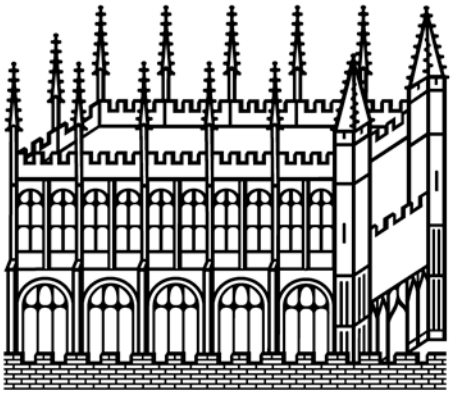

# LAWRENCE LOFTEWALDE.

## A Tale.

BY

ARTHUR HAMILTON.

" Hath he not galled my spirit to the quick?
And with a sullen rigour obstinate
Pour'd out a phial of wrath upon my faults?
Hunted me as the Tartar does the boar,
Driven me to the very edge o' the world,
And almost put a price upon my head?"

IN THREE VOLUMES.
VOL. III.


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# LAWRENCE LOFTEWALDE.

## CHAPTER I.

"An inhuman wretch,
Incapable of pity, void and empty
From any dram of mercy.
*  *  *  *  *
One that slept in the contriving of sin,
And waked to do it. False of heart,
Light of ear, bloody of hand."

SHAKESPEARE.

"How shall I present to you, my children, an adequate idea of the iniquity contained in the defence to as fair and strong a claim of right to an honourable name and fortune as was ever set up?

"The enemy assumed, as the bases of their arguments, suppositions the most monstrous that the human mind ever conceived. My

father was taxed with direct fraud; my mother's honour was indirectly, although unmistakably, impugned. That I was illegitimate in the eye of the law, Sir Furnaby Splotch declared he would be able to show beyond all question whatever.

"'Your lordship,' he said, 'touched closely upon the position which I am about to take up when you asked my learned friend on the other side the question relating to Miss Porchester's knowledge of the rank of her husband. For the sake of argument, I will at once admit that she did go through a ceremony of marriage with a certain gentleman; nay, further, I am quite willing to admit that that gentleman was Sir Lawrence Loftewalde, of Harnisham Castle. I will go even one step farther than that, and admit that the young man now in the court is the son of these two—Sir Lawrence Loftewalde and Miss Helen Porchester, or Mr. and Mrs. Launcelot Lorrimer, as the plaintiff has put them.'

"'I wish you had admitted all this at the outset,' remarked the judge. 'It would have simplified matters very considerably, and have prevented a great, and, as it now seems, an unnecessary waste of time.'

"'I was desirous, me lud,' returned Sir Furnaby, 'of avoiding, if I could, the raising of a very unpleasant issue. I would have preferred seeing the plaintiff's case going off upon an informality to being obliged to establish the grave view which we take of the relations of the baronet and Miss Porchester. The issues which we are now obliged to raise we thought to have avoided, but we find ourselves—I say it candidly—*in extremis*, and we have no other alternative than to resort to the most unpleasant and drastic expedient of showing that the marriage of these two individuals was void in law, and that their offspring is consequently illegitimate.'

"Oh, I was not prepared for this, my children," observed poor Loftewalde, parenthetically. "I had seen something of human villainy, but never to such lengths as this did I think it possible for human villainy to go. How was it that the court-house did not fall upon—that its walls held apart from and did not crush—this horrid libeller of the dead: this foul and wretched viper, whose slaver was being scattered broadcast o'er the memory of her whom I knew to be an angel? Wrongs and their paid defenders do not meet with

speedy doom, nor with any doom at all, very frequently, as far as the world can see."

"If they did," said Zetty simply, "it would be no use building court-houses, for they would be always falling in."

"And the race of lawyers would become extinct," continued the Showman, bitterly. "But I must go on.

"Sir Furnaby's speech was by no means as long as I and a good many others expected.

"'It is my duty' (a man like him to talk of duty!) 'my unpleasant duty, me lud,' Sir Furnaby went on, 'to contend that this marriage was clearly illegal, and I shall base my contention upon very simple grounds. The name of one of the parties to the contract, it is admitted, was a false one, but it was stated by my friend, in answer to a question from your lordship, that this fact was not known to Miss Porchester at the time of her marriage, and not, I believe he added, for many years afterwards. My friend, as I shall clearly show you, has been mis-instructed upon the point. He is there most lamentably, and, if I may be pardoned the term, most egregiously in error. We shall show you by

evidence the most strong and conclusive—evidence which we never sought for, not knowing that it was obtainable—evidence which must be beyond suspicion, inasmuch as it is from the camp of the enemy that it has come to us—evidence which, in short, my lord, must satisfy your mind, and the mind of every reasonable being who hears it given, that Miss Porchester, at the time she entered into this unhappy alliance, knew perfectly well who her lover was, what was his station in life, his name, his residence, and every other particular which it was essential that she should know concerning him.'

"It was our turn to be astonished now, and we were astonished, at the extraordinary turn which the case had taken. Sir Furnaby, who had here made a momentary pause, in order that his words might have their full effect, thus proceeded:

"'It is not necessary for me more than briefly to remind you, my lord, of the state of the law bearing upon this point. You, my lord, know far better than I, that by a series of decisions upon the statutes for the regulation of marriages, both in the Ecclesiastical Courts and in the Court of King's Bench, it

has been held that the clear intention of the legislature was that, as a preliminary step to the performance of a ceremony of marriage, banns must be published in a certain form, and the publication must contain the true, me lud, the *true* names of the parties about to be contracted, otherwise it is no publication at all. The evidence upon this head is, I submit, decisive. Your lordship has only to refer to your notes of the questions put by me to, and the answers given by, the first witness called for the plaintiff, and you will at once see that all the conditions which would render the marriage invalid in the sense I am now contending for are present. As your lordship must be abundantly well aware, by past and recent judgments and dicta of the higher courts, these rules have been established: if there be a total variation of a name or names, that is, if the banns are published in a name or names totally different from those which the parties, *or one of them*, ever used, or by which they were ever known, the marriage in pursuance of that publication is invalid; and I wish your lordship here most particularly to follow me, although I am only repeating what

your lordship is already perfectly cognisant of—I say, it is immaterial whether the mis-description has arisen from accident or design (your lordship will see how wide my words are), or whether the design be fraudulent or not. All that my friend on the other side will dare to contend for, is, that the name of one of the parties was only partially varied, the initials being retained; and that, therefore, it becomes an important part of the inquiry whether the mis-description was consistent with the innocence of the parties, or whether it arose from a fraudulent intention. Even here, upon the only bit of ground which he has chosen—or rather, which he will be forced to take up—am I ready to do battle with him. What motive, my friend will doubtless ask you, could Miss Porchester have had for perpetuating a fraud in a matter which so vitally affected her? Upon a first thought you might answer 'None;' upon a second, you might say, 'Every motive.' The attachment of this unhappy couple was a sudden and a violent one. Both were romantic, impulsive, and—but why take up your time by demonstrating a conclusion in itself so simple and obvious? Here are a few

hypotheses, however, which I am sure your lordship will pardon me for introducing. The gentleman declares it impossible for him to marry her. He is plighted to another, and the breaking of his pledged faith will bring ruin upon his prospects and lasting obloquy upon his name. She, fertile of expedients, suggests (short-sighted plan !) that he shall be married to her in a false name, by which means the event may be kept secret from the world in which he moved until the removal therefrom of the object of his former betrothal (which she relied upon a propitious fate speedily accomplishing).'

"Heavens, what a torture did my soul undergo while listening to these horrid insinuations! The torturer, heedless of my sufferings, still plied the rack with vigour.

"'He, weak-minded, consulting only his own passions, or perhaps designedly, knowing that the marriage would, under such circumstances, be no legal bar to his contracting another alliance, consents, and the ceremony is gone through with a manifest intention, as I say, on both sides, to commit a fraud. I have only to prove the part which Miss Porchester took in the matter, to convince you,

my lord, that there was a fraud, or, at the very least, a connivance at one on her part—that a fraud was committed by the one whom she called her husband is only too palpable—and for this purpose I will call a witness whose testimony you cannot fail, after you have heard it, to pronounce disinterested, veracious, unimpeachable.'

"I was most anxious to know who this witness was. You may judge of my surprise when I heard Mr. Hempkin Roper, Q.C., shouting, 'Call Simeon Grubbum.' It was a day of surprises. Simeon Grubbum was a youth whom my grandmother occasionally employed to look after some cows which we kept, to clean our boots of a morning, to work a bit in our garden, and to do other little jobs of a similar kind. His parents had died whilst he was yet a mere baby, and he had been brought up entirely dependent upon the charity of others. My grandmother had been particularly kind to him, it having been a point with her, 'because he was an orphan,' to see that he had always plenty to eat, and a tolerable suit of clothes to his back. My mother had nursed him through a fever 'because he was an orphan, and had no one to

take care of him;' had fed him daintily in his convalescence, 'because he was an orphan;' had once saved him from the serious consequences of an act of pilfering, by intercession with the owner of the stolen property, all 'because he was an orphan, and that it was possible he might have been unjustly accused.' And this was his gratitude! Heaven reckon with him, and demand of him quittance in full!

"Into the witness-box he stepped, but his hang-dog look and manner at once belied Sir Furnaby's assertion as to the unimpeachability of his testimony. Our looks met as he was being sworn, and the book dropped from his hand to the ground as though it had been a burning coal. He picked it up again reluctantly and awkwardly, and had to be told at least half-a-dozen times after the oath had been administered, to kiss it. He put it up to his face, but Mr. Gottimore, who had been watching him sideways, declared loudly that his lips had never touched it at all, whereat an officer of the court interfered, and stood by to see that he did give the book a real kiss. This being done, Mr. Hempkin Roper, Q.C., proceeded to examine him.

"What boots it to inquire minutely into this tale of villainous ingratitude? Simeon Grubbum on that day stained his soul with lies black as hell. An eternity of penance would scarce wipe away the record of this chapter of infamy in the life of the scoundrel who for lucre perjured himself: who for a handful of dross swore away the portion of the fatherless, and threw doubt upon the integrity of the spotless dead.

"His evidence was exceedingly brief. He had acted, he said, as a messenger between Sir Lawrence Loftewalde and Miss Helen Porchester previous to their marriage. Miss Porchester always addressed the baronet in her communications with him by his proper name. He (witness) could read very well. Miss Porchester had taught him! One day he had to wait a long time at the Frampton Arms (the Baronet's hostelry) for the appearance of the gentleman to whom he was to deliver the letter—his orders always being that he was never to deliver these missives into any hands but those of the Baronet—and he took it into his head to have a peep inside. What did the letter contain? Why Miss Porchester, after giving her love over and

over again, said that the marriage *must* take place. Her darling Lawrence could, if he liked, give another name; it would be such a surprise, when things came right, for her companions to find that she was the wife of a real Baronet. Wouldn't that booby Gilpin stare, when the news was told him? and many more things of that sort which he, the witness, could not remember.

"I noticed that Farmer Gilpin, at this juncture, blushed scarlet, and bit his lip. He turned my father's picture (which was resting upon the ledge of a niche near the judge's chair, and in full sight of the court) with the face to the wall, and made his way out of the court. In passing me he bent towards me, and said, in a perfectly audible whisper, 'Good-bye, lad. I never thought thy mother would ha' done *that* by me. It was bad enough to throw me over. I would not ha' believed it, but he has kissed the book to it, and he daren't do that to a lie.' I hung down my head. I went dumb—and the only friend I had in the world passed me by, and was lost in the crowd which stood without the court-house. My memory of the events which happened immediately after this, is

somewhat indistinct. I remember Mr. Gottimore on his feet repeatedly, and his being engaged in a long contest, first with the witness, next with the counsel on the other side, and lastly with the judge himself. By the time his lordship came to pronounce judgment, I had considerably recovered myself. I remember that towards the end of his remarks, he made use of words something like the following: 'It is impossible,' he said, 'looking at the substance of decisions upon cases (almost on all-fours with the present) which have been argued before some of the ablest interpreters of the law that have ever graced the English Bench, it is impossible, whatever may be the disposition to favour parties (I speak, of course, without regard to the evidence of the witness Simeon Grubbum) who have meant to act correctly, and from the best motives, to say that the name of one of the contracting parties to the marriage now in question, can be held to be the true name of the party to which it was applied. It will be a great hardship, no doubt, upon the innocent young man, the plaintiff, to pronounce that this marriage is void, but it would be a much greater inconvenience to the public

to alter the settled rules upon the subject for the sake of preventing a particular mischief.

"'VERDICT FOR THE DEFENDANT.'

"'We don't ask for costs in this case,' said Sir Furnaby, graciously.

"I sat there like one bereft of motion, staring stupidly at Sir Gustave, who was all smiles, and whom Sir Furnaby was shaking heartily by the hand, apparently congratulating him upon the successful issue of the suit.

"My lawyer kindly took me by the arm, and led me out of the building. I remember muttering as I went—my movements and my words being like those of a man in a dream—'Verdict for the defendant; the plaintiff doomed.'"

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## CHAPTER II.

"Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below, and saints above,
For love is heaven, and heaven is love."

SCOTT.

"I ARRIVED at my lodgings with a mind

crushed and broken. A very severe and long illness, attended by delirium, changed me so completely in appearance that no one would have taken me for the same being after my recovery that I was before being stricken.

