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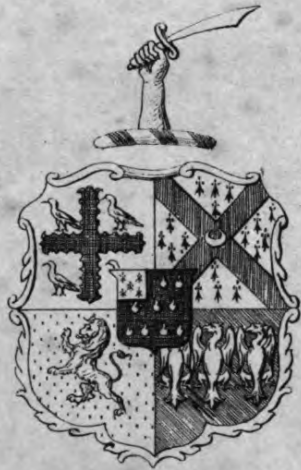
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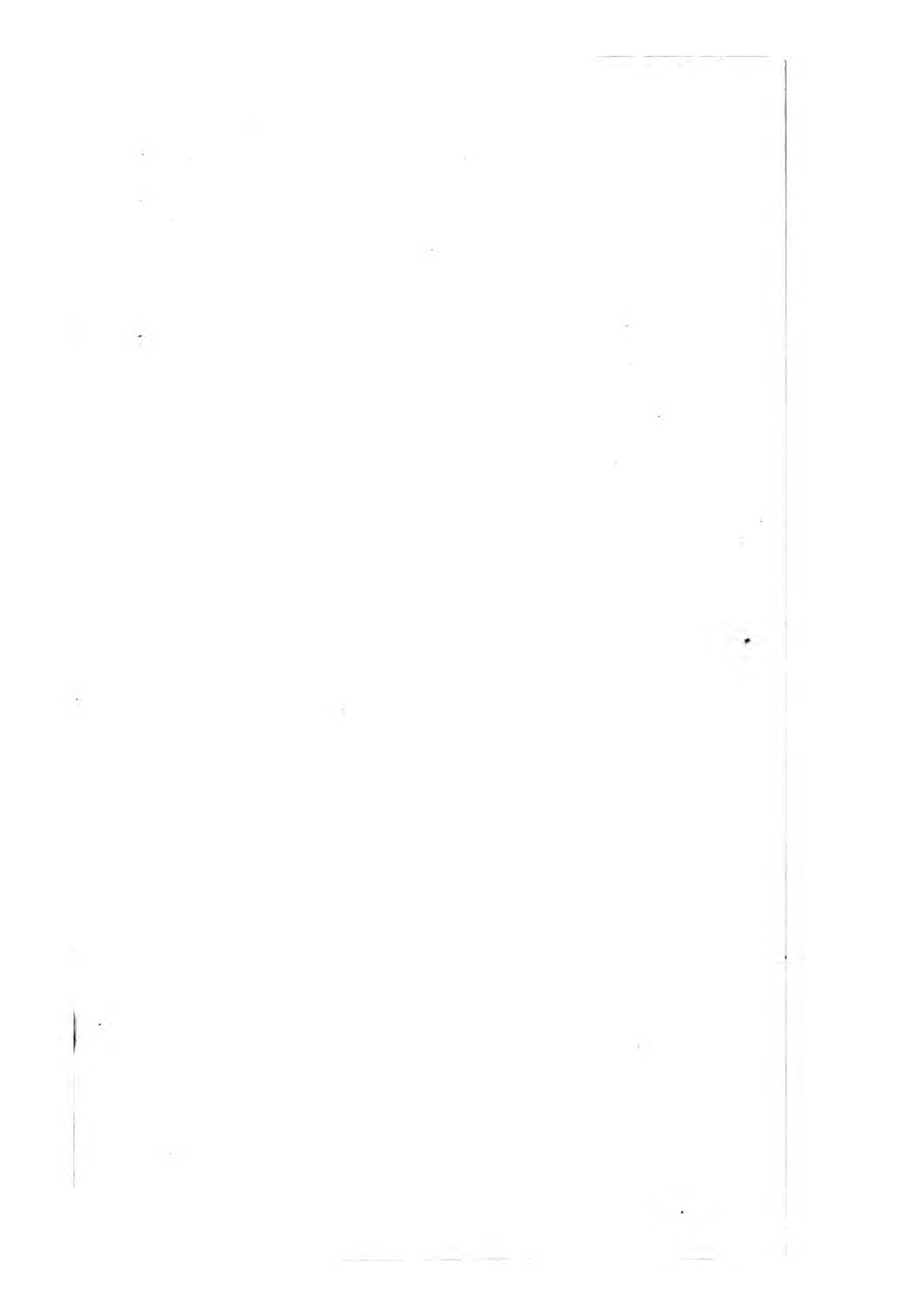
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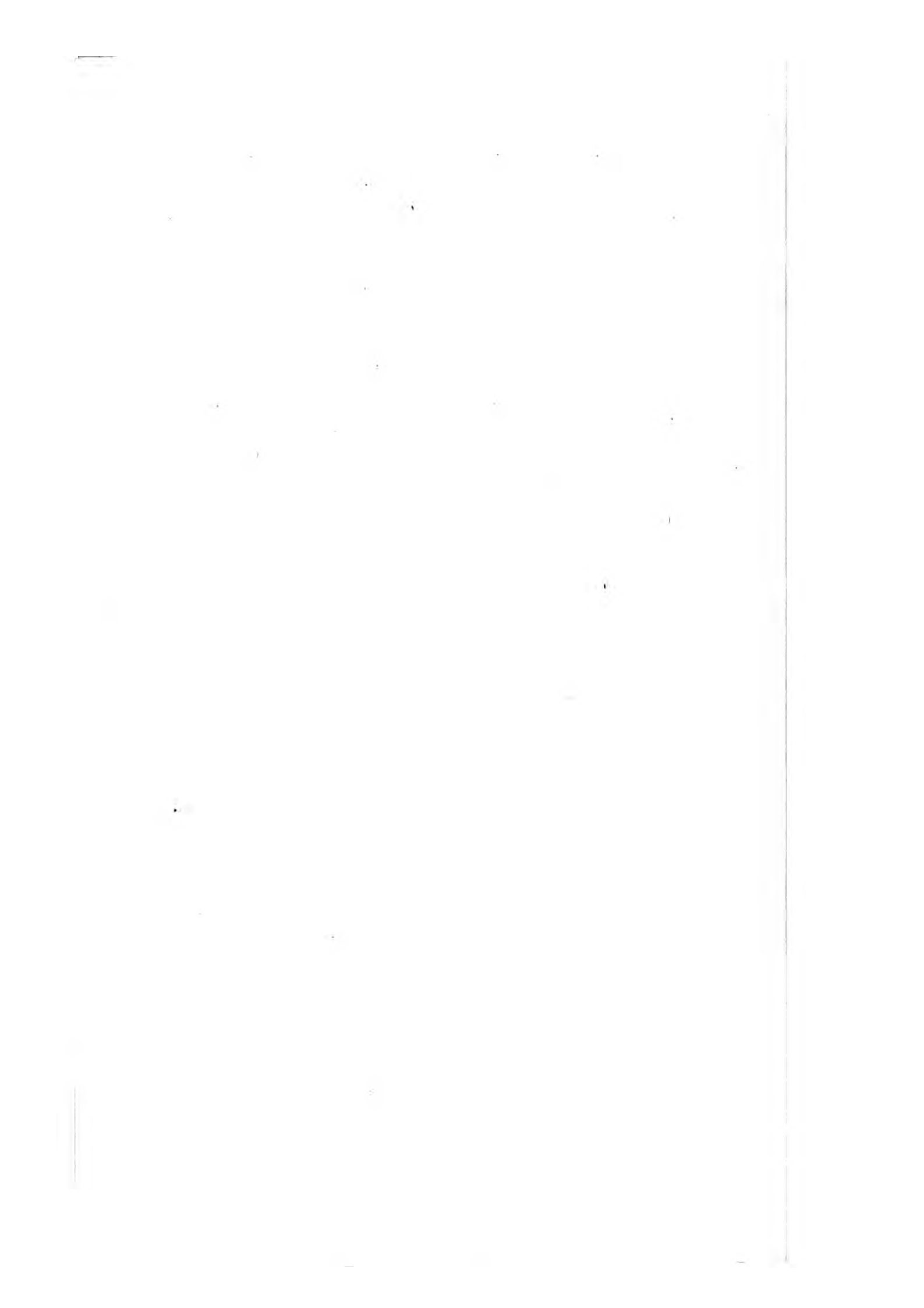
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THE GIPSY.

VOL. II.

LONDON :
Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.

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. II.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR

LONGMAN, REES, ORME, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMAN,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.

1835.



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THE GIPSY.

CHAPTER I.

LET any one who is fond of sublime sensations take his hat and staff, and climb a high hill by a moonlight midnight. There is a part of that dust of earth, which gathers so sadly upon our spirit during our daily commune with this sordid world, cast off at every step. The very act of climbing has something ennobling in it, and the clearer air we breathe, the elevation to which we rise, all gives the mind a sensation of power and lightness, as if it had partly shaken off the load of clay that weighs it down to the ground. But still more, when with solitude — the deep solitude of night — we rise up high above the sleeping world, with the bright stars for our only companions, and the calm moon for our only light — when we look through the profound depth of space, and see it peopled by never-ending orbs — when we gaze round our

extended horizon and see the power of God on every side, — then the immortal triumphs over the mortal, and we feel our better being strong within us. The cares, the sorrows, the anxieties of earth seem as dust in the balance weighed with mightier things; and the grandest earthly ambition that ever conquered worlds and wept for more, may feel itself humiliated to the dust in the presence of silence, and solitude, and space, and millions of eternal suns.

The cool night air playing round his brow calmed the feverish headach which anxiety and excitement had left upon Edward de Vaux; and as he walked forth from the park, and climbed the high hill towards Morley Down, with the stars looking at him from the clear heaven, and the moon glistening on every pebble of his path, it is wonderful how much his mind felt soothed and tranquillised, how small the cares of earth became in his sight. So much so, indeed, was this the case, that although, as he mounted the steep ascent, he heard distinctly two several shots fired, apparently, a great deal too near his aunt's preserves — a sound which, at any other time, might have roused his indignation in a very superabundant degree — he now only paused for a moment, and turned

round to listen ; and, hearing no more, walked on, regarding the destruction of some hares or pheasants as a matter of but small consequence. When he reached the common, the beauty of the moonlight scene, with its broad lights and shadows, and the solemn effect of silence, and solitude, and night, again made him halt in his advance, to gaze upwards into the depth, and feel the mightiness of the universe around him ; and that, too, sunk all human cares so low by comparison, that he began to think he could bear any disclosure with calm tranquillity.

He then walked on rapidly, regretting, perhaps, a little, that he had not asked Manners the exact position of the gipsy encampment, as he had become warm in climbing the hill, and the wind that blew over the common felt chill, and made a slight shudder pass over him. The little mound, however, was his resource, as it had been that of his friend when engaged on a similar errand ; and, walking on to the spot where it stood, he climbed the side, and cast his eyes over the wide and broken flat grounds below him. In the direction of the sand-pit, he almost immediately beheld a light ; and the next instant a fine mellow voice singing showed him

that the gipsies were not only there but awake, though he was too far off to catch any thing but a few detached notes of a merry air rising up from below. Turning his steps in that direction, he had proceeded about a quarter of the way from the mound to the encampment, when an old white horse, which had lain down after feeding, started up at his approach, and hobbled away with its clogged feet, as fast as it could, uttering, at the same time, one or two short neighs, as if perfectly aware that its masters were of that class which does not like to be interrupted without warning. The light of the fire, now rising up above the abrupt edge of the sand-pit, and showing the dark outline of the bank, with the few black bushes cutting sharp upon the glare, pointed out to De Vaux the exact spot where the gipsies were to be found, when suddenly a human figure was seen rising rapidly across the light; and a minute or two after the form of a stout youth planted itself directly in the way of the wanderer.

“Who do you want, and what?” demanded the young man, eyeing him from head to foot with a look of no particular satisfaction.

De Vaux, however, answered him at once in such a manner as to put a stop to any farther

enquiries, saying, "I want to see a person called Pharold, who is with you here. Can you bring me to him?"

"No," replied the youth, "but I can bring him to you;" and he uttered a low, long whistle, succeeded by another, which was quickly followed by the appearance of Pharold himself, who, as he approached, took care to examine his visiter as accurately as the moonlight would permit. When he came near, without addressing De Vaux, or waiting to hear his errand, he turned to the young man, saying, "You may return, William;" and seeing a slight inclination to linger, he added, in a more authoritative tone, "Return!"

The youth obeyed; and then turning to his visiter the gipsy said, "You are Captain de Vaux, I suppose — nay, I see you are."

"You are right," replied De Vaux; "though I am not aware that you ever saw me before; at least, I am certain that I never saw you."

"I saw you on the day before yesterday," replied the gipsy, "though it was but for a moment, and you did not see me. But it is not alone from that I know you. You are very like your father, as I remember him; but still more like your grandfather and your uncle,

in the times when I can recall as happy a set of faces in Dimden Hall as ever shone in the palace or the cottage."

The gipsy sighed as he spoke, and De Vaux sighed too, for he had never seen such faces in his father's house; and there was also, in the picture thus presented, a sad sample of how happy things and scenes of joy can, in a few short years, pass away and be forgotten, which, linking itself by the chain of association to the present, carried on his mind to the time when he and his might be as those of whom the gipsy spoke, and all the happiness which he now so fondly anticipated with her he loved become a memory for some old remaining servant, or poor dependant, to sigh over in their age.

"Then I am to suppose," rejoined De Vaux, after pausing for a moment on thoughts which, perhaps, might be called gloomy, — "then I am to suppose that I am speaking with the person signing himself Pharold; and I may also conclude," he added, "that he is the same whom I have heard of, as having been taken, when a boy, by my grandfather, in order to educate him with my father and uncle; but who could not bear the restraints of that kind of life, and at

the end of two years fled back to his own race and his native pursuits."

"In less time, in less time than that," said the gipsy; "but I often went back, and was ever kindly met, and used to please myself by enacting one day the young gentleman at the hall, and the next the gipsy on the common. But after a time," he continued, carried away by his subject, "I strayed farther, and forgot what I might have been, to give myself more up to what I was to be — but there is no use of talking of such things now, it makes me sad! And so you have heard all that? Yet who would tell you? Your father never did, I am sure; and your aunt was then but a child of two or three years old; and your uncle — but you remember not him."

"No," replied De Vaux, "any knowledge of the facts that I do possess was derived, I believe, from the tales of an excellent old house-keeper, who died not many years ago, and who seemed to speak of Pharold with no small regard."

"And is she dead?" cried Pharold. "Poor good old Mrs. Dickinson — I knew not that she was dead — she was ever kind to me, good soul:

and now she is dust and ashes! Well, well, the fairest, and the strongest, and the best, go down to the sand with the leaves of the tree!—but will the kindly affections, and the noble feelings, and the generous nature, die too and rot? Can you tell me that, young gentleman?—I think not.”

“Nor I either,” answered De Vaux. “God forbid that we should think so! But, as I said, it was from that good old person, as I now recollect, that I heard all I know of your former history.”

De Vaux recurred to the subject of the old housekeeper purposely, for he was not at all sorry that—instead of having to meet the gipsy as an opponent, where every word was to be examined, and nothing admitted without proof—their conversation had taken such a turn as to draw forth the man’s true character, and to show the deeper motives upon which he acted. Anxious, as he might naturally be, to ascertain whether there was any hidden passion which might tempt the other to deceive him, or to seek to injure either himself or those connected with him, De Vaux would fain have led the gipsy on to speak more fully of the past; but Pharoold’s mind, following always its own particular

train, rested but for a moment longer upon the idea suggested, and then returned abruptly to the cause of their meeting.

“ Since you know so much of me, Captain de Vaux,” he said, “ you must also know that I possess knowledge in regard to your family which few other persons now living do possess ; and you must know, likewise, that I am not one to say to you a word that is false, or to seek to wrong you by even a thought. That you have given some credence to my letter I see, by your having come here ; and that you put some confidence in me, I see by your having come alone, and at this hour. Both deserve that I should be as explicit with you as possible ; and, therefore, before you quit me, I will leave not a doubt upon your mind in regard to the truth of what I affirm.”

“ By so doing,” replied De Vaux, “ you will at least entitle yourself to my gratitude and thanks, though I conceal not from you that it is difficult to feel grateful, or to offer sincere thanks, to one who, willingly or unwillingly, overturns our hopes and our happiness for ever.”

“ It is difficult !” replied the gipsy : “ I know it is difficult ; but yet you must believe me

when I tell you, that I feel deeply and bitterly every pang that I inflict on you — that but for a duty and a promise registered in my own heart and beyond the stars — but for your own ultimate happiness — I would not pour upon you now all that I must bid you bear. You must believe all this, Captain de Vaux, for it is true.”

And De Vaux did believe it, in part if not entirely; for there was a solemn earnestness about the man's manner, a sort of eager deprecation in his tone, that would have been very difficult to assume unfelt. Although his opinion of mankind in general, and of the gipsy race in particular, was not very high, still the barrier of distrust was not strong enough to shut out conviction when De Vaux heard the tones of real sincerity; and he spake truly when he replied, “I will believe that you do feel what you say, both because I have never, to my knowledge, injured you or yours, so that it would be gratuitous baseness to injure or afflict me; and because the little I have ever heard of your character in youth, as well as your tone and manner at present, convinces me that you are incapable of such a proceeding. Nevertheless, you must remember, that before I can

yield belief to any part of a story which, in some way, must throw dark imputations upon my family, I am bound to exact proof, and must be permitted to question every assertion that is not supported by the fullest evidence."

"Proof and evidence you shall have," replied the gipsy; "and you shall not only be permitted to question any thing that seems doubtful, but to be angry and indignant till you are convinced. Only, for your own sake, command yourself as much as possible. Remember that you have to hear a tale that will give you great pain; and, in order to enable yourself to judge rationally of its truth, you must govern your passions, and, as far as may be, subdue your feelings. You must promise, too, Captain de Vaux, to forgive him who inflicts the truth upon you. Will you promise me," he asked, laying his hand solemnly on De Vaux's arm, "to forgive whatever pain I may inflict, when you shall be satisfied both that my tale is true, and that I have no motive of earthly interest in relating it?"

"Most certainly," replied De Vaux, "though you proved my illegitimacy ever so clearly. Of course I must forgive you, if disinterestedly you speak but the truth."

“Worse, worse, far worse than that have I to tell,” replied the gipsy; “but I cannot tell it here. The wind blows cold, and I saw you shudder, but your blood will run colder still before my tale is done. Besides, my people have long hearing and cunning ways. They are too near; and I would not that any other ear than yours, in the whole world, should listen to the words I am going to speak. You have trusted yourself so far to-night that you will not fear to trust yourself alone with me still farther. Come, then, with me to the edge of the wood, that you see lying there, about half a mile off. There we can shelter ourselves from the wind beneath the part of the bank just where it looks down upon the road. You are nearer home there, too.”

“I know I am,” answered De Vaux, turning, and gazing somewhat fixedly upon him; “but do you know that the road which it does overhang is within a hundred yards of the spot where my uncle was murdered?”

“I know it well,” replied the gipsy; “but you will never be murdered like him, Captain de Vaux.”

“And why not?” said De Vaux, quickly. “What happened to him may happen to me.”

“ My story must explain my words,” rejoined Pharold ; “ I am unarmed — you are armed. All my comrades are there behind us, — I go farther from them, and lead you nearer to your home. Were I willing to injure you, here were the place.”

“ Lead on, lead on !” said De Vaux ; “ I will trust you, and follow you.”

Without reply, the gipsy led the way across the common, with every step of which he seemed so well acquainted as to be able to shape his course, amidst all the breaks, and bushes, and irregularities of the ground, without ever giving a glance to the right or the left. He said not a word either, and De Vaux followed equally in silence, with his interest and anxiety still more excited than they had been even by his strange companion’s letter. In less than a quarter of an hour they had crossed that part of the common which lay between the sand-pit and the edge of the wood, exactly at that point where the hill, of which Morley Down formed the table land, joined on to the general chain of hills, from which it appeared as a kind of offset or promontory, and which, as we have said, were generally covered with forest. The neck of the promontory here overhung the

turn of the road and the river, at about a couple of hundred yards nearer to Morley House than the spot where De Vaux had told Manners, on their first arrival in the country, that his uncle had been murdered some years before; and the track that lay between the place where he now stood and the highway was a steep precipitous bank of two or three hundred feet in height, covered with loose stones, scattered bushes, and one or two larger trees, thrown forward beyond the mass of wood on the left. The moon was shining bright on the road and the river, and though she had passed her meridian, promised yet several hours of light.

“Come down this little path, sir,” said the gipsy. “Under that bank, with those bushes round us, about thirty yards down, we can find shelter, and can see every thing around, so that there will be no fear of interruption.”

De Vaux followed as he desired, and in a few minutes reached the spot to which he had pointed. There, upon a felled oak, which only remained to be rolled down the hill, he seated himself on a little piece of level ground, where some one had endeavoured, ineffectually, to establish a quarry, and whence he

could behold the village, near his aunt's dwelling, and the top of Morley House itself, though the view up the valley on the other side was interrupted by the sweep of the woody hill. The gipsy stood beside him, and De Vaux anxiously besought him to produce at once the proofs of the very painful assertions which his letter had contained.

"I brought you not here without an object, Edward de Vaux," said the gipsy, still standing; "for here I can relate my tale better than any where else. Now, tell me what you remember of your early years, and what you have heard of your father's history, — of his history, and that of his family."

"I did not seek you," answered De Vaux, "to tell you what I myself know, but to learn from you facts with which I am unacquainted. You have made assertions, and you must either support them by proof, or let them fall to the ground."

"Well, well," said the gipsy, "be as cautious as you will! If you hesitate to tell the story you have heard, I will tell it for you, Captain de Vaux, as I know you have heard it, and stop me if I speak a word that is false."

“ Your grandfather, the twelfth Lord Dewry, left two sons and one daughter, then nearly seventeen. His eldest son, who was about six and twenty, succeeded to his title; and his second son, Edward, your father, who was then at college, went soon after to London to study for the bar. They were both as handsome men as you could look upon; and of your father’s life and conduct in the great capital, as I know nothing, with much certainty, so shall I say but little ——”

“ But it appears to me,” interrupted De Vaux, “ that such is the very matter on which you are called to speak. I was born in London; and if you can tell me nothing certain of my father’s conduct in London you can tell me nothing to the purpose.”

“ Patience! patience! sir, I pray you,” replied the gipsy; “ I can tell you much; though, on your father’s conduct in London, I will spare you as far as may be. William Lord Dewry (your uncle) was one of those men such as the world seldom sees; full of fine and generous feelings, kind, forgiving, noble, with enthusiasm such as the cold call folly, and humanity such as the unfeeling term weakness, though the rectitude of his own conduct was as unbend-

ing as yonder oak, and his enthusiasm never led him to aught but what was just and good. For some years after he succeeded to the title he remained unmarried, and it was generally supposed that he would continue to live as a single man. Those who knew him better, however, felt sure that if ever chance should throw in his way a woman who deserved his love, whose heart was full of such feelings as his own, and whose mind was stored with thoughts and wishes as high and noble as those which filled his own bosom, he would not only offer to join his fate to hers, but would love her as woman has seldom been loved on earth — that such a woman, so loved, would become the great object of his being and his life, and would concentrate on herself all those deep and ardent affections which from his boyhood he had shown that his heart possessed. He did at length, as you well know, find such a woman — full of all those qualities which were so bright in himself — beautiful, accomplished, and his equal in rank and fortune. He addressed himself at once to a heart that was free and unengaged; and the same fine properties that had won his love were sure to win her love for him. He was married, and was happy beyond all that he had ever dreamed.

He was happy — nay, more, he was content ! for the angel of his home was more than all he had expected, and he sought and wished for nothing more. Every feeling, every thought, turned towards her ; and, though his kindness, his benevolence, his philanthropy, were doubled rather than diminished, yet no joy was any thing to the joy of his love. For a year and six months he was as happy as any human thing can be — happier, perhaps, than any human thing ever was before. I saw his happiness ; and oh, how it made my heart expand to behold it ! But then suddenly came a change. His wife had given him a child — beautiful, I hear she is, as her mother, and good as her father ; but ere the opening of her infant mind could add any thing to the happiness of her parents, or afford even a momentary consolation to her father when distress came, her mother was seized with sudden illness, and ere five days were over she was dead.”

The gipsy paused, and seemed to sigh bitterly over the memories of the past ; while De Vaux, whose interest in all that concerned his beloved Marian was hardly less than he felt for those things that affected himself, waited anxiously to hear more ; for, though the story

was not unfamiliar to him, yet it was put in a new light, and told in a mild and feeling tone, that gave it a thousand times more force than ever. After a moment or two of silence the gipsy went on:—"What a change," he continued, "came upon him then! The world seemed all forgotten. He appeared as one struck with sudden blindness; and where he had beheld nothing but beauty around him before, he now beheld nothing but a blank. For hours and hours he would ride in solitude through the country, unaccompanied even by a servant. He would pass his friends when he met them as strangers, and when they spoke would seem long ere he remembered them. He forgot all enjoyment and all occupation, and lived in the world as if it were not his proper place. Thus passed the days for near two months, when, at the end of that time, he one morning rode forth as usual alone; but he chanced—though it was seldom he mentioned whither he went—he chanced to say that he was going to the county town. He was known, too, to have a large sum of money on his person; and as he passed by the house of Mrs. Falkland, his sister,—for it was at Dimden he always lived,—he stopped for a few minutes."

“ You seem to know the whole facts as minutely as if you had followed him,” said De Vaux, when the gipsy paused for a moment.

“ I do,” said the gipsy; “ and, if you will listen, you shall hear how. When he left Mrs. Falkland’s, her husband, who was then living, and a noble, frank-hearted man, walked by his brother-in-law’s horse as far as the village, but there he left him, and Lord Dewry rode on. He was seen by some boys who were playing in that field — can you see it? half a mile nearer than the village, with a red barn at the side. But none of the country people saw him after, and he never returned to the hall. His servants, who all loved him, were alarmed, and sent over to Mr. Falkland, and he despatched messengers to the county town, with orders to enquire at the villages on the road; but no Lord Dewry was to be heard of any where. The evening passed over in terror; night had come on, and the family of Morley House were retiring late to rest when a messenger arrived from Mr. Arden the magistrate, to inform Mr. Falkland that a gipsy — do you remark — a gipsy had just been taken up, upon the charge of beating a young peasant almost to

death the day before, and now made a voluntary declaration that he had seen the Lord Dewry murdered at the elm-point, there down below, that very morning at ten o'clock. Mr. Falkland instantly got upon horseback, and rode over to see Mr. Arden; and it was agreed between them that the news should instantly be sent to the Honourable Edward de Vaux, your father, and that till he arrived nothing farther should be asked of the gipsy, except if he knew where the body of Lord Dewry might in any likelihood be found. He said yes: it might be found at the sea; but that if they would search in the reeds by the bank they would find the Baron's hat, and that in some of the woods or meadows his horse would be met with. Search was instantly made, and some of his words proved true; for the hat, pierced through and through with a shot, was found bloody amongst the reeds, and his horse was discovered grazing in the meadows, four miles down, on the other side of the water. In the mean time, the courier rode night and day to London, and when he arrived found the dead lord's brother at the play-house. He was very much shocked at the news, and instantly came down hither, with one Sir William Ryder, a good enough man,

they said, at heart, but one who had been fond of play, and had lost a fine fortune by that foolish passion. When the new lord arrived, the gipsy was again brought up, and placed before him. A great many questions were asked, and he told this story:—The young man he had beaten had foully ill-used a gipsy woman, and he, the gipsy, had punished him, scarcely as he deserved. He had left him for dead, however, on the ground; and thinking that if he were dead the offence might bring trouble on his people, if he went back to them, he hid himself in these woods, and on the morning of the murder was lying down yonder, in the sweep of trees there, just at the head of the point. He had been there all the morning, he said; and, as the country people generally take the short way over the hill, he had seen no one pass, till, about half-past nine o'clock, a man on horseback came and backed in his horse between the two old elm trees that lie about five hundred yards farther up in the bite of the river. He lay very still there, to see what would come of it; and in about half an hour he heard another horse's feet coming quickly up, and Lord Dewry turned the point. The gipsy said that he thought to have sprung out, and told

him what he had seen ; for his heart misgave him as to the purpose of the other horseman ; but just at the moment the other came forth, and, riding quietly up, spoke with Lord Dewry calmly enough for some minutes. They then seemed to get into high dispute, and Lord Dewry pushed his horse on upon the road a little, while following, and speaking at his side, the other suddenly drew a pistol from his pocket, and fired right into the Baron's head. At the same moment, as he was falling from the saddle, the horse, taking fright, plunged into the river, dragging him by the stirrup, and his hat fell into the rushes. The other horseman looked after him for a moment ; but ere the swimming horse reached the opposite bank, he set spurs to his own beast, and was galloping away, when at the turn he was met by another. The gipsy could see them grasp each other's hands ; but they stopped not a moment to speak : the second turned his horse with the first, and both galloped away like lightning. The gipsy plunged into the water, he said, to see if he could bring out the body, as soon as he saw that it had become disentangled from the stirrup : but it had sunk to

rise no more ; and when he was tired with swimming, he returned to the woods.

“ Mr. Arden the magistrate said it was a very improbable story ; but asked the gipsy if he could recognise the man who had committed the murder. The gipsy replied that he could, if he saw him, and could swear to him whenever he was placed before him. Mr. Arden then said that it would be better, under all circumstances, to commit the gipsy at once for his other offences ; when he would be always forthcoming to give evidence if required ; but as it was proved that the young man he had beaten was hourly getting better, and acknowledged that he had deserved the treatment he had received, the kind magistrate had no other excuse to propose for committing the gipsy, but that of his being a rogue and a vagabond. In this, however, he was over-ruled by Lord Dewry, the new Lord Dewry, after some private consultations with Sir William Ryder. His Lordship said, with a kind look to the gipsy, that it would be cruel, he thought, to commit a man to prison for having given voluntary evidence, where it was much needed ; and besides, that he had reason to think very well of that gipsy, who had, in a degree, been brought up by his

father. Mr. Arden, however, suggested that the gipsy himself might have been the murderer ; and though Lord Dewry treated the idea with contempt, yet the sturdy magistrate kept him in custody, till, by the marks of the horse's feet, and many other things, it was proved that his story must be true. In the mean time, Lord Dewry and Sir William Ryder were very kind to him, and took care that he should want for nothing while he was detained. At length he was liberated, and went to join his own people ; promising to return whenever he should be called upon, which every one felt sure he would do, as he had been educated with the dead man, and loved him as a brother.—I need not tell you that I was that gipsy !

“ In the mean time,” continued Pharold, “ Mr. Edward de Vaux took the titles and entered into possession of the estates held by his late brother. The will of the last lord was found, and no one wondered that in it he never mentioned his brother's name ; for it was known to all the world that they had had many a bitter dispute, and had long been, not as brothers should be. His daughter, Miss de Vaux, and the care of the splendid fortune which she inherited from her mother, were

intrusted to his sister, Mrs. Falkland, to Mrs. Falkland's husband, and to a distant relation.

All his servants and friends were remembered by the dead nobleman, and almost every one that he knew was named, except his own brother. The world did wonder, then, that that brother, with a singular generosity, resigned in favour of his niece many things that he might have claimed as belonging to the male heir, and treated all questions between them, in regard to property, with unexampled liberality. When he had settled all things, and retained a number of his brother's domestics, he ordered the hall at Dewry to be put in order; not loving the part of the country where his brother had been murdered. Thither, then, he went, after he had arranged his affairs in London, bringing down with him a young gentleman of seven years' old, his only son, and supposed heir to all the property."

"And my mother!" cried De Vaux, raising his head from his hands, in which position he had been sitting while listening to the gipsy's story; for during its course he had been agitated by many a strange, but ill-defined, emotion. The story of his uncle's murder had always been one on which his mind had rested with awe and pain

from his very childhood; but though he had heard it often told, both as a whole and in detached fragments, yet he had never listened to such minute details as were now given, by an eye-witness of the horrible event, who seemed prepared to connect it, too, by some vague and unexplained link, with the painful assertions which had been made in regard to his own doubtful situation. The very expectation, or rather apprehension, of some horrible disclosure to follow at every word the gipsy uttered, had troubled and shaken him greatly; and the name of Sir William Ryder — a person who, it appeared, was then most intimate with his father, but who, it was clear, had since become the object of his most determined hatred — had added deeper feeling of mysterious dread to all those thoughts by which he was already perturbed. What could be the meaning of all this? whither would it lead? how was it to end? were the questions which continually pressed upon him as the gipsy proceeded; and it appeared even a relief, when Pharold's last words seemed to bring his ideas back from the new and dreadful topics on which they had been engaged, to the subject of his former doubts and suspicions.

“ And my mother ! ” he cried, as the gipsy paused, “ what of her ? ”

“ Nothing, that I know, ” replied Pharold, apparently with some surprise ; “ nothing but that she was a Spanish lady, who married your father privately, after breaking her vows in a convent. ”

“ Then they were married ! ” cried De Vaux eagerly.

“ Certainly ! ” answered the gipsy : “ I never heard it doubted ; though he kept her from all his family, and used her ill ; which was one of the causes of his quarrels with his brother. But she was dead before he came down here to take possession of his brother’s lands. — But let me tell my tale. ”

De Vaux again leaned his head upon his hands ; every thing once more becoming dark and misty around him. “ Go on ! go on ! ” he said ; “ go on, and keep me not in suspense, for Heaven’s sake ! ”

“ I have now told you, ” continued Pharold, “ the story of your family as it went forth to the world, and as you most likely have heard it yourself. It is a goodly tale, and just such as could be desired under such circumstances ! The picture is, indeed, a dark and painful one :

but it has another side more dark and painful still; and ere you look at it, nerve your mind firmly, young gentleman; for if you be such, as I believe you are, filled with honourable feelings and kindly affections, your very soul will writhe under all you have to hear."

De Vaux waved his hand for him to go on; and the gipsy continued: — "You have heard the world's version of the story; you must now hear the gipsy's. My early history you know; for a year and nine months I was brought up with your uncle and your father. Your uncle ever loved me — your father never: but he was too proud to seek to injure me; and when I left the false restraints of what you call society, to go back to my own race and my native freedom, he and I were friends, as far as we could be.

"Your uncle I often returned to see, though longer and longer became my absence, and greater and greater my contempt for gilded halls and mercenary slaves in laced jackets. I took a pleasure, however, a secret pleasure, in marking and learning all the doings of the man I loved best on earth; and sometimes, though my distaste to fine dwellings and insolent lackeys had grown into a diseased abhorrence that would not let me

cross the lordly threshold of Dimden, yet often would I meet him in the park or in the walks, and hold a brief conversation with him in the free air. It was after an absence from this part of the country of near two years that I came back, and found that his heart had been withered by the death of her he loved. I was seeking for an opportunity of meeting him, when the offence was given to an unhappy woman of our tribe, which called for vengeance at my hand; and I was forced to conceal myself till I could learn what were the ultimate consequences of the punishment that I had inflicted. I hid myself, as I have told you, in that wood; and all the rest that I said before the magistrates is true: but I said not all the truth. I saw the horseman station himself between the elms; I saw Lord Dewry ride up, and they met; I heard the words they spoke; I saw him ride on, and I saw the other follow, though little did I dream his purpose; I saw him draw the pistol from his bosom; I saw it raised, and the shot fired that struck the good lord down — and the hand that fired it, young man — the hand that fired it was his brother's!"

“It is false!” cried De Vaux, starting up

and half drawing his sword; "it is as false as hell itself!"

"It is as true as yon stars in heaven!" replied the gipsy calmly but sternly; and a long pause followed, while Pharold stood erect and tranquil before the son of him whom he had charged with so fearful a crime, and De Vaux gazed on him with a countenance in which the workings of all the manifold passions that such terrible tidings produced were fearfully visible. "Will you hear me out?" demanded the gipsy at length.

"I will," said De Vaux, casting himself down again upon the tree; "I will! but think not to escape me. You have made a dreadful charge; and as there is a God in heaven, you shall show me that it is true before I quit you!" and, leaning his head again upon his hand, he kept his eyes fixed upon the gipsy, as if fearful that he should elude him, till he came to parts of the details that made his hearer again bury his face in his hands.

"I will!" continued Pharold: "I will show you that what I have uttered is true; for it was to that purpose that I brought you here. But be more calm, and let me tell you all the cir-

cumstances which might lead him to the terrible act that he committed."

"He committed it not!" murmured De Vaux; but the gipsy went on as if he had not heard him. "I have since heard all the facts," he proceeded, "from one who knew them too well; the only one, indeed, besides myself. Edward de Vaux, the younger of the two brothers, was a man of extravagant tastes and habits. He went early and often into other countries, and there he learned expensive vices and follies. I would not pain you; but he gamed deeply, and lived sumptuously, while your mother lived neglected, and fared but hardly. What he inherited from his father was but small; what he acquired was nothing; what he squandered came from the liberality of his brother; and often his demands were more than any liberality could supply. Lord Dewry remonstrated and entreated, but in vain; and much and nobly have I heard did he offer to do for him, if he would retire into the country, and treat your mother well. But she died, and that cause of dispute was removed by her death. All check, indeed, seemed now cast away by her husband. He gamed more deeply than ever; lost all; applied to his brother; was re

fused, and then staked what he did not possess. He lost. Sir William Ryder, his great friend, joined him in an engagement to pay the sum within a certain time; but shortly before the period arrived, Mr. de Vaux was not to be found by his friend. Sir William thought that he had evaded him in order to cast the whole debt upon his shoulders; and, learning the route he had taken, followed at full speed; traced him step by step, and overtook him — at the very moment he had murdered his brother. Horrified, but confused and bewildered, before he well comprehended what he was doing, Sir William became a participator in the crime, by promising to conceal all that he had seen; and, setting spurs to their horses, they arrived in London by different by-roads, in so short a space of time that it seemed impossible they could have done the distance. Well knowing that he must soon be sent for, the heir of the dead man took care to show himself in every place where his presence in London would be marked and remembered, in case of necessity; and he was found, as I have said, at the play-house. What sort of hell was in his heart, as he sat and saw mockeries and pageants, I know not.”

“ But your story halts, sir,” said De Vaux sternly; “ how could he know at what exact spot his brother would be found at that precise time? How could he —— ”

“ By that letter!” said the gipsy, placing abruptly an old, but well-preserved, paper in his hands, on which the regular post marks were easily discernible.

“ But I cannot read it by this faint light,” said De Vaux, attempting to make out the contents, after gazing at the address; “ what is its purport?”

“ I will tell you,” replied the gipsy, striking a light with a flint and touchwood that he carried, — “ I will tell you; though you shall soon be able to satisfy yourself. It is your uncle’s letter to your father, telling him that he has not sufficient money at his banker’s to meet his fresh demand; but that if he will be at the inn at the county town of ——, at noon of the eighteenth of May — the very day of the murder — he will give him the sum of five thousand pounds, which is all he can collect without burdening himself for other people’s faults, in a manner that he does not choose to do. There!” he continued, lighting a few dry sticks; “ there is light enough to read!”

De Vaux read the letter. It was such exactly as the gipsy described: it was written in a hand which he remembered from other papers he had seen to be that of his uncle; it was dated four days before his death, signed with his name, sealed with his arms, directed to his brother, and by the post marks had evidently been received. Conviction was forcing itself painfully upon his mind, but drowning men will catch at straws; and he hoped yet to find some flaw in the horrible history he heard, and to be enabled to give it the lie to his own heart. He returned the letter; and folding his arms upon his breast bade the gipsy go on; while, with a knitted brow and quivering lip, he continued gazing upon vacancy, suffering his mind to roam wildly through a thousand painful thoughts and memories, but without letting one word escape his ear.

“By this letter,” continued the gipsy, “did he know exactly when his brother would set out for the town of——; and he knew his habits, too, well enough to arrange the rest of his plan. But crime is always agitated; and it is thus that even the coolest and most determined ever leave some trace behind by which murder may be detected. Your uncle came

not so soon as he had expected, and he took the letter from his pocket to be sure that he himself had not overstepped the hour. Just as he was reading, the horse's feet which bore Lord Dewry sounded, and he hastily thrust back the paper, as he thought, into his pocket; but it fell, and I saw it, and forgot it not afterwards. When the deed was done, he paused for a moment gazing upon the swimming horse, and the sinking form of his brother, as it detached itself from the stirrup, and without even a struggle the waters closed over his head; and I am as sure as there is a heaven above us, that at that instant the murderer would have given lands and lordships — nay, life itself — to have recalled the irrevocable act that he had done. He could gaze at it no longer; but striking his spurs into his horse like a madman, he turned back the way he came. Just at the turn of the wood he was met by Sir William Ryder: what he said I know not, but he grasped his hand for a moment, and then galloped away, followed by the other. Ere he had gone far his coolness had returned; for before he came down here all his plans had been arranged, and his conduct decided. He had questioned the messenger, too, and had heard the evidence that I had

given ; and though I had declared that I could swear to the person, he felt sure, from my *not* swearing to him, that I either did not really know him, or had determined to conceal my knowledge. At all events, he had no resource but to front the matter ; and he did so boldly. When I was brought into the justice room, I could see that he turned a little pale, and at the same time he put up his finger to his lip, in a way that I might take for a signal or not as I pleased. I repeated all I had said before, nay, I went farther, and described exactly the appearance of the murderer, but such descriptions are always loose ; and no one asked me whether any of those present was the man ——”

“ Would you have said yes if they had ?” interrupted De Vaux.

“ I do not well know what I might have done,” replied the gipsy, “ but I think not. What use would it have been to me to destroy the son of one who had loved and cherished me ? He had committed an awful crime ; it is true—but I was not the avenger. Besides, I knew that vengeance, in its intensity tenfold more terrible than aught that man could inflict, was in his heart already, — that there was a serpent

eating it up, — that the mighty, the almighty, Avenger of all crimes was there in his terrors, and that every hour of his after-existence would be constant judgment, and continual death. No, no! on my life, I did not so much hate as pity him. At night, after I had been removed from the justice room, I heard the door of the chamber, in which they had confined me, open, and Sir William Ryder came in with a light. He was a fine-hearted man, though he had been misled; and although the real murderer had shown himself but little shaken, yet through the whole of my examination he, Sir William Ryder, had been agitated, as I could see, to his very soul. Both he and the other, however, whether to make me a friend or what matters little, had done all they could to soften the hardness of old Squire Arden, as he was called; but Sir William now came to me to see what I did know, and how far they could trust me. It was a difficult task; and had he gone about it as cunningly as some would have done, he might have failed with me. But he was too much moved for that. He spoke kindly to me, however, and told me that Lord Dewry was very much interested for me, and would take care of me, and I told him at once to bid

Lord Dewry take care of himself, for his was the case of danger, and not mine. So then he said that he saw I knew more than I had spoken, and that Lord Dewry was grateful to me. 'Call him not by a title that is not his,' I answered; 'for I know that the patent of their nobility bears, that if any of the family, judged according to law, be found guilty of a felony, he and his children are to be considered dead, their line extinct, and the next heir to claim as if they were not.' He answered that that mattered not, for that his friend had not been found guilty of any felony, nor ever would; and that he had only to say, if I would quit the kingdom, till he gave me leave to return, he would secure me the sum of one thousand pounds directly, and a pension for my life. I said I would think of it, and tell him when I was at liberty; and I was very soon after set free. Sir William Ryder did not fail to find me out, however; and it was agreed between us that I should go; and that he should meet me at the sea-port where I embarked, and there give me the money.

"It took a time, however, to move the tribe to the port, and some were unwilling to go without knowing the reason. So we divided,

some going with me, some betaking themselves to their own way. I saw Sir William Ryder often, and when I wrote to him to tell him that we were near a sea-port in Wales, he came down directly and visited the encampment. He told me that he, too, was about to set out for America, and intended to spend the rest of his life in the colonies. 'I will try,' he said, 'by devoting the remainder of my days to doing good, and walking uprightly with all men, to efface from my memory the traces of many follies, and of one great crime, in which I have not been a sharer, indeed, but which I have aided to conceal.' The second day, however, that he came out to us, his horse took fright at a monkey, which some of our people had amongst the tents, and threw him violently. He broke his collar bone and several of his ribs, and being carried into a hut we all nursed him tenderly. I found him better than I thought, and learned to love him; and under our care he got well sooner than if all the doctors in the world had seen him. While he was recovering it was, that I learned how all had happened; and he tried to persuade himself, and to make me believe, that the murder had been committed in a moment of passion, and not by design — or

that his friend was distracted with anxiety and distress at the moment that he committed it. When he left us for America, I went away to Ireland. I have since seen many other lands, and have lived for some years in Scotland, but I never returned to this country of England till about three weeks ago."

The gipsy paused ; and De Vaux remained as he had placed himself, with his head bent down almost to his knees, and his eyes buried in his extended hands. He continued silent long, bowed down by a sense of misery, and humiliation, and despair. What would he have given at that moment to have all his former apprehensions confirmed, if the present terrible doubts could have been thereby swept away ! — doubts, indeed, they could scarcely now be called, for the gipsy's story was too consistent in every part, was too much combined with facts within his own knowledge, was too clear an explanation of many parts of his father's conduct — his gloom — his reserve — his irritation — his agitation at the very name of Sir William Ryder — for him to entertain any thing but one of those faint, lingering, insane hopes, which death itself is the only thing that can extinguish. But, for the moment, the thought of

whether there were still a doubt had merged itself in the more agonising ideas of what must be his fate if the story were true. His own father! How could he ever behold him again? How was he to act towards him? What was he to do? Then came the idea of Marian in all her beauty, in all her gentleness, in all her generous love—and he felt that she could never be his—that the blood of her father placed between them an obstacle that could never be removed—that no time, no change, no effort could ever cast down that dreadful barrier—that at the very moment when his passionate love had been raised by her noble conduct almost to adoration was the moment at which he must sacrifice her for ever! And how must he sacrifice her? How must he act towards her? He could not—he dared not explain, by even a single word, the cause of that sacrifice—he could not tell her what had happened—he could not even have the blessing of weeping with her over their blighted hopes. Whichever way he turned, it was all horror and destruction; and the brain of the unhappy young man seemed to reel with the agony he suffered. He spoke not—he could hardly be said to think—it was all one frightful dream of

misery and despair. He felt that his fate, as far as happiness was concerned, was sealed for ever; and yet a thousand whirling and inconsistent visions rushed upon his brain regarding his future conduct. How—how was he to act? What—what was he to do? At one moment he thought of going instantly to his father's presence, of telling him he knew all, and of ending his own life before him, to cast off the intolerable burden of thought and sensation: but then he remembered all that his father had already suffered—called to mind the deep and gloomy pondering—the solitary meditations, and the never-smiling lip—the bursts of wild and impatient passion—the hollow cheek, the sunken eye, and all the indications of a heart torn and mangled by remorse; and that idea vanished in filial sorrow. At another time he thought of burying himself deep in the wilds of America, of joining some Indian tribe, and hiding his name and its disgrace in scenes to which Europeans never penetrated; but then again the idea of Marian, and of never, never seeing her more, overcame him with fresh anguish. He knew not where to turn his eyes for guide or direction, he knew not how to act, he knew not whither to go—every place was

hopeless, every view presented but despair ; and after a long and terrible silence, one deep and bitter groan found its way to his lips.

The gipsy's heart was moved for him ; and after gazing upon him for several minutes he said, " I grieve from my very heart to pain you thus ; but yet, young man, be comforted—there is a balm for all things !"

The very words of comfort, however, proceeding from the same tongue that had destroyed all his happiness for ever, roused De Vaux almost to frenzy ; and starting up he exclaimed, " Either what you have told me is false, or you must know that there is no comfort for me on earth—what balm do you mean ?"

" The balm of time," replied the gipsy unmoved, " which, as I know by the experience of many sorrows, can take the venom from the most cankered wound."

De Vaux glared at him for a moment as if he would have struck him to the earth, and then—for there are some loads of misery which are too vast for the human mind to comprehend or to believe at first—and then replied, " I believe you have been deceiving me—and woe be unto you if you have ! Have you any other proof?" he cried, striving eagerly to catch at a

doubt. "Have you any other proof? if so, produce it quickly."

"I am not deceiving you, young gentleman," answered the gipsy; "and I can forgive both your anger and your unbelief."

"But the proof! the proof!" cried De Vaux; "have you any other proof?"

"I have," answered Pharold, "and I will produce it, though the letter I have shown you is proof enough. I grieve for you, sir, but you must not injure me."

"The letter you may have stolen," replied De Vaux fiercely, "or found it years afterwards — what other proof have you? Give me some other proof, and I will believe you."

"You believe me already at your heart," answered the gipsy; "but the other proof is this: — I have said that the murderer gazed for a moment after his victim, and that I saw that he gazed in deep and terrible remorse — know you how I saw that it was so? Thus — The moment that the shot was fired, and that his brother was falling, his hand let the pistol drop from his grasp, and he sat on his horse motionless as a statue, as if the deed he had done had turned him into stone; nor did he move hand or limb till he turned and galloped away as if the fiends

of hell were pursuing him. The pistol was not lost any more than the letter, and happy for him was it, that they both fell into the hands of one who concealed them carefully; for had they been found by any other, your father might have ended his days upon a scaffold more than twenty years ago. You ask for more proof. Look there! that is the weapon, and you know the arms of a younger brother of your race too well to doubt me longer."

De Vaux took the pistol which the gipsy produced. It was curiously inlaid with silver, and the arms of his family embossed upon the stock. He had once seen one, and only one, precisely similar, in the hands of his father, when he came upon him by accident in his private study. His father had put it away in haste into a chest that contained it; and with a pale cheek and quivering lip had reproved his son for breaking in upon his privacy. De Vaux now saw the fellow-weapon of the one he had then beheld: the last faint gleam of hope left his heart for ever; and, striking his hand upon his bosom, and groaning in the bitterness of his heart, he cast himself frantically down upon the cold ground.

CHAP. II.

IT is a wonder that man ever smiles; for there is something so strange and awful in the hourly uncertainty of our fate, in the atmosphere of darkness and insecurity that surrounds our existence, in the troops of dangers to our peace and to our being, that ride invisible upon every moment as it flies, that man is, as it were, like a blind man in the front of a great battle, where his hopes and his joys are being swept down on every side, and in which his own existence must terminate at length, in some undefined hour, and some unknown manner—and yet he smiles as if he were at a pageant.

Were his smile the smile of faith and confidence in the great, good Being who sees the struggle and prepares the reward, he might smile unshaken indeed; but, alas, alas! is it so? — I fear but seldom.

There are few things on earth more melancholy than when one is burdened with some evil news, to see those whom it is destined to plunge into grief full of gay life and happiness,

enjoying the bright moments as if there were nothing but pleasure in the world. There is something awful in it! It brings home to our own hearts the fearful fact that, at the very instant when we are at the height of joy, some remote, unseen, unknown, unexpected agents may be performing acts destined to blast our happiness for ever. There is something mysterious in it, too; for it shows us that at the very moment when our state is in reality the most miserable upon earth, we are often giving ourselves up to the most wild and rapturous gaiety, solely because some other tongue has not spoken in our ear a few conventional sounds which the inhabitant of another land would not understand, but which, as soon as they are spoken, plunge us from the height of joy down into the depth of despair.

On the third morning of Colonel Manners's stay at Morley House, and on which he expected letters that would give him a fair excuse for abridging his visit, he rose as early, but came down somewhat later than usual. He still, however, expected to find himself earlier than the rest of the family: but on passing the music room, the door of which was ajar, he heard the notes of a harpsichord—the solace and delight

of our worthy ancestors—mingling with some gay voices talking; and, taking the prescriptive right of opening quite all half-opened doors, he walked in and found Miss Falkland at the instrument speaking cheerfully, over her shoulder, to Miss de Vaux who stood behind.

A slight complaining cry on the part of the lazy hinges made both ladies turn their eyes towards it; and Isadore smiled as she did so, while a faint colour spread itself deepening over Marian's soft cheek—perhaps she might expect to see some one else than Colonel Manners, and be just sufficiently disappointed to say something civil and kind to him on his entrance, as a sort of compensation for the bad compliment she paid him at the bottom of her heart.

“Isadore was just talking of you, Colonel Manners,” she said, looking towards her cousin, as if leaving her to explain in what manner.

“There is a proverb to that effect, madam,” replied Manners, smiling; “but I am always glad to find myself subject of discourse to those I esteem, if the matter be not censure at least. May I be let into the secret?”

“Oh, beyond all doubt,” replied Isadore. “The fact is, De Vaux betrayed you last night, Colonel Manners; and told me, without even



binding me to secrecy, that you sing remarkably well."

"He did me injustice, I assure you," replied Manners; "but if that be 'the head and front of my offence,' I can prove myself innocent of singing remarkably well at any time you like."

"No time like the present, Colonel Manners," said Isadore. "It wants full half an hour to breakfast, and there is nothing on earth so painful as to live in long-drawn expectation of such things. Will you sing, Colonel Manners?"

"I believe," he replied, "that there is some superstitious penalty attached to singing before breakfast; but nevertheless I will dare the adventure if you have any music that I know, for the sin of accompanying myself I commit not."

"Do you know that?" asked Miss Falkland; "or that? or that?"

"No, indeed," answered Colonel Manners; "but I know the air of this one, and have sung it more than once to different words, the composition of a lady possessing no small poetical powers. I will try to recollect them now; though, to speak the truth, it is doing some injustice to the lines to take them from the drama for which they were designed, and apply them to an old song."

“ Oh, never mind; we will make all due allowances,” replied Miss Falkland: “ am I to accompany you, or Marian? — Oh, very well, with all my heart! — Is it to be the time of a monody or a jig?”

“ Not too fast, if you please,” replied Colonel Manners; and Miss Falkland accompanying him, he sang the following lines to an air which was then not very new, but which is now in all probability lost to posterity.

SONG.

- “ I woo thee not, as others woo,
 I flatter not as others do,
 Nor vow that I adore;
 I cannot laugh, I cannot smile,
 Nor use, as they, each courtly wile,
 But oh, I love thee more.
- “ The rich, the noble, and the great,
 Offer thee wealth, and power, and state,
 And fortunes running o'er!
 How can I smile, when none of these
 Give me the worldly power to please,
 Though I may love thee more?
- “ And yet I hope, because I love
 With thoughts that set thee far above
 Vain Fortune's glittering store.
 Others may deem thou canst be won
 By things that sparkle in the sun,
 But oh, I love thee more.

“ I do believe that unto thee
 Truth, honour, plain sincerity,
 Are jewels far before
 All that the others think are dear;
 And yet far more than they I fear,
 Because I love thee more.

“ I love thee more than all the train
 Who flaunt, who flatter, and who feign,
 And vow that they adore:
 I love thee, as men loved of yore —
 Ah, no, I love thee more — far more
 Than man e'er loved before.”

“ I do not think I could have resisted those verses well sung,” cried Isadore, smiling as he concluded, “ if I had been the most disdainful beauty that ever carried a hawk upon her glove in the days of old. What do you say, Marian?”

“ I do not know how far my powers of resistance might go,” answered Marian de Vaux, “ but I should very much like to hear the rest of the story. You say that it is in a drama, Colonel Manners, I think; pray can it be procured?”

“ I am afraid not,” answered Manners: “ it is the writing of a lady, and has never been given to the world; at least, as far as I know.”

“ But at all events tell us the fate of the

lover," exclaimed Isadore; "that you are bound to do in common charity, after having excited our curiosity."

"Oh, he is made happy, of course," he replied, "as all lovers are — or should be."

"Say *true lovers*, if you please, Colonel Manners," cried Isadore, "and then I will agree; but if a woman were to make happy — as you gentlemen call it before you are married — every impertinent personage who comes up, and making you a low bow with his hat under his arm asks you, 'Pray, madam, will you marry me?' as if he were asking you merely to walk a minuet, she would have enough to do, I can assure you."

"I can easily conceive it," answered Manners, laughing; "but what a clamorous summons that bell makes: pray does it ring for breakfast every morning? I did not hear it yesterday."

"That was because you were out having your fortune told when it rang, Colonel Manners," replied Miss Falkland: "but it rings every morning at this hour; and if Mrs. Falkland is not down it falls to my lot to make the tea. Wherefore I must now remove to the breakfast room."

Thus saying, she led the way, while her cousin and Colonel Manners followed; and the hot and shining urn having taken its wonted place, she proceeded with the breakfast arrangements, while the butler bustled about, first at the side-board, and then at the table, looking ever and anon at the two young ladies, and then at Colonel Manners, and then at the fire-place, till, having nothing farther to do, he was obliged to retire.

“Gibson looks as if he had some vast secret upon his mind,” said Isadore, speaking to her cousin; “did you see, Marian, how he moved about?—You must know, Colonel Manners, that that old gentleman is a very privileged person in our family, and often condescends to pour forth the secrets of the village upon us, in despite of all our struggles and reluctance.”

“I am sorry he did not gratify himself this morning,” said Manners: “there are few things more delightful than a village story well told.”

“You were the great obstacle, I am afraid,” replied Miss Falkland: “he has his own peculiar notions of decorum, and a visiter is pretty sure of reverence; but I do believe, from his extreme alacrity this morning, that he would have even disregarded your presence had a single word been said to him. But I did not choose to

gratify him even by a word ; for I knew if I had but said, ‘ Gibson, bring more butter,’ he would instantly have burst forth with, ‘ Yes, miss, I’ll tell you all about it. The park-keeper’s daughter’s husband’s sister——’ and so he would have gone on for an hour.”

Colonel Manners could not help laughing, and even Marian smiled at the manner in which her gay cousin imitated the old man’s prolixity ; but at the same time there was an expression of anxiety on Miss de Vaux’s countenance which nothing but the presence of Edward de Vaux could have done away. He had not yet come down, however, and the next person who entered was Mrs. Falkland, whose first observation after the common salutations of the morning was, “ Why — is not Edward down ? surely he has not grown a sluggard in the wars ! ”

“ Oh no, my dear aunt,” replied Marian ; “ I dare say he was down before we were up, for he told me last night that he was going out early this morning, but would be back to breakfast.”

The old butler was just at that moment entering with a partridge pie ; and halting in the midst, he exclaimed, “ No, indeed, Miss Marian ;

no, indeed! Master Edward has not come down because he has never been up."

"Never been up!" said Mrs. Falkland, mistaking the man's meaning; "then you had better send up his servant to wake him, Gibson. But why are you so pale, Marian? what is the matter?"

"Oh, that is not it at all, ma'am," replied the butler, taking upon himself to answer for all parties. "Mr. de Vaux has never been in bed last night, ma'am. His servant told me so this minute. There is the bed turned down, says he, just as the housemaid left it, and his slippers standing by the great chair, and his hat, and sword, and riding-coat gone."

"Nay, Marian, do not look so alarmed," said Isadore, laying her hand affectionately upon that of her cousin. "This will prove all airy nothing, depend upon it: but you had better come away with me, love, and leave mamma and Colonel Manners to sift it; for you will only agitate yourself more than is at all necessary by listening to the miraculous conjectures of every different servant in the house."

"No, no; I would a great deal rather hear all, Isadore," answered Marian, in her usual

calm tone, though the excessive paleness which had spread over her countenance evinced, clearly enough, that her heart was any thing but at ease. “ You had better send for Edward’s servant, my dear aunt ! ”

Her suggestion was instantly followed, and De Vaux’s servant, who had been an old soldier, entered the room, and stood at ease before the party assembled round the breakfast table.

“ Colonel Manners, will you be so kind —— ” said Mrs. Falkland.

“ Most certainly, my dear madam,” replied Manners, understanding her meaning, as well as if she had expressed it.—“ When did you see your master last, William ? ”

“ Last night, sir, at twenty minutes to twelve,” said the man.

“ Did he seem as if he were about to go to bed ? ” demanded Manners.

“ No, sir,” replied the servant. “ He made me give him his dressing-gown and slippers, but told me not to wait, for that he had a great deal to write before he could go to bed.”

Marian’s face cleared up a little, for she was glad to imagine that De Vaux might have sat up writing on all the many subjects which she knew occupied his mind till daylight had ap-

peared, and might then have set out at once for the gipsy encampment ; but Colonel Manners proceeded : —“ Do you know at what time any of the other servants were up ?”

“ The groom and I were up at five, sir,” replied the man, “ and it was just dawning then ; but as we went along the corridor I saw my master’s door ajar, and thinking I must have left it so by carelessness, I just pulled it gently to.”

“ Were all the horses in the stable ?” asked Colonel Manners.

“ All, sir,” answered the servant.

“ And now, William, in what state did you find your master’s room ?” demanded Mrs. Falkland.

“ Why, madam, I found that nobody had been in bed, clearly enough,” replied the man ; “ and I found, too, that Captain de Vaux had put off his dressing-gown and slippers, and put on his riding-coat and boots ; and I remarked, also, that the curtains of one of the windows were undrawn, and the window itself open.”

“ Oh, then, I dare say he went out after daylight,” said Colonel Manners, “ and will soon be back. Shall we ask him any thing farther, my dear madam ?”

Mrs. Falkland had nothing more to enquire, and the man was dismissed.

“ It is as well,” said Manners, who knew that De Vaux was the man of all others to be very much mortified, if he came back and found that his absence had been made unnecessarily a nine days’ wonder of, — “ It is as well to treat this business as quietly as possible, though, I confess, it does seem to me strange that De Vaux should go out so early, so very early, as to be seen by none of the servants, and also should never have gone to bed ; but I think Miss de Vaux said just now that he mentioned his intention of going out very early.”

“ I did so,” replied Marian, colouring slightly, from a feeling of embarrassment, in regard to disclosing any part of all that her cousin had confided to her, and yet painfully anxious on his account. “ He intended to go to speak with somebody, who gave you, I think, a letter for him yesterday, Colonel Manners.”

Manners was not a little anxious for his friend also ; but he saw Marian’s still deeper anxiety, and he strove tenderly to avoid giving her greater pain than necessary, while he yet continued to investigate the cause of her lover’s absence. “ Oh, if he be gone to that person

who gave me the letter," he said, "De Vaux is safe enough; but, perhaps, he may not be back for an hour or two, as it is a long way, and they may have much to speak of; but yet, Mrs. Falkland, I should like, if you could make an excuse for sending for the housemaid who usually washes the stone steps, to ask her one or two questions."

"Certainly," answered Mrs. Falkland. "If you will ring the bell, I will find some excuse."

The housemaid was accordingly sent for; and holding fast either corner of her apron, presented herself before the company in the breakfast-room. Mrs. Falkland then asked her one or two questions of no particular moment, and Colonel Manners next demanded, somewhat to the girl's surprise, "The mornings are becoming frosty now, are they not, my good girl?"

"Oh, that they are, sir," answered she. "It was all as white this morning as if it had snowed last night."

"And did you see any marks of feet upon the steps?" demanded Manners.

"No, sir, none," replied the girl.

"Are you sure?" repeated Colonel Manners.

"Oh, quite sure, sir," she replied; "for I washed and whitened the steps with my own

two hands, and cold work it was ; and I must have seen steps if there had been any."

After this answer she was dismissed, courtesying low, and not ungracefully.

" I dare say he will soon come back," said Colonel Manners, when the woman was gone ; " and, at all events, if he be with the person who gave me the letter, he is in no danger, I am sure."

Both Mrs. Falkland and her daughter perceived that Manners, at least, if not Marian, spoke with a slight touch of mystery concerning the letter and its sender, but, of course, they asked no questions ; and Colonel Manners's assurance that his friend was in no danger served in some degree to tranquillise Marian. The breakfast, as may be supposed, passed over dully enough, for every one was more anxious than they chose to show, and their anxiety was, of course, increased by every minute as it flew. Each passing step that made itself heard in the breakfast-room, the sound of every opening door, caused Marian's heart to beat, and Isadore to look round, but still the person for whose return they were so anxious did not appear ; and however slowly the minutes flew,

so many of them passed away at length as to justify serious alarm.

The time had now lingered on till eleven had struck by the clock in the hall, and some very painful remembrances of all that had taken place at the death of her beloved brother were recalled to the mind of Mrs. Falkland by the unaccountable absence of her nephew. Isadore, with all her natural cheerfulness, was anxious and silent; but it was scarcely possible to express all the painful emotions that thrilled in the bosom of Marian de Vaux. Manners, for his part, — though his feelings as a man were, of course, essentially different from those of the persons by whom he was now surrounded, — was far more alarmed about his friend's absence than he liked to admit, and somewhat undecided in regard to what he should do himself, under existing circumstances. He wished much to go and seek his friend; but he did not like to do so till the length of time was sufficient to warrant the conclusion that some accident must have befallen him; and at the same time he reflected, that during his absence some news might arrive which would render his presence and assistance necessary at Morley House. At length, however, he could master his impatience

no longer ; and ringing the bell he said, with as much appearance of unconcern as he could command, “ I think, my dear madam, that it may be as well for me to go and see if I can hear any thing of De Vaux, in the direction which his fair cousin imagines that he has taken. I do not, indeed, think that there is any cause for alarm ; but it may quiet your mind.”

“ Oh yes, yes ! pray do, Colonel Manners,” cried Marian, starting up, and clasping her hands. “ I beg your pardon for asking you such a thing ; but, indeed, it will be a very great consolation.”

“ If it afford you the slightest comfort, my dear young lady,” replied Colonel Manners, “ it will be the greatest pleasure to me.—Will you send my servant ?” he added, as the butler appeared. The servant came promptly ; for the anxiety of the parlour soon finds its way, in a greater or less degree, to the servants’ hall ; and all the domestics at Morley House were as much on the alert as the garrison of a newly-invested fort.

“ Put my saddle on the grey directly,” said Colonel Manners ; “ saddle Amherst for yourself, and bid Captain de Vaux’s servant get a horse ready to come with me.” The man re-

tired.—“ I will just put myself in riding costume, and be down directly,” Manners added ; and leaving the ladies still gazing in melancholy guise from the windows of the breakfast-room, he retired to his own apartment.

Long before the horses could be ready, however, he had rejoined them, and was in the act of saying, “ Now, I think, Mrs. Falkland, with three old soldiers upon the search, we must soon be able to bring you tidings of your nephew ; and, I trust, perfectly satisfactory tidings too,” when the butler again made his appearance. The terror expressed upon his countenance, and his first exclamation of, “ Oh, ma’am !” instantly sent every drop of blood from Marian’s cheek back to her heart. Colonel Manners would fain have stopped a communication which was evidently alarming, and which might not only be a confirmation of their worst fears, but be told in the most abrupt and most painful manner ; but it was too late, and the old man went on, “ Oh, madam, here is John Harwood, who has the cottage on t’other side of the point, come up to say, that last night, about one o’clock, he heard shots fired in the wood, and he’s afraid there’s been bad business there.”

Marian dropped down where she stood, as if she had been struck with lightning ; and for the time all attention was called towards her. Colonel Manners aided to carry the fair unhappy girl to her room ; and then leaving her to the care of her female relations, he returned to question both the butler and the peasant, whose intelligence had so much increased their alarm. On enquiry, however, he found that old Gibson's taste for the sublime and horrible had given greater effect to John Harwood's tale than it deserved.

The man had simply heard shots fired, and his own natural conclusion had been, that poachers were busy in the wood, of which, as a dependent on Mrs. Falkland's family, he found himself bound to give information. Colonel Manners, however, sent another servant to the stables to hurry the horses, and then returning to the breakfast-room, wrote down a few words in pencil, to inform Mrs. Falkland that the story had been exaggerated ; but he was almost instantly joined by Isadore, who assured him that her cousin was better.

Moments of grief, anxiety, and danger are wonderfully powerful in breaking down all the cold and icy barriers which society places be-

tween us and those we like ; and Isadore Falkland came forward, and laid her fair hand as familiarly upon Colonel Manners's arm as if she had known him from her infancy. There was an earnestness in her fine eyes, too, and an appealing softness in her whole look, that was very irresistible. " Colonel Manners," she said, " this state of apprehension and uncertainty is very dreadful, especially to us poor women, who having but little knowledge of the world and its ways have little means of judging whether our fears be reasonable or not. I can see that you have put a restraint upon yourself before Marian ; but I beseech you to tell me, at least,— if you have any friendship for a person you have known so short a time,— what is your real opinion ? Do you think there is any serious cause for apprehension ?"

" You and your family, Miss Falkland," replied Manners, " have taught me how soon one can feel the deepest interest and friendship for those who deserve it ; but in regard to De Vaux, I really see no cause for apprehension."

" Nay, nay, Colonel Manners," said Isadore, " I shall not think you have much regard for me if you try to soothe me by false hopes re-

specting my cousin. There is an anxiety in your look which could not be there if there were no cause for alarm."

"Indeed, Miss Falkland," he replied, with a smile which was not of the gayest character in the world,—“indeed I have the deepest regard for you, and would not deceive you for a moment. De Vaux's absence is strange undoubtedly. His never having gone to bed is strange. But in regard to these shots which have been heard — as the man himself believed till your old butler infected him with his own miraculous mood—they have been undoubtedly fired by poachers; and I see not the slightest reason for believing that they are in any way connected with your cousin's absence."

There had been a degree of earnestness in Manners's profession of regard that had called a slight glow into Isadore's cheek, and made her heart beat a little quicker, though, Heaven knows, he had not the slightest thought of making her heart beat with any but its ordinary pulse, and Isadore herself never suspected that he had. It was only one of those slight passing emotions which sometimes move the heart without our well knowing why, like the light ripple that will occasionally dimple the surface of a still

sheltered water from some breath of air too soft and gentle to be felt by those who watch it from the banks. Whatever caused the glow, it was all gone in an instant, and she answered, "Perhaps what makes us all the more uneasy is that none of us can forget that my uncle, Marian's father, was murdered many years ago in this neighbourhood; and the first news of his death came upon mamma by surprise, in the same way that this has done upon poor Marian."

"I trust in Heaven, and believe most firmly, Miss Falkland, that you will find no farther resemblance between the fate of your cousin and that of his uncle," replied Colonel Manners: "but at all events I will lose no time, and spare no exertion, in endeavouring to satisfy you as to his fate; and if it should cost me my life, I will discover him before I give up the search."

"Nay, nay, you must take care of your life," said Isadore; "it must doubtless be valuable to many, and therefore must not be risked unadvisedly."

"It is valuable to none that I know of, Miss Falkland," said Manners with a melancholy smile, "and to myself least of all; but, nevertheless, I never trifle with it, looking upon it

but as a loan from that great Being who will demand it again when he himself thinks fit. But I anticipate no danger from my visit to the gipsies."

"Are you going, then, to the gipsies in search of Edward?" exclaimed Miss Falkland in evident astonishment. "Good Heaven, I had no idea of that."

"It was from one of them that I received the letter to which Miss de Vaux referred," replied Colonel Manners; "and I may add," he continued, "to you, Miss Falkland, that the impression that letter made upon your cousin was such as to induce me to believe that if news is to be heard of him any where, it will be from them that I shall obtain it."

"This is all very strange, indeed," cried Isadore. "But tell me, Colonel Manners, do you know the contents of the letter?"

"Not in the least," he replied; "but certain it is that whatever they were, they affected your cousin sensibly. I had it from a gipsy man, certainly of a very superior stamp to the rest; although I found him consorting with a gang of as ruffianly fellows as ever I beheld."

"Oh, then, for Heaven's sake take more men

with you," cried Isadore, eagerly: "you may get murdered too, and then ——"

"Nay, nay, I have no fear," answered Manners, "and there you see are the horses. Three strong men on horseback might surely contend with a whole legion of gipsies."

"Must I plead in vain, Colonel Manners?" said Isadore, really apprehensive for his safety, and desirous of persuading him, but blushing at the same time from feeling conscious that she was more apprehensive for him than she had often before felt for any one. "Must I plead in vain? or must I ask you for my sake, if you will not for Heaven's sake? But consider what we should do if we were to lose your aid and assistance at such a moment. Take two or three of our servants with you also."

"For your sake, Miss Falkland, I would do much more difficult things," replied Manners, earnestly; "but listen to my reasons. It would delay me long to wait till fresh horses are saddled, and longer to take men on foot with me. In many cases speed is every thing: I have lost more time than I can well excuse already; and I can assure you, that with the two strong and trustworthy fellows who accompany me, there

is nothing on earth to fear. Adieu: I doubt not soon, very soon, to bring you not only news, but good news."

Thus saying, he left the room, and sprang upon horseback, while Isadore returned to the apartment of her cousin, who was now in bed by the orders of the village apothecary, and in the act of taking such medicines as he judged most likely to calm and soothe the mind by their sedative effect upon the body. Here Isadore communicated in a low voice to her mother all that she had gathered from Colonel Manners; and placing herself at the window of her fair cousin's room, watched the dark edge of the hill where it cut upon the sky, till at length she saw the figures of three horses straining with their riders up the steep ascent. The next moment they came upon the level ground at the top, changed their pace into a quick gallop, were seen for a minute or two flying along against the clear blue behind, and then, passing on, were lost entirely to her sight.

CHAP. III.

WE must now beg leave to retrograde a little in regard to time ; and in order to bring every character in our story to the same point, must turn for a while to a personage of whom we have heard nothing since the day after Edward de Vaux's arrival at Morley House.

The beautiful world in which we live, the multitude of blessings by which we are surrounded, and that beneficent ordination by which the human mind in its natural state is rendered capable of resting satisfied with whatever portion is allotted to it, would make the earth that we inhabit an Eden indeed, if Satan had not supplied us with easy steps to lead us to misery. Our passions form the first round of the ladder ; then come our follies close above them ; then follow next our vices ; these, with brief intervals, are succeeded by crimes ; and all beyond is wretchedness. Every crime, too, is prolific in miseries — its legitimate children, — who not only return to prey upon their proper parent, but ravage far and wide the hearts of thousands

of others. Not only is it on the grand scale when the glory-seeking felon call the dogs of war to tear the prostrate carcass of some peaceful country, and, by his individual fault, render millions wretched; but each petty individual crime, like the one small seed from which mighty forests spring, is but the germ of gigantic and incalculable consequences; and no one knows to what remote and unforeseen events each trifling action may ultimately lead: no one can tell to whose bosom the error he commits may not bring despair, or how many hearts may be laid desolate by the sin or the folly of the moment.

The father of Edward de Vaux — for to him we must now turn — had gone on in the usual road by which small errors grow into great crimes. He had committed follies, and yielded to passions. Passions had hardened into vices, and vices had ultimately hurried him beyond what he would at first have dreamed possible for a reasonable creature to perpetrate. In the story we have heard told by the gipsy, the part that he had acted was in no degree overdrawn by the narrator, though there were some secrets in Lord Dewry's breast alone, which neither, indeed, justified nor even palliated his crime — for such deeds admit not of palliation — but which

showed, at least, that the crowning act itself was not accompanied by many of the circumstances which seemed to aggravate it. Overwhelmed by a debt that he could not pay, disappointed of relief from a source that had never before failed, Mr. de Vaux had set out from London to meet his brother in a state of mind which approached insanity, and was, in fact, despair. Hardened by many years of vice, he had retained very few of those Christian principles which had not been wanting in his early education ; and there remained, certainly, not sufficient virtue of any kind to make him view an escape from disgrace, by an act of suicide, as any thing unmanly or infamous in itself. He had determined, then, either to obtain from his brother the full sum he demanded, by whatever means might suggest themselves at the moment — threats, supplications, or remonstrances — or to terminate his own existence on the spot, — principally with a view to avoid the shame he anticipated in London if he could not discharge his obligations, but partly, also, with a savage desire of inflicting bitter regrets upon his brother for the obduracy of his refusal.

As the most retired spot for executing this

purpose, he had chosen the point where we have seen that he had waited his brother's coming ; and there a busy devil, that had been stirring at his heart all the way down, renewed its suggestions with tenfold importunity. He saw before him some of the rich lands of Lord Dewry ; he saw them smiling with the promise of abundance ; all seemed happy in the world but his own heart ; all seemed prosperous but himself. His brother, notwithstanding his late loss, appeared in his eyes peculiarly blessed ; and again and again the fiend within asked him what right by nature had his brother, because he was the elder, to the sole possession of all those advantages, which, the same evil spirit lyingly told him, would have kept him from vice and misery, had they been equally divided between them ? His brother arrived while he was in this mood. The first means he employed to obtain what he wanted were entreaty and persuasion ; and when these failed, he had recourse to threats and violence. Lord Dewry retorted with reproach and reprehension ; and his brother, in a moment of frantic passion, brought the curse of Cain upon his own head.

The agony of remorse was the first thing that succeeded ; but self-preservation, and the enjoy-

ment of that which he had so dearly purchased, became the next considerations, and he bent all the energies of a keen and daring mind to that purpose. He mastered his own feelings, both bodily and mental; and, after returning to London with a degree of speed and perseverance that killed the horse which bore him, he overcame both personal fatigue and anguish of heart, and showed himself, on the evening of his return, at two private parties, and one public place; and, what is more, he showed himself with a smiling countenance and an unembarrassed air. But when it was all over — the examination of the facts, the taking possession of the property, and the removal of those who could betray him — the excitement which had been caused by danger passed away, — that bubble, the hope of happiness without virtue, burst under his rude touch, and left his heart to remorse for ever.