"My lawyer, meeting me one day in the street, and being told who I was, came up to me, kindly took me by the arm and made several inquiries as to my health, what I meant to do for a living, and whether I had settled upon any plan for the future. Perceiving the perfect haze which I was in regarding the best mode of arming myself for the battle of life, he good-naturedly told me to buckle to; despair was useless, worse than useless, he said. These things happened every day. If I had won, Sir Gustave would be in nearly the same plight now that I was, and what would become of him, similarly placed, he (the lawyer) was really afraid to say. 'I'll tell you what I'll do for you, young man,' he continued. 'You have been well educated, so I understand (although—you see I am speaking under the experiences of the past couple of months—if you had been brought up to some kind of trade it would have been much better for you), and you may, with a little

grinding up or filing down, make a good attorney's clerk. We shall shortly be in want of one, and if you like to fill the vacancy, say the word, and the post is yours. Previous knowledge is not necessary, at least not in your case; for we will take care to coach and to cram you up to the desired point. Say, is it a bargain? We'll take you on next week, if you like, and in the meantime here's a guinea for you. You can spend it as you like. Just think matters over, and let me know your decision by Saturday. Good-morning. I've an appointment, and can't wait.'

"The lawyer had spoken with such rapidity that it was some time before I could bring my wits to bear upon what he had been saying. Immediately I did so, however, I, without hesitation, made up my mind to accept his offer.

"On the following Monday morning, had you visited the office of Messrs. Ingram and Neal, in the High Street of Frampton-Mucknard, you might have beheld me, perched upon a very high stool, behind a very high desk, with Mr. Ingram looking over my shoulder, inducting me into the mysteries of

pouncing parchment, mending quills, and writing a round and somewhat modified form of court hand. I got on very well indeed with Mr. Ingram. He gave me credit for being sharp, obliging, and painstaking. With Mr. Neal, however, I was not much of a favourite. It was impossible that I could be. This black-a-visaged man courted no one's favour or good-will. You rarely ever saw him laugh. His heavily-lined features would sometimes relax into a smile; but then the scowl or the frown followed so close upon its heels, that the poor smile was caught in mid-growth, and either strangled or scorched outright. As to his laugh, good heavens! you would have run ten miles to get out of its way. It was perfectly shocking, frightful. You felt it creeping down your back like a swarm of ear-wigs, and right into your marrow. You might fancy it to be the whinnying of a nightmare, so hideous was the sensation it gave you. As I said before, it was not often that he did laugh, and for that mercy I hope I have been sufficiently thankful. Five years in the service of the firm gave me no better impression of the junior partner's distinguishing traits. Mr. Ingram's

amiable face, beaming over the sour one of his partner, suggested to you the comparison of Apollo shining over Styx.

" It required but very little penetration to discover that, although the junior partner, Mr. Neal's influence was upon most occasions paramount in the establishment. Mr. Ingram, who had several sons, but only one daughter, kept a house and table which were expensive, to say the least of them. The boys had been bred up to no profession whatever. They believed with their mother in the command, 'Ask, and it shall be given you;' none ever thought of inquiring where the 'it' was to come from. They were educated and travelled young men, and neither of them ever dreamt of settling down to work. Each of them, no doubt, devoutly thanked Heaven that he was above *that!* It was well known that Mr. Ingram was frequently in pecuniary straits by this behaviour of his sons, and that but for the tight grasp which Mr. Neal kept upon the purse-strings, the senior partner and the junior too would long ago have 'gone to the dogs.' A cheque given by the senior partner in the firm's name upon their (as we thought) common bank was of no more value

than if given by the youngest lad in the office. Before the cheque could be converted into money, the bankers required the name of the junior partner to be attached to it—then it was as safe of being cashed as if the signatary had been the Governor of the Bank of England himself.

"Mr. Ingram had a daughter, Constance. How shall I describe her to you? I will try as I go along. Messrs. Ingram and Neal gave their families and clerks a day's outing every summer regularly; at least Mr. Ingram did, for if Neal had his own way he would have discarded the custom as useless and entailing an unnecessary expense. A few of Mr. Ingram's wife's relations, a few of his own, and his servants, Mr. Neal (*he* had no relations that any one had ever heard of, or friends either), and the clerks from the office (we were a dozen, our conveyancing practice being a very extensive one), made up a party of about fifty. Our general plan was to hire a number of vehicles and drive to a very romantic spot about ten miles off, where there were some really beautiful waterfalls and several extensive caves, the exploration of which was a never-ending source of delight to us.

"It was in the fifth year of my service under the firm that I saw Miss Ingram for the first time. She accompanied us in one of these excursions, and I was honoured with an introduction. She had been educated abroad, and spoke French and German with extraordinary ease. It was her first visit to 'the Falls,' as we called them, and she was delighted. I, having been there frequently before, was presumed to know all about the spot, and was immediately appointed her cicerone. The appointment was lightly made and lightly undertaken; but could any one of those concerned in it have foreseen the consequences, it would have been avoided as though it were the pestilence. What was it that thrilled me as I assisted her over the ford which we had to cross to gain the first of these caves? It was the magnetism of her touch certainly; but then magnetism doesn't influence everything. As far as I know it has no effect upon a block of wood. There must be reaction before action is here discovered; one is co-existent with the other; the subject of magnetic action must be sympathetic, or the magnetising influence loses its force. My fair companion was imagina-

tive—romantic. Immediately she put her feet upon dry land she ran towards the first of the caves, but stopped at its mouth, and, turning to me, said :

"'. . . . . But what is this?
Here's a path to't; 'tis some savage hold,
. . . . . Ho ! who's here?
If anything that's civil, speak ; if savage,
Take or lend. Ho !—no answer? then I'll enter.'

"Enter she did, but she had not gone many steps before she turned her face towards the entrance, and stood looking at me. I returned her gaze with one of admiring wonder. Her face seemed to me to irradiate the gloomy vault wherein she stood, and I involuntarily exclaimed :

"'By Jupiter, an angel ! or, if not,
An earthly paragon.'

"'Ho, ho!' she responded merrily. 'You've been reading Shakespeare, have you, sir? Those words, you know, come very soon after mine in "Cymbeline." Imogene is a favourite character of mine. I prefer her to any of Shakespeare's heroines, Juliet herself not excepted.'

"'I must plead guilty to devoting a good deal more of my time to the writings of the Bard of Avon than to those of any legal luminary whatever,' I returned, looking downwards bashfully.

"'That's it, is it?' she said with mock sternness. 'Studying plays instead of *works*. Giving your days and nights to the dramatist instead of to "Coke upon Littleton," "Dr. Blackstone and his Commentaries," and nice reading of that sort, by which you might have hoped to profit some day. You will come to a bad end, sir, unless you very speedily reform.'

"How many words spoken in jest have eventually turned out to be solemn, earnest truths!

"Mr. Ingram had now joined us, and with him were his wife (hanging on Mr. Neal's arm) and about half a dozen others of our party. We lighted our torches, explored the cave, crossed dry-footed over the bed of the river at a spot where the water overhead formed a screen of crystal between us and the blazing sun, and explored another cave, where, in an absent manner, I informed the party there was a marvellous echo. Con-

stance, who was the foremost of us all, held a torch high above her head, and looked back at us and at the surrounding walls of rock to see the effect of the glare. It was truly wild and grand. The region in which we stood seemed Pluto's own. In the distance could be heard the rumbling sound of a cataract, heavy, ceaseless, and resembling a muffled thunder-peal of unbroken continuity. We tried the echo. I blew a blast upon a key bugle. Something like what the poet so beautifully describes was the result:

"'The roofs all around
The shrill echoes rebound.
* * * * * *
Exulting in triumph now swell the bold notes
In broken air trembling, the wild music floats,
Till by degrees, remote and small
The strains decay
And melt away
In a dying, dying fall.'

"Constance then sang in a minor key:

"'Have not you seen the timid tear
Steal trembling from mine eye?
Have you not marked the flush of fear,
Or caught the murmured sigh?

And can you think my love is chill,
Nor fixed on you alone?
And can you rend by doubting still
A heart so much your own?'

"Gracious heavens, what witchcraft was this? What magic held me spell-bound? What spirit was it that had wafted me under its wing to an elysium of bliss and of transport. It was a double witchcraft, the spell was the result of a dual influence; my soul had soared heavenwards in the company of two spirits—celestial music, more than celestial Love!"

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## CHAPTER III.

"She listened with a flitting blush,
With downcast eyes and modest grace;
And she forgave me, that I gazed
Too fondly on her face!"

COLERIDGE.

"'VERY pretty song, upon my life,' said Mr. Ingram.

"'The offspring of some love-sick and out-at-elbows wanderer,' continued Mr. Neal with a sneer.

"'It isn't every one who has a poetical any

more than a musical ear, Mr. Neal,' observed Miss Ingram spiritedly.

"'I admit that I possess neither the one nor the other,' returned Mr. Neal, colouring, and bowing slightly.

"'Of course in that case it would be no use my telling you Shakespeare's opinion of beings of your unfortunate temperament,' said Miss Ingram with icy politeness.

"'It is something highly ludicrous, I have no doubt,' responded Mr. Neal. 'A wonderful knack he possessed, I believe, of turning everything into ridicule. Of course you may ridicule anything, no matter how sacred.'

"'I am afraid, and I say so without intending the slightest disrespect, Mr. Neal,' said Constance (we had now gained the open air), 'that you are better acquainted with "the wise saws and modern instances" of your profession than with the beauties of the national bard. If you think there is anything ludicrous, or ridiculous either, in the opinion which he (or which one of his characters, which is the same thing) has expressed respecting the man whose soul is impervious to the influence of harmony, I assure you you are mistaken. Here it is: judge for yourself;—

"'The man that hath no music in himself,
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night,
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted.'

"Mr. Neal bit his lip, and flushed scarlet with anger.

"'Miss Ingram,' he said, with a frown of most portentous blackness upon his brow, 'is unusually argumentative and complimentary this morning. By-the-bye, Ingram,' he added with affected carelessness, addressing her father, 'it has just struck me that I have an appointment to-day at four with old Mr. Inchcup respecting that bit of conveyancing. It is now half-past two, so I will be only in time if I drive back at once. I would apologise to your daughter and to your party generally for this abrupt departure, but that I feel certain my unpoetical, unmusical company renders an apology unnecessary, if not superfluous.'

"He turned from us as he spoke, and walked rapidly away in the direction of his gig, which we heard shortly afterwards careering furiously across the hard dry road in the direction of home.

"'Constance, girl,' I heard Mr. Ingram say, as he and his daughter walked ahead of us arm-in-arm. 'You know not what you have done. You have by your pertness—you may call it vivacity, high spirit, ready repartee, or anything you like—this day offended a man who will never either forget or forgive. You have insulted—aye, that's the word—one who will, or will try to be, one day avenged in full, and who, if he fail to reach you directly, will strike at you through others a blow or blows which you would rather have received yourself in full. It was a foolish thing, girl—a foolish thing.'

"'But then he drew it all upon himself, papa,' replied his daughter. 'He provoked me by aspersing the poet of whose writings he has probably never read ten words. Besides,' she added, after a pause, 'his conduct towards me of late has been the reverse of desirable, and I am glad if I have made him feel that I have nipped his impertinence in the bud.'

"The contrast between the dispositions of father and daughter was very great, and would have been noticed upon the most casual acquaintance with them. He was

loud, talkative, boisterous sometimes, but singularly yielding and pliable. She, though spirited, was cool, dry, inclined to be sarcastic and inflexible. Her conduct towards Mr. Neal might at first sight appear inexplicable and scarcely justifiable, but viewed in the light of her reply to her father's observations and of the knowledge which she afterwards communicated to me, I considered it to be not only strictly proper, but praiseworthy.

"The departure of Mr. Neal had very little effect upon the spirits of the party generally. Mr. Ingram I observed to be a little less gay than usual, but, this fact apart, all went well and merry as a marriage bell.

"We partook of luncheon, and enjoyed a dance upon the green sward. Constance was twice my partner. After that we had a row upon a tiny lake which the river formed about half a mile away from its first fall. This last was what I most of all enjoyed. I could handle the sculls tolerably well. Out upon the water we felt a breeze which refreshed us, and for which we had panted whilst on land in vain. The day was an exceedingly warm one, and although we had courted the shade as much as possible, we all felt oppressed and

fagged by the heat. On one side of the lake where the foliage was particularly thick and heavy, there was a slight current always perceptible. Towards this I now pulled, and beneath the delightfully cool umbrageous shade formed by the overhanging branches of trees our boat drifted idly and at leisure. I rested on my oars, and drank in the scene around me. We were there alone, and in a situation both difficult and delicate, if the state of my feelings be taken into account. I was twenty-one, be it remembered, and never once before had I perceived in myself a feeling which could have claimed the slightest kindred with the one which now possessed me. I, too, was more inclined to view the world from an imaginary than a real standpoint. Its people I considered as divided into two classes—demons and angels—supreme wickedness on the one hand, and on the other superlative goodness and purity. Here was a being before me who, though lovely as a vision, had spirit, life, vigour; was sweet enough, yet not tame enough, to be a seraph; had a will of her own which would not brook impertinent advances, and what could I expect my advances to be deemed

—I who had only seen her a few hours? But 'the divine child' Love was never noted for anything more than for rashness. We all know that, beautiful though he is painted, his organs of vision are defective—some say (and I believe them) that he is quite blind. I had no more command of my feelings than the wretch who tied to a plank has of the current which bears him—it may be to his own destruction.

"'Could you pull against this current, Mr. Loftewalde?' I heard her ask.

"'Pull against the current of my feelings I certainly cannot,' I mentally ejaculated. I said aloud, 'Oh yes, miss. It is but a very slight one, and requires no very great exertion, but we must be pretty careful how we turn the boat's head to the stream.'

"'Is there danger in it?' she said. 'Oh, do it then, for I love a little danger. It is the salt of one's life, this danger is.'

"'Your favourite poet calls it a nettle, miss, from out of which we pluck the flower safety. However, there is so very little of it here that we need not fear being stung by the plucking process,' I replied.

"I had by this time worked the boat's

head into the desired position, and was pulling against the current.

"'Do you know, Mr. Loftewalde,' she said suddenly, 'have you ever calculated upon the time which has been wasted and the feelings which have been stifled or chilled by that horrid incubus of a thing called ceremony?'

"'I have, miss,' I replied, 'but still I think that it is not an unmixed evil. It is a sort of barrier against the intrusion of many things which might be deemed unpleasant.'