Knowing that he must often see his brother's child — though, at first, the sight was full of agony — he forced himself, by a great effort, to endure it, till he had overcome the pain by habit; and, at the same time, the lingering remains of some better feelings in his heart made him look upon every generous or kindly thing

that he could do towards her as an act of atonement for the crime he had committed.

Such were some of the motives, or, rather, such were some of the facts, which had influenced Lord Dewry in all his actions for the last twenty years. For a time, indeed, he had affected gaiety which he did not feel, and mingled in society which had lost all charm for him : but the revellings of the never-dying worm upon his heart's inmost core would make themselves felt, and gradually he drew back from the world ; gave himself up to solitude and stately reclusion ; forgot what it was to smile ; and only mingled with his fellow-men to pour forth upon them the gall and bitterness that welled from an everlasting source in his own bosom.

Remorse, however, was not the only fiend that preyed upon his heart, — fear, too, had its share. We have said, and said truly, that he was corporeally as brave a man as ever lived : he knew not what bodily fear is ; but that is a very, very different affection of the complicated being man from the mental terrors, the daily doubts, the hourly apprehensions, that crowded upon him in solitude and retirement. Corporeal pain, the simple act of dying, he feared not,

and there yet lingered in his mind some faint traces of his early faith, suggesting vague ideas of atonement made for man's crimes, which led him to believe that the anguish which he suffered below might be received in place of repentance, and procure him pardon hereafter; so that, on ordinary occasions, he felt no tangible dread even of the awful separation of soul and body. But this was not all: the torturing uncertainty of his fate was a bitter portion of his curse. He knew that there were two men in the world who could, at any time, doom him to disgrace and death; or, at least, if, by the precautions he had taken, their success in any attempt of the kind had been rendered doubtful, yet their knowledge of the dreadful secret of his state rendered all that he possessed — honour, fortune, rank, even to existence itself — precarious; and he felt, as he looked around him, that he was living in a gilded dream which the next moment might vanish, and leave him to misery and despair.

At first, when, perhaps, it might have been in his power to implicate the gipsy as the murderer of his brother, and, by pursuing him as such, to have crushed one strong source of evidence against himself, two powerful causes had

operated to deter him from such a course. He knew that Sir William Ryder, though implicated by accidental circumstances in his crime, was of too generous a nature to connive at any farther evil to which the desire of concealing it might lead him. But it would be doing him injustice not to say that he himself had shrunk from the very thought. His heart was not hardened enough for that: he felt that there was too much blood upon his hand already; and although the idea did cross his mind, yet at that time remorse was stronger than fear, and even had Sir William Ryder not existed, he would have chosen rather to bear apprehension than a greater load of regret.

Time, however, had now altered such feelings; he was accustomed to remorse: but no time can harden the heart to fear; and the first imagination which crossed his mind, when, at the end of twenty years, he again saw the gipsy, was to destroy him. The reader may recollect a conversation in the beginning of this work, wherein Pharold detailed the particulars of an interview he had had with the peer; and it may easily be conceived that from that interview Lord Dewry perceived at once that the moment was come when he must try his strength with

those who had the power to injure him, and silence them for ever, or yield for ever to his fate; and with a strong determination, but a mind fearfully agitated, he instantly resolved to crush those he feared, if human ingenuity, backed by wealth, and power, and a daring disposition, could accomplish such an object.

Such had been the state of his mind when he so unexpectedly visited the house of Mrs. Falkland, and found new cause for apprehension in the conversation of Colonel Manners. But his coming thither had not for its sole object to meet and welcome his newly-returned son. He had learned, by instant and close enquiry after the gipsy had left him, that parties of his race had been seen lying in the neighbourhood of Morley Wood, with the view, it was supposed, of poaching on the open and ill-protected grounds in that district; and suspecting, from his conversation with Pharold, that on the refusal he had given, Sir William Ryder himself might return to England, he hastened over to his sister's house, which lay within a few miles of his property of Dimden, in order, if possible, to pursue means of destroying the actual witness of his crime, before the arrival of the only other person who even suspected it.

Let it not be supposed — although there were, in reality, no means at which Lord Dewry would now have hesitated to effect his purpose — that he deliberately, and boldly, and undisguisedly proposed to his own heart to bring about the gipsy's death. No, no: the great power of evil is too well aware how horrible his naked suggestions are not to furnish them with a veil, flimsy enough, it is true, but still sufficient to cover some part of their deformity. No! Lord Dewry only proposed — at least, he cheated himself into thinking so — to detect the gipsy or his comrades in some unlawful exploit, which might give an excuse for removing them for ever from the country, and at the same time might render any evidence they might tender against himself not only suspicious, but almost inadmissible.

The severe laws in regard to poaching, and the loose and lawless habits of the gipsies themselves, he doubted not would furnish the means; and his great object was to discover an offence of such magnitude, and to obtain proofs so clear, that great severity would be warranted, and the justice of the accusation undeniable. It might cross his mind that, in the pursuit of these views, a gipsy or a keeper might be killed;

that the charge of murder might be added to that of poaching, and that a felony might rid him of the enemy of his repose for ever. Such a thing might cross his mind, and be viewed with no great dissatisfaction; but, at the same time, he denied to himself that such was his object. "No: God forbid! but, if it did happen, he should, of course, take advantage of it to silence for ever the voice of one who had been witness to the *unfortunate accident* by which, in a moment of hasty passion, his brother had been deprived of life, and who seemed disposed to abuse the knowledge he unhappily possessed."

Such had been the thoughts of Lord Dewry as he travelled over to Mrs. Falkland's house on the night of his son's arrival; and such were the thoughts that again took possession of him as soon as the passion in which he had left her subsided on the following morning.

"With Sir William Ryder," he thought, as the carriage rolled rapidly on towards Dimden,—
"with Sir William Ryder I shall easily be able to deal single handed, if once I can remove his confederate. He used to be a simple, frank-hearted, foolish fellow; but I must, by some means, keep him from any farther meeting with

Edward. I have already remarked that the boy sees there is some mystery ; and a bare hint would waken suspicions that I would rather die than he should even dream of. But this man — this Pharold — must be my first care ; and my next must be to procure such proofs of my having been in London at the time of my brother's death that suspicion itself shall be silenced, if either of the villains dare to open his lips."

The manner in which this latter object was to be accomplished became the next consideration ; but ere Lord Dewry could come to any determination upon the subject, the lodge of Dimden Park, and the old woman who opened the gates, courtesying to the ground as the carriage rolled through, met his eyes, and told him that he must reserve that matter for after thought.

The place that he was now entering had been the favourite habitation of his brother, where his days of happiness and sunshine had been past, and whence his virtues had made themselves felt and beloved through all the country round. There were many recollections and associations then connected with that spot, which, as it may easily be conceived, were not a little painful to the man who now entered it :

and although he sometimes visited the house, and had once or twice in twenty years spent a day within its walls, yet he had never been able to vanquish the distress that the sight occasioned him so far as to live in it for any length of time. He now beheld it in a state which added to the pain whereof other circumstances had rendered it fruitful. It was not exactly going to ruin, for he had given strict orders and paid large annual sums for the express purpose of keeping the grounds in order and the house in repair; but those orders had been given from a distance, and had been received with a conviction that the master's eye would never inspect their execution very minutely. There were long tufts of grass in the walks and on the roads, though here and there was to be seen a faint and lazy effort to clear away, by the exertions of a few hours, the shameful negligence of many a day. Some of the trees, which had been felled years before, were rotting in the long dank grass; and the fences which had been placed to keep the deer within their proper bounds lay flat upon the ground, overturned and broken. The road over which the carriage rolled was channelled with deep, unmended ruts; and the fine old house,

with its closed windows and smokeless chimneys, stood in its wide, open esplanade, like the palace of damp and desertion. Lord Dewry bit his lip, and muttered audibly, "This must be amended. The scoundrels did not expect me to visit the place, and have been shamefully negligent. I will send them away."

But as he thought thus, his other purposes crossed his mind, and brought with it one of those annoying and degrading convictions which so often follow evil actions and crooked policy. He felt that when he was about to engage his park-keepers in an action which his own heart told him was base, he could not dare to treat them severely for the faults they had themselves committed; and to a proud and violent man the restraint which he was obliged to put upon his passions was bitter enough. As the carriage approached the house, hasty symptoms of opening windows and unbarring doors showed that his coming had been remarked; and as he had no ambiguous commands to lay upon the old servants who had been left to keep the mansion in order, upon them fell the full weight of his indignation. When the first angry burst was over, he ordered the old man to call the principal park-keeper; and while he was absent

upon that errand, strode gloomily through the dreary chambers, feeling his heart more dark and comfortless than even the long deserted apartments amidst which he stood. He then called for pen and ink, which, after some difficulty, he obtained, and wrote and despatched the note which we have seen delivered to Marian de Vaux.

At length the park-keeper appeared, a bold and sturdy fellow, with no inconsiderable portion of shrewd cunning in his countenance, to which had been superadded, at present, an air of dogged preparation, occasioned by the tidings of Lord Dewry's anger, which the old man had given him as they walked along towards the house.

"Harvey," said the peer, as the man presented himself, "you have suffered the park to get into a terrible state. I must have all this changed. Those fences must be put up — those trees cleared away — speak to Wilson about the road, and tell him if ever I see it in that state again, I shall discharge him, and — do not answer me, but listen; for I came over to speak to you upon matters of more importance. — What are you waiting for, John?"

"I thought your Lordship might want me,"

said the old man who had lingered in the room.

“No, no, not I,” replied the peer; “retire, and shut the door: but take care what you are about; for in future I shall come over, at least, every month; and if I find the house is not properly attended to after this warning, you and your wife go out of it without another word. — Now, Harvey, tell me,” he continued, as the old man withdrew with a low and deprecating bow, “have you many poachers here?”

“Why no, my Lord,” replied the park-keeper, his face brightening up to find that the anticipated storm had blown away. “We have not had much of that work doing lately, though I dare say we soon shall have.”

“And why so?” demanded Lord Dewry. “I am glad to hear that poaching is on the decrease. What makes you think it will revive again?”

“As to revive, my Lord, why I don’t know,” replied the man; “but I doubt we shall soon have more of it—so I think. It’s just the time, you see, my Lord,—long moonlight nights, and a good deal of the out-door work over.”

The man paused; but these were not the

reasons the peer had hoped to hear him assign for his apprehensions of more extended poaching, and found that he must bring him nearer to the point by some direct course. "We have a great deal of poaching near the hall," he said: "Wise tells me that there are a number of bad characters continually in the woods, gipsies and thieves of all descriptions."

"Ay, for the matter of that, we have gipsies enough, just now, too," replied the keeper; "and that's the reason, my Lord, why I said I thought we should soon hear of more poaching: but I did not like to mention it, you see. Why there, I saw no longer ago than yesterday, up in Morley Wood, I dare say a score of them—lazy beggars! Damn them, I hate those fellows, and so I told 'em—beg your Lordship's pardon."

Lord Dewry found that he was now on the right course; but, afraid of pursuing the matter so eagerly as to cause suspicions which might, perhaps, tell against himself hereafter, he replied with a tranquil countenance, "It would not surprise me if these were the same that have been plundering and poaching in a most desperate manner near the hall."

"Oh, no doubt they are the same, my Lord,"

replied the keeper ; “ and as to poaching, they were at it last night, or I have no ears : I heard a gun — I am sure I heard a gun — though I got up and went all over the grounds without finding them. But I heard a gun, I am sure enough of that, any how.”

“ Oh, if that be the case,” said Lord Dewry, “ we must really take serious measures for their apprehension and conviction. They once murdered a game-keeper, those gipsies, not far from here ; and it is dangerous to honest men to let them be in the country.”

“ Ay, that it is, my Lord,” said the keeper ; “ they’d murder any one as soon as look at him. They nearly murdered me once. I wish we could get rid of them, that I do, any how.”

“ And so do I, too,” replied Lord Dewry, solemnly ; “ I do not like men’s lives risked continually, nor their property plundered at every turn, solely because these gipsies are suffered to continue in the kingdom. I declare I would give fifty guineas to any one who could convict them in such a manner as to insure their being sent out of the country without fail. I do not like my people continually exposed to their attacks.”

“ Your Lordship is very kind and very ge-

nerous," said the keeper; "and if your Lordship would really give the fifty guineas, I dare say we could find some young fellows that would join in and take a hand in catching them."

"But we must first be able to prove that they have committed some offence," replied Lord Dewry, thoughtfully.

"Oh, they have committed offences enough, my Lord," answered the keeper; "and if your Lordship give fifty guineas, we shall soon have plenty to help in catching them."

The peer paused for a moment or two without any direct reply; but he then answered, "What I have said I mean, Harvey: the fifty guineas I would give of course to the man by whose means they were principally brought to justice; but I would do more, and pay handsomely every one concerned in actually taking them. Do you think they have ever shot any of the deer?" he added after a short pause.

"No, my Lord, no!" answered the keeper, fearful that blame might fall upon himself; "I will answer for it they have not done that."

"I am sorry for it," said Lord Dewry dryly. The man stared, and the peer proceeded:—"I am sorry for it; because, you see, Harvey, the offence would be the heavier, and we might get rid

of them for ever if we could prove such a thing against them : whereas this poaching, especially if it be a first offence, will only take them out of the way for a time, and then turn them back upon us more enraged against us than ever."

"That is true, my Lord, that's true," replied the keeper, whose perceptions were sufficiently acute, and who began to see that his master had a very potent distaste to the race of gipsies, although his mind, proceeding in its habitual train, did not fail to conclude that the peer's motives for hating them were the same which would have actuated himself had he been in the peer's situation, namely, wrath at their having destroyed the peculiar objects of his veneration, game, and anger at their having outwitted him in his endeavours to preserve it. He went no farther in his investigations of his lord's designs, though he himself had peculiar motives of his own ; but possessing goodly powers of detestation himself, he easily conceived that the Baron would not scruple at any plausible stratagem for the purpose of obtaining his object. "That's true, my Lord, that's true," replied he : "but do you know, I should not wonder if they did some night shoot a fat buck upon his moonlight walk ; and I dare say, for

the matter of that, we could get them to do it very soon."

"Nay, nay," cried the peer in a tone of moderation, "take care what you are about, Harvey; for if any one were to discover that you instigated them, you might get transported; and though, of course, I would take care that none of my servants was a loser by his zeal in my service, yet I should not like you to get into any scrape."

"Your Lordship is very kind," said the man, "but I will take care that I get into no scrape; and as to any one hearing me say any thing about it, no fear of that, for I will never say a word to any one but your Lordship; and but little will I say even now. But I know how to manage the matter; and if I can get some stout hands, to help me and the two under-keepers in taking the fellows, when once we have found out when they are about the job, I'll rid the country of them soon enough—a set of lazy, thieving beggars."

"Why, Harvey," said the peer, with a complacent smile, "you do not seem fond of these gipsies, I think."

"I fond of them, my Lord!" said the man. "No, no! I owe them an old grudge, which I

have long thought to pay. One of them nearly killed me once when I was a young man, now near twenty years ago, just for being a little over civil to one of their women. I might have had my revenge at the time; but I was weak and sick with the bruises, and I was spoony enough to let him get off: but he'll not do so again if I catch hold of him."

"But pray, Harvey," said the peer, "how do you propose to obtain such information in regard to when and where these men are to be caught—for they must be caught in the fact, remark—as to enable you to seize them with any certainty? Do you know any of their gang personally?"

"Not I, my Lord," replied the man; "but, do you see, my Lord, I know a man up in the village, called Harry Saxon, who hears a good deal about all those sorts of people, and I will get him just to put it into their heads to ——"

"Hush, hush, Harvey," interrupted the nobleman, but not in such a tone as to express much disapprobation. "Do not tell me what you intend to do, but merely how you are to learn when and where to catch them."

"Why *he* will tell me all that, to be sure, my Lord," replied the keeper. "He's a good

sort of man, and wont disoblige me, I'll warrant."

"And pray what is his usual occupation?" demanded the peer in a casual way.

"Oh, he sells venison to the dealers in London," replied the keeper; and then suddenly perceiving that he was on the edge of a precipice he added, "That is, when any of the gentlemen in the neighbourhood want to kill off some of their bucks he buys them, and sends them up to London. I have heard, too," he continued, seeing that his lord listened with an unmoved countenance, as if to something of course,— "I have heard, too, that he sends up many a good brace of partridges, and many a pheasant, and a hare: but he is a good sort of man upon the whole; and when he knows a keeper, like, he will not let the people poach and that upon the grounds that he keeps, and that's what makes us have so much game here. I'll warrant the game is better preserved here than any where else in the country."

The peer made no observations upon these disjointed pieces of information; but in his own mind concluded, and not without reason, that his keeper was a very great scoundrel. He took care, however, neither by word, look, or action, to

suffer the man he was making use of to perceive what sort of a character he was establishing in his opinion ; being fully resolved in his own mind, however, to discharge him as soon after he had served the present purpose as might be found convenient.

Deceit, like every other art, has been wonderfully perfected and refined since first it took its origin in the rude, uncultivated human breast. There can be no doubt whatever that when one man entertains an opinion which he wishes to conceal from another, the first natural effort of his mind would be to tell him the direct contrary ; and much refinement and experience in the art must have been acquired before the necessity was ascertained of doing things more delicately, and implying, rather than saying, that one believes another to be an honest man when one is sure he is a great rogue. As the world proceeded, however, and the liberal science of deceit became so thoroughly studied as to force one, with very few exceptions, to say, as said the Psalmist, " All men are liars," a new refinement was introduced, and it became necessary to know when to cover one's own opinion by a skilful implication of the reverse, when, returning to the original and simple mode, in plain terms

to announce the direct contrary of what one feels, and to deceive the most thoroughly by the appearance of the utmost candour.

In the present instance Lord Dewry chose the latter means, and ended the conversation with the keeper by saying, "Well, Harvey, well! I believe you are a very honest fellow. There are ten guineas for you to give the men you are obliged to employ, — an earnest of their reward; and, if you succeed in catching these gipsies, so as to convict them either of deer-stealing or aggravated poaching, you may count upon fifty guineas and my favour, besides having all your *bonâ fide* expences paid."

The man made a low bow, though he did not understand at all what *bonâ fide* meant; and the peer, with a slow step, walked to his carriage. The old man and woman who kept the house followed half a step behind, troubling him all the way by questions concerning the superintendence of the place, in regard to which their directions had been full and explicit years before, but by redemanding which they meant, as usual on such occasions, to insinuate a justification of their late negligence, implying that if they had been properly instructed they would have behaved better.

Short and severe were the replies of the Baron; and when the carriage door was at length closed, and the vehicle rolled away, he sunk into thought, feeling that at least one part of his plan was in a fair way for execution, but feeling, likewise, deep, deep in his heart's core, the melancholy conviction—not the less poignant because he strove not to see it—that one crime was lashing him on with a fiery scourge to the commission of many more.

The house he had just visited, and the scenes through which he was passing, had not been without their effect. They had recalled to his mind his brother, who had there lived so long the object of his envy, and now of his deep regret. That brother's virtues, his kindness, his noble generosity, tried to the very utmost by his excesses and demands, often, often returned reproachfully to his mind. All the good and affectionate acts which had seemed as nothing while his own passions and interests existed in opposition, and while his brother lived, had been estimated with terrible exactness as soon as his own hand had placed the impassable barrier of death between them; and the sight of that house now, as it always did, recalled every memory that could aggravate remorse,

and stir into an intenser blaze the unquenchable fire that burned his heart.

There, too, he had himself been educated from infancy to manhood; over those lawns and walks he had played in the guileless innocence of youth; under those trees he had sat a thousand times with the dead, in the sweet and hopeful summer days of boyhood. Their arms clasped round each other's necks, or their hands locked in each other, they had wandered, in their hours of play, through the calm green shades of the park, or sat beneath the stately oak, reading some lighter book than that appointed for their daily studies. He remembered it all well; and many an individual day, too, would come forward from the crowd of early memories, and stand before his eyes, bright and distinct, as if it were hardly yet numbered with the past. He could call back even the feelings of those times, the noble and enthusiastic glow of their bosoms when they had read together some great actions, some generous self-devotion, some pious act of friendship, some deed of mighty patriotism; and now, what had those feelings become? In his brother they were extinct in death, or, rather, glorifying him in a brighter world; and with

him himself they were but memories — with him it was the feelings that were dead while he himself lived but to remember them. Nor was his a heart to scoff at their memory as some men might have done. Perhaps, indeed, had his crimes been lighter — had they but reached the grade of vices — had they been of that character which man's blind selfishness can dress up in other garbs, and cover beneath a light robe of wit, or of what we call philosophy, he might have sneered at the sweet and innocent days that forced themselves upon his recollection, and have parried all that was painful in them by a jest. But the terrible, irrevocable, awful deed that he had committed had been weighty enough not only to break the elastic spring of gaiety in his heart for ever, but to leave those sweet early hours of guileless happiness and noble feeling which still flattered him with the thought that he had not always been base, or cruel, or depraved, the least painful of all that series of painful things whereof his memory was alone composed. And yet remorse mingled its poison even with them, and perhaps rendered the agony they produced on the present occasion more poignant,

because on that point his heart was not hardened to the lash.

He cast the memories from him as the vehicle rolled on, for he found not only that they were painful, but that other thoughts of the imperious present must have way ; and that though he trusted, by a new crime, to remove some part of the danger of his situation, yet that it was necessary to contemplate his position in every point of view, in order to guard against all that might happen. But here, perhaps, his feelings were even less enviable than those from which he turned. Personal danger, not abstract and distinct, but accompanied by shame, and scorn, and detection, was the first image that presented itself to his mind. To meet the hatred and contempt of the whole world, to be exposed in a court of justice, and on a public scaffold to be pointed and hooted at by the rude populace, to be called the fratricide, the murderer, to undergo the horrors of imprisonment, suspense, trial, condemnation, and execution, and to plunge, loaded with a brother's blood and many another sin, into the wide, dim, terrible hereafter, — such were the only objects of his anticipation if his present schemes should fail.

Nor was it at all strange that he should feel them now much more poignantly than at the time which immediately followed his brother's death, though, perhaps, the years which had elapsed might have rendered his safety less in danger now than then. But at that period he had little time to reflect; and his whole mind had been occupied in acting. He had seen and felt the immediate peril, and had apprehended many a vague horror; but imagination had not had time to act—she had not had time to call up and particularise, as she had since done, with terrible minuteness, all the awful and agonising scenes that await the detected murderer.

As he leaned back in his carriage, and with closed eyes thought of all the past and all the future, the mingling emotions that agitated his breast were dreadful indeed. Bitter, bitter remorse—strong, lasting, never-sleeping remorse—was, for the moment, paramount; and could he have seen any way of avoiding shame and death but by new evil, he would have resigned much, he would have resigned all, to follow it. But there was no means before him of escaping all the horrors that threatened, but either to destroy those he feared, or to destroy himself—he had but the choice of two great

crimes; and the terrors of the endless future, aggravated by the condemnation of self-destruction, were too great for him to think of attempting his own life. As we have before said, it was not that he feared death; for often in his moods of deepest despondency he thought that if some one were to take away his life, as he had taken that of his brother, it might be received, together with his long remorse, as some atonement for the past; but he feared to make it his own act, and to double, instead of diminishing, the load upon his own head: and in the desperate choice which was before him he yielded to the common weakness of human nature, and chose that crime of which punishment was most remote.

Such were some of the emotions which agitated his mind as the carriage rolled on towards his usual residence; but still the picture of them is but faint and imperfect, as every picture of agitated feelings must be. There were a thousand shades that escape the pen, a thousand sudden changes for which it would be difficult to account. Nevertheless, it must not be supposed that this varying and uncertain mood was the general state of his mind, when no outward circumstance had served to awaken antagonist

feelings. On the contrary, he was generally firm in his despair, with remorse for the predominant tone of his whole sensations; but at the same time, with a stern determination to hold all that for which he had paid so deep a price, and to defend his own safety at any risk. It was only when some association, connected with other days, touched a tenderer point in his heart, and roused some better feelings from their sleep of years, that the winds and the tempests dashed against the dark dwelling-place of his spirit, and threatened to level it with its foundation in the sand. The mood seldom lasted long, however, and, indeed, could not have done so without driving him to frenzy; and now as he came within sight of the plantations that skirted his other property, he put on a firmer frame of mind, cast doubt, and fear, and hesitation behind him, and called up those powers of quick, decisive thought, and vigorous action, which had often, in former days, carried him through many a scene of difficulty and danger.

“ I have been as weak as a child,” he said, when he looked back on all the feelings to which he had given way, — “ I have been as weak as a child; and that at a moment when I

most need manly firmness: but it is past, and I will not easily forget myself again!"

On the next day but one, at a very early hour, Lord Dewry again drove over to Dimden, and had the pleasure of learning, by implications and hints from his head park-keeper, that the plan which had been shadowed out for entangling the gipsies was in a fair way for execution; and yet his spirit was ill at rest, for he felt that his plan was an imperfect one, and that at a thousand points it might fail. The gipsies might be too wary; and at all events Pharold was not likely to take part himself in such a scheme. If his companions were implicated, and he were to escape, the natural consequence would be, that his roused-up vengeance would take the ready means of sating itself by betraying the fearful secret that he possessed; and thus the attempt to remove him would but bring about, more certainly, the danger that was apprehended. Yet what could he do? the peer asked himself. If he could add one other link to the chain in which he had sought to entangle the gipsy, it might render it complete, and prevent the possibility of his escape; but what was that link to be? He could not tell, and yet it served him as food for stern and eager

meditation as the carriage bore him rapidly home again, after having satisfied himself that his scheme, as far as it went, was already in progress towards its completion.

As he drove up to the door of the house, he remarked that one of his grooms was walking a hard-riden horse up and down upon the gravel, while the dirty condition of the animal bespoke a long journey. As such sights, however, were not at all uncommon, and the horse might either belong to the steward or to some stranger come on a visit of curiosity to the house, it excited but little notice on the part of the peer, who was entering without enquiry, when one of the servants informed him that a gentleman was waiting his Lordship's return in the small library. Lord Dewry turned a little pale; for there was a consciousness of danger and of the uncertainty of his condition at the heart of the peer, that caused the blood to forsake his cheek at any announcement of a visit, the import of which he did not know. He rebuked the servant, however, for admitting any one to wait for him during his absence; and ordered him never to do so again, adding, that when he expected or wished to see

any one, he would always give intimation of his will.

The servant excused himself on account of the stranger's pressing and determined manner, motives which did not in the least reconcile the peer to his admission ; but without any farther appearance of distrust he walked with slow and stately steps to the library, and throwing open the door advanced towards a table, determined not to afford his unwished-for guest a pretext for sitting down by even approaching a chair himself.

The stranger's person merits some slight description, and even a more detailed account of his clothing than is required on ordinary occasions. He was a man, perhaps, four or five years younger than the peer himself, thin, light, active, with a twinkling grey eye, somewhat too full of moisture, and a number of those long radiating wrinkles, which, I believe, are called crows' feet, decorating the corners of the eyelids. His general complexion was white, of that dry and somewhat withered appearance which long habits of dissipation leave behind, when dissipation is not combined with drunkenness. In every glance there was a quick, sharp, prying expression, joined to a somewhat sub-

servient smile, which was strangely enough displayed upon a cast of countenance, the natural expression of which was pertinacious effrontery.

His dress was well worn, and had not, apparently, been formed, originally, of any very costly materials ; but it had, withal, a smart cut, and a smart look, which prevented the eye from detecting either the long services it had rendered, or the coarseness of the stuff. It was of a rather anomalous description too, consisting of what was then called a marone frock with a silver lace, a pair of buckskin breeches for riding in, thunder and lightning silk stockings, just showing their junction with the breeches above, and a pair of heavy boots ; while ruffles, and a frill of that species of lace which, seeming all darns together, admits the most frequently of being mended, decorated his wrists and his bosom.

Lord Dewry gazed at him as he rose from the chair in which he had been sitting with a look which, if it did not absolutely express the stare of utter strangeness, had very few signs of recognition in it. But the other was neither to be abashed nor discomposed ; and his manners, which were those of a gentleman, softened down a good deal of the effrontery which his

demeanour displayed. Had he not been a gentleman, and in the habit of mingling with gentlemen, his determined impudence would have been insufferable ; and even as things were, that impudence, together with a certain affected swagger in tone and language, which was very generally assumed by the puppies of the day, and which the visiter caricatured, were quite sufficiently annoying, especially to such a man as Lord Dewry. Conceiving at once that the peer was not peculiarly delighted with his visit, the stranger advanced round the table, and with a low bow addressed him ere he had time to speak.

“ I perceive,” he said, “ that the lapse of time which has occurred since we met, together with the accession of well-deserved fortunes and dignities, and the cares consequent thereupon, has obliterated from your memory, my Lord, the person of a former friend. I must, therefore, announce myself as Sir Roger Millington.”

The peer bowed haughtily. “ I once,” he said, “ had some acquaintance with a person of that name ; but as you say, sir, the lapse of time has been so great since we have held any communication with each other, that I certainly did not expect it to be so suddenly renewed, and

far less to be favoured with an unannounced visit at a time which, perhaps, may not be the most convenient."

"My Lord," replied his companion, unrebuffed, "I am happy to find that your Lordship's memory extends to our acquaintance at least; and to refresh it in regard to the degree of that acquaintance, I think I could show you some, letters in your Lordship's hand beginning, some 'My dear friend! some, 'My dear Millington!' some, 'Damn it, my dear Millington!' with an elegant variety in the terms, whereby your Lordship was kind enough to express your friendship for your humble servant."

Lord Dewry coloured highly, between anger and shame; but he did not feel at all the more disposed to receive Sir Roger Millington kindly on account of these proofs of their former intimacy. He had not forgotten, any more than his visiter, that they had once been choice companions in both the elegant and inelegant debaucheries of a London life: but a great change in situation, and a total change in feelings, had made the peer as desirous of forgetting the past as the other was of recalling it; and he hated him in proportion as he felt himself thwarted. Sir Roger Millington, however, had calculated

his game with the utmost nicety; and the moment he perceived that the idea of their former friendship annoyed his noble host, he comprehended at once that nothing was to be obtained by gentler means, and determined, therefore, if possible, to force him to the object towards which he could not lead him. Such had been his motive in the somewhat pointed and galling manner in which he had repeated some of Lord Dewry's former expressions of regard, and he was not a little gratified to see the colour rise in his cheek as he spoke.

Lord Dewry's reply, however, which immediately followed, was not quite so much to his taste; for the peer also played his part skilfully; and though, in reality, as angry as Sir Roger desired, he concealed his anger, and replied in the same cold, haughty tone. "You recall to me, sir," he said, "days of which I am heartily ashamed, scenes of which we have neither of us reason to be proud, and expressions which I greatly wish could be retracted."

"I am sorry, as your Lordship wishes it, that such a thing is not possible," answered the persevering Sir Roger; "but I think, if you will take a few moments to consider, your Lordship may find reason to change some of your senti-

ments. I may have become an altered man as well as Lord Dewry ; and if so, his Lordship will have no cause to hate or shun an old friend, because he once followed in a course which his Lordship led, and has since followed in his repentance. I hear that a mutual friend of your Lordship's and my own is coming to England soon, if not already on his way from America,—I mean Sir William Ryder ; and I should be sorry to have to tell him, on his return, that your Lordship casts off your old acquaintances. You had better consider of it, my Lord."

" I shall consider nothing, sir," replied the peer, " except that my time is too valuable to be wasted in idle discourse, which can end in nothing ; and, therefore, I have the honour of wishing you good morning." Thus saying, he stood for about the space of a minute and a half, expecting Sir Roger to leave the room ; but being disappointed, he himself turned upon his heel, with a curling lip and a flashing eye, and quitted the library, leaving the door open behind him.

Sir Roger Millington stood for a moment or two in some embarrassment, but at length impudence and necessity prevailed. " No," cried

he ; “ no : damn it, it will never do to be beaten when one has resolved on such an attack. Curse me, if I don't die in the breach, like other heroes. Why, if I cannot raise a hundred or two, I'm done, that's clear. No, no : I'll not stir ;” and casting himself down into a chair, he coolly took up a book, and began to read.

CHAP. IV.

“ To be teased with such an insolent scoundrel at such a moment as this!” thought the peer, as he strode hastily to his usual sitting-room: “ it is insufferable! I have a great mind to order the villains that let him in to horsewhip him out again for their pains: I believe that they will some day drive me mad amongst them!” and stamping his foot upon the ground, as was his custom when very angry, he clenched his thin hand as if he would have struck the object of his indignation. Suddenly, however, stopping in the midst of his passion, he fell into deep thought, which kept him standing in the middle of the room for two or three minutes; then approaching the bell, he rang it calmly. His own valet, whose peculiar province was to attend to that especial sitting-room, appeared in less time than ordinary. “ Is the gentleman who was in the little library gone?” demanded the peer.

“ No, my Lord,” replied his laconic attendant.

“ I shall dine in the larger room to-day,” said Lord Dewry ; “ bid Mr. Scott have the table laid for two, and tell *le Chef* that the dinner must be different.”

The man bowed and withdrew ; and the peer, after pausing for a single moment where he was, re-opened the door, and proceeded through the neighbouring gallery to a vestibule, whence his eye could rest upon the door of the room in which he had left Sir Roger Millington. Here again, however, he paused even for several minutes ; and then, raising his head, which had been sunk somewhat upon his bosom, he walked on with a calm, dignified step towards the room which he had quitted not a quarter of an hour before in such great indignation. Sir Roger Millington was seated exactly in the chair which had received his person when the peer left him, and was deeply, and apparently pleasantly, engaged with the book he had taken up. So perfectly comfortable, indeed, did he seem to have made himself, that Lord Dewry, notwithstanding strong determinations to the contrary — the motives of which will be explained immediately — could scarcely refrain from kicking him through the glass door into the park. He conquered his passion, however ;

and, in a tone which was very different from that which he had used towards the same person a quarter of an hour before, but which was still sufficiently guarded by haughty coldness to prevent the transition from appearing excessively abrupt, he addressed his visiter once more. "Sir Roger Millington," he said, "I am glad to find that you are not gone; for a little reflection makes me regret having treated a former acquaintance somewhat hastily: but the truth is, your arrival has occurred at a moment when I am not only extremely busy, but also when my feelings have been irritated and hurt by various occurrences which may in some degree have made me forget my courtesy."

"Come, come," thought Sir Roger Millington, "matters are improving! some fools would have gone away ashamed or affronted! There is nothing like knowing when to keep one's ground, when to beat a retreat! My Lord," he continued aloud, "it gives me the greatest pain to think that I have intruded upon you at such a moment: but I am quite ready to repair my fault by retiring! only requesting your Lordship to name some hour to-morrow when I can have the honour of

conversing with you on matters of some importance."

"Of importance to yourself or to me, Sir Roger?" demanded the peer, forcing a half smile; though there had been something in the pertinacity with which his visiter had held his ground that made him almost apprehend that these matters of importance might refer, in some unpleasant manner, to himself.

Had Sir Roger Millington had the slightest means whatever of showing that the matters of which he had to speak were in any degree relative to the peer, he would have ventured the assertion that they were of importance to him; but as he had not, he judged it expedient to be candid in the more placable mood which his noble host now displayed, and he accordingly answered, "Of more importance to myself, my Lord, I am afraid, than to you."

It was a lucky hit, however; for this proceeding not only quieted all Lord Dewry's apprehensions, but also favoured his views in other respects.

"I am glad to hear it, Sir Roger," replied the Baron; "for, to say the truth, I have important business of my own enough upon my hands to tire me of it; and I would rather

“speak upon any one else’s affairs than have any more of myself. But you must not think of leaving the Hall, though I am afraid I must be absent from you a considerable part of the day. I shall expect the pleasure of your company for a few days, and I will order my servant to conduct you to your apartments. You must amuse yourself as best you may till the evening. Here are books enough, you see, if you have turned student; and if you are still fond of field sports, the game-keeper will show you where you may find plenty of game. Use the house as your own, I beg; but only excuse the master of it for a few hours.”

“My Lord, your Lordship is too good, too kind,” replied his companion, bowing low and lower; “but——”

“Oh, I understand,” said the peer; “you have ridden here, and have not dressing materials: never mind, we will cast away ceremony, Sir Roger.”

“But if any one could be sent over to the village of Barholm, my Lord,” said Sir Roger, “since your Lordship is so very good, they would find my vallise at the inn.”

“Certainly, certainly,” said the peer, increasing in courtesy at every response, — “cer-

tainly, we will see about it directly ;” and he rang the bell once or twice with that air of good-will which was well calculated to wipe away the memory of any former coldness.—“ Richard,” he said, as soon as a servant appeared, “ send over the errand boy on horseback, directly, to Barholm, and bid him enquire for the things Sir Roger Millington has left there at the inn. Bid the groom look to Sir Roger’s horse, and then come here to show him to the Yellow Room. Attend upon him while he does me the pleasure of remaining here, and see that every thing is supplied properly.—Now, Sir Roger, I must beg you to excuse me for a short time ; but I shall have the pleasure of seeing you at dinner.”

Sir Roger bowed low : the peer withdrew ; and the servant saying, “ I will be back in a minute, sir, to show you to your apartments,” followed to give the orders he had received to the errand boy and the under-groom.

Sir Roger Millington cast himself back into his chair, mentally declaring, “ ’Pon my soul, he seems a devilish good fellow, after all ; somewhat hasty, and hellish proud, but better at bottom than he lets himself appear. I should not wonder if this card, which, by ——, is

the last in my hand, should turn up a trump, after all. Egad! that would be queer!"

Such were his first reflections; and he had not time to proceed much beyond them, when the servant re-appeared, and begged him to follow. The visiter immediately complied; and walking through a suite of handsome rooms, where gold lace, and damask, and pictures, and cabinets, and brass, and tortoiseshell, and marble, combined to form a very dazzling assemblage of furniture and decorations, he was led up a fine flight of stairs to another story, where, through corridors scarcely less handsomely garnished than the apartments below, he was conducted, murmuring, "What a splendid house!" to a spacious bed-room and dressing-room, adorned with yellow damask hangings, and supplied with every thing at which luxury had yet arrived in the days whereof we speak. Here, after asking his farther commands, the servant left him, and Sir Roger Millington threw himself on one of the sofas, asking, "Well, what the devil can the fellow want? for want something he certainly does. However, no matter; all the better for me. I'm the man for his money, whatever he wants; and by Jupiter I'll take good care not to quarrel with

the sort of bread and butter that is to be got in this house.”