"'It is a barrier,' she returned, 'which the rude trample down as easily as if it had been a pile of feathers. It is, I think, a sort of artificial shield erected at first by the shallow and the timid, and behind which it has since become fashionable for greater natures to take refuge. The honest and straightforward despise and contemn it; the crafty and cunning court its protection for a double purpose—they rush to it when worsted in fair fight, or they use it to shoot at you from under cover.'

"'Indeed, miss, you argue so well that it would be worse than ungallant in me to take the opposite side. Ceremony in me shall

find no advocate when such a formidable, to say nothing of fair, counsel has been retained against me,' said I.

" 'Now you flatter, sir,' said she quickly, and with a blush. 'Perhaps it was unintentional. Wherefore I forgive you, Mr. Loftewalde.'

" 'I never intended to apologise, Miss Ingram; it is too ceremonious,' I returned, laughingly.

" 'But you *are* ceremonious, sir,' she responded. 'You can't address half a dozen words to me without putting in "Miss" or "Miss Ingram." This sounds too formal and stiff. Why not drop it altogether, and call me Constance—the name which my godfathers and godmothers gave me at my baptism?'

" This abrupt speech fairly staggered me, but the blow was the most delightful one which an opponent could give. I believe, however, that my reply was not less powerful, though much more short and abrupt.

" 'Why not call me Lawrence, then?' said I, adding softly, as I noticed the effect which my words had had, 'I am but your father's clerk.'

"I pulled at a desperate rate up the stream, and the exertion relieved me somewhat of the strain upon my feelings. My fair companion sat silent, and appeared meditative for a long time. At length she said slowly, and in a low voice:

"'Yes, that is a phase of the question which I had not studied, not calculated upon, even. However, I am determined that I will be consistent. I will call you Lawrence, and you must call me Constance.'

"'But should we happen to meet in society —before strangers, or your father, for instance, or Mr. Neal,' I said hesitatingly, 'shall we observe the rule then without modifying it in any way?'

"'How shall I answer you?' replied she. 'Are you brave enough? Are there consequences which you would fear should my answer be "Yes?"'

"'None, on my soul, none,' I answered eagerly, and with warmth.

"'Then I will trust to your manly discretion to bring me out of the difficulty without compromising my consistency,' she returned.

"We had reached the head of the lakelet, and my companion expressed a wish to land.

"'One word before we part, Constance—I mean Miss Ingram—no, I mean Constance,' said I. 'We may, if I have not read your heart aright, never meet again under circumstances such as these. I have something which I wish to say to you, but I know not how to begin. I know not why I say it at all, unless it be that there is a fate overhanging me, and that I wish at once to know its nature. Pardon me for reverting (for I would not for a moment have you think that I am taking unfair advantage of you) to something which you said about ceremony. Search your own heart while I search mine, and let us mutually avow whether either at the present moment contains a feeling, the outcome of which is not frozen by (you see you've converted me to your own way of thinking) the cold of wintry ceremony.'

"We had gained the shore, and I stood gazing at the heaven of her half-averted face, watching in it the sunshine and the clouds that came and went with fitful alternation.

"'My heart, my heart!' she at length murmured. 'Lawrence, Lawrence, you know not what you have asked. It beats,

it beats; but I cannot interpret its beatings—they choke me.'

"'Then let me interpret them, and those of my own heart too,' I responded wildly, sinking upon my knee, and showering kisses upon her hand, which mine had unconsciously seized. 'If not me, let Love be the interpreter for both of us,' I continued in the same passionate strain.

"'Lawrence—Mr. Loftewalde—you forget yourself,' she exclaimed in faltering accents. 'I felt—I knew that it would come to this. Heaven sustain me and direct me in the right path. Like Juliet, my heart tells me that I have no joy of this contract. It is too rash, too unadvised, too sudden—too like the lightning, which doth cease to be ere one can say, "It lightens."'

"She paused, as though undecided how to proceed.

"'Let me finish the passage, my love,' I murmured, bending over her fondly. 'Let us both hope, darling of my heart, that this bud of love by summer's ripening breath may prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.'

"She looked into my face with her full,

dark-blue eyes tear-suffused, but joyous. I drew her gently to my bosom, and our lips met in one long entrancing embrace. By this first kiss of love a covenant strong as death was sealed between two souls, who, from a zenith of human bliss, received foretaste of Paradise."

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## CHAPTER IV.

"He is indeed a slave that dares not utter
His thoughts, nor 'gainst his cruel masters mutter,
But all their insolencies must o'erpass
And bear their follies tamely like an ass."

EURIPIDES.

"LOVE is republican; it knows no rank, estate, or caste. All are equal in its eyes. King and clown, prince and peasant, queen and rustic maiden, alike have owned—will own—the sway of Love the leveller. Hence was it that neither Constance nor myself ever dreamt that a wide social gulf yawned between us. To me she ought to have been a star, to be gazed at, but never approached. Love lifted me into the atmosphere, drew me

within the orbit of that star, placed me in contact with its rays, dazzled, blinded, overwhelmed, absorbed me. Perhaps, though, it was love that drew that star down to earth, as love did once the sons of God to the daughters of men. Perhaps—— But why speculate?

"In one short year from the day on which we first met, we—Constance and I—were man and wife. We loved, met, and were married in secret. The secret was kept undivulged for nearly two years after our union. In the meantime, I understood that Mr. Neal had been pressing his suit with her father, and that the old man had given him every encouragement, but that he had refrained, either from fear of a rebuff, or from some other cause, from declaring his intentions to her personally. Things, however, got to a head at last, and the storm broke. It began in this way. Mr. Ingram liked me so well that he proposed to Mr. Neal that they should give me my articles, and admit me into partnership with them. But to this Mr. Neal would not listen. I accidentally overheard a conversation between them one day upon the subject.

"'He is such a really good, painstaking, obliging fellow, Neal,' I heard Mr. Ingram say. 'Upon my honour, he'd be an acquisition, and you know we have plenty to do for a third, or even a fourth partner.'

"'Painstaking, indeed!' sneered Mr. Neal in reply. 'He keeps the work going, I admit, but if he had been sharp he might have brought us in a great deal more. He doesn't study our interests half as well as he ought to.'

"'Well, he's no tout, it's true, like that little puppy of Chawthum and Bland's, but I can't help thinking that he's of more real use to us than that young shaver is to his employers after all,' returned Mr. Ingram.

"'He seems to have made wonderful headway with you,' said Mr. Neal, in a slightly sarcastic tone. 'Let me tell you a bit of my mind now, Ingram: the young fellow with his taking manners goes a little too often to that house of yours. You have a daughter there whom I should have liked for a wife, as you very well know, for I have told you so often enough before. You have a daughter, I say, who is a little weak in the head—pardon me, I mean no offence—who is foolish, a little moonstruck in her notions; sentimental,

romantic, and so forth. Do you understand me ?'

"'Indeed, I don't,' rejoined Mr. Ingram, with, as I then thought, and still think, excusable testiness.

"'Bluntly, then,' said the other. 'Taking manners—I call it trafficking on another's weakness myself—a girl who craves after the ideal, and that sort of thing. Now do you understand ?'

"'No wiser than before,' replied Mr. Ingram, this time with greater coolness.

"'How very obtuse you are this morning,' said Mr. Neal coarsely, and with almost a hiss. 'A taking man and a yielding girl; the one might *take* the other off! Is that plain enough for you ?'

"'I'm hanged if he does,' returned Mr. Ingram, who whistled, as though a new light had just dawned upon his ever active mind. 'But I say, Neal, you're inclined to be crusty this morning. Met a testy client in old Slithers, eh ? Deuced near being let in for costs, or an action for remissness. Good Lord, how stupid you must have been to draw up the old fellow's will without naming executor or trustee, or saying a word about it.

Escaped by the skin of your teeth from a drubbing.'

"'Curse it, yes,' said the other. 'It all came of that girl of yours putting on her airs, and getting my back up so that day at the Falls. My brain was in a whirl for a month after. But this articling business, Ingram. My mind is made up about it. When Mr. Loftewalde comes into this concern, Mr. Neal goes out, d'ye understand?'

"'Oh, perfectly,' responded Mr. Ingram. 'Good-morning,' and he turned towards the door and went out.

"Mr. Neal rang his bell for me, and I entered his sanctum. I endeavoured to look cool, but I didn't—I never could very well mask my feelings; on the occasions on which I have tried, the mask was so transparent that it was easily seen through.

"'Good-morning, sir,' said I.

"'Is that draft of Davidson's ready?' he asked, with a snap as though he were going to take my head off at a bite.

"'Not quite, sir,' I said. 'I wanted to see you respecting the annuity clause. I'm somewhat in doubt as to whether the wording is explicit enough.'

"'Why the devil didn't you see me sooner then?' he growled. 'I wanted the deed to be ready for signature this very afternoon. It is a matter of a hundred folios, and here you are with the draft unfinished.'

"'I would have seen you earlier, sir, but that Mr. Ingram was with you,' I replied.

"'How do you know that?' he asked quickly.

"'I—I—saw him going towards your office, sir,' stammered I.

"'Yes, and *heard* him in my office, sir,' he returned, observing my confusion. 'Tell the truth now, without shuffling or reserve: aye or nay?'

"'And if I say "aye," sir, what then?' I inquired stiffly.

"'Only this, sir, that to other bad habits you have added that of eavesdropping,' he returned. 'We want no spies in this office, young man, and you either break off your practice at once, or you may try for a place where it is not objected to.'

"'I am sure, sir, that what I heard was accidental,' I began.

"'Oh! so you did hear something, then?' he said, interrupting me. 'Thank you for

the admission ; it comes better when it comes unasked.'

"'You have the reputation of being a clever cross-examiner, sir,' I replied. 'You will perhaps permit me to remind you though, that I am not upon my defence, and that as there is no charge made against me, you have no right to make use of my own words to my prejudice.'

"' But there *is* a charge made against you,' he returned, 'that of eavesdropping, which is detestable.'

"'I don't know that it is worse than speaking ill of others behind their backs,' I retorted.

"'What you heard was but a penalty which always attends upon misplaced curiosity,' he replied.

"'The ways of Providence are inscrutable,' I remarked ironically. 'Only to think, now, that it should have chosen such an instrument for the punishment of my sin ! It is something extraordinary and incomprehensible.'

"'Davidson's draft, sir, if you please. Attend to that, and keep your impertinence for your inferiors—or your equals, if you wish it. I can't change the subject, however, with-

out first giving you one word of advice. Never hope whilst in this establishment to advance yourself a single step by currying favour with Mr. Ingram. If you do, you will show yourself to be as big a fool as he is, and that is saying a good deal.'

"'After what I have heard, sir, it would be useless for me to hope to advance in *your* good graces, at any rate,' I rejoined.

"'Quite,' he returned. . . .'You and I never were, never will be, never can be friends,' he went on.

"'It is something to be honoured with a great man's hate,' I replied with a bow.

"'Idiot, you are wrong,' he replied savagely. 'Stand but in my path, and I will tread you down with no more concern than had you been an ant.'

"His words made my blood boil, but I weighed well my reply before giving utterance to it, like the swordsman, who, finding the weak point in his enemy's guard, deliberates and collects his energies for a blow which shall be mortal.

"'Attempt to tread upon me,' I replied, drawing myself up, 'and I'll play a tune about your head which shall ring in your ears to the

end of your days, son of a washerwoman that you are !'

"He turned white, whether with anger or fear I know not. I expected he would have become furious, but he made no demonstration whatever. He merely said, in a comparatively cool tone: 'You leave this place in another month, sir.'

"'And allow me to tell you,' I replied, 'that if I were to say the word you would leave this place in half that time. I know that which, if divulged, would have you struck off the rolls at once, and perhaps brand you as a felon besides. The signature to the will of Dr. Snarkins—remember whose it was, and beware.'

"Without giving him time to recover from the astonishment which my words produced upon him, I turned upon my heel and left the room. I went straight to my desk, locked it, gave the keys to Wilkins, my immediate subordinate, and telling him I might not be back that day, or perhaps that week, left the office.

"I bent my steps homewards not very certain what I should do. My thoughts ran in half a dozen different directions at once. I

never before felt so annoyed and disgusted with existence and with everything about it. Foremost in my mind was Constance, my love, my life, my bride. The disclosure of our relationship must, I mused, overwhelm both her and me. The effect upon her father I knew would be terrible. I had fondly hoped that a partnership would have smoothed away many objections to my union with the daughter of the head of the firm, but that hope was now completely extinguished. Her mother, I felt convinced, would never recognise me as a son-in-law, whilst her brothers—I dreaded what would happen when it came to their knowledge that *their* sister—their only sister—was *my* wife.

"I felt, however, that something must be done, and that very speedily. My position had become intolerable. I resolved to seek out Constance, lay before her a plain statement of my and her case, take her opinion thereon, and (if they turned out to be better than my own—which was very probable) act entirely upon her suggestions. The resolution was no sooner formed than the means of carrying it into effect appeared in view. In turning the corner of the street which led to

my lodgings, I almost ran into the arms of my darling.

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## CHAPTER V.

" Hark ! 'tis an elfin storm from fairy land,
Of haggard seeming but a boon indeed ;
Arise—arise ! the morning is at hand ;
The bloated wassailers will never heed :—
Let us away, my love, with happy speed ;
There are no ears to hear, or eyes to see,
Drown'd all in Rhenish and the sleepy mead ;
Awake ! arise ! my love, and fearless be,
For o'er the southern moors I have a home for thee.'

KEATS.

"'LOFTIE, my love!' was her exclamation, 'you look displeased, almost ill. What is it that ails you ?'

" A better, more appropriate question she could not have put. I at once begged her to walk with me a little way, and, with her arm linked in mine, we struck out into a green lane, which we used to called the 'Lovers' Walk.' We seated ourselves beneath a large old willow, and there I poured forth unto her the burden of my sorrows.

"'The situation does indeed look black, Loftie,' she remarked when I had concluded, 'but there is nothing to despair about. I love black situations—they bring out the bright side of one's nature in stronger relief.'

"'Would that my heart were but half as strong as yours, my dearest Constance,' I replied. 'This eternal buffeting with Fate has made me fretful and gloomy.'

"'But it should not, it must not have any such effect upon you,' said she. 'Would life be worth the having if we were never to meet with trouble? Certainly not. We would never have known day but by contrasting it with night. But for the darkness, light would be of no use to us. We can't live in an eternal blaze of sunshine. The soul, in such an atmosphere, would become bewildered, blinded, apathetic, dried of its healthful juices, scorched up, be a very Sahara of unproductiveness, would die.'

"'It seems so very selfish in me to be always talking of my troubles, Constance,' I rejoined. 'I know, or ought to know, that you have enough of your own. I would not mention mine, but that distributing lightens

them, although that is only easing my own burden by adding to yours.'

"'Never mind, love,' she returned. 'To whom should you unburden yourself, but to your wife? Now, Loftie, listen to me. I have begun to think that concealment of our position is no longer possible. I think we had better go through the worst at once, and with your consent I will tell my father all this very night when he asks me to go to the party at Dr. Snaithie's with Mr. Neal, as mamma has informed me he will.'

"'Not to-night, not to-night!' I replied in alarm. 'I must have time to collect my energies and my wits. To-night would be too soon.'

"'And why may to-night be too soon, sir?' she asked, with a flush of mingled pride and anger. 'Why not to-night, when I, a woman, the *weaker* vessel, have proposed it, and declared myself ready to face the consequences; when I, who will have to bear the first fury of the storm, when I, to whom the danger may amount to a sacrifice, have told you I am willing?'

"'It is on that very account that I am anxious you should postpone it, my darling,'

I replied, seizing her hand and kissing it passionately. 'The storm may take so long in gathering that it may fall entirely harmless in the end.'

"'Or it may,' she responded, 'like a dammed-up stream, destroy the more the longer its waters are allowed to accumulate.'

"We talked long and earnestly over our plans. From her courageous proposal that we should dare the worst at once, I shrank with almost a coward's fear. Had I given way to Constance upon this point, our fate might have been a very different one. It might have been; ah! yes, it might have been—no one knows what. All we can speak of is what *was;* the rest is mere conjecture and probability. We parted with our minds fully made up as to the course of action which we were to take.

"That night, whilst the merriment at Dr. Snaithie's must have been at its highest, a chaise and pair drove up to the Doctor's gate, a head was put out, and a hand was stretched towards the lamp, which was on the left hand side of the conveyance. Suddenly the lamp itself was turned and waved in the direction of the Doctor's drawing-room, from the large

window of which light blazed forth in a perfect stream. A moment later a stately female form might be seen crossing the Doctor's lawn in the direction of the waving chaise-lamp, which was at once replaced in its old position by a human hand, whose owner bade the post-boy, in a suppressed though visibly excited tone, drive on until he came to a doorway leading towards that part of the Doctor's house which he denominated his surgery. The female figure before referred to might have been (but wasn't) seen from the Doctor's house gliding along by the side of the wall which divided his lawn from the high-road in the direction of the door towards which the chaise was now slowly moving. It seemed to him who was within that chaise as though the moments which elapsed before the door was reached were so many years, while those which elapsed after the door had been gained, and before the appearance of her whom he so hurriedly sprang out to meet, seemed so many stages in eternity itself. He paraded the space between that portion of the road in which he had ordered the post-boy to pull up and the Doctor's side-door a hundred times without being rewarded with a sight of

her who was imaged in his thoughts. He became fretful, and actually stamped the ground in his impatience. But still she whom he had driven thither to meet came not. Softly he lifted the latch beneath the brass-plate on the gateway, on which were engraven the name and occupation of the proprietor of that establishment, and entered. To the left of the doorway a figure whose white drapery and whiter face might have caused you to mistake her for a fallen statue, was stretched cold and helpless upon the dew-damped grass. He bent over her, raised her head to his knee, kissed her lips in an ecstasy of passionate alarm, and called frantically her name. There being no sign of recognition, and scarcely any of animation in her whom his arms fondly encircled, he began debating in his own mind whether he had not better summon Dr. Snaithie, but the very next moment he raised the fair one in his arms as though she had been a child, ran with her to the chaise, whose door was held open by the driver, deposited her therein, and bidding the boy give his horses as much rein and whip as he liked, was whirled away with her in the direction of London.

"The motion of the chaise, added to the means adopted by her protector, had the effect of restoring the flow of the current of life in a form whereon you might have thought death had laid his seal. The oft-caressed lips, however, at last murmured a sigh, and in a whisper soft and sweet as an angel's were uttered the words, 'Am I safe? Is it you, Loftie darling?'

"He upon whose breast her fair head rested responded, in a tone of passionate tenderness, 'Safe, light of my soul, and in the arms of your beloved.'"

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## CHAPTER VI.

"An image of paternal tenderness."

VIRGIL: *Æneid.*

"WE took a little cottage, did my wife and I, in that which was then a suburb, but is now a part of the great city itself. I had, through the kindness of a young gentleman who had been articled to Messrs. Ingram and Neal, who was now in practice in the city, in partnership with his uncle, and who hated Neal very heartily, obtained a tolerably com-

fortable situation. My earnings were considerably augmented by certain literary work, not easily explainable here, which I was able to do after my office hours. The pay, it is true, was not very large, but my employers found me plenty to do, and always settled with me promptly, considerations which cannot, to a person situated as I was, be too highly valued.

"Constance wrote her father a letter a month after our flight, by which time we both hoped his anger had had time to cool. In due time an answer arrived, not from her father, however, but from her father's wife—mother I cannot call her—which ran thus:

"'Mrs. Ingram's compliments to Mrs. Lawrence Loftewalde; begs to inform her of the receipt of her letter, and of its immediate consignment to the parlour grate. Mrs. Loftewalde has chosen her own course; let her adhere to it, and never again dare to trouble those whose advice she so utterly disregarded, and upon whom her conduct has brought unutterable shame.'

"My wife, upon reading the note, pushed

it towards me, and I read it. We both remained silent for some time. I noticed the tears gathering in her eyes; but she bravely repressed her emotion, and, looking me steadily in the face, said: 'What do you say to that, Loftie?'

"'I wish that your father had seen your letter,' I replied with bitterness. 'He has a heart: your mother hasn't. But never mind, love. With health and a little luck I shall make you and myself independent of them all. If you are disposed to make another attempt, however, I would suggest that you write to your father at his office, instead of at his house. I will get the address copied in a fair round hand, so that it may have the appearance of a business letter, and be all the more sure of finding its way into your father's hands.'

"'What an excellent strategist you are, Loftie,' she observed, reaching up her mouth to be kissed, and smiling through her tears. 'I *will* try another letter, but not to-night, for I have not the heart. My nerves are all unstrung, and my spirits clean gone.'

"In the course of that week my darling penned another epistle. It ran thus:

"'My dearest Papa,

"'It is *your daughter* that writes, and it is with an anxious heart that she does so. She is fearful lest she has hurt her father beyond forgiveness; but knowing him to be the fondest parent undutiful child ever had, the hope has not yet fled her that he will write to her, and that, moreover, he will tell her that he has not yet pronounced sentence of banishment upon her, that she is not to be for ever proscribed the light of his presence. I will do penance for my ingratitude, if you will, but write to me, papa darling. Let the expiation be what it may (short of giving up my idol, my husband), it shall be cheerfully performed. Write to me, I implore you. Let not my life remain longer under the cloud of your displeasure. Even my husband's love will be insufficient when the thought is ever present that I have lost your own. Let me hear from you speedily. A beating, loving heart awaits, yearns for your reply, even though it should consist of but a single word. Let that word be "Yes," and it shall be esteemed of greater price than had it been the answer to a prayer that a coronet should

be placed upon the brow of your devoted, loving, only daughter,

"'CONSTANCE.'

"The letter was duly despatched, and a reply arrived. It came as we were sitting to breakfast one morning, and, as I expected, it was of a different tone to that written by the mother.

"'MY DEAREST CHILD (it began),

"'Yours of Tuesday to hand. In reply, I beg to inform you that I give you, in fee simple, to have and to hold henceforth and for ever, my entire forgiveness, without any entail, mortgage, or deduction whatsoever. Due notification of your present address having been forwarded me, I will not fail to do myself the honour of calling upon her on whom has always doted the heart of the senior partner in the firm of

"'INGRAM AND NEAL.'

"Over this curious mixture of business and sentiment Constance laughed and cried by turns until she was tired. The meeting between her and her father was very quickly

brought about. Mr. Ingram's visits to London were frequently made, and were sometimes of long duration. In about three weeks after the receipt of this letter he was called to the city upon an important matter—the winding-up of the affairs of some mercantile clients of his; a business which would take a long time in transacting. I told my patron that my father-in-law had expressed a wish to pay a visit to his daughter, and I requested him to add another to the many obligations which I was under to him by informing Mr. Ingram of our address. This he at once undertook to do, and the next evening, on my return from the office I had the pleasure of seeing the old gentleman sitting down to tea with his daughter, smiling, and happy as if nothing had ever occurred to divert his love from her.

"I stammered out something by way of apology, for either my abrupt intrusion, or our elopement, or something of that kind; but he at once cut me short, and set me at my ease, by observing:

"'No need of excuses, young man. What is done, can't be undone. It is a binding contract, this one of marriage is, and it can't

be dissolved by anything which the parents of either party may do or say. If either of you had had the courage to tell me, as Constance has just done, that you were married such a long time ago, there would have been no need of your running away in such a fashion.'

"'For that I am entirely to blame, sir,' I replied. 'If I had understood and known you as well as your daughter; if I had listened to her advice, given long after she became my wife, the disclosure would have been made, but——'

"'Aye, aye, always "but" to the end of the chapter," he interposed. 'Your "buts" and your "provideds" have spoiled, and will spoil again, many a pretty piece of work. However, beyond telling you that you were both very much to blame——'

"'And that you entirely forgive us, pa dear,' broke in Constance, throwing her arms round his neck, and kissing him.

"'Well, well, yes, yes,' said her father, trying, but completely failing, to look censorious and stern.

"'And now, my darling, good, forgiving papa,' said Constance, 'you must promise us

that you will make our house yours while you are in London. We have room enough and to spare, and I am sure that we—Loftie and I—will see so little of you in the future, that this wish of ours can't appear selfish.'

"'Selfish, no, my dear!' he exclaimed; 'but——'

"'There, now, the "but" is yours, father,' put in Constance, playfully.

"'Well, well, I promise you that I'll run down to you as often as the nature of my business will permit me. It is a very heavy affair, and I only wish I was well through it. It will take us two months at the least, and I sincerely hope that at the end of that time I may find myself deserving, and in the humour, to be congratulated.'

"The time, which to Mr. Ingram must have seemed an age, to us appeared very short and fleeting. He visited us often—as often, I am sure, as he was able. I noticed that he grew less light-hearted in his manner day by day, until at last he became gloomy, despondent, and sullen even. One evening (he had latterly been in the habit of visiting us every evening regularly) he drove up to our door in a chaise,

walked straight into our parlour, where Constance had made the most charming little tea for us, and sank upon the sofa without saying a word. Constance, in some alarm, went towards him, and, taking hold of his hand, tenderly requested him to tell her whether he was ill.

"'In mind, girl, yes,' he replied moodily. 'All lost, all lost. The crash has come. I thought from the first it would. The great ship went down, and, in the vortex caused by its sinking, many smaller ones have been engulphed—my own amongst the number. All lost, all lost! We are beggars every one, save you and Loftie.'

"Here, then, was the secret of his late restlessness and anxiety.

"'Thirty thousand pounds,' he exclaimed, presently. 'More, by at least ten thousand, than I am worth. Took the word of that precious scoundrel Neal, that the concern was a sound one. Told me he had invested heaps in it, and that it was, and would continue, a paying affair. Turns out he never had a halfpenny in it, and that he was paid a handsome sum for introducing my money there. They'll sell me up. Let them do so;

I must leave the place, I suppose, although it has been very dear to me. My wife will never be able to show her face in it after this. Good heavens! only to think that a life of hard, honest work, should have brought me to such an end.'

"We endeavoured to administer such comfort as we supposed best suited to his particular form of affliction, but to no purpose. We reminded him that he had his profession still left him, and that out of it he might yet make a comfortable income.

"'You are mistaken,' he cried, in a despairing tone. 'I, who have always been notably hard upon dishonesty, will be pointed out, will see heads shake at me from all quarters, as the man who preached one thing and practised another. I should have it cast in my teeth (maybe in open court), by every debtor whom a client of mine happened to sue, that *I* at least ought to hold my peace. It would be unendurable, worse than torture. Our creditors have declared they will be satisfied with nothing less than the sale of every chattel belonging to each and every one of their debtors—nothing but the last drop of blood will satisfy them.'

"'They must be a cruel, merciless set!' I exclaimed angrily.

"'You haven't heard their case, my boy,' he responded. 'They have been cheated, swindled, robbed right and left; have had to pay over and over again for what they never had; have had false balance-sheets, falsely audited, presented to them; have been told that there was a substantial reserve fund in the hands of the bankers of the concern, when the fact was that the bank was the company's creditor to an enormous amount. But for the refusal of the bankers to accept any more of the company's bills, the creditors would have gone on in ignorance for another year, and thus, perhaps, have doubled the debt. It was a shocking disclosure of fraud, chicanery, and falsehood from first to last, my dear children, which astounded no one more than your father, who acted throughout as innocently as a child. The time has come for vengeance, and they mean to have it, on guilty and innocent alike.'