Leaving Sir Roger Millington to speculate upon such very natural propositions, we may as well follow the peer once more to his private room, and endeavour to ascertain the cause of a change in his demeanour towards the poor knight, which had been, as we have seen, no less sudden than complete.

No sooner had he entered the chamber than he closed the door and bolted it, approached a small iron chest which stood rivetted to the floor and to the wall; and, opening it with a key which was attached to a strong gold chain round his neck, he folded his arms upon his breast, and gazed in for a moment, biting his lip and straining his eye as if it required no small powers of self-command to proceed any farther. He then drew forth a large holster pistol richly embossed with silver — the fellow to that which had been placed in the hands of Edward de Vaux by the gipsy Pharold — and held it for a time in his hand, with his eyes not fixed upon it, but upon some far object in the distant landscape, which, nevertheless, he saw not in the least; for the intensity of the mind's occupation at that moment had broken

for the time the connection between the intellectual soul and her servants, the corporeal senses; so that his eye was as blind to the things on which it was fixed as if it had been seared by lightning. His thoughts were far away—in other years, and in other scenes; and as he laid the weapon down upon a chair beside him he murmured, “ It *must* have fallen into the river, or it would have been found with the hat.”

He then sought for a moment amongst some papers, from which he selected one; and replacing every thing in the chest as it had been before, turned to the table and gazed upon the sheet, which seemed alone filled with memoranda of dates and numbers that certainly could possess no meaning to any eye but his own. To him, however, their import seemed of great consequence; for again and again he studied them; and ever and anon the contemplation would plunge him into deep fits of thought, from which he only roused himself again to gaze upon the figures as before.

“ It will do,” he said at length, “ it will do; but I must take care of what I am about. Yet of this Roger Millington there is no fear. He would at any time of his life have condemned his

own soul for gold, and now he seems beggared and wretched enough. The other people can offer him nothing: I can offer him ease and luxury; and he will not only have no temptation to betray me, but every inducement to keep my secret till the grave closes over us both. And yet," he added thoughtfully, — "and yet I must not put it in his power ever to annoy me hereafter. He must rest in my power rather than I in his. Yet if we can silence this Pharold for ever all real danger will be past; and I must risk something — I must risk much, for that object."

Such were some of the thoughts which passed through the mind of Lord Dewry; nor were his conclusions formed upon a very wrong estimate of the character of his present visiter. The better qualities of Sir Roger Millington were few. The best of them was personal courage, or rather that total thoughtlessness in regard to death, and what is to follow death, which in many men supplies the place of a nobler principle. He had always, too, been what is called generous; and he did, indeed, possess that curious combination of qualities which makes a man pillage and ruin the father of a family, and thus bring want, destruction, and desolation

upon a whole household, while at the same time he is willing, on every occasion, to share the ill-gotten wealth of the moment with any one who needs it. His generosity, however, still more displayed itself in wasting, amongst debauchees like himself, whatever he possessed, and thinking no means ignoble to dissipate what he had thought no means dishonourable to obtain.

Born of a good family, introduced early into the best society, and placed as a military man, in a situation which should have acted rather to strengthen honourable principles than to lead him from them, he had at first, so long as the actual war lasted, gained some credit and renown as a soldier ; but no sooner had a peace succeeded than various gambling transactions, of a somewhat doubtful character, rendered it expedient that he should quit the service. This he was permitted to do without disgrace ; but from that hour his progress had been downwards in fortune and society. He had first mingled with gentlemen upon equal terms ; and during the greater part of his acquaintance with Lord Dewry had kept himself on the same footing with his companions, by keeping up the same expenses, and by indulg-

ing the same vices. He was often very successful at play; and, though it was reported that his scruples were not very great in regard to the experience or the sobriety of those with whom he sat down, as his winnings enabled him, generally, to live in luxury and splendour, there were few found to object to the means of acquirement. He sometimes lost, however; and, as on one or two occasions his losses had been to persons of greater wealth than courage, he was said to have discharged his debt by lending the use of his sword in some of the numerous disputes which vice and debauchery entail upon their disciples.

All these things were suspected; but still Sir Roger Millington was not, on that account, shut out from society. Some people merely thought that in him they knew where to find a *serviceable man* when they wanted such a thing; and others did not choose to quarrel with one who was in better repute at the Park or the back of Montague House, the two great resorts of duellists in that day, than in St. James's Street. Gambling, however, is always a losing trade; and, by slow degrees, and with many a brief revival of fortune, Sir Roger Millington was forced down lower and lower in

the scale of reputation and estate. It must be a very honourable spirit, indeed, that poverty renders more scrupulous; and such was certainly not the case with Sir Roger Millington. The means of obtaining money seemed to him all honourable if they led him not to Tyburn; and, at length, he would fight with or for any man, for a very trifling consideration. By this trade, varied, where he found it necessary, by sycophancy or by impudence, he contrived for some time to keep himself up, till at length some one of his adversaries, more wise than the rest, took courage to refuse to cross swords with a bully and a sharper, horsewhipped Sir Roger when he posted him, fought and wounded the first man of honour that looked cold on him for his conduct, and left Sir Roger Millington no resource but to quit the circles in which he had been formerly received.

These circumstances had occurred about two years before the knight's visit to Lord Dewry; and it would be more painful and disgusting than amusing or instructive to follow him through the shifts and turnings of the succeeding months. At length the happy thought struck him which we have seen him execute; and with a horse,

the last of a once splendid stud, a valise, containing all that remained of his wardrobe, three guineas, and some silver in his purse, a vast stock of impudence, and a packet of the peer's old letters, he set out to see whether he could wring any thing either from the weakness or the kindness of Lord Dewry, from whom he had won, in former days, many a sum, which he now sighed to think upon.

He came, as we have seen, at the very moment when the assistance of such a person as himself, who was not in the least scrupulous either in regard to oaths or dangers, was likely to prove most serviceable to the peer, provided that any bonds could be invented, so close and clinging as to restrain a man who had never yet been bound by any principles of religion, morality, or honour. On their meeting the uses to which he might be put had not at first struck Lord Dewry, and he had given way to the irritable impatience natural to his character: but the last words of Sir Roger Millington, concerning Sir William Ryder, had struck a chord of association which soon awoke other ideas; and before the peer had reached his own room he had seen and comprehended the va-

riety of services which Sir Roger might render him.

Thought, however, was required, both to arrange and give a tangible form to plans which were yet vague and undefined; and to devise means of so guarding against the very agent he was about to employ as not to fall into a new danger in striving to escape an old one. Men who have involved themselves in the dark work of crime, like those employed in forging red-hot iron, are obliged to touch the objects of their labour with tools of steel, lest they should burn themselves with the bolts they forge. After much thought, however, Lord Dewry believed that he saw means of rendering Sir Roger Millington not only obedient to his every wish, but faithful also; and though the plans in which he was to be employed, of course required long and intense consideration, the new views that opened before the peer gave him so much comfort that he heard the dressing-bell ring, long before he had expected it, without any feelings but those of renewed security and anticipated triumph over those who had before caused him so much doubt and apprehension.

Now Lord Dewry was a shrewd and strong-

mindful man, who, as far as a violent and proud disposition, and very uncontrollable passions, would let him, generally acted upon a regularly-arranged and well-considered system in every thing he undertook: but it is extraordinary how often a man acts upon system without knowing it; for, after all, as before said, we are but mere puppets, body and mind, in the hands of our desires. Lord Dewry had ordered the beggared and threadbare Sir Roger Millington to be taken to one of the most splendid apartments in his splendid house; he had ordered such an intimation to be given to the cook as would place upon the table a rich and luxurious repast; he had directed that repast to be spread in a room full of magnificence; and now he dressed himself with scrupulous care and elegance, without at all being aware that it was all part of a system to re-awaken in the bosom of the penniless knight that thirst for luxury and ease, which would render him most willingly and eagerly the tool of him who could bestow it. So it was, however; and though pride had her word too, and told his Lordship that such display would make his visiter more humble and respectful, yet the principal object was to show him how many pleasant and desirable

things might be obtained, by being the very humble and most devoted servant of the noble Lord.

Had Lord Dewry sat and calculated for an hour what system was most likely to produce the desired effect upon a man of the peculiar mental and bodily idiosyncrasy of Sir Roger Millington, he could not have more happily adapted his actions to the circumstances. In his high and plummy days of fortune, Sir Roger Millington had learned to love and delight in every good thing of the earth that we inhabit, and in his days of debasement and poverty he had equally learned to admire and bow down to, in others, the possession of those things which had given him so much pleasure when he possessed them himself. The soft tread of the Turkey carpets, the sight of damask, and lace, and or-molu, an accidental whiff of the distant kitchen, as he passed the top of a back staircase, — a whiff faint and fragrant as if it came from “the spice islands in the south,” — the very feel of the sofa on which he sat, were all so many arguments in favour of any plan, action, or idea which Lord Dewry could possibly suggest; and when, after having received his goods and chattels from the village, selected the best of

his wardrobe, and made himself look, as he could do, perfectly gentlemanly, he descended to the drawing-room, it was with an impression of the greatest possible respect and admiration for the talents, sentiments, feelings, thoughts, and virtues of his noble entertainer.

He was almost immediately joined by the peer, who was surprised but not sorry to see his guest look so much like a gentleman; for though he sincerely desired that he should be such at heart, as to do his unscrupulous bidding unscrupulously, yet he was quite willing to have him such, in appearance, as would excite neither wonder nor animadversion.

Hasty as the peer was by nature, and eager as he was in the present instance, he had acquired sufficient command over himself to reserve any more open communication with Sir Roger till a more proper moment; although, had he given way to the impulse of his own heart, he would have entered upon the business which occupied his thoughts at once. But he felt what an advantage such a course of action would confer upon his guest; and, therefore, without showing the slightest haste or impatience, he spoke a moment or two upon the weather, and the state of the nation, and the

alarming increase of crime in the metropolis, and several other things, about which he cared not in the least, and then turned to some of the pictures that hung upon the walls, expatiating upon their various merits with as much learning as a connoisseur, and as much taste as an Agar Ellis. "Yes," he said, "that is a very fine picture, though not so valuable as it looks. It is by one of the disciples of Rubens, and artists believe the heads to be by Rubens himself. But I will show you a real treasure!" and approaching a small panel opposite, covered with two richly-carved and gilded doors, he opened them; and drawing a silk curtain displayed an inner frame containing a Madonna exquisitely painted. "That is an undoubted Correggio," he said; "and one of the most beautiful pictures that master ever painted. Remark the exquisite bend of that head, so full of grief and resignation. The beauty of the colouring too — that tear upon the cheek, the faint pink of the nostril partaking slightly of the blue of the drapery, and the drapery itself, how masterly! Look here, too, at the hands crossed upon the breast! Did you ever behold such beautiful hands? so small and delicate, yet so soft and full? every thing graceful

and light, yet every thing full of contour and correctness !”

The doors were thrown open while he still spoke, and dinner was announced; nor did Lord Dewry, during the whole course of the meal, deviate from the rule he had laid down, of hurrying his communication by neither word nor hint. The dinner itself was such as might be expected from his fortune and his habits,—abundant, but not loaded, showing every delicacy that wealth could procure, and yet taking care that, as in the Palace of the Sun, the workmanship should excel the materials. The wines, however, surpassed every thing else; and that sort of nectar which is called *sec sillery* once again greeted the palate of Sir Roger Millington, after many years of tedious interval. Sir Roger blessed the stars which had conferred so many good things on a man to whom he hoped to render service; for though he neither eat nor drank to excess, he enjoyed to the full, and saw the dessert placed upon the table only with the expectation of, at length, hearing how he might merit a participation in such blessings in future.

The best polished crystal, full of the liquid rubies of rich Medoc, was set upon the table;

and the majestic butler drew off after the retiring footmen. Lord Dewry recommended the claret; and when he saw the glass filled, he opened his approaches cautiously.

“ Now, Sir Roger,” he said, “ we have all the evening before us, without fear of interruption; and though I trust you will give me the pleasure of your company some days longer, yet, as you spoke of some matter which was of importance to you, it may be pleasanter to us both to get rid of the business at once, and devote the rest of our time to less weighty affairs.”

Sir Roger had not prepared for this way of opening the campaign; and he felt some fear that any demand upon the purse of his noble host might banish him from a dwelling where he felt himself as yet quite comfortable. A moment's thought, however, re-assured him; for, both from his general knowledge of the world, and his particular knowledge of the peer, he felt very sure that such a sudden transition from rudeness to hospitality, as we have heretofore recorded, could not have taken place without a motive — that motive he concluded to be a desire of reaping advantage from some of his numerous and pliant abilities; and he there-

fore perceived, that the policy now was to make a bargain as best he might. All this train of argumentation was run over rapidly in his brain, and he then replied, "The fact is, my Lord, that some of my old evil habits have, as your Lordship may have anticipated, somewhat impaired my property, and put me to temporary difficulties. Such being the case, and being rather rudely pressed, I bethought me of your Lordship's former kindness and liberality; and came down in haste to see whether I could not induce you to favour me with the loan of a small sum."

"A loan!" exclaimed the peer, raising his eyebrows as if something quite unexpected had broke upon his ear, though there was the dawning of a half-suppressed smile about his lip that contradicted his tone of surprise, — "a loan! Ah, I dare say we can manage that matter, Sir Roger. But be candid with me; tell me the state of your finances: it shall not injure your views, upon my honour!"

"Bad enough, my Lord, bad enough!" replied his companion, candidly, and yet shrewdly; for he began to fancy that candour would be best: "bad enough, I am sorry to say. I have

had a sad run against me, and have not been able to get over it."

"No heavy debts?" said the peer.

"No, upon my honour, no," replied Sir Roger; "I do not owe twenty pounds in the world; but I find a difficulty in getting one."

"That was always an extraordinary trait of yours, Millington," said the peer; "you were never in debt, though you spent a good deal, and played high."

"Because I always paid away my money as fast as I got it," replied his guest. "As soon as I had a sum any one might have it that wanted it, whether a tradesman or a friend; and as I had large sums then," he added, with a sigh, "I was never long in debt."

This was, indeed, partly true of the times to which he referred, as the peer well knew; and the reason for his having few debts, in later years, was still more simple, though he mentioned it not — it was, that no one would trust him. Lord Dewry, however, seemed affected by his reference to old times, and replied, "Well, well, Sir Roger, we will not let you be hard pressed any longer. What is the sum you at present want?"

Sir Roger Millington hesitated between the

fear of asking too much, and asking too little ; and he would have given the three guineas that graced his pocket willingly to have found out what service was to be demanded of him in return, that he might shape his request accordingly. “ It cannot be to fight,” he thought ; “ the fellow used to do all that business for himself, and devilish well too ! but, however, it must be some pitiful job indeed, if it is not worth a couple of hundred. I ’ll ask fifty more. “ Why, my Lord,” he said aloud, “ the fact is, that two hundred and fifty pounds, I am afraid, will be requisite.”

“ Well, well,” said Lord Dewry, who, thinking chiefly of Sir Roger’s former style of living, had calculated upon a demand of at least double that amount, — “ well, well, that can be managed ; and upon my honour it *shall* be managed : but now let us speak a little upon other matters.”

“ Now it comes !” thought Sir Roger Milington ; but the peer proceeded : “ I have now promised you this sum unconditionally ; but if you will explain to me more fully the real and particular state of your finances, perhaps we may strike out something that may prove ulti-

mately still more beneficial to you — I mean permanently beneficial.”

Sir Roger Millington sat with his eyes wide open, and the internal voice of his wonder would have been, could any one have heard it, “ Why what ’s the meaning of all this ? Is he going to turn out really generous after all ? ” He had recourse to the claret jug, however, which soothed him wonderfully ; and he answered, “ Why, my Lord, as I have already said, the state of my finances is bad — very bad ! In short, my Lord, there is nothing which your Lordship can do to mend them, that will not be most gratefully received by Roger Millington.”

“ We must think of it, Sir Roger ; we must think of it well,” replied the peer ; “ and you will find, Sir Roger, that no man will do more than I will to remove you from all difficulties, and put you at your ease. The worst point of the whole business is, I am afraid that all I can do for you is but for my own life. My estates are strictly entailed. I live up to my income ; and I am afraid that with me would die any thing that I could annually do for you.

“ May your Lordship live for ever ! ” replied Sir Roger, with more sincerity, perhaps, than

ever courtier offered such an aspiration in favour of the kings of the Medes and Persians. "The truth is, my Lord," he continued, "nothing can be worse than the state of my present fortunes. I certainly did not doubt being able to mend them with a little assistance; but if your Lordship carries into execution your kind intentions in my favour, and mends them for me, all I can say is, that you shall find one man at least grateful in this world; and I hope also that your Lordship will point out to me some means of aiding you in return, for the burden of my obligation to you will be greatly relieved by being able to show my zeal in your service."

"Oh, we will think of that hereafter," said Lord Dewry; "and as you are a man of taste and ingenuity, I have no doubt, Sir Roger, in the various changes and alterations which I am making here and at Dimden, I have no doubt that we shall be able to find you employment of a nature the most agreeable to your feelings, and the most suitable to your mind. Nobody need know any thing of the pecuniary arrangements between us. You shall always be received here as a friend; and the rest of your days may pass in sunshine and enjoyment."

These were prospects bright indeed to the

view of the impoverished knight ; and as he felt that no services on his part would be too great or too unscrupulous to merit such reward, he very plainly gave his noble entertainer to understand that such was the case, and explained to him how willing he would be to undertake any task he chose to impose. This was the plainest speaking which had been held during the evening ; and the peer was not sorry that it had come on the part of his guest, for he was anxious now to arrive at the point, and yet he decidedly wished that the way might be smoothed for him. He smiled most graciously, therefore, as he replied, “ Well, well, Sir Roger, your offers shall soon be put to the proof. I have upon my hands, at the present moment, some business which is very difficult to manage ; and as I know you to be both firm and skilful, I will request your assistance in it. But remember, I beg, that my object, as I shall explain to you immediately, is perfectly just and upright ; and although the business wants a little shrewd management, yet it is one in which you may engage conscientiously.”

“ I doubt it not, my Lord, I doubt it not,” replied Sir Roger, who, perhaps, in all the variety of human actions, would have found very few in

which, under his present circumstances, he would not have engaged quite conscientiously,—“ I doubt it not, my Lord, pray proceed.”

“ Oh, it is a long story,” answered the Baron; “ and before we proceed to that, let me ask you, Sir Roger, if you remember, with any degree of accuracy, the transactions which took place between you and me and Sir William Ryder in regard to a large sum of money that we lost to you in the year 17—?”

“ Perfectly, most perfectly, my Lord,” replied Sir Roger. “ My memory never fails on such points; I could swear to every fact.”

“ Then do you remember,” said the peer, “ receiving a note from me on the eighteenth of May, telling you, that if you would wait another week, I would pay you the whole sum at once, as my brother would be able by that time to call in money to lend me, and do you remember your coming to me the same evening to say that you were quite willing to wait, and our going out together to a party?”

“ I remember it all accurately, my Lord,” replied the poor knight, to whom the recollection of days when the proud man before whom he now sat had been his debtor and his humble servant was too gratifying to be easily forgotten,

— “ I remember it all well — every particular ; but you are mistaken in the date, my Lord. It was the nineteenth, not the eighteenth, of May.”

“ No, no, it is you who are mistaken, Sir Roger,” replied the peer with a meaning smile. “ It was the eighteenth, I can assure you.”

Sir Roger did not comprehend. “ Indeed, my Lord,” he replied, “ it was the nineteenth ; I remember it from many circumstances. On that very morning the great bet had come off between Colonel Hammerstone and the Nailer, and——”

“ Nay, nay, I am positive,” said the peer, “ from circumstances that I cannot forget either. It was the eighteenth day of May in the year 17——.”

“ But, my Lord, I have your Lordship’s own note,” said Sir Roger, persevering.

“ Have you so ?” cried the peer ; “ I wish you would be so kind as to let me see it.”

“ Certainly, my Lord, I will bring it in a moment,” said Sir Roger ; and rising from his chair he left the room in order to bring the paper to which he referred. While he was gone Lord Dewry sat silent and stern, with his hand over his eyes and the upper part of his face ; but his lips, which were uncovered, moved as if he

were speaking, and the working of the muscles of his cheeks seemed to indicate that he was in bodily pain. As soon as his guest returned, however, he withdrew his hand, and all was clear and smiling, except, perhaps, a slight contraction of the brow, and an anxious intensity of gaze in his eye, which had both become habitual. Sir Roger Millington resumed his place ; and, laying down upon the table a bundle of papers which he carried, he selected one, and presented it to the peer, saying, “ There, my Lord, is the note.”

Lord Dewry received it calmly, not only because he knew the contents exactly as well as Roger Millington, but because he felt perfectly satisfied that Sir Roger himself was secured—bound hand and foot his slave, by promises and expectations which no one else had the power or the necessity of holding out to him. The paper, though it bore the marks of age in the yellow hue of its complexion, and the paleness of the ink, was in other respects well preserved ; and the peer, unfolding it, perused it attentively, and still held it in his hand when he had done.

“ I see, Sir Roger,” he said, “ that you are correct as far as the dating of this note goes ; but at the same time I can assure you, I must

have dated it wrong at the time by some unfortunate mistake, which mistake, by an unpleasant concatenation of circumstances, might prove of the greatest disadvantage to me at present, and might even deprive me of the power of assisting you in the way that I am so desirous of doing."

The master key of self-interest instantly unlocked the door of Sir Roger Millington's understanding; and he now saw that some very strong motive must influence the peer in wishing to prove that the letter was written on a different day from that on which it was dated. He consequently determined at once that it should be written on any day whatsoever that his Lordship thought fit; but at the same time, having a due regard to the friable nature of promises, he extremely desired to make himself master of his noble friend's secret views, in order to have some check upon him hereafter. "Indeed, my Lord," he replied, in a tone of much concern, "I am sorry to hear that the fact should be likely to produce such result. May I enquire how such an unfortunate state of things is likely to ensue from so simple a circumstance?"

"Oh, certainly," replied Lord Dewry, with

somewhat of a sarcastic smile ; “ you may enquire, and I will answer you, Sir Roger : but then, if I do, I must, I am afraid, demand a bond for the two hundred and fifty pounds I am about to advance, as I must either have security for my money or my secrets—which you like, Sir Roger.”

“ Oh, then, my Lord,” replied Sir Roger Millington, inclining his head with a significant bow, “ the matter is very simple. As I have no security to offer for the money, I will beg not to burden myself with your Lordship’s confidence any farther than you think absolutely necessary ; and in regard to the note which is likely to produce results so unlucky to both you and me—for I am fain to believe that my prosperity is now intimately connected with your Lordship’s—I think the best way to settle the matter will be to put it in the fire.”

“ I do not exactly know that,” answered Lord Dewry, musing : “ at all events, let me convince you first that it was written on the eighteenth, instead of the nineteenth.”

“ My Lord, I am already convinced,” said Sir Roger Millington, who, once having obtained the cue, could go on without the prompter : — “ I am already convinced, - I see

my mistake. I remember it was the day before the great walking bet came off, which was on the nineteenth, at Hounslow. Indeed, it is impossible that it could have been otherwise; for I was present on the ground all day; and if I was at Hounslow all day, I could not receive your note in London."

"True, true," said the peer; though he very well knew that the note which he had written after his return to town, the very day subsequent to his brother's death, had found Sir Roger just come back from Hounslow: "true, true, Sir Roger; and doubtless you could swear to all these facts, should it be necessary."

"Beyond all doubt, my Lord," replied the knight: "circumstances crowd upon my memory, which all tend to show that your Lordship is right; and it must have been the mistaken date of the note which deceived me."

"Would it not, then, be advisable," demanded the peer, "to rectify the date which the note bears, instead of destroying it — hey, Sir Roger, hey?"

"Certainly, my Lord, certainly," said Sir Roger; and then, dropping his voice, he added in a half whisper, "if it can be done without the chance of discovery."

“Easily,” replied the peer; “easily, Sir Roger: a little acid, which I have in my library, will take out the tail of the nine, without leaving a trace; there will then remain only a cipher, which I will alter to an eight; so that no one will see a difference between the writing of that figure and the rest of the letter. You and I — the only persons concerned in a private letter from me to you — are both convinced that the date ought to be so rectified; and no one else need know any thing about it.”

“I am perfectly of your Lordship’s opinion,” replied Sir Roger: “had it not better be done immediately?”

“With all my heart,” replied the peer: “follow me, Sir Roger; we will return here, and conclude our claret when we have done.”

The serviceable Sir Roger followed without another word to the peer’s private room. A small bottle of acid was produced, which answered its object fully: the obnoxious figure was changed into a more convenient one, with ink mingled with water, to render it of the same hue as the rest of the writing, and the most severe and practised eye could not have detected a change. When it was done, the peer and his confederate stood gazing upon the

paper with very different feelings: Sir Roger, totally indifferent to all considerations of right and wrong in the matter, only wondering what was to come next, and desirous of knowing whether he himself was to resume possession of the letter, or whether his noble host intended to keep it for his own purposes; Lord Dewry feeling at his heart that blessed sensation of security which he had not known for twenty years.

The peer's next act was calmly to take his pocket-book from his pocket; and drawing forth five notes, amounting to the sum which Sir Roger had demanded, he laid them, one after another, down upon the paper which they had been corrupting, and then, taking up the whole packet, he put it into his companion's hand. "Sir Roger," he said, "I always like to be as good as my word; and often endeavour to prove myself better than my word. In regard to these notes," he added, seeing the knight about to pour forth thanks, "let us say no more about them; and in regard to this note," pointing to the one they had altered, "let me beg you to put it by carefully with the rest of my letters; and should you ever be called upon to produce it and speak about it, you will

remember the fact accurately, that it was received by you on the eighteenth of May — the day before the great bet came off at Hounslow. Also you will remember that you called upon me in answer to it, and that we sat together for half an hour. But it may be as well to forget, perhaps, that we went out in company to Hillier's party. Let all statements be as simple as possible, with no more circumstances than are necessary to show that you do really remember the facts, and now let us return to our claret, for we have more to talk of yet, both concerning your affairs and mine."

Sir Roger bowed low, promising to act exactly as he was instructed. "You know I have been a soldier, my Lord," he said, "and am well aware of the necessity of obeying orders without the slightest variation."

The peer led the way back to the dining-room, and rang for more claret, though there was a good deal still upon the table; but the cause was, in truth, that he desired a moment or two to think farther before he continued his conversation with Sir Roger Milington. His original design had been to employ him in a much more extensive and conclusive enterprise than he had hitherto broached to

him ; but in the very initiatory steps, the fact of the letter being still in existence, the facility which Sir Roger had shown in bending to his wishes, and the certainty of his following exactly the directions he had received, seemed to remove the necessity for farther efforts. “ I have now,” thought the peer, “ the most perfect and conclusive proof to adduce that I was in London on the very day of my brother’s death ; and granting that the oath of Sir Roger Millington may be somewhat doubted, on account of his established character, the letter — the letter — is proof positive. Besides, what can be opposed to it but the oath of a gipsy and a gambler ; neither of them worth more than his, if so much. The letter is conclusive. Perhaps it may be as well to let the gipsy alone ; and yet it is not to be longer endured — this state of momentary apprehension of what the next minute is to produce. Nor can there be any doubt, that, as soon as Pharold finds out this business in regard to the deer-stealing — which has gone too far by this time to be stayed — his first vengeance will be to tell all, and I may as well be prepared to cast the charge back upon himself. Besides, if I can crush him before

the other arrives in England, I may set the whole world at defiance."

As he thought thus, he drank a large glass of claret. There never yet was man who committed a great crime, and did not thenceforth feel that the predominant longing of his soul was, once more to be able to "sleep in spite of thunder." He drank another full glass; and then went on, determined to bring the struggle to an issue at once, now that he had all his preparations made, and was sure of the result.

"What we have just been speaking of, Sir Roger," he said, as the servant shut the door after setting down the claret, "brings to my mind our former acquaintance, Sir William Ryder. I should scarcely think that he proposes to come back again to this country, as you hinted this morning, considering that he left many a debt unpaid. Amongst other things, you know he was your debtor in the transaction of which we but now spoke, as well as myself, though not to the same amount; and you are, doubtless, also aware that I paid the whole debt. Pray, when did you hear from him?"

"I did not hear from him directly, my Lord," replied the knight, "as we have, in

fact, kept up no correspondence. I wrote to him, indeed, shortly after his departure, but he never answered my letter. But I saw, a few days ago, in an American paper, that the well-known Sir William Ryder was about to quit his dwelling at some strange named place in a few weeks, for the purpose of visiting England, in order to induce the government to take measures for the protection and instruction of the savage Indians."

A sneering smile curled the lip of the peer; but he made no observation upon the information he received. "Did you not go down with him to Holyhead, on his way to embark for America, from some Irish port?" demanded Lord Dewry: "I think I have heard so."

"No, my Lord, no," replied Sir Roger; "I met him at Holyhead by accident. I had just come over from Ireland, where I had been to settle a little affair with a man in Dublin. I lent Sir William one of my horses to go out to see some gipsies — what the devil business he had with them I could never tell — but the horse threw him and broke his ribs, and hurt himself into the bargain; but a gipsy fellow, the best farrier I ever saw, cured him in a week — the horse, I mean; but I believe they cured Sir

William too; for I left him in their hands recovering fast; I myself being obliged to be at Newmarket before he could get out of his bed."

"I thought I remembered something of the transaction," said the peer. "Sir William Ryder, with whom I was in some correspondence at that time, in regard to the very debt of which we were speaking, wrote to me that he had seen you there, and mentioned the accident your horse had met with. But now tell me, Sir Roger, did you not receive from the gipsy farrier a bank note, in change for money given him in payment?"

"No, my Lord, not that I remember," said the knight; "faith, I have forgot what I gave him, and all about it."

"Recollect yourself, Sir Roger," said Lord Dewry; "I think, if you remember right, you will find that he gave you in change a note, which you afterwards gave to me when we last settled our accounts together, about six months after I succeeded to this property."

"Nay, nay, my Lord," said the knight, "your Lordship is not right there: it was you gave me the money; I gave you none. It was a round sum, you know, my Lord."

Lord Dewry bit his lip, and Sir Roger Mil-

lington could hear his foot stamp upon the carpet under the table with impatience at his contradiction. In truth, the noble Lord did not at all desire to be driven to explanations, though, in fact, the dark and fearful scheme which his mind had formed for the purpose of delivering himself from all fear for ever was too deep and intricate to be understood by him whom he intended for his tool in accomplishing it, without a much fuller knowledge of the subject than the knight possessed.

“ You do not understand me,” cried the peer, hastily; “ you will not understand me, Sir Roger ! Mark me, now ! ” and then, after thinking for a moment, he proceeded in a stern, determined tone, and with a dark, contracted brow : — “ You remember my succeeding to this property, Sir Roger ; and you remember the circumstances of my brother’s unfortunate death ? The only person who saw the — the business was a gipsy ; and at the time some circumstances made it appear so strongly probable that that gipsy had been himself the — the murderer, that Mr. Arden — old Mr. Arden who is still living — wished to commit him. I, however, foolishly would believe nothing of the story, as this very gipsy had always been a protégé of

my brother's, and he was liberated. A number of small particulars, however, afterwards appeared to make me regret my obstinacy, and to convince me that the villain was really the assassin of my poor brother. I had him sought for in vain; and all the news I could learn of him was that he had sailed from Holyhead for Ireland. There I lost sight of him, till a few days ago, when I suddenly met him in the park; and I have since learned that he is lingering about in the neighbourhood of my other place at Dimden. I have laid a trap for him: we shall catch him this very night; and if it cost me half my fortune, I will bring him to justice."

"Your Lordship is right, very right," exclaimed Sir Roger Millington; "but I do not see——"

"Listen to me, Sir Roger, and you shall see," replied the peer: "I doubt not that I shall be able to convict him; but if my recollections are right, and can be supported by yours, his conviction is certain. My brother at his death had a large sum of money on his person. One of those notes marked with his name, in his own handwriting, has since come into my possession; and *I am sure that I received it from you, while I feel almost sure that you received it from the*

gipsy!" He spoke the last words slowly and emphatically, and then added rapidly and sternly, "Now what I want you to do, Sir Roger, is to recollect yourself, and—if you can remember the facts of your having received the note and given it to me—to be prepared to swear to those facts should it be necessary."

Sir Roger Millington turned very pale. A light—a fearful light—had broken in upon him, and how far it served to guide his suspicions aright matters little. He was a man of few scruples, and vice and misery had both contributed to harden his heart; for though the uses of adversity may be sweet when acting on a virtuous disposition, yet I am afraid that in this good world of ours the back of that great felon Vice only gets callous under the lash of affliction. Sir Roger Millington, however, had, as we have said, but few scruples of any kind; yet this thing that Lord Dewry now proposed to him was a step beyond the point at which he had arrived in all the course of evil and of folly that he had hitherto pursued. He had fought and had slain men in another man's quarrel, but in doing so he had perilled his own life and the corporeal risk had seemed in some degree to balance the moral culpability; but now he was

asked to say and do things which, without any danger to himself, would conduct another to an ignominious death, — one against whom he had no enmity, whom he had never, perhaps, beheld, and of whose real guilt there was in his bosom many a terrible doubt. He felt that it was a fearful and an awful thing that he was called upon to do, and in despite of the absence of all moral principle — of twenty years' hardening in vice, and of a long training in degradation and dishonour — he turned pale, he hesitated; and, forgetting all restraint, rose from his seat and walked once or twice up and down the room in evident agitation.

Lord Dewry saw how far he had committed himself. He saw that notwithstanding all his caution, his words, having been spoken to one whom habitual vice had rendered familiar with all the wiles of crime, might have put his suspicions on a track from which they could never be withdrawn, and that although Sir Roger had him not, indeed, in his power, as the gipsy had, yet that no sacrifice would be too great to force him on to acts which would make his co-operation irretrievable. He suffered him then to pace the room for a single minute; and then rising, he placed himself opposite

to him, and laid his hand on that of the knight. "Sir Roger," he said, "I am inclined to do much for you, but you know service must have service in return."

"But tell me, tell me, my Lord," exclaimed the other, with some vehemence, "do you really believe that the note you speak of was ever in the possession of the gipsy?"

"I not only believe it, but I am sure of it," replied the peer. "Hear me, Sir Roger; I pledge you my honour, my soul, my word, this note which you now see, and which is marked with my brother's own hand, must have been in possession of the gipsy after my brother's death; and if it did not come to me from you, it must at all events have come through some one who received it of the gipsy." Nor in this assertion did he speak falsely; for the note was one of those which he had sent to the gipsy by Sir William Ryder, and which had accidentally returned to his own possession.

It is wonderful how easily men can sometimes satisfy their conscience. Sir Roger did not pause to ask any very minute explanation: the vehemence with which his noble entertainer spoke convinced him that in some sense he spoke sincerely; and he would have been very

sorry, by any indiscreet question, to have discovered that there was any thing like a double meaning in the words. “ Well, well,” he said, “ I think I do remember something of the transaction, my Lord ; and I doubt not that a few moments’ thought will bring it all back clearly to my memory.”

The peer pressed his hand. “ Well, then, Sir Roger,” he said, “ so much for my affairs when they are all settled : hear what I wish to do for you. I propose to give you apartments in my house at Dimden, where you shall undertake to superintend all my improvements and works of taste, for which you will favour me by receiving a deed of annuity for one thousand per annum *during my life*. I am sorry that I cannot make it permanent, but I have not the power ; all I can do can only last as long as my life lasts.”

Bright, bright grew the eyes of Sir Roger Millington ; and, bowing low before the peer, he uttered a few words of thanks, and cast himself back into his chair to enjoy the glad transition from a state of beggary and despair to the prospect of affluence and luxury such as he had never hoped to see again. All scruples were swallowed up in satisfaction ; not even a shadow of them remained ; and he was now only anxious

to prove his zeal in those services which were to merit so noble a reward.

The peer had seated himself, also, with the note of which he spoke laid on the table before him; and it was not difficult for him to see that the feelings of the serviceable Sir Roger Milington were undergoing the exact sort of transition which he desired. He accordingly entered into farther explanations; and Sir Roger, in his eagerness to merit the favour of so generous a patron, proposed of his own free will to write his name upon the note in such a manner as to give every apparent veracity to the recollections to which he was to swear.

“ You will find the butler’s pen and ink in the buffet,” said the peer, in reply; “ dip your pen first in the claret, Sir Roger, to make the ink look faint and old. Only put your name; no date — no date; never be too precise. Thank you; thank you: now he cannot escape me.”

“ But, my Lord,” said Sir Roger, “ as I am to swear to the person of the gipsy from whom I received the note, will it not be better that I should see him first before he is taken up; so that I may identify him at once without any appearance of connivance?”

“ That is, I am afraid, impossible,” replied

the peer; "for we have found out that he and his fellows have a design upon the deer in Dimden Park this very night, and a large party of keepers have been assembled to arrest them, so that between twelve and one they will all be prisoners. Otherwise it might have been better as you say."

"But there is time before that," said Sir Roger, looking at his watch, which — as the dinner hours of that day were very, very different from those of the present time — only pointed at seven even after this long conversation with the peer, — "there is time before that, my Lord: how far is it to Dimden?"

"Fourteen miles at least," replied the peer.

"Lend me a strong horse, and I will be over by half-past eight," answered Sir Roger. "If I cannot get a sight of him by any other means, I will join the keepers privately, and as soon as ever the business is over come back here; so that I may point out the fellow at once, if there should be twenty of them. What is his name, my Lord; do you know?"

"Pharold, he is called," answered the peer, thoughtfully. "Your plan is good, but I am afraid it is too late. Let us take care that by trying to do too much we do not spoil all."

“ Oh, no fear, no fear, my Lord,” replied Sir Roger, who was not without hopes of getting a private conversation with the gipsy before his arrest, and who had an object of his own in wishing to do so; for, although rogues often trust each other in a manner which — with the knowledge of each other’s character that they must possess — is little less than a miracle, no man covenants with another whom he knows to be a villain without seeking some check upon him; and Sir Roger was not a little desirous of having the peer more fully in his power, as some security for the fulfilment of his promises. “ No fear, no fear, my Lord; and remember it would never do if I were to point out the wrong man by any chance.”