"Just as he had predicted, the crash came. By order of the Court of Chancery, that celebrated auctioneer, Mr. Bidwell, had another, and a more splendid opportunity than

ever (the company being more discriminating, appreciative, and select) of conjugating the verb 'to sell,' when 'that fine old mansion known as the Moorlands,' with the estates appertaining thereto, was brought under his hammer, and by that instrument knocked down, at the sum of £19,780, to—Mr. Robert Neal."

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## CHAPTER VII.

"When first I heard (from whom I hardly knew)
That you were fled, and all my joys with you,
Like some sad statue, speechless, pale I stood,
Grief chilled my breast, and stopped my freezing blood:
No sigh to rise, no tear had power to flow,
Fixed in a stupid lethargy of woe.
* * * * * *
I rave, then weep, I curse and then complain,
Now swell to rage, now melt to tears again."

POPE.

"IT was a calamitous year for me and mine. My mother-in-law, having some property of her own, removed from the neighbourhood of her old home into a distant part of the country, where she had relations who were said to be well off. Poor Mr. Ingram was

never consulted in the matter of her removal. She wrote him in a fortnight after she had settled down, offering him an asylum beneath her roof; but the letter was such a cold, uninviting one, that, to a man of any spirit, a refusal of the invitation which it contained was the only possible course. This course my father-in-law took. He came to live with me and Constance, and brought with him as much of the wreck of his once comfortable fortune as he was able to secure, or the bounty of his creditors chose to allow unappropriated. The shock of the fall from affluence to comparative poverty was, however, too great for a system and a spirit like his. He died within the year, in the arms of his beloved daughter. He passed away to his everlasting rest with the peacefulness of a child falling asleep. Mrs. Ingram honoured his funeral with her presence, but we could not prevail upon her to enter our house. Constance she would not even speak to, while the words that passed between me and her did not exceed half a dozen. She merely apologised for the absence of her sons by saying that both were then in Milan. She drove away after the funeral, and that was

the last I ever saw or wished to see, of that cold, hard-hearted, pitiless woman.

"The loss of Mr. Ingram was a great shock to us. I, no less than my wife, felt that the house was wanting in something when the kind, handsome face of the old man was missed from the corner where he invariably sat and read.

"In less than a month after his death, I received notice from my employers that I must leave their service at the end of that term. The reason assigned was, that they intended their junior partner to take to the management himself. They offered me a quarter's salary in advance, and to dispense with my services at once, if I liked. I was for some time too astounded to reply, but I at length mustered courage to ask the senior partner in the firm, by whom the intelligence was communicated to me, whether it was not possible for him to reconsider his determination.

"'Impossible—quite,' he replied.

"'Had I done anything to incur their displeasure?'

"'That,' he said, 'was a very important question, and one to which he would rather

not give a direct answer. He would merely remind Mr. Loftewalde that it was in the power of every employer to (having first given proper notice, or tendering salary in lieu thereof) dismiss any servant he pleased.'

"I bowed, bit my lip to steady its quivering, said I would accept my salary, and left the office without another word.

"On my way home I was met by the junior partner, he whom I had considered my patron. I would have passed him by, but he laid his hand upon my shoulder, and said :

"'No, old fellow, you shan't escape me without a word. I had nothing to do with this business. My taking the management is a sham. I never will, never intended to do anything of the sort. I don't know all, however; although it strikes me that Neal is at the bottom of the affair. Only a fortnight ago he appointed us his City agents. His connection is a valuable one. He soon ascertained that you were with us, and he doubtless used the screw at once. Either our connection with him or yours with us must immediately cease. Your services, my poor fellow, were weighed in the balance against

Neal's interest, and kicked the beam. This, I suspect, is the whole history of the affair. Now I can't stay longer, but if there is anything I can do for you, here's my card; write to my lodgings, and if it is within my power, it shall be done. Be advised, however, as to Neal. Keep clear of him. The scoundrel hasn't done with you yet. Sorry for you, from my heart, and will help you if I can. Bye, bye.'

"He wrung my hand, and passed on.

"My heart was too full for reply, therefore I did not attempt one. How to communicate the news to Constance, was the thought which now engrossed me. Poor girl, poor girl; hers was a cruel fate, hers a double burden of sorrow and affliction.

"The news must be—let me say at once that it was communicated. It was a heavy blow to both, but we bore it bravely and well. We managed to live on the scanty income which I derived from my literary occupations; and as time went on, and I became better known, my prospects brightened very considerably.

"I was again beginning to congratulate myself upon being on the road to prosperity,

when a storm overtook me which blasted my life, and which rendered bitter for ever the fountains of my soul. She who had been my partner in adversity, my firm supporter under every stroke of misfortune, the soother of my cares, whose heart was to me a kingdom, whose presence was light, my pride, my joy, my wife, passed away from me, left me alone to sojourn in a desert which her radiance only had made tolerable. Woe, black as night and fathomless, was mine when the dreadful intelligence was communicated to me. Little was I comforted by the reflection that in dying she had left me a memento of her love for me. When you, Emmeline, were placed in my arm, I wept over you. I cursed the hour in which both of us were born! I would have named you Marah, for the rending of your mother's soul from mine filled my cup of bitterness to the brim. In the music of your mother's voice, as her spirit took its flight, I, however, heard a name pronounced, which was to be, and has been, yours. 'Emmeline,' said she, and Death placed his eternal seal of silence upon her lips. I laid her beside my mother, to whose tombstone there was added another inscription. May the turf

upon their breasts lie lightly, and long may the tender hands of the living preserve it fresh and green.

"From sorrow let me turn to persecution. From the one man may feel a chastening, refining influence; but under the other the high, sensitive spirit becomes galled, rebellious, and pants for revenge.

"I knew myself to be an object of hatred to a man who nursed vengeance with a fondness like to that with which parent nurses favourite child, and against him I meant, I tried, to be on my guard. His, however, were the tactics of the assassin, who dogs his foe by night, and strikes him when and where he least suspects. For the home which she who had flown from me had brightened by her presence I entertained the strongest affection. I was advised by many of my friends to give over housekeeping, and to go into lodgings, as the most economical mode of living; but my reluctance to part from a place, and with things over which hovered so many fond and tender memories, made me steadily decline to listen to any of them. Besides, I found a home of my own of great advantage to me in the pursuit of my business,

and a removal—into lodgings more especially —might prejudice me in more ways than one.

"When you, Emmeline, were about eleven, you were placed in a school where I intended you should remain until you had acquired those accomplishments which would have made you an ornament to any circle. To maintain you there cost me many a struggle, and deprived me of many things which I might then have considered necessary, but which I have since learned to look upon as superfluous. It was a very easy matter for me, under those circumstances, to live up to my income. I spent every penny I earned upon your maintenance and my own, and more (so some of my friends went the length of saying) than I could afford. I remember it was towards the end of your first year in this school—for I had gone to see you, and had paid for your maintenance there for the term—that notice was served upon me that another landlord had acquired possession of my house, and that I must either quit at the end of the quarter or pay double rent. Judge of my surprise when I found the notice signed with the detested name of my old employer, 'Robert Neal.' This man, because I had

crossed him in love, would hunt me to death, that was certain. I (foolishly, as I have since thought) determined to keep possession of the house, and to brave the worst he could do.

"Listen now, my children, to the manner in which even English law may become an instrument of injustice and persecution in the hands of a vindictive man. I pinched myself to the utmost to discharge the heavy burden which was cast upon me by the doubling of my rent. Bit by bit I saw, notwithstanding the most strenuous exertions on my part to preserve them, my household gods, the links between me and a happy past, disappearing for the benefit of my rapacious landlord. Finding that he could not get rid of me soon enough, another notice was given me that my rent would be again doubled. Stung to desperation, I resolved that I would remain in spite of him. When quarter-day came round I could not muster more than half of what was asked of me. My goods were distrained upon, and a full third of them sold ere the required sum could be realised. A notice was then served upon me that I must quit unconditionally at the expiration of

the next quarter. Just before the day came round I removed the little which remained of my furniture to the house of a friend, where I intended taking up my abode. In a fortnight afterwards I was summoned to appear at the divisional police court for having fraudulently conveyed away and carried off the whole of my goods and chattels in order to prevent my landlord, Robert Neal, from distraining upon them for certain arrears of rent which were then due and payable! I appeared on the day named in the summons before Sir John Micklegold, the owner of very extensive house property, and who appeared to have the law of landlord and tenant at his fingers' ends. It was a very simple matter. Neal merely swore that I was his tenant, that my tenancy was determined by notice to quit on Lady-day in that year, but that before the expiration of my term I had, without informing him of my intention to do so, moved away the whole of my furniture. A professional appraiser—a man who had accompanied the bailiffs to my house when they made the seizure—was then sworn, and stated the value of my goods to be at the least forty-five pounds. Mr. Neal,

addressing his worship, remarked that he had no wish whatever to ruin the young man now before him, and that he would be content, if his worship so pleased, to lay the value of the goods at, say, thirty pounds.

"'Ah, very kind of you, Mr. Neal,' said Sir John, who at once proceeded to give judgment in favour of the plaintiff.

"After a very eloquent harangue upon the rascalities of tenants in general, and mine in particular, he referred to the Statute 11 George II., chapter 19, by which he was enabled to order payment of double the value of the goods removed, which in my case would be sixty pounds, with all costs. In default of payment, the only alternative was imprisonment with hard labour in the common gaol for six calendar months. Was ever the statute-book of this or any other country disgraced by a worse law ?* A better engine of oppression an unjust man could not wish to be armed with. Double the value of his goods indeed! Beyond his goods what could the wiseacres who framed that extraordinary law expect the being whom they intended that that law should punish to be

* In force in the year 1877.—*Author.*

worth? With the man for whom rent has become a greater burden than he can bear, does not 'the *whole* of his goods and chattels' constitute the *whole* of his wealth—his all in the blessed world? 'Yes,' says common sense. Law says, 'yes' too, but with a hankering after the paradoxical which has become habitual with it, adds: 'Ergo, we will make him pay twice what he is worth.'

"I found myself, my children, dragged away from the court in the custody of a constable, and marched through the streets to gaol in company with, and chained to, a common felon!

"My term of imprisonment, like everything else, had an end, although that end appeared, up to the very last day of my incarceration, as though it would never come about. Of course I dared not again hope to mingle with the friends I had made whilst in London. I had the prison mark upon me; I knew I should be regarded as a proscribed man, an outlaw, by them all. I moved into the country, and during the interval between that time and the expiration of Emmeline's school term, supported myself in various ways. I first of all tried the stage, and succeeded so

well that I raised the means of procuring my daughter another year's schooling. I wished to keep her away from me, for I feared that the fact of my imprisonment would reach her ears, and that her bright young life might be blighted by the knowledge. Ever since leaving the accursed place to which the vengeance of an insatiable wretch and monster had consigned me, I fancied myself infected with the plague, and that every one who came near me ran the risk of contagion. My success in my new walk of life was, however, but temporary. A certificate of my conviction and imprisonment was sent to the manager of the theatre —by whom, I need not inform you—and I was at once dismissed. I next went round the country as a sort of demonstrator and junior partner to the proprietor of a camera-obscura, in which I myself had suggested and carried out several improvements. For a travelling concern it was constructed on a very large scale, the table actually measuring twenty-one feet. It paid very well for a time, but eventually both of us were ruined by it, and we had to sell it for a mere song. Work I found very difficult to procure, and the fact of my not having been accustomed to

manual labour, coupled with the injurious effects which my imprisonment had had on my constitution, made it impossible for me to obtain a livelihood by the sweat of my brow.

"My daughter's educational term having expired, and her acquirements being (simply from the shortness of the time allowed her) insufficient to qualify her for the post of governess, we were put to very great straits for the means of bare subsistence. Luckily for both of us, a friend appeared, and rescued us from our miserable position. That friend had once before come to my aid at a critical moment, and to him my thoughts have ever turned in deepest gratitude. I mean the gipsy, Ezekiel Manhaggo, as strange a creature as one could meet with in a lifetime; a rugged, uncouth, gnarled and twisted being, with a heart stout and brave as a lion's, or tender as a woman's, as occasion may require. Manhaggo had, when he met me, the (for him) large sum of two guineas in his pocket. One of them he made me take. He offered both, but less than one he would not hear of my accepting.

"Under his advice, I took to the life which

I have led ever since. I have sometimes made enough money in a day to support us for three months. At other times, again, I have lain down at night with no other covering than the sky, no other pillow than my show, with my pockets as light as my heart was heavy.

"I once performed in Harnisham Castle itself. Sir Gustave did not know me. His eyes, damaged long before past recovery by the explosion of his gun, were then almost sightless. I was ushered into the drawing-room, where a happy party was gathered to celebrate the birthday of the baronet's niece, who was his housekeeper, and who, having heard that 'the gentleman showman,' as I was called, was then at the castle gates, bade one of the servants call me in. I noted well the fine old building and its belongings. In the splendid room, which I knew should have been mine, I performed. Whilst my heart was ready to burst with the emotion awakened in it by the contemplation of wrong and suffering, the sides of every one of my audience (Sir Gustave's, perhaps, excepted) were ready to split with laughter. When it was all ended, I came out of the frame, and

looked at the baronet earnestly and long. His niece, believing I was waiting for my pay, thrust half a guinea into my hand. I turned my back upon the company with a sort of relief, saying to myself, 'I would not, after all, change places with the usurper were his title twice as great, his acres twice as many.'

"The rest of my story is well known to you, my children. You, Alberto, know all that can be known from me of the manner in which we first became acquainted. The clue has been given you by which you may unravel the further history of your life. Follow it up, boy. You are young, sanguine, and quick-witted. Your task, compared with mine, will be an easy one. See to Emmeline, she who has been mother and sister to you by turns. I charge you neither to let her perish, go astray, nor want. The present holder of the Harnisham estate will die a miserable old man, without any one to succeed to his lands or title. The former, with the castle situate upon them, are yours, Emmeline. In my oil-skin bag yonder you will find documents by means of which any lawyer will be able to establish your identity.

I have been told that if that ungrateful wretch Grubbum could be induced to repent of his horrid perjury in regard to my mother's marriage, and truthfully to say all he knew concerning it, all would yet be well. I have tried him over and over again, but to no purpose. Many times in my wanderings have he and I met. Immediately after his appearance at the trial his patron cast him off, and he has tramped the country ever since, scoundrel, vagabond, and thief.

" My tale is at an end. I can only add a hope that a generous Heaven may prove propitious to my child in this matter. May the battle in this instance be for the weak, the race for the faint and helpless, and may you, my darling, find in the love of a strong heart, and true, that which will more than compensate you for the loss of mine. In all your actions employ 'clean hands and a pure heart,' and trust to that higher Power, without whose knowledge or sanction the tiniest sparrow falls not, the most delicate of earth's blossoms never fades away, to keep you safe from the besetting dangers of your pilgrimage, and to guide you at last to the haven of rest prepared for those righteous ones who,

in their term of probation, have aimed at perfection."

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## CHAPTER VIII.

"Home would I go—my hopes have gone before,
There where my treasure is my heart would be;
The voices that the earth shall hear no more
Are calling, with their spirit tones for me:—
'Immortal longings' stir within my breast,
Oh! let me 'flee away and be at rest!'"

T. K. HERVEY.

THE Showman ceased. It was not in one day, nor in two, nor in a week even, that his narration was completed. We have told the story of his life as he would have told it were he hale and strong, and well disposed to proceed with such a task. It has been given in his own words as nearly as possible, but not with his manner. The frequent pauses, the quickening breath, the indistinct articulation, the changing features, the hollow cough, the laboured expectoration, and the other adjuncts of a condition such as his, have not been noticed. We, the collator of his notes, the chronicler of his words, have deemed it

wisest to leave these to the imagination of our readers, who will decide whether we have acted judiciously or otherwise at such a crisis. With them we leave the issue, feeling confident that in this instance, at least, the sin of omission will not be laid to our charge. To our story again.

Long before the end came, it got abroad among those of a kindred walk of life—of which the town of Liverpool contained a fair proportion—that a brother wanderer lay struggling in the arms of Death, and that poverty, like a coward, was siding with the strongest. Efforts spontaneous and united were put forth from various quarters, such as tended effectually to keep one at least of these foes at bay. This foe being repulsed, the attack of the other upon the citadel of life was weakened, and the final surrender delayed for a period which at one time was beginning to be regarded by those surrounding him as indefinite. The sufferer, however, felt, knew that Death was the besieger, and the knowledge forced him to abandon hope. Silently, slowly indeed, but surely and irresistibly as the darkness that follows day, was the march of the Destroyer, whose clammy hand his

victim was beginning to perceive the touch of as the close of the history of his life was being woven. Shortly, he felt, there would be an end of mortal struggling, of triumph, of care, of joy, of ambition, of plenitude, of toil, of ease, of weariness, of *ennui*, of sorrow, of pleasure, of heartaches, of longings. All would shortly become whelmed by an avalanche, swallowed in an ocean of—what? The negation of all that he knew was the only answer he could make himself, as his weary head turned upon his pillow to seek a fresh and cooler resting-place.

The sun had passed the meridian upon the last day which the mortal part of the Showman would ever see. His daughter and her foster-brother had long been absent from him, endeavouring to wring from the crowd in return for their guitar-playing and posturing the money which would procure him who was most dear to them the nourishment which his body required to enable it to keep the vital spark from for ever fleeing its tenement. The girl, with her wondrous voice, rendered doubly sweet by the tinge of melancholy pervading it, was holding enthralled around her a hundred souls, when a tall, sun-browned, long-

bearded, but withal young and handsome, man broke through the circle, and, standing right in front of the singer, surveyed her attentively for nearly a minute. Perceiving herself to be an object of scrutiny, the fair songstress raised her eyes to those of the well-dressed stranger, and the instant they met hers fell. She appeared slightly confused at first, but to no greater extent than became her maiden dignity, for after a momentary pause she went on with her song seemingly heedless of him who was staring at her. The melody came to an end, and the stranger, stepping closer to her, exclaimed, "Well done, lass. I never knew but one that could sing like you, and it is now many years ago since I heard her. She is dead, poor thing, they say. I was not much older then than your companion is now. She had blue eyes, too, and hair of gold like your own. Here's a crown for you, for you remind me of her."

Emmeline shrank from the stranger at first, as though she deemed his manner over-bold. There was something so frank and winning, however, in his face and voice, that her prejudice vanished like snow before the sun. Alberto, noticing his foster-sister's hesitation,

and thinking she meant to refuse altogether the proffered gift, ran towards the would-be donor with extended hand, saying, "I'll take it, sir, if you please. I am my sister's banker."

"Is that so, my fine fellow?" said the stranger. "Very good, take it then," and he tossed the coin towards the youth, who very adroitly caught it and pocketed it. The stranger turned away from them, crossed the road, and entered a public-house, from the windows of which he watched their departure from the spot.

"We're in luck to-day, Emmy," exclaimed Alberto, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Let us go back at once to your father, and tell him and Zeffy of our success. Two crown pieces and two shillings in copper. I had one and you the other. Mine was given me by a big stout man with a grey moustache, who, while you were singing, asked me if we had always lived in this town, and whether I had ever been to sea. I told him I had once, but that I was too young to remember anything about it. He whistled, rubbed his head, and said 'the devil' (you English people always do something of this sort when you

are puzzled or surprised), and walked away. He looked like a seafaring man for all the world."

"So did the gentleman who gave you the other crown-piece," said Emmeline quietly.

"Oh yes, and 'the devil,'" returned the youth laughingly. "There they are at this very moment talking together at the corner of the street, and watching us. Ah! you turn your heads away, do you, perceiving you are detected? It won't do. You were too late."

"I don't like this, Albert," said the girl. "It looks suspicious. There may be danger in it. Let us hasten to my father."

"Danger or no danger, they will find that we know what they are up to," responded the youth stoutly.

Shortly afterwards they turned a corner, and Alberto, when they had walked a little distance down that street, said to his companion, "Go on, Emmy, as if I was by your side; I will play these gents a trick," and before she had time to give utterance to the remonstrance which her thoughts had framed he had turned from her, and was rapidly retracing his steps. It was a very simple thing to do, it was very neatly done, and the plan

suited his purpose to a nicety. Followers and followed met exactly at the corner. Alberto, pulling off his hat, bowed with mock politeness, and, with a slight smile, inquired the way to Fisher Street.

The friends, for such they appeared to be, were so thoroughly confounded by the unexpected encounter, and the consciousness that the youth was laughing at them in his sleeve, that neither of them could, for a moment, find words to reply.

At length the younger of the two said, "'Fore George, now, you are a clever young shaver."

"As sharp a bit of counter-marching as ever I saw. It isn't every day we meet a lad as can 'bout ship like that," remarked his companion.

"Fisher Street," said the other, "is to the right-about, and follow your nose, young fellow. Don't be an idiot. You have been playing a trick on those who mean you no harm, and who may turn out to be very good friends to you."

"Thank you for your direction," returned the youth, whose eyes twinkled roguishly. "Your advice is gratuitous, and deserves no

thanks. Good-evening, gentlemen," saying which he started at a run after his sister, whom he very shortly overtook.

* * * * *

The "parish doctor," as he was familiarly termed, had just left him. Zeffy had waylaid the man of medicine as he was leaving the room, and had entreated him to tell him the truth concerning the Showman's fate.

"Going home; make much of him," said the doctor, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder in the direction of the sick man's room. "It is now Wednesday. Won't hold out till the end of the week. Left a prescription upon the window-ledge in his room. Take it to Sassafrass, the apothecary, get him to make it up, and let him have it every hour in doses of half an ounce each. It is all that can be done for him. Bah," continued the worthy man, in an aside, "what a fuss this simpleton makes over a brother mountebank. If one had been a courtier and the other a king there wouldn't have been greater stir made."

He might, had he known the exact state of the cases from which he drew his comparisons, have said: "This poor fellow will have

at least one sincere mourner; who will dare to say as much of the king?" The doctor was a good, easy-going soul, however, who loved his bottle and the plague above all things on earth--the one filled his stomach, the other his purse, while both combined served to render him one of the most peaceable, harmless, loyal creatures in existence.

It would be hard to say which of them loved the dying Loftewalde with the greater tenderness and consistency—the man Zeffy or the brute Toby. If the circumstances were carefully weighed, the palm might be given to the brute, though the question is one difficult of solution. The intelligence of each was nearly on a par, hence Zeffy's constancy and affection; were it not for this, we should not have degraded the dog by suggesting the similitude. The man sat by the bedside of his sick patron; the dog crouched and curled himself at the feet of his master, who, pillowed up by the kindness of the one, extended feebly his hand for the other to lick.

"Zeffy," said the Showman, softly, and the dog, catching the tones of his much-loved master, pricked up his ears, wagged his bushy tail, and gave a low growl of pleasure,

"Zeffy," he said, in an almost inaudible whisper, "have they returned yet? Why do they lag thus? to-day too. Tell them to be kind to you, and be you faithful to them when I am gone."

"Yes, my dear friend, yes," returned Zeffy, whose eyes were blinded with tears. "May I be forgotten in that black hour which will one day overtake me, if I forget anything you now say to me."

"What was that, Zeffy? That song, I mean. Do my ears deceive me; is it a bird?" queried the Showman, suddenly.

"Only Old Will, sir. You remember Will, don't you? the old blackbird that I always carried about with me. It is in the window at the end of the landing. I will shut the door if the noise disturbs you," replied the witling.

"No," said the Showman, with a feeble gesture of dissent; "fetch him hither. Let me listen once again to the notes that along the dusty roads, through the troubled fight of life, have cheered my heart and chased away the gloom from my soul."

Zeffy bounded like a roe through the open doorway, and brought back the bird-cage and its occupant in his hand.

"Set him down there on the window before me," said the Showman. "He wears a mourning coat, Zeffy. Does *he* know that I am about to die? Perhaps he has lost some relation or a friend that was dear to him. Poor fellow! poor fellow!"

The mind of the sufferer was evidently wandering.

"Yes, yes, music; I love music. Constance loved it; Emmy and Alberto do; Zeffy does too, poor lad. He who doesn't, as Shakespeare—no, as Constance said, as Shakespeare *wrote*—has a soul black as Erebus, affections dark as night, dark as *this* night, and, oh! this is dark. I must have light. What means this? My room in darkness, and at this hour! You without there, bring lights! 'Tis night. My castle is in darkness. My servants have fled. I am alone, and in the dark. Light there, light! My castle, my inheritance for light!"

Zeffy wrung his hands, and ran to the street-door, the very picture of terror and despair. The solemnity pervading the chamber of death had overpowered him; his friend's strange manner drove him nearly distracted. He gave a sigh of relief, and his

whole face brightened as he saw the Showman's daughter and Alberto rounding the street corner. He waved his hand to them frantically, and seeing them quickening their movements, he returned to the sick man's chamber. Alberto gained it almost as soon as he did, and Emmeline followed quickly after.

"Ah, they have heard me! Quick! light. The sun has gone out. The music, yes, the music! Let my ears drink it in. It has lightened my burden many a time before; it may relieve me now."

"Father," said Emmeline, in a voice broken with emotion, "do you not know me? Albert is here too, and Zeffy."

"Yes, yes; you are Constance, and you are young again," said the dying man, faintly. "It was the voice of my wife that I heard then. Kiss me, darling. We will leave the world together."

He sank back upon his pillow apparently bereft of life.

The blackbird poured its throat in an anthem of gladness as the sunshine streamed in upon the bars of its prison-house, which shone in the glare like burnished gold. A

soft breeze swept through the open window, causing the dingy paper curtains which intercepted its progress to move with a sound which Zeffy compared to the rustle of an angel's wing. The glorious melody of the bird grew wilder, sadder, softened down into a plaintive recitative, and died away altogether. Alberto placed his hand upon the Showman's heart. It had ceased to beat. An old broken mirror was applied to his mouth. Its polished surface remained undimmed. Emmeline gave a wail of despair, and fainted right away. Zeffy, sobbing like the child that he was, drew the covering over the dead man's face, walked to his bird-cage, opened the door thereof, and held it to the opening in the window; but the bird having been so long a stranger to freedom welcomed it not.

"Foolish thing!" said he. "His spirit flew away in that song of thine, and for thy services would I have given thee liberty."

Though these things be above thy understanding and ours, Zeffy, it is nevertheless true that, like thine own bird, the Showman's soul, had the choice been given it, would have preferred remaining a prisoner.

## CHAPTER IX.

"There are shades which will not vanish,
There are thoughts thou canst not banish;
By a power to thee unknown
Thou canst never be alone;
Thou art wrapt as with a shroud,
Thou art gathered in a cloud,
And for ever shalt thou dwell
In the spirit of this spell."

BYRON.

OUR story takes another turn. In one of the state apartments of Harnisham Castle, sits alone a prematurely old and feeble man. There are lights depending from the ceiling near him, but they burn dimly. The fire, by the side of which he is nursing his knees and rocking himself to and fro, burns low. All within the room and within the house is peace: but in his bosom there glows a never-dying flame. Without there is a storm; the elements have been waging an unceasing war since nightfall. The rain pelts mercilessly, the wind whistles round the pile, penetrating its every nook and cranny. Even the Baronet sees the lightning—he describes it to himself as a flying *shadow!* In wretchedness of spirit

he groans aloud, and, finding the solitude unbearable, pulls the bell-rope near which he invariably sits. In response to his summons appears a serving-man, whom he requests twice over (for the storm is raging with such violence that his attendant fails the first time to comprehend what is being told him) to send Miss Jakerville (his niece) up to him. The reply is made—the man bawling his loudest—that Miss is out, having ridden away hours before to Strandleigh House, where there was to be a merry-making.