This argument was conclusive with Lord Dewry. The bell was rung, a swift horse was ordered to be saddled immediately, Sir Roger equipped himself for riding, received minute directions as to the way to Dimden, and the peer and his guest were standing before the fireplace waiting for the horse, each occupied with his own thoughts, and each rejoicing at the event of a meeting which had seemed at first so inauspicious, — Sir Roger Millington indulging in dreams of future luxury and ease, and the Baron

triumphing in the hope that the means he had employed, the dark and dreadful scheme which he was prepared to execute, would bid defiance to accusation, and sweep from his path for ever the man that he most feared on earth — when the sound of more horses' feet than one was heard without, the bell was rung violently, and the servant, entering, announced that a gentleman on horseback was at the door, urging important business with his Lordship.

“ Did he give his name ? ” demanded Lord Dewry.

“ Yes, my Lord, ” replied the man ; “ he bade me say that it was Colonel Manners ! ”

“ Ho, ho ! ” said the peer, his lip curling with a haughty smile : “ take him into the saloon ! This is a business of no importance, Sir Roger ; do not let it detain you. Fare you well, my good friend, and may success attend you. ”

“ I give your Lordship back your wish, ” replied Sir Roger, “ and will wait on you tomorrow at breakfast with all my tidings. ”

Thus saying they parted, Sir Roger proceeding to hasten the arrival of the horse, and the peer walking with a haughty step towards the saloon, where he was waited by Colonel Manners.

CHAP. V.

WE must now turn to follow the course of Colonel Manners, from the time we last left him at Morley House to the moment of his visit to Lord Dewry, comprising in all a space of about eight hours. While waiting for his horse he had, as we have already seen, examined quickly, but not the less accurately, into the story of the peasant who had heard shots fired in the neighbouring wood during the night before ; and he had thus satisfied himself that there was very little probability of there being any connection whatever between those shots and the absence of his friend, except such as the marvel-loving mood of the old butler and the natural fears of De Vaux's relations had supplied from the stores of imagination. The shots had been fired, it seemed, in a direction different from that in which there were many reasons for believing that De Vaux had gone ; and the man himself acknowledged, not only that he had originally supposed the sounds to be

occasioned by poachers, but that he had heard the report of one gun on the preceding night.

Convinced, from what he himself suspected, as well as from what Marian had said, that De Vaux had gone to visit the gipsies on the hill, Colonel Manners at once determined to turn his horse's head thither, before he made any examination in the wood where the shots had been heard; and in this resolution he was strongly confirmed by a short conversation with the head gardener, whom he met as he was just passing the gates.

As soon as Manners saw him he checked his horse and demanded, "Pray, in coming through the garden this morning, did you see any marks of steps in the direction of the small door leading towards Morley Down?"

"No, sir," replied the man; "but I found the key in the outside of the door this morning, so that any body might have got into the garden that liked; but, however, I cannot see that any of the fruit is gone. Did you hear of any one having got in last night, sir?"

"No, no," answered Manners: "I did not mean to imply that," and spurring on his horse, he rode forward, more than ever determined to address his first enquiries to the gipsies. Now

Colonel Manners was not a man to pause and wonder what could be the connection between the Honourable Edward de Vaux and the king of shreds and patches from whom he had received the letter, till the time was past for rendering effectual service. Nevertheless, as he rode on, he did wonder much at that connection, revolving in his mind every thing probable and improbable which could account for circumstances with regard to which the reader wants no explanations; but keeping his horse's chest all the time steadily against the hill, and his spurs to its flanks, to prevent its resisting a method of progression to which he never subjected it except on occasions of necessity. The beast panted, but still Manners, feeling that perhaps too much time had been lost already, kept it up to the same pace, saying internally, "You would have gone unflinching at the heels of the hounds, my good grey, and the matter is more important now."

The early rays of the sun had licked up the hoar-frost of a clear autumnal morning, but had left the roads in consequence, and especially the road up which Manners's course lay, heavy and difficult. The sunshine, too, of the autumn — as we often see with the sunshine of

life — had been too early bright to continue unclouded to the close of the day; and now even as he rode on, a thin brownish film of dull vapour began to creep up from the verge of the horizon, promising rain ere long. Manners spurred on all the faster, not that as far as his own person was concerned he cared whether it rained or not, but he had served long enough with nations who follow their enemies by the lightest traces in the dew or in the sand to know that a heavy rain was often destruction itself to the hopes of a pursuing party.

At length he reached the level at the top of the ascent; and pointing with his hand to the tumulus he said, turning to those who followed him, “ You, William, ride up as far as you can upon the mound, and keep a keen eye upon the whole plain. If you see any one skulking about or watching, give instant notice; and gallop up if you hear me call. You come with me,” he added to his own man; and taking the shortest cut towards the sandpit, he spurred on towards the spot where he had last seen the gipsies. The bushes, however, were now directly between him and the bank that had sheltered their encampment, so that he could see nothing till he was nearly upon the pit.

Then, however, his disappointment was not small to find the usual relics of a gipsy resting-place, but nothing else. A few rags, a leaf of an old black-letter book, feathers of many birds, and fur of more than one sort of beast, several charred spots, and a large stick or two, were to be seen upon the ground; but nothing else met the eye in any direction, and Manners paused for a moment to lay out what was to be done next.

“Go back for a hundred yards,” he said, at length turning to his servant; “and then make a slow circle at that distance, quite round this pit, seeing whether you can find fresh footmarks in any direction.”

The servant obeyed, and in a few minutes exclaimed, “Here are a great many, sir, along this road, which seems to go down the other side of the hill. Horses’ feet, too, and cart-wheels quite fresh!”

“Go on quite round,” rejoined his master. “What do you find more?”

“Here are a good many scattered footmarks in this direction, sir,” replied the man, when he had arrived at a spot situated exactly between Manners and the little tumulus; “but

they do not tend in any particular way that I can see."

Manners rode up, but the foot-prints were turned in many directions, and were of various sizes, some seemingly fresh, and some half effaced by others. Nothing, therefore, could be discovered from the traces on that particular spot; but as Colonel Manners had every reason for believing that his friend must have approached the gipsy encampment from that side, he took the pains of dismounting and tracing the different steps some way upon each of the several paths in which they led. It was in vain, however; the whole were so puzzled and intermixed that he could make nothing of them, and had his foot in the stirrup to mount again, when De Vaux's servant came down from the mound, at full gallop, exclaiming, "There is certainly some one watching there, sir, at the edge of that wood. I have seen them come out and in three times. There! there! do you see, sir? He is coming more forward now."

Could Manners have bent down with his attendants, so as to escape the attention of the person who approached, he would certainly have done so; but though they might have hidden themselves amongst the neighbouring

slopes, their horses were not so easily concealed, and the sand-pit was now too far off to afford them a screen. A moment's thought showed him, that it would be best to stand quite still, as the man, whoever he was, was still advancing. The next moment, however, the stranger stopped—went on again a few steps farther—stopped again, and then turning precipitately made his way back towards the wood.

Manners was in the saddle in a moment; and could speed have accomplished what he desired, the person who so evidently sought to avoid observation would not have escaped, but the distance he had advanced from the wood had not been more than a hundred yards; and long ere Manners's horse could reach the skirt of the forest ground, all vestige of him he pursued was lost, in an intricate labyrinth of trees and bushes, which set farther search at defiance. The two men came up shortly after, while Manners was pausing disappointed by the edge of the wood; and De Vaux's servant, touching his hat, called the Colonel's attention to some footmarks, which they had passed as they followed him. Manners instantly turned back, and in a dip of the ground, where some mud had been left by a half dried up pool, he dis-

covered the distinct traces of two different sets of footsteps. Both were small, and neither seemed to have been left by the tread of a peasant; but one was evidently the mark of a boot, cut by some neat and fashionable maker, and De Vaux's servant declared that he could swear to that print having been made by his master's foot.

Nothing remained, then, but to follow these footsteps as far as possible; but the difficulty of doing so was not small, for there were but few spots of a nature similar to that in which the traces had been found, and the ground around was in general covered by short parched grass, or long tufts of rushes. At length, however, at the distance of more than fifty yards farther on, in the exact direction in which the other steps pointed, Manners discovered the mark of a heel, and this again led them to more steps. Several times the traces seemed lost entirely, and several times Colonel Manners was obliged to return to the last he had seen, and set off anew; but still the positive assertions of his friend's servant that the footsteps were those of De Vaux caused Manners to persist, till at length he succeeded in tracing the prints to the edge of the steep bank, to which, as we

have seen, the gipsy had really led his unfortunate visiter.

Manners now paused with some very painful apprehensions gathering thick upon him. Thither it is true De Vaux must have come willingly with some other person, for there was not the slightest appearance either of haste or resistance in any of the footmarks they had seen; but it was in that very wood, near which they now were, that the report of fire-arms had been heard the night before; and, as far as Manners had been able to discover, it had been in the precise direction to which the steps had now guided them. What, too, he asked himself, could be De Vaux's inducement to approach so lonely a place as this—by a path which led to no other object—in the dead of the night, and with a person to whom it appeared he must have been a stranger? What, too, could be that person's object in leading him thither at such a time?

No answer could he give to either of these questions which was at all likely to calm the apprehensions that he now began seriously to entertain concerning his friend's fate; and he gazed round the spot to which the footsteps had conducted him with more anxiety concerning

the next object that was to meet his view, than ever he had felt on the field of battle.

At length, however, his eye rested on the little rugged path by which his friend and the gipsy had descended to the scene of their conference; and Manners at once followed it. Here, again, the two sets of foot-prints were distinctly visible, going down towards the abandoned quarry and the felled oak. There were marks also to be seen, as of some one coming up; but they had evidently been imprinted by the tread of one person, and that not of Edward de Vaux. A few drops of blood next met Manners's eye, as with an attentive gaze he examined the ground while he descended. Then came more and more, dotting the sand with red, till they at length led on to a spot where the same footsteps were thick and many, as if the persons, whose course they marked, had stood there for some time. There, too, appeared, however, an evidence of more import; for close to the spot where De Vaux and the gipsy had been standing, the sand had drank up a large quantity of gore, while the patches of short green grass that had rooted themselves here and there upon the broken ground around were dabbled with red in various directions.

Manners gazed with horror and with grief on signs so unequivocal of the fate of his unhappy friend; and if he sorrowed bitterly for De Vaux, his heart was hardly less afflicted when he thought of her, who was so soon to have become his bride,— of her, whose father and whose lover had shared the same dark and melancholy fate. His heart bled for her; and although, under any circumstances, he would have felt the same sympathy for De Vaux's family, and the same grief for the loss of his friend, the pain he personally felt was aggravated by the belief that he had, in some degree, been made an instrument for the purpose of decoying him into the trap which had evidently been laid for him. That feeling, however, and the indignation which that feeling awakened, made him the more strongly determine never to abandon the search till he had discovered the murderer, and brought him to justice. He resolved to devote time, and fortune, and life itself, if it should be necessary, to the pursuit — to trace the offender out with the pertinacity of a bloodhound, and to run him down as he would a wolf.

Although, to a man of Manners's character and peculiar frame of mind, the very task of the avenger was a bitter and a dreadful one,

yet there was another duty still more grievous which lay before him for execution; that of communicating to the family of his unhappy friend the painful facts he had discovered; and the thought of the tears of Marian, and the sterner grief of Mrs. Falkland, and the deep, deep sorrow of her daughter, all thrilled upon him as he contemplated the course he had to follow. But to such thoughts he gave but a few moments. No time was to be lost in long deliberation, if action were to be effectual; and as Manners was not more a man of real deep and noble feeling than he was a man of active energy, he turned instantly to the measures for detecting the murderer. His first step was to take the exact measurement of both the foot-prints, and the next, to note down precisely, in his memorandum-book, every thing that had occurred in the search.

The man who had been seen watching his party from the wood, he felt sure was implicated in the transaction, if he were not the principal; and amongst the gipsies were to be found, beyond all doubt, the accomplices of the murderer, if not the participators in the deed itself. After a brief conversation, then, with the servants, concerning the discoveries they had al-

ready made, he proceeded to enquire what was the next village or town to the seat of Lord Dewry; and being informed by his late friend's servant, who was well acquainted with the county, that it was called Barholm, he went on to give farther directions.

“ You, William,” he said, “ ride back to the sand-pit, which you saw me examining just now on the top of the common; you will there find the tracks of wheels and feet, going down the opposite road to that by which we came, indicating the direction the gipsies have taken. Follow them as fast as you can, making continual enquiries concerning them. Trace them out, step by step, till you have found them. Then hire any of the peasantry to keep watch upon them, night and day, paying whatever sum may be necessary in advance, and giving strict orders to follow them wherever they go. There is a note to pay the people. Do not spare either speed or money; and when you have taken these precautions, ride over to join me at Barholm, where I will be to-night. Quick! mount, and away!”

The man obeyed, and Manners then turned to his own servant. “ You, John,” he said, “ lead your horse down the bank to the road—

then on to the village there, with all speed. Gather together as many stout men as ever you can, and mount them at any price. Establish corresponding patrols all round this wood, as we did at the wood beyond Montreal, last year, and remember that the great thing is haste. There is money, and if you need more, refer the people to me at Morley House. When you have done that, and left the care of the patrol in the hands of the most intelligent fellow you can find, come back to me at the house."

"Shall I tell the folks what is the matter, sir?" demanded the servant. Manners mused for some moments. "Yes," he said, at length, "yes; circumstances fully justify it; and the people, who must love Mrs. Falkland and her family, will work in the matter with the greater interest. Lose no time, John, lest the fellow get out of the wood before you can surround it. He will probably lie there for half an hour or so, till he thinks we are gone; and then will make an effort to escape. It will take, at least, four or five and twenty men to watch it properly, giving each of them half a mile; but I should think that in the village you can get together as many,—at all events, do your best."

The man bowed, and led his beast down the bank, while Manners, springing into the saddle, turned his horse's head back towards Morley House.

With grief and with reluctance he did so; and although he felt the necessity of promptitude in his own proceedings, and that he had no right to keep those so deeply interested in suspense, yet repugnance to his painful task certainly rendered his horse's pace slower in returning than it had been when he set out upon his search.

“How is Miss de Vaux now?” he asked of the servant, who presented himself to take his horse; and it was some relief to hear, in reply, that she had not come down. He then ascended the stairs towards the drawing-room, but in the anteroom he was met by Isadore, who had already become aware of his return. All the light gay spirit was gone from her eyes, and her countenance now expressed nothing but intense anxiety. “You look grave, Colonel Manners,” she exclaimed, as soon as she saw him. “You look sad; for Heaven's sake, tell me what have you discovered?”

“Nothing at all satisfactory,” replied Manners, anxious to break the matter to her as

gently as possible: "the whole business is certainly very strange; but I still hope and trust that——"

"Hope and trust!" exclaimed Isadore, clasping her hands. "Oh, Colonel Manners, you know more than you say! Poor, poor Marian! But tell me, I beseech you, tell me all. Indeed, this suspense is worse than the truth."

"I have very little to tell, my dear Miss Falkland," he replied; "but I must acknowledge that what I have to tell is not at all calculated to remove our apprehensions."

"But the gipsies, Colonel Manners!" exclaimed Isadore; "have you seen the gispies?"

"No, I have not," he answered: "they had left the common before I arrived; but I found traces of the way they had taken, and have sent your cousin's own servant to pursue them."

"Sent my cousin's servant, without attempting to follow them yourself!" cried Isadore; but then, instantly lighting upon the right conclusion, she added, "But, no — no — no, Colonel Manners, I know you better! You would never have sent my cousin's servant upon such an enquiry, unless you had disco-

vered something to render your stay here more necessary. But here comes mamma from poor Marian's room. Now, for Heaven's sake, tell us all, Colonel Manners."

"I hope Miss de Vaux is more composed," said Manners, turning to Mrs. Falkland as she entered.

"She is asleep from the effect of strong opiates, my dear sir," replied Mrs. Falkland gravely; "and, if I may judge from your countenance, it is happy for her that she is so. Now, Colonel Manners, tell me candidly what you have discovered—I require no preparation."

"The facts are simply these, then," replied Manners, "and I will not attempt to conceal from you that I am deeply uneasy on account of De Vaux. When I reached the gipsy encampment all was vacant, and nothing to be found but the place where it had been, together with fresh tracks of wheels and feet, marking the direction which the great body of the gipsies had taken. However, in another part of the common we discovered footmarks, which De Vaux's servant positively asserts to be those of his master; and, of course, my first care was to follow those as far as possible. They led us,

I am sorry to say, in the direction where shots had been heard in the wood."

" Good God!" cried Isadore, the tears bursting from her eyes; " poor Edward! and still more unhappy Marian!"

" Nay, do not weep so bitterly, Miss Falkland," said Manners, " or I fear I shall not be able to finish my account. Remember, however, that we have discovered as yet nothing at all certain; and that such appearances as we have discovered are often, very often, fallacious."

" You must let her weep, Colonel Manners," said Mrs. Falkland: " men never understand how great a relief tears are to a woman; and often I regret that some severe sorrows have taken from me the power of weeping as once I could. Pray go on, too: let us hear the worst — where did the steps lead to?"

" To a high bank just above a turn in the road," replied Colonel Manners; " a little more than a mile on the other side of the village."

" Indeed!" cried Mrs. Falkland, now extremely agitated; " the very spot where my poor brother was murdered."

" Not exactly," answered Manners; " for that spot was pointed out to me by De Vaux as

we came hither; and the place to which I now refer, though near it, is not precisely the same. At that bank, however, all traces of my poor friend's footsteps were lost, and I could only find those of another person going away from it."

Isadore continued to weep in silence; but Mrs. Falkland, seeing that Manners paused somewhat abruptly, fixed her eye upon him with a look of keen enquiry: Manners glanced towards Miss Falkland, slightly raising his eyebrows, and shaking his head; and Mrs. Falkland, understanding his meaning, took Isadore's hand, saying, "Go, my love, and sit by your poor cousin: Colonel Manners may have business with me which we can better discuss alone."

Isadore obeyed at once, and Mrs. Falkland then turned to Manners with firm composure, saying, "Now, Colonel Manners, tell me all: what more did you find?"

"I am sorry to say, madam," he answered, "that I found a great deal of blood spilt upon the sand."

Mrs. Falkland covered her eyes with her hands, and remained silent for several minutes. At length she looked up, and Colonel Manners proceeded: — "I have now, madam, related

all that I have done, except some measures already taken for the apprehension of the persons implicated. Such appearances as those I have met with, I still say, are often fallacious; but, nevertheless, it is absolutely necessary to take the same steps as if they were perfectly certain. If you will give me the name of the nearest magistrate, I will write to him instantly to obtain his sanction for what I have already done, and his assistance in what we may yet have to do."

"The nearest magistrate is old Mr. Arden," replied Mrs. Falkland; "an active and intelligent man, though somewhat severe. He is the same," she added, while some tears came into her eyes, — "he is the same who investigated, with so much energy, the circumstances attending the death of my poor brother."

"To him, then, I will write at once, madam," replied Manners. "When I have done so, I have another task to perform which will lead me to some distance: but I will be back here to-morrow: for though I would not willingly intrude upon your family in such a moment of grief, yet I hold myself bound——"

"Oh, do not call it intruding, Colonel Manners," cried Mrs. Falkland; "if you will have

the great kindness to manage the whole of this sad business for me, to act as my representative in it, and to add my love for my poor nephew to your own friendship for him, as motives for ascertaining his fate and pursuing his murderers, you will confer the greatest of favours on me and mine. Oh no, Colonel Manners, you must not think of leaving us at such a moment as this, when we all want the assistance, advice, and support of one so well calculated to strengthen and to aid us. But do you know there is another task I am going to put upon you; and circumstances may render it very painful to you—De Vaux's father—I could wish these tidings broken to him. His whole soul was wrapped up in his son; and I am sure Colonel Manners is too generous not to forget, in moments of affliction, any offence that ——”

“ I have already arranged, my dear madam,” replied Colonel Manners, “ to go over to Lord Dewry as soon as I have written to Mr. Arden. De Vaux's servant is to meet me at the village of Barholm; and believe me that the little dispute which occurred between the father of my friend and myself rests too lightly on my mind to be thought of for a mo-

ment, when I can, in any degree, blunt the first sharp edge of the sad tidings he must soon hear."

"I see one cannot calculate too liberally on your good feeling," said Mrs. Falkland; "nor can I express what a relief it is to me to have you here, Colonel Manners, at such a trying moment. I cannot, indeed, in my present state of mind, attend to your comfort as I could wish; but let me beg you, at least, to take some refreshment ere you set out for my brother's."

"None, I thank you, my dear madam," he replied; "I do not require it. But now do not let me detain you. I know that you, too, have the painful task of breaking the confirmation of our fears to her who will feel the pang more acutely than any."

"Indeed, I hardly know how to do it," replied Mrs. Falkland. "To a casual observer, Marian may appear cold and indifferent by nature; but quite the reverse is known to be the case by those who have better opportunities of judging. Her heart is all warmth, and tenderness, and affection; and it is, perhaps, a consciousness of the very excess of such feelings that makes her put a stricter guard upon the

expression of them. I fear that these tidings, if told entirely, will go far to kill her."

"Then by no means tell them, my dear madam," replied Manners: "I am no advocate for concealments or pious frauds of any kind; and where the strength of the individual is able to bear them up, we should always speak the truth: but of course we must regulate our conduct by our knowledge of the person; and both from what I have seen to-day, and what you yourself say, I would strongly advise you — if you will excuse my doing so — to tell Miss de Vaux, merely, that I have not succeeded in my first search for my poor friend, and that I am still following the same object in a different direction."

"I believe I must do even as you say," replied Mrs. Falkland, "and suffer Marian's mind to come to the sad conclusion, to which we have already come, by degrees. Though the suspense may be harrowing, yet it will not have so bad an effect on her as the sudden confirmation of her worst fears. Allow me, too, to hint, Colonel Manners, that you will find my brother less capable of bearing such tidings than you may imagine, from what you have

seen of his demeanour. His love for his son was as ardent as his other passions."

"Do not be afraid, my dear madam," replied Manners, taking her hand; "I will do nothing roughly, believe me."

"I do, indeed," answered Mrs. Falkland, — "I do, indeed, believe that it is not in the nature of Colonel Manners to act unkindly to any one. At what time shall I order the carriage?"

"Oh, not at all — not at all," he answered; "I will ride: it is always my custom; and as soon as I have written this letter, and my servant has returned, I will set out. Let me detain you no longer, and God grant that our fears may have magnified the proofs in their own support."

CHAP. VI.

NOTHING shows us, perhaps, the utter blindness in which we are held by fate more completely, than the constant fallacy of our calculations in regard to even the smallest events over which we have not a personal and unlimited control. A letter is put into our hands in a writing that we know; and ere we have broken the seal, fancy, aided by the best efforts of reason, has laid out before us the probable contents: but as soon as the seal is broken, we find the whole as different therefrom as it is possible to imagine. A friend, or a stranger, comes to see us; and ere we can reach the room where he is waiting, imagination has done her work, and given us a full account of the person and his errand. We expect some pleasant meeting, or some glad tidings, and we go but to hear of some bitter loss or sad disappointment.

Thus, as Lord Dewry walked towards the room to which he had directed the servant to conduct Colonel Manners, he did not fail to calculate the cause of his coming. "He is

either here," thought the peer, "to apologise for his conduct, in which case I shall treat him with contempt, or he has come to proffer that personal satisfaction which he before refused. I hope the latter; and if so, I shall have a cause sufficient to assign for demanding Edward's immediate rupture with him."

As he thus thought, he opened the door of the saloon in the midst of which Colonel Manners was standing, booted, and spurred, and dusty, from the road; but with that air of ease, composure, and calmness, which spoke his character.

"My Lord," he said, as soon as the peer entered, "I am obliged very unwillingly to intrude upon you; and, of course, feel more uncomfortable in interrupting you at this unseasonable hour: but the business on which I come admits of no delay."

"I am not aware, sir," replied the peer, frowning sternly, "what business can remain between us, after our last meeting, when you thought fit ——"

"My Lord," interrupted Colonel Manners, anxious to put a stop to a revival of past grievances, which, at the present moment, could only aggravate the pain he had to inflict,— "my

Lord, my present business is totally unconnected with the past; and extremely sorry I am that any thing ever occurred between your Lordship and myself to render my present visit disagreeable to you in itself."

"Sir, your expression of sorrow," replied the peer, "as is usual in such cases, comes too late; but to your business, sir. Do not let me interrupt that. What is your business with me? for the sooner we settle it the better shall I be pleased."

There was a pertinacity in Lord Dewry's rudeness that offended Manners; but he gave no way to his anger. There was a stronger feeling in his bosom; and pity for the childless old man not barely mastered every other sensation, but mastered all so completely, that he went on with as nice a calculation of the best and kindest means of breaking his loss to the peer, as if not a word had been said but those of welcome and civility. "My Lord," he replied, "I come to you as one of the principal magistrates of this county, in your quality of lord lieutenant——"

"I wish, sir," interrupted the peer, "that you had sought some other magistrate to whom your presence would have been more welcome."

“ I might have done so, my Lord,” replied Manners, “ had the business on which I had to seek a magistrate not been one so immediately affecting your Lordship, that although, in the first instance, I wrote to the nearest justice of the peace that I could hear of — Mr. Arden — I thought it but right to ride over myself to request your co-operation in the measures we are taking.”

Manners observed a change of expression, and a slight degree of paleness pass over the countenance of his hearer ; and, although he certainly did not attribute it to that consciousness of crime and consequent feeling of insecurity, in which it really originated, he saw that the first step was gained ; and that the peer was, in some degree, prepared to hear evil tidings. Lord Dewry, however, replied, in a manner which had nearly forced the communication at once. “ May I ask, sir,” he said in a tone grave but less bitter than that which he had formerly employed,—“ may I ask, sir, why, when business of importance concerning myself occurred, my son did not take upon himself the task of communicating with his father upon the subject, but rather left it to a person whose visit was certainly unsolicited ? ”

“ Because, my Lord, your son was not capable of doing so,” replied Colonel Manners, “ from the fact of his being absent from Morley House.”

“ Not at Morley House !” cried the peer. “ Pray where is he then, sir ?”

“ I really cannot inform your Lordship,” replied Manners, “ for I do not know.”

“ Good God ! this is very extraordinary,” cried Lord Dewry, taking alarm more from the tone of Manners’s voice, and the expression of his countenance, than from any thing he had said. “ For Heaven’s sake, explain yourself, sir. Where is my son ? What is your business ? Sit down, sir, I beg ! What is it you seek ?”

By the agitated manner in which the Baron spoke, Manners saw that he must proceed cautiously.

“ May I ask you, my Lord, if you have ever heard of a person named Pharold, a gipsy ?” he demanded, intending by this question to lead his hearer’s mind away, for a moment, from the real subject of apprehension ; but, without at all wishing it, by that very enquiry he redoubled the agitation of the peer.

For an instant the thoughts of Lord Dewry

were all in confusion and uncertainty, — doubtful of the end to which Manners's interrogatory tended, and fearful that a man to whom he had given such just cause for anger had become acquainted with some of the dreadful secrets which oppressed his own bosom. His first impulse was to lift his hand to his head, and to gaze with some degree of wildness upon the countenance of his questioner; but almost instantly recalling his firmness, and recollecting the measures he had taken, and the schemes he had laid out, he recovered also his composure, and replied, with a forced smile, "You have alarmed me about my son, Colonel Manners; but you ask me if I know a gipsy of the name of Pharold. I do: my family have, I am afraid, too good reason to know him."

"Then have you any cause to suppose that he bears an ill will towards your family?" demanded Manners again.

"I have, sir, I have!" replied Lord Dewry; "I have the strongest reasons to believe that he bears us ill will, — that he has already injured us, and seeks but the opportunity to do more and more for our destruction."

"Does his ill will particularly point against your son, my Lord?" asked Manners, deeply

interested by an answer which to him was both mysterious and painful.

“ No — no ! ” exclaimed the peer, starting up from the chair into which he had cast himself, when he had invited Manners to be seated, — “ no — no — certainly not ! What is the meaning of this ? You have some darker meaning, sir ? What of Edward ? Tell me, I beseech you tell me, where is my son ? ”

“ My Lord, I am grieved to repeat, that I cannot tell you where he is, ” replied Manners ; “ and it is for the purpose of concerting means for discovering him that I now wait upon your Lordship. He went out, it appears, to see this gipsy Pharold, and has never returned. ”

Manners acted for the best ; and having not the slightest idea of all that was passing in the bosom of De Vaux’s father, he thought, that by concealing for a few moments the proof he had obtained of his friend having been murdered, he would allow the mind of the unhappy parent to come by degrees, and less painfully, to a knowledge of the truth : but the result was by no means such as he anticipated ; for to Lord Dewry the bare idea of his son having any communication whatever with the eye-witness of that dreadful deed, which he had com-

mitted in other years, was agonising in itself; and, without remembering that any one was present to remark the agitation to which he yielded, he clasped his hands together, and strode up and down the saloon, muttering, "Villain! scoundrel! it is all over!" Then again recollecting that he was observed, he found it necessary to curb his emotions, and to make anxiety for his son the apparent cause for that agitation which he had already displayed. "Colonel Manners," he said, "you alarm me much. For Heaven's sake, tell me the particulars. Something more than a temporary and ordinary absence must have occurred to excite apprehensions in an officer so much accustomed to danger as yourself. Nor is my sister a woman to yield to idle fears. Tell me, then, what has happened to my son, and why you are led to suppose that there has been any communication between him and a person, in regard to whom I have more than suspicions of very terrible deeds, who is, I believe, a villain of the blackest character, and who would scruple at nothing to injure a race who were his first benefactors."

"The facts are these, my Lord," replied Manners; "but I trust we shall find that

your son's absence is owing, notwithstanding its strangeness, to some accidental circumstance of no importance — as I was about to say, however, the facts are these : — It appears that last night De Vaux did not go to bed ; that he left Morley House during the night, and that he has never returned during the day. He also, I find, mentioned yesterday to his cousin, Miss de Vaux, his intention of visiting a gipsy named Pharold, who had sent him a letter that morning ; but his purpose, as he then stated it, was to go to Morley Down, where the gipsies were, to-day, and not during the night ; and his prolonged absence has, of course, greatly alarmed Mrs. Falkland and her family.”

“ But has no search been instituted ? Have no traces been found ? ” cried Lord Dewry, his fears taking a new direction : “ no time should be lost.”

“ No time has been lost as yet, my Lord,” replied Manners : “ I myself have been to the place where the gipsies were last seen ; but they are there no more, and, to all appearance, must have either decamped in the night or early this morning. But it appears certain, from the evidence of Mr. de Vaux's servant, who was with me, that some foot-prints, which

we traced on the ground, in different parts of the common, were from my poor friend's boot ; and in the same track are those of another person, who was apparently with him during the night."

" But whither did they lead ?" exclaimed the peer, whose agitation was becoming dreadful ; " speak out, sir, for God's sake ! You call him your poor friend — you have discovered more — whither did the footsteps lead ? I can bear all."

" They led, my Lord," replied Manners, " to a high bank, overhanging a part of the road, about a mile or more to the west of Morley House, near a point of wooded land which causes the river to take a singular bend in its course."

Lord Dewry shook in every limb, but, by a strong effort, he uttered, " Go on, sir ; go on ; let me hear the worst."

" Thank God, my Lord, I have little more to inflict upon your Lordship," replied Manners.

" At that bank the steps ended, but ——"

He paused, and the peer eagerly demanded, " But what — what found you more ?"

" It must be told," thought Manners. — " We found, my Lord," he added aloud, " a good deal of blood spilt upon the sand."

The peer groaned bitterly. " My poor boy! my poor boy!" he cried, but for some minutes he said no more.

While Manners had been in the act of telling his tale, the conflict which had taken place in the bosom of Lord Dewry can better be conceived than described. Every moment produced a change of sensation; every word a new and different apprehension. Now he fancied his son made acquainted with his guilt; now feared that the very means he had taken to conceal it might have made the gipsy to wreak his vengeance on his unoffending child. That Pharold was capable of committing any or every crime was a conviction which had been brought about in the mind of the peer by one of those curious processes in the human heart, whereby great guilt seeks to conceal its blackness from even its own eyes by representing others in colours as dark as it feels that it itself deserves; and while at one moment he suspected that Pharold might have obtained information of the trap laid for him by the game-keeper, and to avenge himself might have revealed his whole history to Edward de Vaux, at another he believed that the destruction of his son might have been the means which the gipsies had

determined upon, in order to punish himself for his designs against them.

As Colonel Manners concluded his account, however, the latter opinion predominated over all others; the peer's own heart acknowledged that the means they had taken was that which was the most fearfully effectual; and he beheld no other image than the heir of his name, the child of his love, murdered in cold blood, within sight of the very spot where his own hand had slain his brother. All his first emotions were consecrated to deep grief. He had loved his son: he had admired him; and affection and pride had united to give him the only green place in a heart that angry passions had left arid and desolate; and now he was alone in all the world. He had been hitherto like a mariner ploughing the waves in the midst of storms and darkness, with one small point of bright light in the wide dark vacancy before him; but now the clouds had rolled over that light for ever, and the past and the future were alike one lurid night. There was nothing left in life to live for; and during one moment all was despair: but the minute after, the most overpowering passion of human nature rose up and rekindled with its own red and baleful

light the extinguished torch of hope. Revenge became his thirst; and the remembrance that it was nearly within his grasp, and that another day would give it to him, was the only consolation that his mind could receive. It seized upon him at once; it compelled every other feeling and passion to its aid: grief gave it bitterness; pride gave it intensity; wrath lent it eagerness. "He has smitten me to the heart," he thought; "he has smitten me to the heart. But I will smite him still deeper, and he shall learn what it is to have raised his hand against a son of mine." It was but for one instant that he had given way to despair, and the next revenge took possession of his whole soul, and became almost more than a consolation — a joy. All its dark and cruel pictures, too, rose up before his mental vision, and he pleased himself with gazing forth into the future, and seeing him he most hated within the gripe of his vengeance. He painted to himself the agony which long and solitary imprisonment would inflict on a heart which he knew to be wild and free; he thought over all the tyrannical details of a trial in a court of justice, and he gazed even into the gipsy's bosom, and saw the burning indignation and despair that would

wring his heart, exposed a public spectacle to the eyes of a race he detested, tried by laws he condemned and had abjured, and exciting the curiosity and the loud remark of the idle and the vulgar. He followed him in imagination to the scaffold, and saw him die the death of a dog; and only grieved that there revenge must stop, and that the cup contained not another drop of ignominy and suffering to pour upon the head of him who had destroyed his son.

Occupied with these thoughts, he remained silent for several minutes; but his features worked, and his limbs even writhed, wrought unconsciously by the intensity of the emotions within. Colonel Manners saw the strong and painful degree of his agitation; but he had no key to the secret sources of feeling which, opened wide by the news of his son's loss, were gushing forth in streams of bitterness upon his heart. He attributed, then, all that he saw to deep grief; and although his application to the peer, in his magisterial capacity, had been but to bring about the disclosures he had to make as gently as possible, yet he still thought it best to continue the same course with which he had begun, in order to engage

the unhappy nobleman in those personal and active exertions which might in some degree divert his mind from the sole and painful contemplation of his recent loss.

“ My Lord,” he said, feelingly, “ believe me, no one feels more deeply and sympathises more sincerely with your Lordship than myself: but allow me to recall to your mind that great and instant exertions are necessary to insure the arrest of the murderer; the pursuit of whom I have determined never to quit till I have seen him brought to justice.”

Lord Dewry, with his own burning hand, clasped warmly that of Colonel Manners, the object of his former hatred. The fact is, however, that circumstances had established between them, two strong ties since the death of Edward de Vaux. The one was wholly composed of good feelings, and sprang from their mutual affection for the deceased, — affection which had, of course, risen in value in each other's eyes, since death had hallowed it; and the other, — composed of feelings which, though noble and virtuous on the one part, were terribly mixed with evil on the other, — was the desire of bringing the murderer to justice. Lord Dewry then grasped Colonel Manners's hand, and said,

“ I have much to thank you for, sir, and I am afraid that I have somewhat to apologise for in the past; but —— ”

“ Do not mention it, I beg, my Lord,” replied Manners. “ It is forgotten entirely; only let us bend our energies with a common effort to pursue this sad affair to an end, to discover, as far as Heaven shall enable us, what has really occurred; and above all to insure the immediate apprehension of this gipsy Pharold, whom every circumstance, hitherto apparent, points at as the murderer.”

A gleam of triumph broke over the thin sallow countenance of the peer. “ If I am not very much mistaken, Colonel Manners,” he said, “ this very Pharold will be in our hands to-night. He and his gang are not famous alone for one sort of crime. My park-keepers at Dimden informed me, a few days ago, that they had discovered a plan which these gipsies had laid for robbing my park of the deer; and I immediately took measures to insure the arrest of the whole of them in the very fact. Nor was my purpose alone to save my game, Colonel Manners, nor to punish deer-stealers,” continued Lord Dewry, raising his head and speaking with determined firmness; “ no, I had a

weightier object in view, I had a more serious offence to avenge."

The peer paused ; for although he was anxious to make the charge, which he had determined to bring against the gipsy, boldly and distinctly to as many private individuals as possible, before he urged it in a public court of justice, yet he felt a difficulty, a hesitation, perhaps we might say a fear, in pronouncing, for the first time, so false an accusation against a fellow-creature, which was to be supported, too, by so many dark and tortuous and deceitful contrivances. There was in his bosom a consciousness of the fallacy, of the futility we might say, of all human calculations, which produced an undefined dread of rendering his schemes irretrievable by once making the charge to any one. It was to him the passing of the Rubicon ; and that step once taken, he felt that he should be involved in a labyrinth of obscure and unknown paths, from which there would be no retreat, and which would conduct him whither he knew not. And yet he saw that it must be taken ; that the gipsy's first act after his arrest would undoubtedly be, to charge him with the crime which he had committed ; and that it was absolutely necessary, in order to give all his

future proceedings a firm basis, and a commanding position, to be the person to accuse rather than the person accused. He knew how inferior defence is to attack—how much more faith men are naturally inclined to give to a charge, than they give to a recrimination; and from the first commencement of his reply to Colonel Manners he had determined to make it boldly: but when he came to the immediate point where it was to be spoken, he hesitated, and paused irresolute.

The next moment, however, he went on. “Colonel Manners,” he said, resuming his firmness, “as I believe that the culprit may be considered in our power, and that therefore no indiscreet communication of my suspicions can give him warning to escape, I do not scruple to say that I have many, many reasons to suppose that this gipsy, this Pharold, is not only the murderer of my son, poor Edward, but that my brother’s death also may be laid to his charge; and with a view of bringing him to justice for that offence it was that I, this very morning, took the surest measures for his apprehension, and not for any pitiful affair of deer-stealing, which might have gone long unpunished ere I exerted myself as I have done.”

“ Indeed ! ” exclaimed Manners, gazing upon the peer in much surprise. “ How strangely do events sometimes come round ! ”

“ Perhaps you are not acquainted with the circumstances of my brother’s death,” replied the peer, marking some surprise in Manners’s countenance ; and in his anxiety, to show the probability of the charge he had made, overcoming his repugnance to speak upon a subject of all others the most dreadful to him. “ However, Colonel Manners,” he continued, “ he was killed by some one unknown, many years ago ; and the suspicions against this man Pharold were then so strong, that good Mr. Arden, the magistrate, would fain have had him committed, had not I foolishly interfered, from a weak conviction of his honesty. That conviction, however, has been since removed, and I may say that I have in my hands the most decided proofs of his guilt.”

Such was the explanation to which the apparent surprise of Colonel Manners led on the peer ; but that surprise proceeded both from the new charge which the peer made against the gipsy being totally unexpected by his hearer, and from another cause which must be explained, as it touches upon some of those little

weaknesses of our nature, which Colonel Manners possessed in common with other human beings.

Through the whole affair, since he had discovered the traces of De Vaux's footsteps on the common, and the marks of bloodshed at the quarry, hope had offered to the mind of Charles Manners but one suggestion to diminish his apprehensions for the fate of his friend; and that suggestion, strange enough to say, was that the countenance, the demeanour, and the language of the gipsy Pharold were not those of a man familiar with guilt or designing evil. Colonel Manners was too much a man of the world, and too much a man of sense, to suffer such impressions to affect his conduct in the slightest degree. He knew that this earth contains every grade and every sort of hypocrisy; and that Satan himself will occasionally assume the form of an angel of light: but at the same time, although his behaviour was on all occasions guarded by what he had learned from experience, yet through life he had preserved his natural enthusiasm unblunted by the hard world in which we live; and there was thus in his character a rare mingling of ardent and energetic feelings, with calm and well calculated actions, which formed the specific difference

between him and the general herd with which he moved. During his conversation with Pharold he had remarked a dignity, not alone of manner but of thought, in the gipsy, opposed to all the habits of his tribe, and which must have been difficult to retain amongst them at all, but still more difficult to assume, if it was not natural and habitual,—if it sprang not from a heart at ease in itself, and a consciousness of virtue and intellect superior to the things through which it passed. His countenance, too, had appeared to him open and frank, though wild and keen; and Manners wished much to believe that vice or crime, in general, more or less affect the expression of the human face. All this had struck him; and though, as we have said before, he suffered not these impressions to affect his conduct in the least, opposed as they were to known facts, and circumstances of great probability, yet hope still whispered, surely that gipsy was not a man either to plan or to commit so dreadful a deed as the indications he had met with would have naturally led him to suspect. It may well be supposed, then, that the numerous and dark charges brought forward so boldly by the peer startled Manners not a little; and as he had no cause to believe that Lord Dewry was instigated

by any motive to prefer a false accusation against the gipsy, he could only conclude, that he himself had been deceived in his estimation of Pharold's character by the most skilful and consummate hypocrisy.

“ I have heard some of the events to which your Lordship alludes,” he replied, as soon as the peer paused ; “ and was only surprised to hear such an unexpected aggravation of the suspicious circumstances which have already appeared against this man Pharold. I trust, too, that the measures which your Lordship has taken may be successful for his arrest : but allow me to suggest, that the unhappy news which I have had the melancholy duty of communicating ought to point out more extensive operations for the apprehension of the offender ; as it is not at all impossible that this new offence may have entirely changed the circumstances, and may have put a stop to the attack upon your Lordship's park, of which you received intimation.”

Lord Dewry struck his hand upon the table, perceiving suddenly the probability of Colonel Manners's suggestion, and anticipating, with rage and disappointment, the possible escape of the gipsy, or at least his evasion till such time

as the arrival of Sir William Ryder in England might render the schemes he had planned, if not entirely impracticable, at all events highly difficult of execution, and dangerous to himself in the attempt.

“ He shall be taken if it cost me life and fortune,” he exclaimed; “ but how, how? that is the question, Colonel Manners. What you say is true; the murder of my poor unhappy boy may have scared them away from the scene of their crimes, and most probably has done so ere this. What is to be done? how can we trace them? Pray advise me, Colonel Manners, if you had any regard for your unhappy comrade.”

His agitation was dreadful; and Manners saw that the only way to tranquillise him was to give him fresh hopes of the apprehension of those who had been instrumental in the death of his son. “ Most willingly will I give you any advice and assistance in my power,” he replied; “ but your Lordship will be better able to judge what is most fitting to be done, when you hear what I have already endeavoured to accomplish. My proceedings have been those of a soldier, but perhaps they may not be the less likely to be successful on that account.”

“The more, the more,” cried Lord Dewry; “but let me beg you to give me the details.”

“In the first place, my Lord,” he replied, “I have sent my poor friend’s own servant, who is a keen and active fellow, to trace out the gipsies, and to follow the tracks we discovered on the common as far as possible. I have furnished him also with money to hire assistance and to buy information; and I directed him, as soon as his object was accomplished, to join me at Barholm with all speed. He had not, however, arrived when I passed the inn, and I ordered him to be sent on here as soon as ever he appeared.”

“Thank you, thank you, sir,” reiterated Lord Dewry; “but do you think there is any hope of his discovering the road the villains have taken?”

“Every chance, my Lord,” replied Colonel Manners; “in the first place, the tracks of the wheels, and the feet going in one particular direction, was too evident to leave a doubt in regard to which path they had taken at first. That path, I find, leads down to a hamlet where they must have been seen, and where the servant will most probably obtain the means of tracing them farther. But my next step, my

Lord, is, I think, likely to produce the still more desirable result, of placing in the hands of justice the particular individual whom we have the greatest reason to suspect. While we were examining the sand-pit, where these gipsies had been assembled, we discovered some one apparently watching the common from the wood; and whether at first he mistook us for some of his own tribe or not I cannot tell; but he advanced some way towards us. As soon as I saw he was again retreating to the wood, I galloped after him; and though I unfortunately had not time to overtake him, yet I had an opportunity of satisfying myself very nearly to a certainty that this was that very Pharold whom I had once before seen on another occasion. I took measures as soon as possible for having the wood surrounded by a mounted patrol of as many men as it was possible to obtain, and I directed that any one who was apprehended in coming out of it should be instantly carried before Mr. Arden, to whom I had written a concise account of all the circumstances.

The peer mused; for, as in every dark and complicated scheme of villany, the slightest alteration in the events which he had anticipated was likely to produce the most disastrous re-

sults to the schemer. "If Pharold be carried at once before Mr. Arden," thought the peer, "the accusation which he has it in his power to bring against me may be made before I am aware of it, and that, too, to the very man who has the best means of comparing minutely, in the first stages of the proceeding, the present charge with the past circumstances. That the gipsy will ultimately tell his own tale, there can be no doubt; yet to make the first impression is the great object — to be the accuser rather than the accused — to attack rather than defend." With such views, the probability of the gipsy being carried before Mr. Arden ere he had been prepared was any thing but agreeable to the peer; and for a moment the anguish occasioned by his son's death was forgotten, in apprehensions for the failure of his own deep-laid schemes.

"I will write myself to Mr. Arden," he said, at length, after long thought,— "I will write myself, and send off the letter this very night. Colonel Manners, excuse me for one moment. I have but a few lines to write, and will be back with you in a few minutes."

Thus saying, he proceeded to his library, and with a hasty hand wrote down that bold

and decided charge against the gipsy which was to bring the long-apprehended struggle between them to an end at once. Nor did he, in this instance, feel any hesitation. The words had now been spoken to Colonel Manners, — the charge had once been made ; and it is wonderful the difference that exists between the first and second time of doing any thing that is wrong. He wrote, too, though without any effort at policy, yet with the most exquisite art, — with that sort of intuitive cunning which much intercourse with the world, and its worst part, gives to the keen and unscrupulous. He referred, directly, to Mr. Arden's former opinion, concerning the culpability of the gipsy ; he took shame and reproach to himself, for his own incredulity at the time ; he declared, that subsequent events had shown the wisdom and clear-sightedness of the worthy magistrate's judgment, and he finished his letter by directly accusing the gipsy of the crime which Mr. Arden had suspected, doubting not that vanity would establish in the mind of the magistrate, such a prepossession against the object of his wiles as to give every thing in the important first steps that were to ensue a strong tendency against Pharold.

This done, he read the note over with satisfaction, sealed it, and sent it off, raised his head, and gazing upon vacancy, thought, for a moment, over all the stern and painful circumstances that surrounded him, and then turned his steps back to the room where he had left Colonel Manners. He had now, however, made the course he was to pursue irretrievable; his son's death had been the only thing wanting to give all his determinations the energy of despair; he had chosen his path, he had passed the Rubicon, and never hereafter, through the course of this history, will be found in his character any of those fluctuating changes of feeling and resolution which we have endeavoured to depict while his fate was unfixd and his purpose undetermined. Deeply, sternly, from that moment, he pursued his way, driven at length to feel that one crime must be succeeded by many more to render it secure.

“ I have now, Colonel Manners,” he said, as he entered the saloon, “ to apologise for leaving you so unceremoniously ; but you will, I am sure, make excuse for feelings agitated like mine. To guard against the most remote chance of Mr. Arden suffering this Pharold to escape, I have formally made a charge, which I

shall be able to substantiate, I am sure, concerning the death of my poor brother ; and, next, let me beg you to give me your good advice in regard to what more should be done, in case the measures which you and I have separately taken should prove alike insufficient."

" I would not wait, my Lord," replied Manners, " to ascertain whether they were sufficient or not ; but I would instantly take measures to guard against their insufficiency. You have, I think, only three contiguous counties here ; had you not better send off messengers at once to the sheriffs and magistrates of those three, informing them of the circumstances, and begging them to stop any party of gipsies, or any person similar in appearance to this man Pharold ? Your messengers, well mounted, will soon be far in advance of the murderer, or his accessories, whose mode of travelling cannot be very rapid."

The suggestion was no sooner given than it was assented to ; and with all speed the necessary letters were written by the peer, who took as active and energetic a part in the whole proceedings as if he had been in his prime of youth. But it was a part of his character to do so. He could feel deep grief, it is true — and

did feel it for the loss of his son — but grief with him led not to languor and despondency, but, on the contrary, to hate and to revenge ; and as hunger instead of weakening only renders the tiger and the wolf more ferocious and more tremendous, so sorrow, instead of softening, only rendered him more fierce and more vehement. The activity, the energy, and the fire he displayed in his whole proceedings, not a little surprised Colonel Manners ; and had he had time or inclination for any thing like gaiety, he might have smiled to think that he had refused, on account of age, to cross his sword with one who, in passions at least, seemed any thing but an old man. Ere the letters were sealed, however, it was announced that Mr. de Vaux's servant had arrived from Barholm, and enquired for Colonel Manners. With the peer's permission he was brought in ; and bowing low to his master's father, by whom he was well known, he gave a full account of his search in answer to Manners's questions.

“ Well, William,” demanded Manners, “ have you been successful ? ”

“ Yes, sir,” replied the man ; “ I believe I have seen the scoundrels housed, and have left those to watch them who will not watch them in vain.”

A glow of vengeful pleasure passed over the countenance of the peer, and nodding his approbation, he leaned his head on his hand, listening attentively, while Manners proceeded. "Give us the particulars, William," he said. "How did you first discover the gipsies?"

"Why, first, sir, I went back to the sand-pit," replied the man, "and then I followed the tracks of wheels down to the bottom of the hill, by the road that leads to Newtown. At the bottom I found traces up the green lane, and I went on there for a mile, till I came to what they call Newtown Lone; but since I was there last some one has built a cottage there; and I asked the woman in the cottage if she had seen any gipsies, and which way they had gone. She said yes, she had seen them that morning, just after daybreak; but that when they had found a cottage there, they had turned down by the other side of the lone, through the lane that leads out again upon the high road beyond Newtown. So I followed them down there, and I tracked their carts across the high road, up the other lane, till I came to where it splits in two, the one going down to the waterside, and the other sloping up the hill to the common at the back of Dimden

Park. Here there were wheels and footmarks both ways; and, after puzzling a little, I took the way down by the water, thinking they might have gone to lie amongst the banks there, as they used to do when I was a young boy in that neighbourhood. But after looking about for an hour, I could find nothing of them."

"Then where did you find them at last?" demanded the peer, growing somewhat tired of the servant's prolixity; to which, however, Manners, who knew how important every little particular is in obscure circumstances, had listened with patience and attention.

"Why, my Lord," replied the man, "I went back directly to the parting of the roads, and then took the one towards the common, above Dimden, which I had not chosen before; and there I rode on as hard as I could, with the cart ruts and footmarks before me, till I came within about twenty yards of the common. Thereabout, there is a bit of low coppice, with some tall trees in the hedge-row; and my horse picked up a stone, so I got off to clear his hoof; and as I was just going to mount again, I heard some one call in a low voice, 'William! William Butler!' so I looked round, but could

see no one, and I said, ' Well, what do you want? come out of the coppice, if you want me.' So, then, from behind one of the tall trees, where he had planted himself on the look-out, comes Dick Harvey, your Lordship's head park-keeper at Dimden; and he began asking after my health, and all I had seen in foreign parts. So I told him I would answer him another time: but I took leave to ask him in return what he was after, bush-ranging in that way; and he answered, ' Oh, nothing; he was only seeing that all was right.' So, then, I asked him again if he had seen e'er a set of gipsies in that direction; upon which he asked why, and I told him outright. ' Don't go any farther, then,' answered he, ' for the blood-thirsty rascals are lying down there, between the park wall and the common; and it is them that I am watching.' And he told me that he had discovered they were to steal the deer in the park that very night, and had laid a trap for them. However, I did not choose to come away without seeing them myself. So, asking Dick when they had come there, I told him he must get me a sight of them. He said that they had not been there much above an hour; and he took me into the coppice to where he had

been standing himself. There I could see the whole party of them well enough, lying about three hundred yards farther down the park wall, some of them still putting out their tents, some of them sitting on the wall and looking over into the park."

"Was the park-keeper alone?" asked Manners, as the servant paused.

"He was alone just at that minute, sir," replied the man; "but he told me that he had five others within whistle, and that he had sent away the man who had been mounting guard where he then was to bring more. By this time, however, the sun was getting low; and Dick said he was sure enough the gipsies would not budge till they had tried for some of his deer. I told him not to let them go even if they had a mind; and he said to make my mind easy, for that before one o'clock in the morning, he would answer for having the whole party of them in what used to be called the strong-room at Dimden House. I thought therefore, sir, that I could not leave the matter in better hands than his; and I came away here to report myself: but as the horse was very tired I thought it best to take my time."

"You have done well, William," said Lord

Dewry. “ Now go down and get some refreshment.—It seems to me, Colonel Manners,” he added, as the servant retired, a gleam of triumph lighting up his dark countenance,—“ it seems to me that these men are in our power—that they cannot escape us now. It may be unnecessary, therefore, to send the letters which I have written.”

“ I think not,” replied Manners. “ If you will consider a moment, you will see that, although some of the gipsies have been seen in the neighbourhood of your park at Dimden, yet we have no reason to be sure that the very man we seek is with them. Indeed, from the resemblance of the person I saw in the wood to this Pharold, we have some cause to imagine that even if he have joined his companions since, he was not with them in the morning.”

“ You are right, you are right,” said the peer. “ In such a business as this no precautions can, indeed, be superfluous, and I will send off the letters at once.”

The bell was accordingly rung, and the epistles despatched by mounted servants, who each had orders to spare no speed, but to ride all night rather than suffer the communication to be delayed ; nor should we be unwilling to

show how these directions were obeyed, and what sort of speed is commonly practised by persons, on such errands,—how they all and several stopped to drink here, and to gossip there, and to feed at another place,—but that the regular matter of our history is now of some importance.

As soon as the servants had been despatched, Lord Dewry bethought him that Colonel Manners might himself require some refreshment, and apologised for his previous forgetfulness. Manners, however, was fatigued, but not hungry, and he preferred some strong green tea — though not very soldierlike fare — to any thing else that the peer's house could afford. This was soon obtained, and by the time it had been brought and taken away, the clock struck ten.

Manners then rose. “ If your Lordship does not expect news from Dimden to-night,” he said, “ I will now take my leave; but should any thing occur in which I can be of the slightest assistance, if you will send a servant, you will find me at the little town of Barholm, where I have ordered rooms to be prepared for me at the inn.”

No two men that ever lived were more different in mind, in character, in tastes, and

feelings, than Colonel Charles Manners and Lord Dewry; yet, strange to say, the peer did not like the idea of Manners's quitting him. Their views were as distinct as light and darkness; and, though for a moment they were pursuing the same object, could the hearts of both have been seen, how different would have been the spectacle presented — how different from those in the bosom of the other would have been all the springs, and motives, and designs, which actuated and guided each! And yet Lord Dewry felt uneasy when Manners proposed to go. A part of his uneasiness might arise in a dislike to be left alone, in the long, long hours of expectation which were to intervene ere he could hear of the first step, in all his dark and complicated designs, having been safely taken; but there was something more in it too. Manners had assisted him with zeal, and talent, and energy, in the very pursuit which he was following: by an extraordinary concatenation of circumstances, he, unbribed, unbiassed, independent, upright, and noble, had been led to give his whole support to the very first object which the peer had in view; and for which he had already been obliged to hire and to intrigue with the low, and the

mercenary, and the vile; and Lord Dewry felt a support and an encouragement in the presence and assistance of Colonel Manners which a thousand Sir Roger Millingtons could not have afforded. Had he had to explain his views and wishes to Colonel Manners as he had done to Sir Roger Millington, he would have shrunk from the task in shame and fear; but when Manners came willingly forward to aid him voluntarily, even for a few steps on the way he was pursuing, it seemed as if his actions were vouched and justified by the concurrence of so honourable a man.

“ I believe, Colonel Manners,” said the peer in reply, — “ I believe that I am about to make a very extraordinary request; but I really cannot allow you to leave me: a room shall be prepared for you here immediately, and it will be a real consolation to me if you will stay. I shall myself sit up till I hear from Dimden,” he added, in a tone of hesitation, as if he would fain have asked Manners to do the same, had it been courteous; “ but I am afraid that news cannot arrive till between one and two o’clock, and as you must be fatigued, I cannot ask you to be the partner of my watch.”

“ I will be so most willingly, my Lord,” re-

plied Manners; “for though I certainly am fatigued, still I am not sleepy, and I shall be anxious, too, to hear the news as soon as possible.”

They waited, however, longer than they expected—three, four o’clock came, and no tidings arrived. The moments, notwithstanding expectation, flew more calmly than might have been imagined. Lord Dewry, although he knew that there were few subjects on which he could speak with Colonel Manners without meeting feelings and opinions different from any that he now dared to entertain, knew also that there was one topic, and that one very near to his heart at the moment, on which he might discourse at ease. That topic was his son; and on that, — with all his feelings softened, with every asperity done away, and with the pure natural welling forth of parental affection and grief over his deep loss, — on that he conversed during the greater part of the night, effacing from the memory of his companion the rude and disagreeable impression which their first interviews had caused, and leaving little but grief, and sympathy, and regret.

CHAP. VII.

FROM sunset till about nine o'clock there had been a light refreshing rain, — not one of those cold autumnal pours, which leave the whole world dark, and drenched, and dreary, but the soft falling of light, pellucid drops, that scarcely bent the blades of grass on which they rested, and through which, ever and anon, the purple of the evening sky, and—as that faded away—the bright glance of a brilliant star, might be seen amidst the broken clouds. Towards nine, however, the vapours that rested upon the eastern uplands became tinged with light; and, as if gifted with the power of scattering darkness from her presence, forth came the resplendent moon, while the dim clouds grew pale and white as she advanced, and, rolling away over the hills, left the sky all clear. It required scarcely a fanciful mind to suppose that—in the brilliant shining of the millions of drops which hung on every leaf and rested on every bough—in the glistening ripple of the river that rolled in waves of silver through the

plain—in the checkered dancing of the light and shadow through the trees, and in the sudden brightening up of every object throughout the scene which could reflect her beams,—it required scarcely a fanciful mind to suppose that the whole world was rejoicing in the soft splendour of that gentle watcher of the night, and gratulating her triumph over the darkness and the clouds.

It was a beautiful sight on that night, as, indeed, it ever is, to see the planet thus change the aspect of all things in the sky and on the earth; but, perhaps, the sight was more beautiful in Dimden Park than any where around. The gentleman's park is, likewise, one of those things peculiarly English, which are to be seen nowhere else upon the earth; at least we venture to say that there is nothing at all like it in three out of the four quarters of this our globe,—the wide grassy slopes, the groups of majestic trees, the dim flankings of forest ground, broken with savannas and crossed by many a path and many a walk, the occasional rivulet or piece of water, the resting-place, the alcove, the ruin of the old mansion where our fathers dwelt now lapsed into the domain of time, but carefully guarded from any hands but

his, with here and there some slope of the ground or some turn of the path bringing us suddenly upon a bright and unexpected prospect of distant landscapes far beyond,—“all nature and all art!” There is nothing like it on the earth, and few things half so beautiful; for it is tranquil without being dull, and calm without being cheerless: but of all times, when one would enjoy the stillness and the serenity at its highest pitch, go forth into a fine old park by moonlight.

The moon, then, on the night of which we have lately been speaking, within half an hour after her rise, shone full into the park, and poured her flood of splendour over the wide slopes, glittering with the late rain, along the winding paths and gravel walks, and through between the broad trunks of the oaks and beeches. The autumn had not yet so far advanced as to make any very remarkable difference in the thickness of the foliage: but still some leaves had fallen from the younger and tenderer plants, so that the moonbeams played more at liberty upon the ground beneath, and the trees themselves had been carefully kept so far apart, that any one standing under their shadow—except, indeed, in the thickets reserved as coverts for the deer—had a view far over the

open parts of the park ; and, if the eye took such a direction, could descry the great house itself on one hand, or, on the other side, the park-keeper's cottage, situated on a slight slope that concealed it from the windows of the mansion. At the same time, though any one thus placed beneath the old trees—either the clumps which studded the open ground, or the deeper woods at the extremes—could see for a considerable distance around, yet it would have been scarcely possible for anybody standing in the broad moonlight to distinguish other persons under the shadow of the branches, unless, indeed, they came to the very verge of the wooded ground. This became more particularly the case as the moon rose higher, and the crossing and interlacing of the shadows in the woodland was rendered more intricate and perplexed, while the lawns and savannas only received the brighter light.

At a little before eleven o'clock, then, by which time the moon had risen high in the heaven, a rustling and scraping sound might have been heard by any one standing near that wall of the park which separated it from the neighbouring common, and in a moment after, the head and shoulders of a man appeared

above the parapet. He gave a momentary glance into the walk which was immediately contiguous, and then swinging himself over, dropped at once to the ground. Pausing again, he looked round him more carefully; and then gave a low whistle. No one followed, however, and the intruder, who was apparently a lad of eighteen or nineteen, advanced cautiously across the walk, and was soon placed beneath the shadow of the tall elms. Every two or three minutes the lad paused to look around him; but as his eyes were more frequently bent upon the ground than raised, it appeared that he rather feared losing his way than apprehended the appearance of any other person in the place to which he had somewhat furtively introduced himself. Humming a tune as he advanced, he approached that part of the park from which, as we have before said, a view could be obtained both of the mansion and the park-keeper's house; and here, fixing his eyes upon the latter, he seated himself at the foot of a sturdy chestnut tree at a little distance within the extreme edge of the wood.

There was a wreath of white smoke still curling up from the chimney of the peaceful looking dwelling of the park-keeper; and

through two of the cottage casements a full yellow light was streaming, so that it was evident enough that some of the inmates were up and awake. For about half an hour the young man kept his post with perseverance and tranquillity, ceasing to hum the air with which he had amused himself as he came along, and apparently regarding nothing but the cottage of the park-keeper.

At the end of that time, however, he rose, muttering, "I'll stay here no longer. I might as well have been with Lena all this while. If Dick would but wait till one o'clock, they would be all abed to a certainty;" and he walked two or three steps, resolutely, away. Ere he was out of sight, he, nevertheless, turned to look once more. The light was still burning; but as he was in the very act of resuming his retreat, it was totally extinguished; and nothing was to be seen but the dark outline of the cottage in the clear moonlight. He now paused again for a moment or two, to be sure of the facts; and then retracing his way as fast as possible to the particular part of the wall over which he had obtained ingress, he stopped and whistled louder than before. For some minutes there was no reply, and he then whistled again, which instantly produced a corresponding signal

from without, and a voice demanded, "Is all right?"

"Ay, ay, Dick," replied the lad, carelessly; "all's right—come along." The moment after, another head and shoulders appeared above the wall; and the gipsy whom we have seen with the old woman called Mother Gray, scheming the destruction of the deer belonging to some of the neighbouring gentry, swung himself up to the top of the wall, and gazed round with a more anxious and careful face than that displayed by his younger comrade.

When he had satisfied himself by examination, he handed over two guns to his companion, who was within the park; and then, dropping down again on the inside, gazed round him with more trepidation than his bold and confident language would have led one to anticipate. He was not alone, however; for no sooner had he effected his descent than three others, each also armed with an old rude fowling-piece, followed from without; and a whispered consultation took place in regard to their farther proceedings.

"Where did you see the deer herding tonight, Will?" demanded their leader; "I mean at sunset."

“ Oh, those I saw were down at the far end of the park,” replied the boy, “ a mile off and more ; up this wall will lead us.”

“ The farther off the better,” replied Dickon ; “ are all your guns loaded ?”

An answer was given in the affirmative ; and, led by Dickon and the lad William, the party of gipsies crept stealthily along the walk that proceeded under the wall to the far extremity of the park. Once or twice the leader stopped and listened, and once he asked in a low tone, “ Did you not hear a noise ? there to the left !” No sound, however, was heard by his companions, who paused as he paused, and gave breathless attention with bended head and listening ear. A light breeze stirred the tree tops, and a leaf would now and then fall through the branches, but nothing else was to be distinguished ; and as they passed the end of many a vista and moonlight alley, and looked cautiously out, nothing which could excite the least apprehension was perceivable, and they walked on, gaining greater courage as every step familiarised them more to their undertaking. By the time they had reached the end of the park wall, they ventured to carry on their consultation in a louder tone ; and they also turned more

into the heart of the wood, following paths with which none of them seemed very thoroughly acquainted, and the perplexity of which often caused them to halt or to turn back, in order to reach the spot which they had fixed upon for the commencement of their exploits amongst the deer.

The lad Will, however, who had apparently reconnoitred the park by daylight, at length led them right; and taking a small footway towards the east, they found themselves suddenly upon the edge of an opening in the wood, through the midst of which ran a stream of clear water. A space of about five acres was here left without a tree; but on every side were deep groves of old chestnuts, and to the east some thick coverts of brushwood. It became necessary now to ascertain the direction of the wind, lest the deer should scent their pursuers, and take another road; and for this purpose, wetting his finger in the water, Dickon held it up high, till he discovered by the coldness that ensued which side it was that the wind struck. As soon as this important point was known, he disposed his companions in separate stations, but each by one of the old chestnuts, in such a manner and at such distances as would render it impossible for the deer to cross the open space before them

without receiving one or more shots from some of his party. The sort of sport in which he was now employed seemed not altogether unfamiliar to the gipsy Dickon ; whose instructions, if oral rather than practical, must have been very accurate and minute, as he wanted none of the skill or knowledge of an old sportsman.

As soon as his men were all properly disposed, and he had likewise taken up his own position in the most favourable spot that the place afforded, he sought out upon the ground a beech leaf, and having found one with some difficulty, bent it in the middle, and applied it to his lips. A quick percussion of the breath upon the bent leaf instantly produced a sound exactly resembling the cry of a young doe. After calling thus once or twice, he ceased, and all was attention ; but no noise followed to indicate that any of the horned dwellers in the wood had heard or gave attention to the sound. Dickon again made the experiment, and again waited in breathless expectation, but without avail. After a lapse of some minutes the beech-leaf was once more employed, and the next instant a slight rustling sound was heard amongst the bushes beyond. The poacher repeated his cry, and there was then evidently a rush through the brushwood ;

but the moment after all was again still, and he began to think that the buck had scented them and taken fright.

In a minute more, however, not from the bushes, but from the opposite chestnut trees, which the low wood joined, trotted forth, at an easy pace, a tall splendid deer, bearing his antlered head near the ground, as if trying to scent out the path of his mate, whose voice he had heard. The moment he came into the full moonlight, however, he stood at gaze, as it is called, raising his proud head and looking steadfastly before him. Then, turning to the right and to the left, he seemed striving to see the object that he had not been able to discover by the smell; but, as he was still too far distant for any thing like a certain shot, Dickon once more ventured a low solitary call upon the beech leaf. Had it been loud, or repeated more than once, the poor animal was near enough to have detected the cheat; but as it was, he was deceived, and trotting on for fifty yards more, again stood at gaze, with his head turned towards the trees under which the poacher was standing. Dickon quietly raised his gun, aimed deliberately, and fired just as the buck was again moving forward. The ball struck the deer directly below the horns, and

bounding up full four feet from the ground, he fell dead upon the spot where he had been standing.

All the gipsies were now rushing forward to see their prize, but Dickon called them back; and keeping still under the shade of the trees, he made his way round to them severally, saying, "We must have another yet. Let him lie there! let him lie! That one shot has not been loud enough to scare the rest; and I am sure there is a herd there down at the end of the copse: so we must have another, at all events; and if we go making a noise about that one, we shall frighten them. You, Bill, go round under those trees for five or six hundred yards, and then come into the thicket, and beat it up this way."

Bill did not undertake the task without grumbling and remonstrance; asserting that every thing that was tiresome was put upon him, while Dickon and the rest had the sport. A little persuasion, however, overcame his resistance, and he set off accordingly to perform the part assigned to him. The others, in the mean time, resumed their places, and now had to wait a longer time than at first; for the youth, not very well inclined to the

task, was any thing but quick in his motions. At the end of a quarter of an hour, however, a rustle and then a rush was heard in the bushes; and then the bounding sound of deer in quick flight, and in a moment after, the whole herd sprang into the moonlight, and crossed the open ground at the full canter. They came fairly within shot of two of the gipsies in their passage, and two guns were instantly discharged. Both took effect; but one of the deer was only wounded, and was struggling up again, when the whole body of poachers rushed forward and ended its sufferings with the knife.

“ Now, now !” cried Dickon, hastily recharging his gun, “ we have got enough for once, I think : let us be off as soon as we can. We can hitch the venison over that nearest wall,” and he turned to point in the direction to which he referred; but the sight that met his eyes at that moment almost made the powder flask, with which he was in the act of priming, fall from his hands. Advancing from the chestnut trees, under which he himself had just been standing, was a party consisting of at least twelve strong men, apparently well armed, and he at once saw that all chance of escape, for himself and

his comrades, without a struggle, was over, as the keepers were coming up between them and the common; while on the other side lay the thick bushes from which the deer had issued, and in which his party must be entangled and taken, if they attempted to fly in that direction, and to the westward, beyond the chestnut trees, were the river and the park-keeper's house. Now, however, that the matter was inevitable, Dickon showed more resolution than he had hitherto done. "Stand to it, my men!" he cried: "they have nosed us, by ——! there's no running now; we must make our way to that corner, or we're done."

His companions instantly turned at his exclamation; and whatever might be their internal feelings, they showed nothing but a dogged determination to resist to the last. The man who had fired the last shot instantly thrust a bullet into his gun, which he had already charged with powder; and giving up their slain game for lost, the poachers advanced towards the angle of the wood nearest to the park wall, keeping in a compact body, and crossing the front of the other party in an oblique line. The keepers, however, hastened to interpose, and came up just in time to prevent their opponents from reaching the trees.

Thus, then, at the moment that they mutually faced round upon each other, the left of the gipsies and the right of their adversaries touched the wood, but the odds were fearfully in favour of the gamekeepers.

“ Come, come, my masters, down with your arms ! ” cried Harvey, the head keeper ; “ it’s no use resisting : do you not see we are better than two to one ? ”

The first reply was the levelling of the gipsies’ fowling pieces ; and notwithstanding the superiority of numbers, and the anticipation of resistance, the keepers drew a step or two back : for under such circumstances no one can tell whose the chance may be ; and the thought of unpleasant death will have its weight till the blood is warm. “ Stand off ! ” cried Dickon, boldly : “ master keeper, let us go free, or take the worst of it ! We leave you your venison, and a good half ounce bullet in each buck, to pay for our pastime ; but be you sure, that the guns which sent those bullets can send others as true, and will send them very speedily, if you try to stop us.”

“ A bold fellow, upon my honour ! ” cried Sir Roger Millington, advancing, and standing calmly before the very muzzles of the gipsies’ guns. “ But, hark ye, my good man, you

came to get the venison ; we came to get you ; and, as we are rather more in number than you, it is not probable we shall let you escape. However, I will tell you what — to spare bloodshed, we will come to a compromise with you.”

“ You are the spy of a fellow, are you not,” cried Dickon, “ who came this evening asking for Pharold ? Well, my knowing cove, be you sure the first shot fired you shall have one.”

“ But he speaks of a compromise, Dickon,” cried one of his companions, lowering the gun a little from his shoulder ; “ better hear what he has to say.”

“ Don’t you believe a word,” cried Dickon ; “ he’s a cheat, and will only humbug you if you listen to him. We can bring four of them down at all events, and then must take our chance with the but-ends of our pieces.”

“ Yes, yes, listen to him,” cried another of the gipsies. “ What have you to say about a compromise ?”

“ Simply this, my men,” replied Sir Roger, who had still kept his place, unconcernedly, within a couple of yards of the gipsies’ guns ; “ if you will lay down your arms and surrender, we will make a bargain with you, that we will let each one free on account of the

deer-stealing, against whom we cannot bring some other charge."

Sir Roger's purpose was to catch Pharold: but he had not accurately calculated upon the state of a gipsy's conscience; and as each man present very well knew that something else — if not many other things — might be justly laid to his charge, the proposed arrangement was any thing but satisfactory to the poachers. Nor was it more to the taste of Harvey and the other keepers, who had not been empowered by their employer to make any such compromise.

"No, no, sir," cried Harvey aloud; "that wo'n't do. My Lord gave me no authority to make such a bargain. I dare say you came from him; for, indeed, no one else could tell you all about it: but howsoever I can't consent to that. No, no, I cry off. Damme, lay down your arms, my lads, or we will fire on you directly."

"Take that, then," cried Dickon, pulling the trigger of his gun, the report of which was followed instantly by those of the fowling-pieces in the hands of the other gipsies, though at the very same moment — or rather, indeed, before the guns were discharged — a loud voice was heard

shouting from a distance, "Do not fire, villains! Dickon, I command you not to fire!"

Sir Roger Millington, and one of the keepers, dropped instantly; and a good deal of confusion took place amongst their party, though a straggling and ill-directed fire was returned, which only wounded one of the gipsies slightly. In less than a moment, however, the keepers had recovered themselves; and hurrying the wounded behind, were rushing on to close with their adversaries before they could reload, when a reinforcement of eleven or twelve strong men appeared behind the small party of the gipsies, and Pharold, rushing forward, thrust Dickon vehemently back, exclaiming, "Mad fool! you have ruined us all for ever! Hold back!" he continued, addressing the keepers in the same stern and imperative voice, "hold back, fools! we are too many for you. Richard Harvey, when you plotted to entrap these poor foolish young men, you should have secured the means of taking them. But get you gone while you may! We are too many for you, I tell you; and you know of old, I am not one to trifle with."

"I know you of old, sure enough, Master Pharold," replied the head keeper, running his

eye doubtfully over the group of powerful men who now stood before him. "I know you of old, and I know you now; and one thing more I know, that you will come to be hanged before the year be many weeks older: I know that too, Master Pharold."

"Lift me up! lift me up!" cried a faint voice behind. "Lift me up, fellows, I say! I want to see him!" and in compliance with this command, one or two of the men who had accompanied the keepers raised Sir Roger Millington in their arms, and brought him a little forward, so that he could obtain a sight of what was passing. He gazed intently upon Pharold, who was still standing prominent, waving the head-keeper and his party back with the air more of a prince than of one in his station and class. But the knight was unable to continue his observation of what was passing for more than a moment, as the agony he seemed to be suffering — although he had sufficient power over himself to prevent any expression of pain from escaping his lips — caused him to writhe so dreadfully, that after one brief, stern glance at the gipsy, he slipped out of the arms of those who supported him, and fell again to the ground. The sight of what he suffered, however was not

without its effect upon the keepers. Had they known him, and been interested in his fate, it might, indeed, have stirred them up to greater exertions in order to avenge the injury he had sustained; but unknown and indifferent as he was to all of them, his situation but served as an example of what they might themselves encounter if they persisted in their attack of the gipsies; and Harvey, who was the best inclined of the party to undertake the risk, soon gathered from the countenances of his companions that he would be but feebly supported, if not abandoned, in any farther attempt.

Unwilling, however, to yield the task he had undertaken, and inspired as much by sincere hatred towards the gipsies as by hope of recompense from his lord, he lingered, still glaring upon Pharold and his companions; and every now and then, in the bitterness of his disappointment, uttering such words as were likely to draw the adverse party themselves on to the attack, which he feared to make upon them. “ You are a pretty set of blackguards ! ” he exclaimed. “ It would do my heart good to see you all hanged up in a row ; why can’t you mind your kettles, and not come stealing other folks deer ? You go kidnapping people’s children, you

do, you thieves of human flesh ! Ah, you'll not go long unchanged, that's one comfort !”

Pharold's lip gradually curled into a look of bitter scorn ; and, turning to one of his elder comrades, he whispered a few words to him, and a movement was instantly made on the part of the gipsies themselves to evacuate the ground. They performed their retreat, however, slowly, and in good order ; four of the party, directed by Pharold, bringing up the rear, and facing round upon the keepers whenever they approached, so as to render their flight secure. Harvey, with several of his companions, followed, somewhat encouraged by the sight of a retreating enemy ; but two or three of the more charitable remained with Sir Roger Millington and the wounded keeper, though the latter was only slightly injured. At every two or three steps, also, as the others advanced in the pursuit, either weariness of the business altogether, or the better part of valour, caused one or two of the head park-keeper's comrades to fall off, and return to the spot where they had left the wounded men. Thus by the time the gipsies reached the park wall, only three persons followed Harvey ; and Pharold, somewhat irritated by his close pursuit,

turned round upon him with not the most placable expression in the world. In truth, he had been crossed and pained; and, for a moment, the evil spirit, which has a secret tabernacle in the heart of every one, came forth, and thought that the dominion was all his own. But the gipsy drove back the fiend; and restraining his inclination to take vengeance on the keeper, he merely commanded him, sternly, not to advance another step, till all his people had cleared the wall. Harvey only replied by imprecations, and Pharold calmly proceeded to station four of the gipsies, who had guns, upon the top of the wall to protect the retreat of the others. Then, one by one, the gipsies passed over, their leader following the last, and the keeper, after giving way to one or two bursts of impotent wrath, turned on his heel, and joined his companions.