"That'll do, then, John," said the Baronet, almost angrily, and as the servant closed the door he muttered, "Even she, my sister's daughter, cares no more for me than if I were a dog. What a cursed world it is! Even gold cannot procure a real friend. I have tried it and have failed. They spend my money and then desert me; they are rats, and they fly me as though they could perceive that mine was a sinking ship. It does sink, too; they are in the right. I tried to keep it afloat, but my seamanship has been bad—no, it is I who have been unlucky, that's it—from the first. I boarded her, and wrested her from the enemy even under his own batteries.

But was it fairly done, though? I and those whom my gold won over may tell the world that it was, but the world no more believes them than I do. I won the fight, it is true, but how? There was a traitor in the other camp; a deep, designing, avaricious devil, who for gold would sell, has sold, his own soul. Curses on him! Had he held firm against temptation, had he but said one word against the advances made to him, my life might have been happy; he whom my elevation has ruined, whom the sleuth-hound poverty has, perhaps, hunted to death, would have had his own, and would have enjoyed it. . . . And what has this wealth, this title, this position, proved to me? Dead-sea fruit—pleasing to the eye; ashes when tasted. . . . Fortune favours the bold, they say. It did not favour me. Why? Ah, those old sayings are—like those which the devil is said to make use of when entering into a compact—always capable of two or two hundred interpretations. They are for the unwary a delusion and a snare. 'The bold,' 'the brave'—I was both. 'The truthful,' 'the good'—I was neither. What a frightful thunder-clap!" he exclaimed, after a pause. "The place smells

strongly of sulphur. Another shadow? A footstep? There is some one in the room; speak and tell me your business. Who are you?"

A voice, solemn, hoarse, and unearthly, replied, "The Devil."

Sir Gustave's hand ran mechanically along the wall in search of the bell-pull. It was gone! His visitor laughed; it was like the clucking of a hen to her newly-hatched brood, but louder, faster, and of longer continuance. The Baronet felt his flesh creep; his whole frame shuddered visibly.

"In Heaven's name tell me who you are, and what you want with me!" he at length exclaimed. "Is it my life that you seek? Tell me, for I am completely in your power."

"Your life, no," said the voice contemptuously; "run out to the end of your tether. You haven't done mischief enough yet. I want two things of you—money and shelter, and I will have them. I served you a good turn once, and you must do the same for me now. I can excuse your not knowing me. 'Tis long since we met."

The Baronet felt relieved. His fear for-

sook him, and he asked the intruder in a calm, steady voice, to proceed with his business.

His visitant instantly replied:

"I am pursued—hunted, d'ye understand?—by the hounds of the law. You will be in the same mess some day. It is I who am in the scrape now, and I want you to give me shelter and money."

"And why me?" queried the Baronet haughtily.

"I don't like to be obliged to say the same thing twice over," rejoined the intruder. "I have told you it was because I did you a good turn once."

"For which you were well paid very probably," said the Baronet.

"Paid, yes, but not half enough," exclaimed the other. "I got you these estates. I swore away a young man's life; blackened a dead woman's honour. You gave me ten guineas for the job, bah! It brought you a hundred thousand. Neal handed me two, and when I asked for more threatened to give me in charge for perjury unless I cut my lucky at once. That's the way you big fellows pay little men like me for doing your dirty work. I want more coin, I tell you. I want a place

to put my head in until this hue and cry is over, and if I put my head in here the dogs will lose the scent."

"Perhaps you will favour me with your name, sir," said the Baronet.

"Yes, sir, Grubbum, sir. Simeon Grubbum, late of that little town on the coast where lived a lady whom you persecuted to death, and whose son is now wandering the country with a punch-and-judy box on his shoulders. He ought to have been there where you now stand. His daughter, for he has one, leads a vagabond life with him, and God knows what she'll come to in the end. All through you, sir—you sir, and me, and our old chum Neal, a blessed trinity truly. But to this business of mine. I've knocked a troublesome fellow on the head."

"Murdered him?" said the Baronet, horrified.

"Call it what you like, but it was not near so bad as what you've done, old codger. You'll have more'n half-a-dozen sins of this sort to answer for. He followed me, and drove me to it, after I'd given him fair warning, which is more'n you'd have done. You and Neal murder first and give the warning

after. Besides, every one knows it's the law that when a cove chases you to the edge of a precipice and goes, over himself, *you* can't be blamed for it—it was nobody's fault but his own, d'ye see. But to business, sir, if you please now. Either you find me what I want, or I give you what you *don't* want. Either you find me shelter and money, or I find you ruin, disgrace, and a gallows, higher, perhaps, than Haman ever swung on. Is that plain enough for you? That's very simple I should think, and the advantages of the bargain are all on your side."

"No, not all," replied the Baronet stiffly. "You forget that the law has a tremendous penalty in store for him who shelters a murderer."

"Who told you I was one?" asked Grubbum quickly.

"Why, you yourself. How otherwise could I have known?" returned the other.

"This tongue of mine is sure to run my head into a noose some day," said Simeon. "I have been swigging regularly at the brandy bottle lately, and they say that that's a thing as will loosen a man's mill-clap for him."

If the Baronet's sense of seeing was deficient, his sense of hearing was doubly acute. He calculated with extraordinary precision the distance between them, and the position which his unwelcome visitor occupied. With a crafty, almost imperceptible step, he drew nearer and nearer to Simeon, with whom he kept up a conversation, until he had reached an antique piece of furniture—a sort of stand for a number of curious ornaments, prominent amongst which was a tall and massive silver candlestick.

"So," said the Baronet, pausing with his hand near the outer ledge of the—cabinet it might be called, for it had drawers, although in shape it more resembled a console-table. "So you thought yourself under-paid for what you did, and that you had yet a demand upon me, eh ?"

"That was just what I thought, sir—just what I thought," replied Simeon, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Your honour sees the point as well as I'd wish."

"And you think, I dare say now, that I am your debtor to a very large amount ?" Sir Gustave went on.

"Every ha'penny you are worth, sir, was

got through me. Howsumever, I've no wish to be particularly hard upon you. A few hundreds now and then—"

"Take your pay at once, fool," cried the Baronet, gnashing the few teeth which had been left him with rage, and bringing down the silver candlestick with lightning-like rapidity and unerring aim, upon the head of his victim. It was like the felling of an ox. Simeon went to the ground as though stricken by a bullet. The plan was well thought out, and succeeded as well as the Baronet's heart could wish. He stooped over the body of the fallen man, tore open the bosom of his paltry rag of a shirt, and felt there for signs of animation. The beatings were but few and feeble.

Sir Gustave raised the candlestick, which he had not once relinquished, above his head, as though to deal the prostrate man another blow. He, however, restrained himself, wiped his weapon carefully in Simeon's jacket, and put it back in its old place.

"The fall will do it, curse him," he ejaculated fiercely, and lifting Grubbum bodily from where he had fallen, he bore him towards the casement, which was open, and through

which Simeon must have entered, hove him through it, retraced his steps to the door, which he opened, and shouted at the top of his voice: "Murder! thieves! Sparkins, Philpotts, Motley, this way for your lives! Murder! murder! murder! Haste, villains, haste, if you wish to save your master."

His domestics rushed towards him from all parts of the castle. He hurriedly informed them that having heard the casement creak upon its hinges he crept towards it, and that he then heard a man's breathings; that he had dealt the intruder a blow with the candlestick, which he had the forethought to arm himself with, and that he was certain he had killed the would-be burglar, for he had distinctly heard him fall to the ground outside.

His story was not consistent with the truth, nor with itself in several points, one of which John Sparkins must have perceived when he said:

"But how did the candlestick get back to its place, sir? It stands now where it always did. That's curious."

The Baronet, who instantly saw that he had made a mistake, replied angrily: "I didn't send for you to ask impertinent ques-

tions, sir. Do as you are bid. Arm yourselves, two or three of you. Search the castle grounds. Take the dogs with you. Capture your man dead or alive ; if dead so much the better. Should he offer any resistance, shoot him out of hand. Shoot him whether he resists or not for what I care ; no one will say a word to you. The law recognises the right of one man or of that one man's servants by his orders to shoot another whom he knows to be a thief."

This would have been the law no doubt, Sir Gustave, had it been of your making, and dependent upon your caprice or will.

Shortly afterwards lights were seen waving backwards and forwards, men were heard shouting, dogs barking, round the castle, over the lawn, down the carriage drive, through the well-grown quincunx, every tree of which was examined separately, until at last the expedition, after making a circuit of some miles, disappointed at not being able to find the object of its search, returned to him who had despatched it with a report of its failure.

The Baronet gave vent to his discomfiture in certain expressions which we prefer leaving unchronicled.

"Did you go all in one body to make the search, or did you separate?" he asked.

Sparkins replied: "We took three different directions, sir. I went one way, Motley another, and Philpotts another."

"Did you search thoroughly the stables, the hay-loft, the coach-house, the tool-house, and the whole of the outbuildings?" queried Sir Gustave.

"Every inch on 'em, sir," chorused the trio.

The baronet gave another growl, and another series of exclamations left him. "Since you have searched the whole of the outside, now search the inside of the castle. The rogue may yet be in hiding somewhere within. Let not a corner that can hold a man escape you. Try every chest, every cupboard, every chimney. Search under and behind everything within these blessed walls. Twenty guineas to the man who brings him to me alive; fifty to the one who finds him dead. About your business, lads, without further loss of time.

Sir Gustave was terribly in earnest in his endeavour to capture the fellow; there could be no mistake about that—the servants were all of one mind upon the subject. Each and

every one of them resolved that the fifty guineas should be earned if possible. That was a curious part of the business, though, they unanimously said. It would be less trouble to bring the man to the master if he were dead than to capture him and lug him alive. Then why was the larger amount offered for the lightest job? Here was a poser to which the astutest of them could not find any solution.

Motley, whose perambulations at length brought him to the castle kitchen, thought he heard a movement in the chimney—the fire in the grate, by the way, had burnt itself very low. The chimney was a very capacious aperture, which might easily have afforded shelter for one man, or for two or three at a push. Motley, who was a wary, some said a desperate fellow, advanced to the opening, and standing a little on one side, so as to secure himself from attack, shouted: "Heigh, you there! Down you come, or by George you gets a pill."

There was no response.

"Do you hear, man?" shouted he after a while. "I'm loaded with duck shot, and if you don't come down this very minute I'll fire."

His ears detected a slight movement within the chimney. He primed his weapon, which was a ponderous old affair (a scion of the stock of Brown Bess), and held it firmly against his foot with the muzzle pointing directly up the chimney.

"It's your last chance," he called out in stentorian tones to the refugee. "One! two! three! I fires then." And he was as good as his word.

The castle rang again with the noise of the discharge. There was heard a wild scream of agony long before the echoes had died away, but it came from nothing human. Immediately afterwards a great bird with noble plumage and of a colour nearly white tumbled to the ground in a cloud of dust at Motley's feet, bespattering the man's nether garments with its gore. The noise brought the whole of the household to the spot with lights and such weapons as each in the hurry of the moment had snatched up for his own defence. Motley stood leaning over the muzzle of his gun looking thoroughly confounded at the result of his shot. Not a soul ventured to utter a word, until at last an old woman, who had nursed the previous

owner of the castle, and who had been retained in the establishment after his decease, made her way to the front, and, looking at the dead bird, cried: "Eh, man! what hast done? Heaven ha' mercy on us all! a rueful thing has happened to us. A bustard, too! We're ruined, we're ruined; for before the moon is two nights older the castle will in ashes lie."

"Peace, you old fool," enjoined Motley savagely.

"Old fool or no," said the old woman, "thou canst satisfy thyself that the prophecy is none of mine. As thou retirest to-night to thy hutch in the donjon, ascend the ladder that is always kept there, and examine the stone which points eastward, and round which is tied the rope which is one of the flag-staff's stays. Thou may'st call me liar unless thou'lt find graven thereon these words, or something very like them:

"When from yts perch on high
Unstruck by goshawk, falcon, tersil, or lanner,
To the grounde shall be brott a birde of ye great flighte,
Before ye moone's light hath twice shone on them,
Shall thys castell's walls be in ruin's layde."

"Read that, fellow, and call those who are

thy betters in years and in sense, fool again, if thou darest. Pray, if thou canst, or knowest how to pray, that this tribulation shall not fall on the walls of Harnisham, nor on those that dwell therein."

"To the devil with your cant," returned Motley, in a worse humour than ever. "If I had built this place, believe me, it should never come to grief because of that prophecy. I would have hanged the prophet before he made it. Pooh! pooh! Do you think that because some ass or other took it into his head to chop and disfigure a bit of stone, the nonsense he has put there will ever come true?"

"Scoffer! infidel!" ejaculated the old lady, raising her hands in horror. "But hush, here comes the master."

The domestics were silenced at once. The master did approach; and with scowling looks, he inquired the cause of the disturbance.

Motley, who explained matters as well as he was able, walked over to old Mrs. Melksham, and whispered fiercely in her ear, "Say anything more of that blessed prophecy, and I'll shoot you before the night is over."

The old dame, whose hearing was remark-

ably sharp, trembled at the threat, and the speech which she had been preparing for the delectation of her master died away unuttered.

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## CHAPTER X.

"That night, a mingled column of fire and smoke,
From the dark thickets of the forest broke,
And, glaring o'er the landscape leagues away,
Made all the fields and hamlets bright as day.
Wrapped in a sheet of flame the castle blazed,
And, as the villagers in terror gazed,
They saw the figure of that cruel knight,
Lean from a window in the turret's height,
His ghastly face illumined with the glare,
His hands upraised above his head in prayer,
Till the floor sank beneath him, and he fell
Down the black hollow of that burning well."