Pharold and his party proceeded in silence to their encampment, which was not far distant, when, to the surprise of those who had been engaged in the deer-stealing, they found every thing prepared for instant departure. The horses were to their carts, the tents were packed up, and only one fire appeared lighted, beside which old Mother Gray and the other women,

protected by only one man, were standing, watching with somewhat downcast countenances the solitary pot which was suspended above it. This group made instant way for Pharold and his comrades; and the former advancing into the midst, folded his arms upon his breast, and bending his brows sternly upon the old woman, he said, after a bitter pause, — “ See, woman, what your instigations have produced, — strife, bloodshed, murder; and, very likely, ultimately, the death of this poor fool, who suffered himself to be led by your bad counsels — very likely, his death upon the gallows!”

“ A very good death, too,” muttered the beldame, sullenly and low. “ His father died the same.”

“ For you, Dickon,” said Pharold, not noticing her speech, — “ for you, however ill you may have acted, your punishment is like to fall upon you soon; but you must hear my reproaches too. You have scorned authority throughout your life — you have forgotten the laws and habits of your fathers — you belong not to our people. Here we must all separate into small bodies, and take different ways, to avoid the consequences of your faults; but you shall go out from amongst us for ever, never to

return. Answer me not, but hear! Had I not, by returning sooner than you expected, learned your errand, and hastened with the wiser and better of our people to stay your folly, and to bring you back — had I not come up in time, not, indeed, to prevent your crime, but to rescue you from the consequences, you would now have been lying, tied hand and foot, and waiting to be judged by those who hold us in hatred and contempt. From that you have been saved; but you must fly far, and conceal yourself well, to make such safety permanent. Go from us, then, go from us! and with whatever race of men you hereafter mingle — whether abjuring your people, as you have violated their rules, or whether seeking again some other tribe of the Romanicheel race — let the memory of all the evil that follows disobedience to those who have a right to command you, keep you from follies like those you have this night committed.”

Pharold paused, and one of the other gipsies whispered a word in his ear. “ True!” he said, “ true! as he has to wander far and long, he must not go unprovided. We will all contribute to help him.”

“ No, no!” murmured Dickon, with his head

sunk, and his eyes bent upon the ground, "no, no! I can do without." But the collection amongst the gipsies was made without giving any attention to his words. Each contributed something from the part he had received in the distribution of the preceding evening, and a considerable sum was thus collected. Pharold, perhaps, feeling that the boon from his hand would come poisoned, suffered one of his companions to give the money to the culprit, and then proceeded:—"Go forth, Dickon! go forth! I warned you long ago—I counselled you, while counsel might avail; you heeded not my warning, you rejected my counsel! the time is past; and I have only now to bid you go forth from among us for ever!"

With his head still bent, and his eyes upon the ground, Dickon took two or three steps away from the rest. He then turned, and raising his head, fixed his eyes upon Pharold, apparently struggling to speak. Words, however, failed him: the stern glance of their leader met his, calm but reproachful; and suddenly turning a look full of fury at the old bel-dame, who had misled him, the unhappy young man shook his hand at her, with a loud and bitter curse, and bounded away over the common.

“ And now,” said Pharold, turning to his companions, “ let us separate quickly, to the east, and the west, and the north, and the south, in the same parties into which we had divided ourselves last night, before the unfortunate accident made us change our plans. Let us travel rapidly and long, for be sure that we are followed by many and keen pursuers, who will spare neither gold nor speed to catch us. Let all of us that are alive meet this day three months at our old tryste on Cheviot ; and we may then, perhaps, pursue our way in peace.”

While he spoke, a light hand was laid upon his coat ; and, as he ended, he found the beautiful eyes of Lena looking up in his face, with a glance of mingled apprehension and irresolution, as if she wished but feared to speak. “ What is it, Lena ?” he demanded. “ You, of course, go with me and mine.”

“ But William !” said Lena in a timid voice, “ William !”

Pharold’s brow contracted. “ He goes with Brown !” he said sternly. “ What is it to you ?” She coloured highly, and cast down her eyes ; but still replied, “ Nothing, nothing, but where is he, I meant to ask ? He went with Dickon

and the rest—they made him go—and he has not returned.”

Pharold started and looked round, anxiously searching with his eyes for the lad amongst the groups that stood near, over whose wild countenances and figures the declining moon, and the half-extinguished fire, were casting together a flickering and uncertain light. “Where is William?” he exclaimed, at length, turning to one of the men, who had accompanied Dickon on his predatory excursion against the deer; “I saw but four of you when I came up. Where was William then?”

“Dickon had sent him round into the copse, a quarter of a mile off, to drive up the deer,” replied the man; “but I am afraid they have caught him, for I heard a bit of a struggle in that direction, as we were making for the wall.”

Pharold clasped his hands, in angry disappointment. “We must not leave the poor boy,” he said: “I for one will stay at any risk, and try to help him.”

“And I, and I, and I!” cried all the gipsies.

“Well, then,” said Pharold, “we must take means to make them think that we are gone; so that the nearer we lie to them the more

completely will they be deceived. The wood on the other side of the common is thicker than any where else. Thither away, my men, on foot—all but five of you. Let those five take the carts down, by the back of the park, to the river. Turn them as if you were going down the road that leads along the bank. Then take out the horses and carry the carts over the gravel to the ford, so that no wheel-marks be seen. Put the horses in again when that is done; but mind to fill up the hoof prints with fresh gravel. Thus they will lose your track. You then take the ford and cross the river. The water is low, and you can drive along the gravel bank, on the other side, for near a mile, keeping in the water all the way. When it gets deep again take the road, and crossing back by the bridge, come round to the wood by Morley Road. Do you understand?"

"Yes, yes, I do," replied the man he had called Brown. "I know the country well. But where go you, Pharold, yourself?"

"I go back into the park to seek the boy," replied the gipsy, "and will join you all in the wood before daybreak. But, on your lives, keep to that wood behind us there; and go not near Morley Common, or Morley Wood; for there are people on the watch there already."

I should have been back in time to have prevented all this, had they not penned me in, in that very wood."

"Well, well, we will do your bidding, Pharold," replied Brown. "You are a brave heart, and always take the danger upon yourself."

"Quick, quick, then," replied the gipsy; "there is no time to be lost. Sarah Brown, take care of Lena; and see that that old woman," he added sternly, pointing to Mother Gray, "works no more mischief amongst us. Bad has been the fruit which all the seed of her planting has, hitherto, borne. You lead them to the wood, Wilson, and light a fire, that I may see the smoke as I come back."

So saying, he sought in one of the carts for a moment; and drawing forth what is called a cut-and-thrust sword, buckled it under his coat, took the path to the lowest part of the park wall, and, vaulting over, was lost to the sight of his companions.

His orders, however, were now as promptly obeyed as if he had been present. Each of the gipsies, who were destined immediately for the wood, hastened to unload the carts as fast as possible. The women took their children on their backs, and large bundles in their hands: the men charged themselves with the heavier

packages; and the carts, greatly lightened, having set off in the direction assigned to them, the rest of the party proceeded across the common towards the wood. They set off silently, and in straggling parties, that their footsteps might not betray their path; but they had not gone far ere the tongue of the old woman was heard, addressing one of the men who walked near her, at first in few words and a low tone, but gradually increasing in power and volubility, as it became encouraged by its own sound.

“He’s a cruel, hard hand, that Pharold,” said she, looking carefully round; but her companion made no reply, and she went on. “It’s a hard thing for poor Dickon to be sent out to starve or be hanged, just because he was a spirity lad, and had different notions from that Pharold.” Still the other was silent. “I often do wonder,” she continued, “how a number of strong hearty men, every one a better man than Pharold, should submit to be led, and bullied, and ill-treated, by an ill-looking thief like that, only because he comes from our old Dukes that are dead and gone.* It’s all your

* The gipsies of all countries still hold the persuasion that they were originally led into Europe by persons whom they term Dukes or Lords of Upper Egypt.

own faults. If two or three of you were but to lay your heads together, and to say——”

“Come, come, you old rip,” broke forth the man, angrily, “none of such talk to me, if you have not a mind to be pitched into that pond. Hold your tongue now, and give us no more of it. I am not one of your Dickons to be made a fool of; and if I hear you saying another word of such matters, I will have you sent after him you have got turned out from amongst us.”

Muttering a few words, about “tame fools,” Mother Gray slunk behind, and for a little while walked on in silence, only interrupted by occasional internal grunts and growls, expressive of her dissatisfaction and wrath. From time to time, however, she cast her eyes towards the straggling parties of her companions to the right and left; and for a while her attention seemed principally directed towards a group of two or three, who walked on immediately upon her right, and amongst whom was one of those who had accompanied Dickon in his unfortunate expedition. But on the left, again, was a line of four or five other gipsies, principally women, followed by Lena, two or three steps behind the rest, with a large handkerchief cast over her

head, and tied beneath her chin, in a manner which would have concealed the greater part of her beautiful face, even if it had been day, but which now served to veil it entirely from all observation. Her head leaned forward, however : — it was evident, too, that her eyes were cast upon the ground ; and from these, and many another little symptom, the beldame, as she gazed upon her, concluded, and concluded rightly, that she was weeping. She hesitated no longer which of the two parties to join ; but dropping slowly behind, she sidled quietly up to Lena, almost unperceived by the girl herself. After walking on a step or two by her side in silence, she ventured to say in a dolorous and sympathising tone, “ Poor Bill ! only to think ! ”

Lena started, and for a moment said nothing in reply ; but after a while she asked, “ Do you think they have caught him, Mother Gray ? ”

“ Ay, ay, they must have grabbed him,” replied the other, “ else he would ha’ been back ’afore this time. Poor Bill ! he was as handsome a spirity young chick as ever I set eyes on.”

There was something in hearing him spoken of in the past tense, as of one gone for ever, that brought a deep sigh from Lena’s bosom ;

and the old worker of mischief went on, satisfied that she was now, at least, upon the right track. "Ah, poor Bill," she said, "there was only one that was fit to match with him among us; and she was snapped up by a kite, before her right mate could come to her."

Lena took no notice of her allusion, though it was sufficiently direct; but asked, "What do you think they will do to him, Mother Gray, if they have caught him?"

"Hang him, perhaps," replied the old woman, "or at all events send him to what they call the colonies, to work their work like a slave—that's to say, if no one gets him out; but if he is so minded, Pharold, who is so sharp, will get him out fast enough."

"If Pharold can get him out," replied Lena, rousing herself at the name of one whom she revered, if she did not love,— "if Pharold can get him out, he will not be long in."

"I dare say not," replied the old woman, "if it be not too dangerous, and cost too much time and trouble; and then Pharold, you know, will not like to risk the other people to save poor Bill,— unless, indeed, some one coaxes him to do it."

"But how can I speak to him about it?"

demanded Lena, holding down her head; "he would only give me hard words if I did, as he did to-night."

"But Lena might risk a little for poor Bill," rejoined the other; "I know Bill would risk his life for her." Lena was silent; and after a pause of some minutes the old woman went on, in a low voice almost sunk to a whisper. "Come, come, my pretty Lena," she said, "do try your hand with Pharold; else poor William may lie there for months in prison, with nothing to comfort him but songs about Lena—which he will sing sweetly enough, poor chap—and then may go to the gallows thinking of her. Do you think I do not see and know, my chick, all that is going on?"

"Then you see and know, Mother Gray, that I want to do nothing wrong," replied the girl, turning half round upon her.

"Yes, but I saw you, Lena, when you stood by the park wall this evening," replied the beldame, "talking to Will for half an hour; and do you think I do not know what is in your heart, my pretty Lena?"

"Then why should I strive to get him out of prison at all?" said Lena, in a melancholy tone. "It is better that he were away; and I

can tell you what, Mother Gray, it was I made Pharold determine to send him away with Brown's people rather than have him along with us."

"And I can tell you what, too, Lena," replied the old woman, "I saw you standing together by the wall, and I saw him come away, and I am very sure that it was because you were unkind to him that he went with Dickon and his people after the deer; so that it was your fault that he went at all, and your fault that he got into prison; so you should but help him out of it."

What Lena might have replied, Heaven knows: but at the moment she was about to speak, she was interrupted by the approach of others of the tribe; and the whole party shortly after entered the wood, and took up their camp in one of the deepest and most unfrequented spots that it contained.

In the mean time, Pharold had, as we have seen, entered the park; and here he spent the whole hours of moonlight that remained, in searching for the youth who had accompanied Dickon and his companions. He searched, however, in vain; and although he often risked the low peculiar whistle which he knew would

be recognised by his fellow-gipsy, yet no sound was returned from any quarter. Long and anxiously did he seek — the more anxiously, perhaps, because he felt that some undefined feelings of dislike and animosity had lately been rising in his bosom towards the unfortunate youth, who had now, apparently, become the sacrifice for the faults of others. With much disappointment and regret, then, he saw at length the morning dawn; and certain that had the youth escaped he would by this time have joined the rest, he prepared to quit a place in which any longer delay might prove dangerous to himself, and could be of no service to him he sought.

There was, however, in his bosom, a mis-doubting in regard to the lad's fate, an apprehensive uncertainty, which moved him, perhaps, more than if he had been assured of his capture; and ere he quitted the park, he approached as near as possible to the mansion, to see if any such signs of unusual bustle were apparent, as might furnish information to a mind habituated to extract their meaning rapidly from every vague and transient indication that met his eyes. As he stood beneath the trees, the first thing he beheld was a boy

run up the steps of the house, and Pharold instantly concluded that it was a messenger returned with some news. The moment after three or four men issued forth ; but instead of taking any of the roads that led from the house, they began to traverse the lawn between the mansion and the nearest point of the park wall. One man halted half way between, the others went on ; but at the first trees again another paused, and Pharold thought, “ They have discovered me, and think to surround me, but they will find themselves mistaken ;” and with a quick, stealthy step, he glided through the wood toward the angle of the park next to the common. None of his senses, however, slept on such occasions ; and ere he had emerged from the bushes, his ear caught the sound of low voices, speaking in the very direction which he was taking, showing him that he had been discovered and pursued before he had perceived it, though the persons who were now before him must have come from the gamekeeper’s house, and not from the mansion. Wheeling instantly, he retreated in a direction which led to one of the most open parts of the park ; but Pharold was well aware of what he did, and knew the ground even better than those who

followed him. As soon as he reached the savanna, he emerged at once from the trees, and with a quick step began to traverse the green. A man who had been stationed at the angle instantly caught sight of him, and gave at once the shout which had been appointed as a signal. The other keepers came up at a quick pace, narrowing the half circle in which they had disposed themselves, and penning the gipsy in between their body and the river. He scarcely hastened his pace, but allowed them to come nearer and nearer, till at length his purpose seemed to strike the head keeper suddenly; and, with a loud imprecation, he called upon the man nearest the water to close upon the object of their pursuit, adding, "He is a devil of a swimmer!" But Pharold had been suffered to go too far. He sprang forward at once to the bank, plunged in without a pause, and in a few strokes carried himself to the other side, where, amidst thick brushwood and young plantations, he was perfectly secure from all pursuit.

CHAP. VIII.

I KNOW no reason why we—the readers and the writer—should not now quit those characters which have lately been occupying us and return to others not less worthy of our care, till we have brought their actions and their feelings up to the same point of time whereunto we have conducted our other personages. The best form—perhaps I might say the most classical—in which a tale like the present can be related, with the exception of the autobiographical, is the dramatic; and holding strongly with the liberty accorded to British dramatists against the straight-waistcoat of Aristotelian unities, I believe that he who sits down to write a book like this has as much right to shift his scene and change his characters when he pleases as a playwright.

The necessity of so doing exists in the very state of being in which we live in relation to one another. Every day we find that in five or six families—the actions of each of which have mutually a great influence on the others—events are occurring, and words are being spoken,

which bring about great and important results in the general fate and relative position of those five or six families, and, in fact, work out their united history, without one house knowing at the time what was doing in the other. The task, then, of the writer, if he would follow the best of guides—nature—is to take such a group of five or six families, whose fate some common bond of union has linked together; and, changing from house to house as soon as the interest of the events in each requires the scene to be shifted, to paint what he there sees passing; and thus in a series of pictures to give the general history of the whole. Stupid must be the man, and impotent the imagination, weak the judgment, and treacherous the memory, which cannot bear the change of scene without a long refresher in regard to the people about to be seen again, or the events of which the writer is once more going to take up the thread!

Could not this change be made, the circumstances which were taking place at Morley House, and, what is still more important, the feelings which were thrilling in the bosoms of its inhabitants, would of necessity be all left untold, or be related in a long unnatural *resumé*. In truth, the feelings of which we speak are worth some con-

sideration ; as feelings, indeed, always are : for, could one write the history of man's heart and its motives, how much more interesting, and instructive too, would the record be, than the brightest volume that ever was written upon man's actions !

For some time after Colonel Manners quitted Morley House, Marian de Vaux continued to sleep under the influence of strong opiates, which the medical man had found it necessary to give her in the morning. Whether he did right or wrong—whether it would have been better to let her meet grief boldly face to face, or was better to shield her from the violence of its first attack—each must judge as he feels ; but he had known her from a child, and he had a notion that her's was a heart which would be easily broken if sorrow was suffered to handle it too roughly. At all events, while this state continued, she enjoyed a cessation from grief and apprehension ; but still, how different was her slumber from the calm and natural repose of a heart at ease ! The dull poppy with its leaden weight seemed to keep down and oppress feeling and thought, not to relieve and refresh them ; and in her beautiful face, even as she slept, there was something which told that the

slumber was not natural. Oh! the sweet profound sleep of infancy, how beautiful it is! that soft and blessed gift of a heart without a stain or a pang, of a body unbroken in any fibre by the cares and labours of existence, of a mind without a burthen or an apprehension. It falls down upon our eyelids like the dew of a summer's eve, refreshing for our use all the world of flowers in which we dwell, and passing calm, and tranquil, and happy, without a dream and without an interruption. But, alas! alas! with the first years of life it is gone, and never returns. We may win joy, and satisfaction, and glory, and splendour, and power—we may obtain more than our wildest ambition aspired to, or our eager hope could grasp; but the sweet sleep of infancy, the soft companion of our boyish pillow, flies from the ardent joys as well as the bitter cares of manhood, and never, never, never returns again.

The apothecary had ventured on large doses of the drug, and Marian's slumber continued for many hours; but at length she woke, pale, languid, sick, with her ideas all confused, and yet her heart not the less ill at ease. "Is that Isadore?" she said, gazing towards the window at which some one was standing, and over which

the shades of evening were coming dim and fast. Isadore approached her bed, and Marian asked eagerly, "What news?" She could not put her question in a more distinct form, for her mind refused to fix itself with precision upon any thing; and besides, with the common self-cheatery of fear, she loved not to give her apprehensions voice.

"I have no news, dear Marian," replied Isadore, sitting down by her. "Sorry I am to say that Colonel Manners has returned without any tidings; and he has since gone over to my uncle's, to see whether any thing may be known there in regard to these extraordinary circumstances."

Isadore had framed her answer, with a view of alone hiding from Marian that any thing had been discovered to confirm their fears, and of turning her mind from the search on which Colonel Manners had been employed: but the result went further than she had expected, or even wished; for it was her purpose only to break the force of grief, not to raise expectations which were likely to be disappointed. Hope, however, is the most adroit of diplomatists, and takes hold of the slightest word or circumstance in its own favour with skill and agility un-

paralleled. The words of Isadore, simple as they were, lighted again in a moment the half-extinguished flame in the bosom of her cousin. She remembered the suspicions concerning the illegitimacy of his birth, with which Edward had gone to visit the gipsies ; she remembered his fiery and impatient nature, and the agitation into which even the apprehension had thrown him ; and hope instantly suggested that he might have found his fears confirmed, and, wild with anger and distress, might have flown instantly to his father's house.

It is true he was on foot ; it is true he had quitted the house during the night ; it is true that he was not likely to take such a step without writing to relieve her mind ; but it is the quality of hope to trample on improbabilities, and Marian de Vaux obtained a momentary relief. Still she would fain have had her hopes confirmed by the opinion of others : but she could not expect to do so without explaining the reason why she entertained them ; and that reason could not be explained without entering into some details in regard to Edward's communication with the gipsy, which she knew not whether she were justified in making. Her mind was so confused with the effect of the re-

medies employed to obtain sleep, that she was long in determining what was the best to do, and remained silent, while Isadore kindly and gently strove to suggest as many motives for consolation as she could imagine. At length, however, as Marian revolved all the probabilities in her mind, she recollected that other causes might render the disclosure of Edward's feelings and intentions necessary; that he might not be found at his father's house; that strict and immediate investigation might be required; and that, under those circumstances, a knowledge of all that her lover had proposed to do previous to his sudden disappearance, might be requisite to those who were employed in searching for him, in order to render that search at all effectual; and although she shrunk from the idea of betraying, in the slightest degree, the confidence he had reposed in her, yet she felt it necessary to give every information in her power which might lead to the result they sought. She determined, then, at length, to speak of what had passed between De Vaux and herself on the preceding day; and only hesitated whether to relate it to her aunt or to her cousin. Mrs. Falkland's kindness and strong good sense were not to be doubted; but

yet Marian knew Isadore thoroughly, and knew that there was more judgment and tact under her usual gaiety than was apparent. She knew, too, that with her she should be able to relate and to keep back just as much as she thought proper; while her aunt's keen and rapid questions, she felt, might draw from her more than she was justified in communicating.

“Do you know, Isadore,” she said, at length, “I am in some hopes that Edward may be heard of at his father's house: it would not surprise me if he had gone thither.”

Isadore felt that she had a delicate part to play. She was glad to see that Marian was more composed than she could have expected; and, of course, she would have wished to maintain that state of composure, till apprehension gradually changed into grief, without any new shock to her feelings: but she still felt that she had no right to encourage hopes which must soon be broken; and she replied, “I am very happy, dearest Marian, that you do think so; but is it not strange that he should go thither, and be so long absent, without letting any one know, when he must have felt that so many would be uneasy?”

“It is strange,” replied Marian; “but I

think I can account for that. I am about to tell you something, Isadore, which you must make what use of you think fit, in case Colonel Manners has not found poor Edward at Dewry Hall; but as it refers to matters which he might not wish told to any one, you must ask me no more than I am inclined to speak; and unless it be necessary, perhaps, had better not mention it to any one but my aunt."

"I will obey you to the letter, dear cousin," replied Isadore; "but I foresee that you are going to speak of his visit to the gipsy, which, indeed, surprised us all."

"It is the cause of that visit I am about to tell you," answered Marian; "for perhaps the facts connected with it may throw some light on the business, if Edward be not at his father's. But you remember, Isadore, that Colonel Manners went up yesterday morning to the gipsies—I believe, because you teased him about them."

"Yes, indeed, I believe it was one of my silly jests," replied Isadore, with a sigh, "that made him go at all. I shall leave off jesting for the future, Marian."

"Nay, nay! never, Isadore!" replied Marian, shaking her head. "However, Colonel Manners brought Edward down a letter from one of

them called Pharold, which distressed him a great deal; for it told him things concerning our own family, and his part of it particularly, which would be very terrible if true. He determined, after speaking to me upon the matter, to go up to the common this morning, in order to investigate the whole; and if he found any reason to believe that the gipsy spoke the truth, his mind, I am sure, would be in such a state that he would hardly know what he was doing. Under these circumstances, it is very likely that he might go over at once to inquire more of his father, without thinking of any thing else in the pain and anxiety of the moment."

"No, Marian, depend upon it, he would think of *you*," cried Isadore, somewhat incautiously.

"I could easily forgive him for not doing so," replied Marian, "notwithstanding all the pain I have suffered, if I could be sure that he is safe at the Hall."

"Pray God it may be so!" replied Isadore; "and if it be, we shall undoubtedly hear from Colonel Manners to-night."

There was something so despairing in the tone with which Isadore pronounced "Pray God it may be so!" that Marian took alarm. "Isadore," she said, looking at her steadily,

“ I hope you are not deceiving me. Your heart is not one to be so easily cast down; your lips, dear cousin, are not accustomed to such sad sounds. Tell me the truth, Isadore, I beseech you. — Have you heard any thing of Edward?”

“ No, indeed, Marian!” replied Isadore, glad that she had put her question in such a shape that she could give it a negative; and yet hesitating a little at the utterance of one word approaching insincerity, — a vice that her mind had never known. “ No, indeed,” she said; “ no one has heard any thing of him as yet.”

Marian marked her hesitation, however, and replied in a low voice, “ I should always like to know the truth, Isadore; and I am sure you would tell it me, dear cousin. You know how I love Edward; and I think it no shame to acknowledge to you, Isadore, that I do not believe there ever was a human being that loved another as I have loved him.” She paused; and though she knew that Isadore needed no new insight into her heart, to see how totally that heart was given to Edward de Vaux, yet, as she spoke, the crimson came again into her cheeks and mottled her brow and temples, even to speak her love in the hearing of one who

already knew it so well. “ Nevertheless, Isadore,” she continued, “ feeling afraid of my own heart, and my own great happiness, I have schooled myself to remember that the blessings of this world are any thing but permanent; and have prepared myself to say, if God should require me to yield them, ‘ Thy will be done.’ Of course, since Edward went into active service, I have felt it the more necessary to be always thus prepared; and though I have tried not to embitter existence by apprehensions, nor to keep myself in continual fear, I have endeavoured never to forget that Almighty Wisdom may hourly require sacrifices, at which we must not repine.”

“ You are indeed a sweet creature!” cried Isadore, casting her arms round her cousin’s neck; “ I wish that I were half as good!” Marian leaned her brow upon her cousin’s shoulder; and when Isadore again looked at her, she found that Marian was weeping.

In a few moments Marian wiped away her tears, and went on: “ You will think that, after boasting of all this preparation, I ought not to be so overcome now—nor, indeed, so much as I was this morning; but the truth is, when Edward returned, half my fears vanished. I

thought that all danger was over; and little remembered that he who had escaped from battle and from storm, might be snatched from me in the bosom of peace, and in his own home. But I am better now, Isadore, and firmer, and stronger; and therefore I will beg you, and my aunt, to let me hear at once every thing that occurs; for though you are interested too, I know, deeply and sincerely, yet you can neither of you feel as I do."

"Perhaps that is the very reason, dear Marian," replied Isadore, "why it would be better to keep from you all the rumours and reports, which could only rack all your feelings with alternate hopes and fears, without leading you even to any certain conclusion."

"Oh no!" said Marian; "no! let me hear all, Isadore! I am now again prepared; I do not say that I shall not weep—I do not say that I shall not be anxious—I do not say that I shall not tremble with hope and fear: but I do say, Isadore, that the knowledge of whose hand it is that guides the whole; and my firm, perfect, undoubting, unchangeable belief that His will is mercy, and His way is wise; will be my support and consolation to the end."

"And I will never believe," said Isadore

warmly, "that He will leave such confidence unrewarded and unprotected."

"Oh, no!" answered Marian; and she then added, in a sadder tone, "but He, seeing more wisely than we do, may yet think fit to afflict us, Isadore. However, I am still prepared, and will meet whatever may come, as little repining as I can."

The conversation proceeded for some time in the same tone, nor was its effect small in soothing the mind of her who suffered; for, in moments of grief, the human heart forgets all the treasured consolations which reason, and philosophy, and religion have garnered up in years of tranquillity; and it is not till we examine the stores that we have gathered, that we remember the sources of comfort which we ourselves possess.

Marian then expressed her intention of rising, and begged Isadore to send her maid from the dressing-room. Her cousin would fain have dissuaded her; and proceeded to inform her mother of Marian's intention of coming down to the drawing-room; but Mrs. Falkland did not disapprove of the idea, especially when she learned from Isadore the state of her niece's mind. "We must endeavour," she said, "to

keep any sudden tidings of evil from our poor Marian ; but in other respects, perhaps, occupation of any sort may do her good ; for I know too well, Isadore, that nothing can be worse than the fears and the pains with which our own imagination fills up the interval of suspense, when, alone and sleepless, we sit and watch away the weary hours, till doubt and fear have grown into the too painful certainty.

Marian was not long in following her cousin to the drawing-room ; and though a few tears rolled over her cheeks as Mrs. Falkland pressed her to her bosom, she soon regained at least the appearance of composure. By degrees she learned all that Colonel Manners had discovered, except the indications which most strongly tended to confirm his apprehensions for De Vaux ; and she heard, also, all that he had done towards obtaining further and more certain information. Marian, however, inferred, from the measures that had been taken, that both her aunt and Manners did entertain serious fears ; and her heart sunk to find her own alarm confirmed by that of persons so much more thoroughly acquainted with the world than herself. Soon after she had come down, the servant, who had been despatched to Mr. Arden,

returned with the tidings that he was absent from his own house, and was not expected back till the next morning. Inquiries, too, were made by the people who had been left to guard the wood, whether it were necessary to keep up their patrol all night; and in Manners's absence, Mrs. Falkland ordered it to be done at any expense. Many a rumour, too, of many a likely and many an unlikely occurrence, reached the drawing-room through the old butler, who, with one other man-servant, had been retained in the house while the rest had been despatched to reinforce the people on watch round the wood.

Thus passed the evening, but no tidings arrived from Colonel Manners; and as minute after minute, and hour after hour, went by, after the period which they calculated might have brought them the news of De Vaux's being at his father's house, the hopes of all the party sunk lower and more low, and at a late hour Mrs. Falkland persuaded Marian again to go to bed.

Sleep, indeed, visited Morley House but little during that night; and the next morning early, a note was received from Colonel Manners, informing Mrs. Falkland that nothing as yet had

been heard of De Vaux. So far Mrs. Falkland communicated the tidings she had received to Marian, before she had risen; and, notwithstanding all the fortitude she had endeavoured to assume, and the most careful guard she had been enabled to put upon her heart, yet Marian had so far encouraged hopes which now suffered disappointment, that medical aid was again obliged to be called; and it was judged expedient once more to dull her sense of grief and fear by strong opiates. The latter part of Colonel Manners's communication, which spoke in plain terms of the murder of poor De Vaux, Mrs. Falkland did not, of course, read to her unhappy niece. In it, however, he informed her, that when he had arrived at Dewry Hall, he had found measures already in progress for arresting the supposed murderers upon another charge, and had waited to know the result. They had proved, unfortunately, without effect, he said; as no one had been taken but a lad, from whom he was afraid little satisfactory information was likely to be gained: but still it was his purpose, he added, to go over to Dimden with Lord Dewry, previous to returning to Morley House, in order to hear personally what evidence could be extracted from the prisoner.

In conclusion, he recommended, if Mr. Arden had not taken measures for searching the wood in which the gipsy had been seen, before his letter arrived, that such a step should be resorted to directly; as the messenger who brought the news of the affray at Dimden, had not been able to say whether Pharold were present or not.

After the receipt of this letter, Mrs. Falkland waited anxiously for the arrival of Mr. Arden; but it was late ere he came. He then asked eagerly what further discoveries had been made, and Mrs. Falkland communicated to him the substance of Colonel Manners's letter. The old gentleman, whose heart was warm and kind, notwithstanding a certain degree of severity of manner, and a persevering adherence to the letter of the law, which often made him appear harsh and unfeeling, sympathised truly with De Vaux's family; and spoke of Marian, and the state of bereavement and distress into which her cousin's loss must have cast her, with words of tenderness and pity which brought a bright drop or two even into his own eyes. He then touched as delicately as his nature permitted upon the subject of Lord Dewry's letter to him, which he had received

that morning; and triumphed a little in the accuracy of the opinion he had formerly given in regard to Pharold the gipsy being the real murderer of Mrs. Falkland's late brother.

Mrs. Falkland started, and combated the idea with various arguments, which had been satisfactory to her own mind at the time. Mr. Arden, however, informed her that, in his letter of that morning, Lord Dewry had asserted that he had acquired positive proofs of the gipsy's guilt; and Mrs. Falkland was silent, but not convinced. That Pharold, either in some fierce dispute, or in some accidental affray, might have killed her unfortunate nephew, or that his companions might have done so, without his will or concurrence, Mrs. Falkland did not doubt: but she had heard too much of his character and behaviour in youth, to believe that twenty years before, when he was still a young man, he could have been so hardened in guilt, as, for the purpose of paltry plunder, to take the life of the only man for whom, with the exception of his own tribe, he had shown affection. For Lord Dewry's fierce accusation on the present occasion, she accounted easily by a knowledge of his character, and conceived it very possible that the rage and hatred which he

felt at the very idea of the gipsy having murdered his son, might make him regard as proof positive any slight additional suspicions, which he had found cause to form against Pharold in regard to his brother's death. However, as she took no pleasure in speaking of her brother's weaknesses, she made no answer; and Mr. Arden began his proceedings for the purpose of causing the wood, in which Colonel Manners imagined he had seen Pharold, to be so thoroughly searched as to ascertain, beyond a doubt, whether the gipsy still remained in it or not.

As all those who have attempted to search a wood must know, the task is not an easy one; and before a sufficient number of people could be collected, and all the orders and directions could be given, it was late in the day. As the men, however, who had kept patrol for so many hours, were now weary of the task, and there existed many doubts whether any inducement would make them undertake it during another night, there was no possibility of delaying the search till the following morning; and Mr. Arden accordingly set out, taking as many of Mrs. Falkland's servants with him as could by any means be spared, in order to make their

proceedings as effectual as the short remaining space of daylight permitted.

During his absence, Mrs. Falkland and her daughter remained in that painful and exciting state of suspense, in which every minute has its expectation, and every minute its fear; and as Marian still slept, Isadore walked out into the garden in hopes of finding some refreshment in the cool air of the autumn evening. When she had passed about half through the garden, with her eyes turning mechanically from time to time upon the flowers, but with her thoughts far otherwise occupied, she perceived a boy of about ten years of age, who worked under the gardeners, approaching her, cap in hand.

“Please, miss,” he said, “I think I have found out something.”

“And pray, what have you discovered. Harry?” demanded Isadore as he paused.

“Why, ma’am, answered the boy, “I heard the gentleman yesterday, and all the folks, indeed, talking of footsteps, and asking where there were any to be seen, in sorts of unlikely places” —

“And have you found any?” exclaimed Isadore, speaking eagerly, from some of those vague and often fallacious anticipations which

rush upon the mind in thousands, when it is excited by any strongly moving cause.

“ Why, yes, ma’am, you see,” replied the boy; “ the gardener, when he was going away to search the wood, sent me down to the other side of the park to cut some box for the borders; and by the little door, close by the river, which has not been opened these two years, I saw the marks of a gentleman’s foot in the gravel, which is softish down on that walk, and greenish too, for it ha’nt been turned this autumn.”

“ But how do you know it was a gentleman’s foot?” demanded Isadore “ It might be either the gardener’s, or the under-gardener’s, or the gamekeeper’s, for any thing you know, Harry.”

“ No, no, miss,” answered the boy; “ I know it was a gentleman’s, for they have little feet; and this was not bigger than mine — and it was not a woman’s foot, because the heel was different.”

“ And a boy’s?” said Isadore; “ why might it not be a boy’s?”

The youth rubbed his head, saying, “ It might be a boy’s, miss; but I do not think it, miss, any how; — I am sure it was a gentleman’s — quite sure.”

Isadore endeavoured to discover the grounds

of this certainty; but when people, whose ideas are not very clear upon a subject, are pressed by those who would fain help them to disentangle the ravelled skein of their thoughts, they not unfrequently take refuge in a sort of blank stolidity which prevents others from finding out the causes that they themselves are not able to explain. Such was the case in the present instance; and the only answer that Isadore could obtain to her questions, shape them how she would, was, that he — the boy — was sure that the foot-marks were those of a gentleman.

With these tidings, however, with every willingness in the world to believe that they were true, and with a long train of phantom hopes to boot, Miss Falkland returned to her mother, taking the boy to the house with her. Mrs. Falkland listened with attention, and replied that it would be at least worth while to send down the old butler directly, to ascertain the facts more precisely.

“ Oh! for Heaven’s sake, do not send him, mamma!” exclaimed Isadore. “ He is so fond of miracles, that he will declare it is the foot of an elephant. We shall never come at the truth from him.”

“ But whom can I send, then ? ” demanded her mother. “ All the other servants are away ; and both the gardener and under-gardener are with Mr. Arden.”

“ I will go myself, mamma,” replied Isadore. “ I shall have plenty of time to get there and back before it is dark ; and I will take the boy with me to show me the place.”

“ You are right, Isadore,” replied Mrs. Falkland. “ The fact may be of no importance, but it may be of much ; and, consequently, it is worth our own examination. I will go with you, my love, if Marian be still asleep. Wait one moment, and we will go and judge together.”

Mrs. Falkland was not long absent. Marian was still lying overpowered with the opium ; and the two ladies, having joined the boy in the hall, set out upon the search. While her mother was absent, however, Isadore called her own maid, and stationed her at one of the windows, whence she could see the spot to which the boy referred, and the path leading to it. She gave her also directions to remain there, and, in case of either Mrs. Falkland or herself making a signal, to send or come down to them in all haste. “ I feel a sort of presentiment,” thought Isadore, as she gave the orders, “ that

this expedition will end in something of importance."

Whatever it was likely to end in, the maid obeyed her orders as punctually as such orders generally are obeyed; that is to say, she remained two minutes at the window; and having seen Mrs. Falkland and Isadore walk about a hundred steps upon the path, she thought, "Dear me! I can just get the cap I was trimming, and be back again here long before they are at the other side of the park;" but as she crossed the hall, she met with the old butler, who detained her just to ask her where his mistress and Miss Falkland were gone; and then told her a story, which he had heard when he was young, and the incidents of which were very like those connected with the fate of poor Mr. Edward de Vaux. Every hair on the maid's head stood on end, and gave her so much occupation, that ere she could get back to her post, it was too dark to trim the cap any further; she therefore, immediately and punctually, turned her eyes on the spot which her mistress had directed her to observe, and watched most carefully, now that she could see nothing at that distance.

CHAP. IX.

ISADORE and Mrs. Falkland, in the meantime, took the little path towards the brink of the river, in the immediate neighbourhood of which lay the spot where the boy had remarked the footsteps. Mrs. Falkland had lived too long in the great school of disappointment, human life, to suffer her expectations to be greatly excited; but Isadore, with a spirit naturally more enthusiastic, and as yet unchastened by any deep sorrows, felt her heart beat high, and her hopes struggle up against her fears, as she set out to take a more active part than she had hitherto been able to assume in the search for her cousin. The path wound along through the park, meandering considerably, perhaps in conformity to the taste of some ancient layer out of parks, or perhaps in consequence of the usual round-about and circuitous nature of man's paths. Isadore, like all ardent minds, was tempted to make a more direct way for herself across the lawns; but Mrs. Falkland, in a more practical spirit, re-

remembered that the grass was damp, and that it was not worth while to wet her feet for the purpose of saving half a minute. She adhered, therefore, to the gravel; and, as her more venturous daughter met with a little swamp, occasioned by a spring, which obliged her to go round, they arrived at the spot they sought about the same time.

The spot itself, however, needs some description, and, indeed, it has been already described once before, with a special injunction to the reader to remember all the points and bearings which were then detailed. However, lest memory should be treacherous, we will once more take a view of the scene, as it was presented to the eyes of Mrs. Falkland and her daughter, who were at that moment looking exactly west-north-west. Before them was a little shrubbery of evergreens and indigenous plants, kept as low as possible, so as just to hide the wall of the park, against which it rested, and yet not to cut off from the windows of the house a beautiful rocky bank, which rose on the other side of the wall to the height of a great number of feet. This bank formed one of the faces of a small wooded promontory, or rather peninsula, which was

joined on to the hills by a narrow neck over which the high road passed after having skirted the other wall of the grounds. It was surrounded every where but at that point by the river. The summit was covered with rich wood; and down the sides also, in every place where the rock did not rise up abrupt and bare, a thousand various trees and shrubs had rooted themselves in the clefts and crevices, or towered up like pinnacles from the top of every detached fragment, and overhung the calm, still bend of the river, which served as a mirror to all the beauties round about it. The setting sun, with his lower limb just resting on the western hills, was pouring a flood of splendour down the valley of the stream; and his full light bursting upon the face of the rock, to the left of Mrs. Falkland and Isadore, found its way round in bright catches of purple light, illuminating every tree and angle of the rock that stood forward before the rest.

Pouring on, too, the beams streamed down the little footway which — cut through the low shrubbery to a door in the wall — led out to another path running from the high road to the river between the park and the cliff; and by the clear light thus afforded it was easy to

see the marks of which the boy had spoken. They seemed to have been made by some one coming from the grass on the side of the river upon the soft gravel of the path, and had turned suddenly towards the door, where they disappeared, as if the person had passed through. They were small, too, as the boy had described ; and were evidently not a woman's, but neither Mrs. Falkland nor Isadore were sufficiently well acquainted with De Vaux's foot-prints to feel any thing like certainty concerning them. It were vain to deny, however, that the hopes of both were raised, though Heaven knows those hopes were vague and indistinct enough. Had either Mrs. Falkland or Isadore been asked what they expected to find, they would probably have answered, " Edward de Vaux ;" but had they been required to assign a reason for such expectations, to account for his absence, or to point out any principle upon which he could have abandoned the society of those he loved, and yet linger in their neighbourhood, they would have been embarrassed for a reply. But affection does not pause to argue. Hope, too, is ever most powerful when she triumphs over reason, and, though it may seem a paradox, expectation is never so vivid as

when we know not what we expect. Hope, then, as bright as sunshine, but as vague and undefined as that sunshine when it streams through the morning mist, was lighted up by the sight of those footsteps. As Mrs. Falkland gazed on them, and traced them distinctly to the door, she exclaimed, "How very stupid it was of me not to bring the key!"

"I have a key, ma'am," said the boy, groping in the pocket of his jacket; and producing it accordingly, he advanced to the door and opened it. Mrs. Falkland now looked eagerly for more traces; but none were to be seen close to the door, though the ground was composed of a reddish sort of sand which would easily have taken the print of even a light foot. At the distance, however, of about five feet were to be seen two deep marks of the same kind, but close together, with the heels more profoundly indented in the sand than the front of the foot; and it became evident that some one had leaped from the top of the wall. This was made still clearer, when, turning back, Mrs. Falkland examined the door, on the top of the lock of which several patches of gravel had been left by the foot of some one

who had taken that means to reach the summit of the wall. In the mean time, Isadore was eagerly tracing on the foot-prints which led straight from the deeper marks to the bank; and on one of the large stones close by the river, she soon found the impression of a foot in red sand, stamped upon the green mould with which fragment of rock was covered.

“ Here, mamma, here,” cried Isadore: “ He must have passed here, and that since the rain of last night, too; for if you look, the marks are quite sharp, while some old ones going down towards the water are nearly washed away. I should not wonder if he were here now.”

“ Hark !” said Mrs. Falkland; “ did you not hear a noise above there ?”

They listened, but all was silent; and at length Mrs. Falkland added, “ We have done wrong, my love, in not bringing more people with us, even if they were but women. The wood is so small and so shut in by the river that it might be searched easily.”

“ Send the boy back to the house, mamma !” cried Isadore, quickly: “ he can bring down the butler, and probably some of the others may have returned. We can remain here, and watch till they come.”

“ But, Isadore,” said Mrs. Falkland gravely, “ it is growing dusk and late, and the place is lonely and obscure : I do not see any good that two women can do here alone.”

“ Oh, Harry will be back in a moment, mamma,” cried her daughter ; “ and, besides, nobody could hurt us. Any one on the high road would hear a scream from this place.”

Mrs. Falkland still hesitated ; but Isadore continued eagerly, — “ I will tell you how we can manage it then, so that there can be no danger. Send him back for the people, and you go into the park to the little mound, there you can see the high road quite across the point.”

“ But I will not leave you here alone, my love,” cried Mrs. Falkland, in some surprise at the proposal : “ indeed I cannot think of doing that.”

“ But, mamma, I have been here a hundred times alone before,” replied Isadore ; “ and, besides, what I mean is, to get up to that little point where Marian and I have sat many a day. When I am there, you will be able both to see me and to hear me if I speak to you ; and if any danger were really to happen, I could make the people with the cattle in the opposite meadow hear me, while you could also make

them see or hear you from the house; and I set Charlotte at the window to watch."

Mrs. Falkland still hesitated; but Isadore continued rapidly, "Run, Harry, up to the house as fast as ever you can go; bring down Mr. Gibson, and any of the men you can find, and do not lose a minute."

"I am afraid that this is not very prudent, Isadore," said Mrs. Falkland, as the boy ran off like lightning; "but I suppose your plan is the best one to follow now that he is gone. I will turn back to the mound then, while you go up there. But if the boy does not return before the twilight grows thicker, come down by all means."

"I will come down whenever you tell me, mamma," said Isadore; "and I can hear every thing you say at the mound."

Without more words then, Mrs. Falkland hastened to take up her station at a little rising ground in the park, from the summit of which she could see, not only the whole of that part of the high road which crossed the neck of the little promontory, but also the extreme angle of the cliff above the river. Isadore, in the mean while, climbed up by a steep and somewhat rugged path, which had been made at her

request some years before, to a small point of rock which commanded a view both up and down the river, and afforded one of the most picturesque landscapes, on either side, that the country possessed.

The height was not more than ten or twelve feet above the stream, and the distance from the mound in the park not a hundred yards, so that any one speaking in a loud voice could be heard from one spot to the other. The ascent, however, while it continued, was steep, and Isadore's heart beat when she reached the top — nor, perhaps, was it the exercise alone that made it palpitate. Although she had not displayed any fear, she was not without some slight degree of alarm; and felt not a little of that sort of excitement and agitation which is not indeed fear, but which often produces very similar effects. She looked back as soon as she reached the point of the rock, but Mrs. Falkland was not yet in sight. Another instant, however, brought her mother to the top of the mound, and Isadore demanded, “ You can see the high road, mamma, can you not ? ”

Mrs. Falkland did not at first distinguish what her daughter had said, and Isadore re-

peated the question. Not that in this enquiry she was at all influenced by fear, although it might appear so ; but, in truth, Isadore's eagerness to send back the boy for aid, and remain upon the watch, had originated in a little stroke of strategy which was not ill-conceived, considering that it sprang from the brain of a young lady.

That there was some one in the wood above them Miss Falkland was quite convinced ; and to ascertain who it was she knew was a great object at the time being. It had instantly struck her, therefore, that, by dividing their forces, her mother taking up a position on the little mound, whence she could see along the whole of the high road, and down a considerable portion of the little lane under the wall, while she, Isadore, placed herself on the point which commanded a view of two other sides of the promontory, no one could well escape from the wood without coming under the eyes of one or the other of the fair watchers. She did forget, it is true, that, supposing the fugitive to be a man, and that man not her cousin Edward de Vaux, neither herself nor her mother were the least capable of making him stay, and that their hunt might very likely

end, while the boy was absent, like a famous hunt of yore, in the catching a Tartar. A vague sort of consciousness, it is true, that such might be the case, impressed itself upon her mind as she climbed to the little point above the river; but still her first question was directed to ascertain whether their line of watch was, as she hoped, secure and complete.

She repeated her enquiry then, in a louder tone, and Mrs. Falkland replied, "Oh, yes, I can see to the river on the other side. But, indeed, Isadore, it is growing very dark. I can scarcely distinguish the house."

Isadore still lingered, however; for the spot where she stood, looking eastward, caught more light than the rest of the scene. She thought she heard a slight rustling sound, too, above her, as of some one creeping through the bushes; and it must be confessed that her heart beat violently. Although, in truth, she now began to think her scheme a little rash, yet curiosity and anxiety for her cousin's fate still kept her where she stood. The next moment, however, she saw some one, indistinctly, pass through the bushes on the edge of the higher part of the bank, and imagination did

much to persuade her that she recognised the figure.

“ Oh, mamma,” she exclaimed, “ I see him, I see him !” but the figure was instantly lost behind some more trees. It was evidently still passing on to the eastward, as if to escape in that direction, for the branches rustled as it forced its way through ; and Isadore took two steps back to catch another sight of it, as it passed before a bare facing of rock, at the extreme point. At that moment there was a sudden rush through the brushwood ; and ere Isadore could see that it was nothing more than a fragment of rock given way under the foot of the person above, she started back, thinking that it was he himself springing down upon her, lost her footing on the edge of the bank, and, with a shrill scream, fell over into the river.

Mrs. Falkland shrieked also, and rushed forward to the stream ; but the height from which Isadore had fallen had caused her instantly to sink, and nothing was to be seen by the mother’s eye but the clear glistening expanse of the water, with the reflection of the cliffs, and trees, and banks, and of the fading purple of the sky, broken by a thousand rippling circles, where her

child had disappeared. With the loud, piercing, thrilling cry of maternal agony, she shrieked again and again; and as she did so, springing from rock to rock, with the swiftness and certainty of a wild goat, appeared the figure which Isadore had seen above her. He stood for a single moment on the spot whence she had fallen, and then exclaimed to Mrs. Falkland, below, "Where is she, woman? where is she?"

"There, there!" cried Mrs. Falkland, pointing to the spot; but as she spoke a bit of white drapery floated up to the top of the water, a little farther down the stream. Pharold paused no longer, but leaped from the bank — sank — rose again — and in the next moment, with his left arm round the slender waist of Isadore Falkland, and her head thrown back upon his shoulder, he struck with his right towards the margin, where the soft, meadowy sloping of the park afforded an easy landing place. There, springing on shore, he laid his fair burden on the grass, but she was pale, and moved not; and Mrs. Falkland, gazing with agony on the colourless countenance of her daughter, wrung her hands, exclaiming, "Isadore! Isadore! she is dead! oh, she is dead!"

"No, lady," said Pharold, kneeling down,

and looking intently upon the fair face before him,—“no, lady! she is not dead, nor has the water had any effect on her. That is not the face of a drowned person. She must have fainted through fear, and will soon recover.”

“For God’s sake, then, help me, sir, to bear her to the house,” cried Mrs. Falkland; “do not, do not hesitate. You who have rendered us such infinite service, do not pause there, but make it complete by bringing her to a place where she may be recalled to life.”

“What!” cried the gipsy, “to be taken and thrust into a prison! Do you not know that they are pursuing me on a charge of murder — pursuing me as if I were a wolf? Have you not, yourself, been sending out men to take the murderer Pharold?”

Mrs. Falkland had forgot all other fears in her fears for her daughter; but as Pharold suddenly recalled them, she involuntarily drew a step back, and gazed on him with terror; but it required scarcely the thought of an instant to make her remember that he had saved the life — at least she trusted so — of her only child; that he had risked his own existence to rescue a perfect stranger, and she exclaimed, boldly, “No, no! I will never believe it! You are

not — you cannot be guilty. But we waste time — we waste the moments that may save my child. For pity's sake, for God's sake, aid me to carry her home. I have sent, but I see no one coming — they may be long — she may be lost ere they arrive. If you will come," she added, seeing the gipsy still hesitate, "I promise you that you shall go free, and well rewarded,— you shall be as safe as if you were in your own house."

"House!" exclaimed the gipsy; "I have no house! but I will believe you, lady—I will trust you;" and taking Isadore once more in his arms, he strode rapidly and powerfully forward, followed at the same quick pace by Mrs. Falkland.

He took not the way across the green, however, believing that he might there be met by the servants, and his retreat cut off; but passing through the low shrubberies, which were almost as near, he walked on towards the house in silence. Every moment the light was becoming less and less, but he threaded the walks as if he had known them from boyhood, and took all the shortest cuts to abridge the way. At length, however, he paused for an instant, and turning to Mrs. Falkland, he said, in a low

voice, "She revives! I feel her breath upon my face!"

"Thank God! thank God!" replied her mother, in the same low tone; and the gipsy then abruptly added, as he resumed his way, "You believe me innocent, then."

"I do, indeed," answered Mrs. Falkland; "I cannot believe a person guilty of a cool, deliberate murder, who could so boldly and generously risk his own life to save that of a fellow-creature, — it is not in human nature."

"It is not, indeed," replied Pharold, still striding on; "but why then did you send out men to hunt me as you would a wolf?"

"I sent them not out," she answered; "but when they went, I, too, thought that you might be guilty."

"The memory of your brother," said Pharold, "the memory of him who loved me, and whom I loved as I have never loved any other man, should have made you think differently. Was he a man to love one whose nature led him to deeds of blood?"

"He was not, indeed," answered Mrs. Falkland; "but they charge you with his death, too."

"Ha!" cried Pharold, in a tone of un-

feigned astonishment, “ ha! that, then, is the well prepared, long digested lie, is it? That they should accuse me of the gamekeeper’s death I thought natural — though I would have given a limb to save him. That they suspected me of Edward de Vaux’s, I heard without surprise ; for men are always the fools of circumstances, and there were circumstances against me : but that, after twenty years, they should accuse me of the death of him that I loved more than any other thing but liberty, I did not think that villany and impudence could bring about, — and did you believe that, too?”

“ No,” replied Mrs. Falkland, very willing, by speaking the exact truth, to soothe the irritated mind of a man who had just rendered her so inestimable a service,—“ no, I did not believe it ; and as soon as the charge was made in my hearing, I expressed my disbelief of it entirely.”

“ So, so!” said the gipsy,—“ there is some justice left! Lady, when you were four years old, I have carried you in these arms, as I now carry your daughter ; and I thank you, at this late hour, for doing justice to one who was loved by those who loved you. No, no, I am not a

murderer; and never believe it, whatever they may say."

They were now coming near the house; and Mrs. Falkland, with fears for Isadore somewhat relieved, would fain have asked the fate of her nephew: but at that moment the gipsy spoke again; and though from the shadow cast by the trees of the shrubbery she could not see in which way his eyes were directed, the tone of his voice, as well as the words themselves, showed her that he was addressing her daughter. "Be not afraid, lady, be not afraid," he said: "you are quite safe, though in hands that you know not,—your mother is behind:—lean your head on my shoulder, and keep quite still."

"Are you there, mamma?" said a faint voice, that went thrilling through all the innermost windings of Mrs. Falkland's heart.

"Yes, my beloved Isadore, yes, my dearest child," replied the mother, "I am here, close beside you; and, thank God, you are quite safe."

"Hush!" said the gipsy, "hush — if I am seen, I am lost, remember; and keep silence, if you feel that I have served you."

"Inestimably," replied Mrs. Falkland, in a

low tone ; and the gipsy, now emerging from the shrubbery, crossed a part of the lawn that lay between the angle of the wood and the house.

In the grey of the evening, a party of two or three persons might now be seen, though indistinctly, following the open path, about half way across the park towards the cliff. But though he turned his eyes in that direction, the gipsy took no farther notice of them ; and, approaching the house, directed his course towards a glass door which led out from a small breakfast parlour upon the lawn. Mrs. Falkland took a step or two forward, and opened the door, and Pharold carried Isadore up the steps into the room, and placed her in safety upon a sofa.

Her first action was to hold out her arms to her mother, with all that flood of gratitude, and tenderness, and joy flowing from her heart, which we feel on being restored to " this pleasing, anxious being," after having thought that we were quitting for ever the warm precincts of the cheerful day. Mrs. Falkland caught her to her bosom, and, locked in each other's arms, they wept as if they had lost a friend.

Well may philosophers say, that man never

knows what joy is till he has tasted sorrow. Isadore and her mother had loved each other through life, without one of those petty rivalries, either for authority or admiration, without one of those jarrings of different purposes and opposing wishes, which sometimes sap the affection of child and parent. They had loved each other through life dearly, and they knew it; but they did not know how dearly, till fate had nearly placed the barrier of the grave between them, and Isadore, safe and rescued, held her mother, weeping, in her arms. Who can explain such tears? Who can tell why the same drops which flow from pain or sorrow should be companions of the brightest joy? for who can trace the workings of the fine, immortal essence within us, in its operations, on the frail, weak tabernacle of earth in which it is enshrined?

However, they wept, and wept in silence; for both felt the bosom too full for speech, and both, from the still oratory of the heart, offered up thanks to God for the joy and relief of that moment. Nor was their happiness unfelt by him to whom, under the Almighty, it was owing. The gipsy stood and gazed upon them, with his arms crossed upon his chest, and the

light of internal satisfaction glistening in his eye. There was something in the scene before him, and in those who were the actors therein, which connected itself with the long, long past; which woke up the memories of many a year, and which called up a thousand thrilling sensations that long had slept. But he had neither time nor inclination to let his mind rest upon all that chaos of pleasures, and regrets, and wishes, and hopes, and sorrows, and disappointments, which, when memory, awakened from her sleep, draws back the veil from the past, is presented to the eyes of every one who has lived an energetic and stirring existence. While one might count a hundred, perhaps, he paused, and gazed upon Mrs. Falkland and her daughter, giving way to the purest feelings of human affection, and suffered his thoughts to wander wildly over the years gone by; but then, starting from his reverie, he remembered that he must depart.

“Lady, I go,” he said. “May God bless you and yours, and send you ever, at your moment of need, one as willing and as able to help you as the gipsy has shown himself.”

“Stay, stay one moment,” said Mrs. Falkland. “You must not, indeed, leave my house

unrewarded for the infinite service you have rendered me."

"I am rewarded already, lady," he said; "I am rewarded by what I have seen, I am rewarded by what I have felt, I am rewarded by knowing that there is one at least that can do justice, in her own heart, even to a gipsy. Lady, I must go — my stay is dangerous — fare you well."

At that moment, however, there was a powerful hand laid upon his shoulder, and as he turned quickly round, he found himself faced by Colonel Manners, who still kept his hold of the gipsy's collar and shoulder, notwithstanding the sudden jerk he gave himself.

"You are my prisoner," said Manners, sternly. "Surrender at once, for resistance is in vain."

"Doubtless, doubtless," answered the gipsy, bitterly. "I have fallen into the trap; and it is useless to writhe. Oh, God of heaven! how often have I sworn never again to do a service to any of these human worms; for if not punished by their own base ingratitude, some other evil is sure to follow, as if thou hadst sworn vengeance on every one that did an act of kindness to their outcast race!"

“ You shall not suffer, however, for your service to me,” said Mrs. Falkland, advancing. “ I have pledged you my word, and I will redeem it. — Colonel Manners,” she continued, “ listen to me for one moment: this man has, within this quarter of an hour, saved my daughter’s life, at the risk of his own.”

“ Indeed,” cried Colonel Manners. “ May I ask how? I trust Miss Falkland is not hurt.”

“ No, not at all, I believe,” replied Mrs. Falkland. “ She fell from the bank into the stream — sunk before my eyes, Colonel Manners; and had it not been for his instant aid, she would have been now no more.”

“ I am most delighted, indeed, to hear of her escape,” replied Manners, “ and would to God it had been my fate to render her the assistance instead of this person, for I should then have avoided a most painful duty. But, indeed, my dear madam, as it is ——”

“ Nay, say not a word more, Colonel Manners,” interrupted Mrs. Falkland, “ but hear my story out. He saved my daughter from the stream — he swam with her to land — but she was without sense or motion — I had nobody with me to help me, and I besought him, for

the sake of Heaven, to do what my strength was, of course, not sufficient to perform, and to bear her home. He then told me his name — informed me that people were hunting him like a wolf among the woods; and asked if I could expect him to venture into the very midst of his enemies. I plighted my word for his safety — I promised him by every thing sacred that he should meet no impediment in quitting my dwelling, and upon that promise alone he came.”

“ I am sorry, my dear madam,” answered Manners, calmly but gravely, “ that such a promise can only be binding upon yourself. Did it involve merely an act of politeness, of friendship, or of personal sacrifice, I would do any thing in my power to oblige you: but there is a higher duty calls upon me than either courtesy or friendship; and I must obey its voice. I have a duty to perform towards the laws of my country — I have a duty to my dead friend; and, at any risk and all risks, I must and will obey it. I wish, with all my heart, that I had met this man any where but here; but wherever I meet him, I am not only empowered, but bound, by every principle of law and justice, to arrest him.”

“ Is there either law or justice, then, in arresting an innocent man ? ” demanded the stern voice of the gipsy.

“ Of your innocence or guilt the law has still to decide,” replied Manners. “ An accusation of the gravest kind has been made against you, circumstances of strong suspicion have already been discovered to justify the charge. If you be guilty, it is but fit you should be punished ; and if you be innocent, doubt not that you shall have equal justice.”

“ I did not expect this from you, Colonel Manners,” said Mrs. Falkland, bitterly. “ Have you no regard, sir, to my plighted word ? Have you no consideration for my honour ? I have used entreaties, sir ; but I now insist that he shall go ; and, if necessary, I will call my servants and make them set him free. He has saved my daughter’s life, Colonel Manners : he has come hither in my service, at my prayer, and upon my promise of safety ; and if he had killed my brother, he shall go hence unimpeded.”

“ Madam, I believe you risk that supposition without a suspicion that it may be true,” answered Manners. “ But I must now inform you, that one of the principal charges against

this man is the very fact of having murdered your late brother."

"And the charge is false, Colonel Manners," answered Mrs. Falkland, vehemently. "Whatever he may be now, — whatever he may have become since, — he was not then a man to shed blood, much less the blood of his friend and benefactor. He could have no motive but lucre, and that motive was wanting; for from my brother he might have had whatever sums he required. Nay more, I have often heard my brother declare, that he would not take what he offered. But, as I have said, Colonel Manners, all other considerations apart, my word is pledged, and he *shall* go free."

"Noble heart! noble heart!" cried the gipsy. "On my hand rests not one drop of innocent blood, as there is a God above the stars! Neither do I fear death nor dread enquiry; but my liberty is more than my life, and what should I do, for months, a prisoner amongst stone walls and the vermin of the earth? He talks boldly of arresting me now, when he has got me here with dozens at his back; but let him take me five hundred yards hence, where I was ere I carried your daughter hither, — let him take me to the wood, or the bare hill side,

where there are no odds against me, — and then, strong as he thinks himself, let him arrest me if he can.”

Mrs. Falkland was going to speak again; and might, perhaps, have spoken angrily, for she was less calm than usual: but at that moment Isadore’s voice made itself heard, though but faintly. “Colonel Manners,” she said, “Colonel Manners, speak with me for a moment.”

Manners looked towards her as she lay on the sofa at the other side of the room; and he felt that to hear what she had to say distinctly he must, by going nearer, release the gipsy from the grasp which he still continued to maintain upon his collar. He felt also, what perhaps Isadore had at her heart felt too, that her voice was likely to have more effect with him than that of any one else; and as Manners had a strong inclination to do his duty rigidly, he somewhat feared her persuasions. However, he could not, of course, refuse to comply; but to guard against his prisoner’s escape, he instantly locked both the doors of the little breakfast room ere he approached her. He then — seeing the gipsy stand calmly with his folded arms, as if prepared to wait his decision — drew near, and bending

down his head, "I am most happy, indeed," he said, "that you have not suffered any injury."

"And yet you would ruin the person who saved me," said Isadore; "but do not reason with me, Colonel Manners, for I have neither strength nor wit to contend with you. I want to persuade, not to convince, you."

"That is what I am most afraid of," answered Manners with a smile.

"Do not be afraid," said Isadore, "but listen. Do you think, Colonel Manners, that a man who could murder Edward de Vaux would risk his own life to save Edward's cousin?"

"It is strange, certainly," answered Manners, "but ——"

"Do you think, then," continued Isadore, interrupting him, "that a man who felt himself guilty of murder would go voluntarily to the midst of the friends and relations of the person he had killed, solely for the purpose of carrying home a poor girl that he had just saved from drowning? Your murderers, Colonel Manners, must be curious characters."

Could Isadore have beheld the face of her hearer distinctly, she would have seen that his cheek glowed a little with something like

shame; but he answered, "I did not say, my dear Miss Falkland, that I thought him guilty. I only said, that the law required me to keep him a prisoner till he had proved his innocence."

"Well, then, Colonel Manners," rejoined Isadore, "since you do not think him guilty — and I know you do not — since there is every reason to think him innocent — since mamma has plighted her word — since he has saved my life — since he came hither solely to aid me — you must let him go, indeed you must.—"

Manners hesitated, and looked doubtfully at the gipsy, as he stood, dark and shadowy, with his arms still crossed upon his bosom, and his eyes bent upon the ground. Isadore saw that a word more would conquer; and though her heart fluttered and her voice trembled to think how important that word might, perhaps, become, at some future time, she made up her mind and spoke it, though in so low a tone that it fell on no other ear but his for whom it was intended. "Colonel Manners," she said, "you must let him go, indeed you must,—" the words she added were, "—for my sake!"

Manners was embarrassed in every way. Who shall say what he would or what he would

not have done "for the sake" of Isadore Falkland? but that was not all — had he really believed the gipsy guilty, he would have had no hesitation; but he did not believe him guilty. The manner in which Mrs. Falkland repelled the idea of his being the murderer of her brother was enough to make Colonel Manners entertain many doubts on a subject where his convictions had never been very strong; and the fact of the gipsy having saved Isadore's life at the risk of his own, and carried her home at the risk of arrest, were so irreconcilable with his guilt, that Manners began to doubt too, in regard to the murder of De Vaux. He knew, undoubtedly, that he himself was not the person called upon to judge; but still, of course, his conviction of Pharold's guilt or innocence made a great difference in the degree of eagerness with which he sought to apprehend him.

But there were still several other motives for hesitation, when once he began to doubt. He felt that Mrs. Falkland was perfectly right in asserting, in every way, the inviolability of the promise she had made to the gipsy — he felt that the gipsy had a right to expect that it would be kept. He knew, also, that if Mrs. Falkland chose to call her

servants, and order the liberation of the gipsy, in all probability any attempt to detain him would be in vain ; and he was conscious, too, that in making the attempt, he was acting, at least, a very ungracious part. Still none of these motives, singly, would have restrained him, had he not felt the strongest doubts of the gipsy's guilt ; but when a great many different motives enter into a conspiracy together, to change a man's opinion, they are like smiths engaged in forging a piece of red-hot iron,—one gives it a stroke with his sledge hammer, and another gives it a stroke, till, hard as it may be, it is moulded to their will. Manners, however,—although he might be led by many considerations to temper the stern rigidity of duty,—was not a man to abandon it altogether ; and, therefore, he sought a mean which, as it was only at his personal risk, he thought himself justified in following, in order that Mrs. Falkland's promise might be held inviolate, and, perhaps, that Isadore might be obeyed.

“ Well ! ” he said, after a moment's consideration. “ All this business has happened most unfortunately, that I should meet a man here whom I am bound to apprehend, and who yet is guarded by a promise of safety. However,

Mrs. Falkland, although I cannot abandon my own duty, yet I must do what I can to reconcile it with the engagement under which this person came here.—I think you said,” he added, turning to Pharold, “that if I would take you to the wood, or the bare hill side, with no odds against you, I might arrest you if I could—did you not?”

“I did,” said Pharold, “and I repeat it.”

“Then we are agreed,” said Colonel Manners. “I will do so, although I am fatigued and exhausted.”

“Who has a right to be the most fatigued?” cried the gipsy. “Have I not been hunted since the morning from wood to wood? Have I not had to double and to turn like a hare before the hounds? Have I not twice swam that quick stream? Have I had repose of mind or body, that you should talk of fatigue?”

“Well, well,” said Manners; “all this matters little. I accept the proposal which you have yourself made; and I thus specify the terms. Though accompanied by me, you shall go free from this place in any direction that you please for one quarter of an hour; a space of time fully sufficient to put you out of all

danger of being overpowered by numbers. At the end of that time, you are my prisoner."

"If you can make me so," cried the gipsy: "if you can make me so."

"Agreed," replied Manners: "that is what I mean, of course; otherwise our agreement would be of no use."

"Colonel Manners," exclaimed Isadore, calling him back to her, for, in speaking, he had advanced a little towards the gipsy and Mrs. Falkland, "for God's sake do not go. You do not know what may happen. Indeed, indeed, it is risking a valuable life most rashly. Let me persuade you not to go."

She made Colonel Manners's heart beat more rapidly than ever it had done in his life; for to a man who felt as he did, and who had nourished the fancies that he had, to hear the voice of beauty, and worth, and gentleness, pleading to him for his own safety, was something much more agitating than the roar of artillery, or the rush of charging squadrons. Isadore spoke too in a voice low, from an effort not to appear too much interested, and a little faint too, perhaps, from late agitation and exhaustion; so that there was, in fact, a great

deal more of tenderness in her tone than she at all wished or intended.

“Nay, nay, Miss Falkland,” answered Manners, who, in this instance, though gratified, could resist, — “nay, nay, I have yielded as much as I can, indeed. I must either arrest this man here, or, out of respect to your mother’s promise and to your entreaties, must let him depart to a spot where we may stand man to man, and then do my best to apprehend him there.”

“Oh, let him go altogether, Colonel Manners,” said Mrs. Falkland: “the one charge made against him is false, depend upon it; and in regard to poor Edward de Vaux, surely his conduct in saving Isadore may be taken as a proof that he is innocent there also. Why should you risk your life in a struggle where you know not how many may come against you?”

“Lady, you do me justice and injustice in the same breath,” said the gipsy; “not one hand should be added to mine against his, if the whole world were inclined to assist the gipsy, instead of to oppress him. But, at the same time, I tell him, as I have told you, that not a drop of innocent blood is upon this hand; that it is as pure as his own, and that I am more

truly guiltless than those who boast their innocence, and sit in high places."

"I think," said Manners, turning to Mrs. Falkland, "that we must here end all discussion, my dear madam. My mind is perfectly made up as to what it is my duty to do. The risk, in this instance, is merely personal; and from such I will never shrink; and I feel very sure, also, that there is no chance of failure."

"Be not too sure," said the gipsy.

"But, Colonel Manners," urged Isadore, "if this person will give us what information he possesses — if he will tell what has become of Edward — if he will explain all, in short, will it not be better to gain those tidings, and let him go quietly, than to hazard so much on a chance which may be productive of no results?"

"But will he make such a confession?" said Manners; "will he give such information?"

The gipsy was silent; but Mrs. Falkland anticipated his answer. "Doubtless he will," she said, "if you will undertake to let him go free when he has done."

"Solely, if he can prove that Edward de Vaux is alive," answered Manners. "Words, my dear lady, can be of no use — I must have

proof before I let him depart. He must not alone tell me what has become of my poor friend, but he must convince me that what he has told is true; otherwise I part not from him."

"I know not well," replied the gipsy, "whether I have even a right to tell what I know; and how can I prove it, without remaining in your hands, and under the curse of a roof where I can scarcely breathe, till those come who would thrust me into a prison; one month of which were worse than a thousand deaths? No, no! I neither will speak to be disbelieved, nor stay to be tortured, if I can win liberty by facing, singly, a thing of clay like myself. If you will keep your word with me, keep it now. If you would not play me false, throw open your door, and go out with me to a place where you shall see whether, with God's free air blowing on my cheek, and God's pure sky above my head, any single arm on earth can stay me, if I will to go." As he spoke, however, two or three dim indistinct forms passed across the windows, which still admitted the faint, lingering twilight of an autumn evening, and the gipsy, dropping his arms by his side, listened for a moment attentively. "It is too

late," he exclaimed, at length. "It is too late. You have kept me till the blood-hounds have come back; and you shall have the joy of seeing them worry their quarry before you."

"What is it you mean?" cried Manners. "Of what blood-hounds do you speak?"

"He means what, I am afraid, is too true, Colonel Manners," said Mrs. Falkland, in a tone of bitter disappointment; "that Mr. Arden and the people, sent to search the wood, have just returned; and that, therefore, notwithstanding my word and your proposal, his apprehension in my house is the recompense he will receive for saving my daughter's life."

"Do not be afraid, my dear madam," said Manners, "I will find means to keep my word with him; but let us be sure that it is as you suppose, before we risk going out into the park. I think I hear sounds in the hall also."

Every one was silent; and the noise of distant footsteps and voices speaking, was heard from the side of the hall and vestibule; and in a moment after some persons approached the very room in which Manners and the rest were standing.

The steps passed on, however, to the library; and at the door thereof paused immediately after, while the voice of the old butler said, "She is

not there, sir;" and the feet returned. They then heard the door of the music-room, which lay on the opposite side, open; and the butler again said, "Nor there." The next moment a hand was laid upon the lock of the very door near which they were standing, and Manners held his finger to his lips in sign of silence. The old man made one or two ineffectual attempts to turn the lock, and then repeated, "Nor there either; for the door is locked for the night — though it is very odd the housemaid should take upon herself to lock up the rooms when I am out. I am sure I cannot tell where my mistress is, sir, nor Miss Falkland either, unless they have both been spirited away, like poor Mr. Edward; for they certainly are not up stairs in either of the drawing-rooms, nor at the place where the boy told me he left them. But now I think of it, I should not wonder if they were in poor Miss Marian's room; and if you will walk up into the drawing-room, sir, I will send to see."

"Do, do," said the voice of Mr. Arden; "but it is very strange that they should have left the spot so suddenly, when they sent for you to come to them. Why did you not search the wood directly? It is not bigger than my hand."

“ Oh, sir, I set the boy and the two others we had called to help us to search,” replied the butler: “ but I came back again, because it was not my place to search woods, sir; and, besides, I had a presentiment that your honour would be here.”

“ The devil you had,” said Mr. Arden; but what the worthy magistrate further replied was lost as he followed the butler up the stairs towards the drawing-room.

“ Now, my dear madam,” said Manners, in a low voice, “ let me advise you instantly to join Mr. Arden, and to keep him engaged till I can effect my retreat, with our friend here; and you, my dear Miss Falkland, for God’s sake do not forget yourself any longer: we have treated you very ill already, to keep you here so long in wet clothes. I am not very much accustomed to act as physician to ladies, but if I might advise, going to bed and warm negus would be my prescription.”

“ Which I shall instantly follow, Colonel Manners,” said Isadore; “ but, for Heaven’s sake, take care of yourself too. Let us see you gone before we open the door.”

“ No, no,” answered Manners; “ yours must be the first party to march off: I cannot

move till I have reconnoitred the ground." Thus saying, he turned the key and opened the door as silently as possible, and Mrs. Falkland and her daughter passed out into the corridor. Isadore paused for a single instant, as if she would have spoken either to Manners or the gipsy; but the former held up his finger, and gently closed the door that led from the breakfast-room into the interior of the house.

"Now, then," he said in a whisper to the gipsy, "let me see that all is safe;" and opening the glass door, he gazed forth over the lawns. The twilight lay heavy over the whole scene, and the dim indistinctness of the day's old age rendered it impossible to see any distant object. There was no one, however, in the immediate neighbourhood of the house; and Manners, looking back into the room, beckoned the gipsy forward, saying, "Now, come with me."

Pharold instantly complied; and Manners whispered, "While we are in the park, you remain under my guidance and protection. As soon as we are safe out of it, you take the lead which way you will."

The gipsy nodded, and Manners took his way by the shortest cut to the trees. Then taking a walk which led up by some steps and a small

rustic door into the garden, he crossed over, till they were both between the fruit wall and a high holly hedge. Along this path he now walked rapidly, till they reached a spot half way between the house and the gate, through which, with Isadore and Marian, and Edward de Vaux, he had once walked out into the woods. Here the gipsy halted for a moment, but then followed on without remark. The next instant, however, Manners heard in the bushes a noise of rustling which the gipsy had before distinguished; and ere he had taken two steps farther, a man stood before him in the walk.

“Are you the gardener?” said Manners, still advancing.

“Yes,” said the man. “What if I be?”

“Why, then, go to the house,” said Manners; “and if you find Mr. Arden, the magistrate, there, give him Colonel Manners’s compliments, and tell him that if he will wait half an hour, I will be back with him, as I have matters of importance to speak to him about, but am obliged to go a little way with this good man, ere I can attend to any thing else.”

“I beg your honour’s pardon,” said the gardener; “I did not know you in this dark walk. That made me speak so rough; but if your

honour be going out by that ere door, it's locked. I have just been locking it."

"Well, open it again, then, gardener," said Manners, "and then make haste and give my message."

"That I will, your honour," answered the gardener, walking on towards the door. "But did your honour say that this here man was along with you? He looks ——"

"Never mind what he looks," answered Manners, somewhat sternly. "He has matters of importance to arrange with me, or he would not be here — so make haste and open the door."

The man obeyed, and only demanded farther, whether he should leave the key. "No," said Manners; "I will return by the other gate. — Now go out, my good friend; and lead the way to the place you spoke of." Pharold proceeded through the open door; and Manners, bidding the gardener not forget his message, followed out into the road.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

LONDON :

Printed by A. SPOTTISWOODE,
New-Street-Square.