*Tales of a Wayside Inn.*

THE search was given up as useless. The domestics retired to rest, but the discomfited Baronet shut himself up once more in the apartment wherein we found him at the beginning of our previous chapter. Over the drowsy eyelids of all, save his, sleep quickly drew her balm-dropping fingers. He, under

a mighty burden of fermenting, soul-torturing thought, paced the room with the steady step of a man who sees. His hands were locked behind him, the fingers intertwined and restless as a nest of playful serpents; his brows writhed and twitched, his thin and bloodless lips quivered and foamed, as though the worm within his breast had assumed the proportions of a python, and was stinging him to madness or to death. Perhaps the worm had reached the python's growth in reality—who knows? It had been nursed long, and must have fed sumptuously every day; it found carrion in plenty, and must have battened thereon. A torrent of passionate hatred at length overcoming him, the mind-tormented wretch sank a helpless mass into a chair which had been drawn near his centre-table. The canker at his heart bubbled up to his mouth, whence, through convulsively working jaws, it dropped in low, confused, but bitter, galling mutterings:

"Wandering the country, said the idiot whom I struck," he spoke slowly to himself. "A daughter, too, and a puppet-show. Poverty, rags, and filth. Who cares though? I don't. He stood in my way, and I brushed

him aside, as men do a fly that settles upon a picture they value. If I had had any scruples, that blow which he gave me swept them all away. Let him die. Let him rot. Let his daughter go to perdition—I reck not. Such things happen to beggars' brats every day, and one is no better than another of them."

After uttering these terrible words he got up, and again began pacing the room. After once circumambulating it, he drew up near the little cabinet which we have before noticed, took a bunch of keys from his pocket, and unlocked a drawer, which he drew out. After his fingers had run once or twice along the inner side of the cavity, they became stationary upon a little black spot, which a sharp pressure caused to disappear with a snap. A beautifully fitted panel at once shot back, and disclosed an aperture which ran the entire height of the cabinet. Into this the Baronet put his hand, and from it he drew out a bundle of papers, tied several times round, and sealed heavily and carefully with his own signet. He felt the documents very minutely, and counted their folds as if to satisfy himself that none of them were missing. He then felt for another knob on the outside of the

cabinet, and seemingly belonging to the top drawer, which he pressed. The panel instantly returned to its old position. After replacing the drawer, he walked towards the table with the papers in his hand.

"Until within a week ago, I had not touched them for a year," he communed with himself. "I was beginning to believe that my mind was becoming easier, my conscience getting sleepy, tired, worn out, was scotched perhaps. I remember well that for years and years and years after this castle became mine I could never go to bed without satisfying myself that these papers were safe. What wonder, when upon their safety depended mine. Yet their destruction would make my safety a matter of absolute certainty. Then how is it I have not destroyed them? I have a thousand times asked myself that question, and for each question asked I have found a thousand answers, not one of which was convincing, or even satisfactory. Fate has for years been hanging over me by a thread which in one short minute I might have transformed into a chain whose links I could have defied the strongest power on earth—nay, even fate itself—to tear asunder.

I have kept these papers by me as the hypochondriac has been known to keep his coffin, or the suicide the poison which is to end his life. For the last week—why, again, I cannot tell—their existence and safe custody have been constantly running in my thoughts. I'll keep the accursed mass no longer. Its presence is hateful to me; its touch is as cold as that of the headsman's axe. It is a mute witness, but its testimony is damning. Let both burn."

He held the bundle to the flame of the candle, but before the flame had more than singed it, it was snatched rudely from his hand, and he himself was thrust backwards with such violence that his head, coming in contact with the massive, carved claw of the chair upon which he had lately been sitting, he was stunned, and rendered almost insensible. His ears presently caught the sound of a laugh, the harsh tones of which he had heard before that night, and the casement directly afterwards creaked upon its hinges. The fallen man, with all the energy which an intense desire for revenge could have inspired him, bounded to his feet, his countenance livid with rage. He made towards the window

straight as an arrow, and nearly as swift, but the voice of the intruder arrested him midway.

"Stand back, fool," it cried. "Escape from the place if you like—if you can—but not in this direction. You'd break your neck; but I forgot—perhaps you'd rather have it done that way than in mounting the three-legged mare. This crib of yours is ablaze. The night will soon be alight with the glim. Hook it while you can, but not this way."

The Baronet stood still, puzzled by the man's lingo; astounded at the information it conveyed to him. He searched in his bosom, as though for a weapon; but the man in the casement, observing the motion, imperatively bade him take his hand away. "You've given my nut a fib to-night," he cried; "and I had a mind just now to pay it back to you with interest, but I didn't, you see. I wasn't revengeful, for once, and I've been rewarded for my forbearance. But don't try the same fake on again, or it may be the worse for you. I've a barking-iron about me, and if you drive me to it I'll let daylight into your carcass."

Sir Gustave evidently took fright at the

threat, for he withdrew his hand from his bosom, and allowed it to drop to his side. At that moment a sound fell upon his ears, which filled his soul with alarm. It was the tolling of the great bell in the castle court-yard. He rushed towards the door and opened it. The room was instantly filled with a cloud of smoke. A tall, evil-visaged man, with a blood-clotted neck-kerchief bound round his head, might at that moment have been seen grinning, like Mephistopheles himself, with exultation at the coming ruin, and waving the papers which he had so dexterously snatched from the burning, high above his head in triumph. He then disappeared through the opening, with a swiftness to which a sudden sense of danger gave wings, leaving the Baronet alone to his fate.

And what a fate! He shouted, screamed himself hoarse; but those upon whom he called came not. To open the door again he feared. The smoke had made his eyes smart and his throat tingle; the room was already nearly filled with it, and he dared not admit more. He shook the door madly, as a wild beast does the cage in which he is confined, but still no response came. None

could come! The servants, when they were roused, found that the fire had enveloped a third of the building, and had to fly for their lives. Their master's position having become known to them, they took the only means of apprising him of it which they could devise—they rushed to the courtyard and rang the great bell. The Baronet heard it, but its tones only increased his terror. He again essayed the door. To remain in the room was no longer possible. The smoke had become intolerable, was suffocating him by slow but sure degrees. He opened the door. A volume of flame surged past him with a roar like that of an angry lion, licking his hair and eyebrows in its passage. His mouth and nostrils inhaled the fiery atmosphere a moment, and he shrieked aloud with agony. Had molten lead been poured down his throat, the torture could scarcely have been greater. He staggered back into the room, and fell prone upon the floor. Here was the relief he had sought for. The atmosphere here was purer, the inspiratory process attended with less unpleasantness than in the higher latitude which the inhalent organs had occupied when the position of their owner

was erect. He lay still as one bereft of life for some moments, but in that brief space of time his mind encompassed eternity.

Among the thoughts that swarmed darkling and orderless across the brain of the miserable wretch, were there none worth preserving? There were. He repented—that he had not taken signal vengeance upon those who had slighted him! He asked pardon—of those who had over-reached him in all his dealings with them, particularly of vagabond Grubbum and Lawyer Neal! He forgave—those whom he had injured, whom he had persecuted, whom he had trampled upon! With an unselfishness that appeared utterly new to him, he denied himself the meed of praise which he considered unquestionably his due, for having taught poor people in general, and Showman Loftewalde in particular, the usefulness, the virtue, of self-reliance, the utter degradation of soul of the seeker after charity! To these soft thoughts followed others obdurate and furious. The world had neglected him—him, its benefactor! His servants had deserted him—him, their patron and friend. His neighbours were in a league against him, but he would baffle

them yet. The window, through which the thief, the incendiary, the assassin, had entered and had left again—he would escape through that, and his enemies would live to rue that night's work to the end of their days!

He bounded from the floor and rushed towards the casement. Horror! its leaden frame had melted, and lintel and shaft held it firm and immovable. With a howl of mingled anguish and terror he sprang backwards and fell. The hope of preserving himself for ever left his breast, and despairing frenzy reigned there instead. The apartment rang with shrieks, with moans; with laughter wild and fierce, hollow and mocking; with words of awful import uttered with fleer, and gibe, and flout. "Walls have ears," 'tis said. Perhaps they have, and eyes as well. Those wherein this dreadful scene was being enacted, watched it not unmoved. They trembled to their foundations, but we are sorry that a strict regard for the truth compels us to be unpoetical enough to say that their tremor was entirely attributable to material means. Fire had blackened, scorched, and devoured their every support; had crum-

bled away the ground upon which they rested. The ponderous superstructure reeled and tottered like a drunken man, and fell with a crash!

The night, which had long been illumined with the glare of the burning pile, grew dun as ever, immediately the echoes of the final catastrophe had died away. A shudder of horror ran through the crowd which had gathered to witness the conflagration, at the thought that beneath the smouldering ruin there lay the remains of a human being.

A company of hirelings, after many days, succeeded in clearing those ruins away. From amongst them, blackened and horrible to behold, with every feature battered and burnt beyond all possibility of recognition, were dug out the loathsome remains of the loathed owner of the whilom handsome and stately edifice called Harnisham Castle.

## CHAPTER X.

"O'er all there hung a shadow and a fear;
A sense of mystery which the spirit daunted,
And said as plain as whisper in the ear,
The place is haunted!"

HOOD.

HARNISHAM CASTLE has long lain in ruins. The moss shows everywhere, from the pavement of its once noble courtyard to the merlons upon the highest tower, where it mingles with the clustering ivy, and gives excellent protection to the rooks and the owls which have built themselves nests in the embrasures. We visit the place on a night of surpassing loveliness. The hoary pile is visible from afar. The rays of the moon dart full upon battlement, turret, and spire, and throw their shadows distended and black upon the silvery landscape. Those travelling in such a direction upon such a night need keep up a brisk pace or be heavily wrapped, for it is cold, bitter cold. The water in the castle moat—there is not much of it, by the way—is frozen, while upon turf, hedgerow, and tree, an incrustation of rime glistens in the moon-

light as though the place had been but recently deluged by a crystal sea. The pilgrim bound thitherward might, too, just as well carry a stout stick or a brace of pistols, or both, for supposing the latter were never called into requisition, the former might be of service to him in helping him over the uneven, slippery, deep-rutted roadway.

The place had an evil reputation. It was alleged to be the haunt of bad spirits, and (what many a pedestrian might have much more dreaded) of bad men. With regard to the first of these allegations, it was specifically set forth by those able to give the information, that at certain seasons of the year (usually when the days were shortest) and at a certain hour of the night, a great white bird might be seen to fly thrice around the keep, upon which it would perch, and then, after mournfully flapping its wings an equal number of times, disappear with a scream such as he who heard it never cared about hearing again. If the curious were brave enough to wait until the clock struck quarters three after the advent of the bird's disappearance, the great bell (the fact that there was no great bell then standing made no matter of

difference) would be distinctly heard "tolling nine times nine, and nine after that"—ninety times altogether, according to the common mode of reckoning—while from every loop-hole and oriel would shoot forth flames and peals of demoniac laughter. The other, and the statement which had the strongest foundation in fact, was that the barbacan, which had never been touched by the fire, and which was in a state of excellent preservation, had become the rendezvous of vagabonds of all descriptions, from the tramping tinker to the poacher or footpad. Wasn't it within half a mile of this place that his Majesty's Mail, on its way to Codgington-cum-Backington, was stopped, and the mail-bags one and all overhauled and rifled of everything valuable which they contained? Wasn't it under the very shadow of the elm tree which stood within fifty yards of the sally-port of the castle itself that John Hulkington and William Biganlezzie, gamekeepers to Squire Gripemal, the owner of the neighbouring property, were thrashed until they roared again by the companions of a fellow whom they suspected of having violated those sacred enactments—those bulwarks of society,

—the game-laws, and whom they had chased thither intending to capture and to prove a poacher, whether he was one or not? Echo asks, "Wasn't it?" Rumour answers, "It was."

On the night of which we speak lights certainly might have been seen gleaming, and laughter heard pealing forth from more than one portion of the castellated ruin. The lights were not, however, the baleful glare of anything sepulchral or supernatural, neither was the laughter eldritch or fiendlike in the slightest degree. Everything was warm, jovial, hearty, and of the earth very much earthy. We will pass beneath the raised portcullis, and enter the capacious, thick-walled barbacan. There are sounds of revelry and merriment from within, and as we enter a laugh rings, and the glow of a huge log fire plays upon the massive masonry above our heads. The company is certainly a strange one, and there are not many faces in it that we can remember having previously seen. That short-legged, bull-necked, heavily-built man, with a back like that of a prize ox, merry eyes, uncommonly good teeth, a little beard and moustache, a sallow complexion, a

slightly turned-up nose, who makes himself the most prominent in the assemblage, we certainly have not met before. He is somewhat differently — a little more showily dressed—than the others. Let us begin at the top. A large, almost conical, Spanish hat, with a dirty-looking feather, sits not ungracefully upon his crown. His shirt-collar (we are not so sure about his having a shirt) is large, and the ends turn down over the cape of his cloak, which is long, thick, and dark blue, and beneath which may be seen a tunic of some coarsely-spun drab material. Encircling his waist is a tolerably stout leathern band, fastened in front by a huge brass buckle. Broad as the belt is, however, it is almost buried by an overlapping layer of fat, just as you may have seen the wedding-ring upon a stout woman's finger. His nether garments are of buckskin, fastened at each knee with a bit of scarlet cord. His almost elephantine calves are encased in blue hose. We complete our description of his attire by saying that his shoes, although having wooden soles, are ornamented above with solid, though somewhat tarnished, silver buckles. He is strumming the strings of a mandolin,

while a somewhat singularly attired female, a little younger, but incomparably more graceful than himself, is singing by his side. We do not stop at present to notice her more particularly, for we must catch up the words as they fall from her lips. In a weird, melancholy voice, whose tones, modulated by passionate tenderness, thrilled her audience strangely, she carolled forth the following irregular, tragical—

FRAGMENT.[1]

"The Guadalquiver's waves of blue,
Swift though their course they run,
Catch and reflect the sickly hue
Of gore from westward sun:
A skiff shoots o'er them, like a star,
Its flashing oars love's pinions are.

"A maiden at her lattice high
Watching the sunlight red,
Longs for the hour when from the sky
The stars shall beam instead.
'That hour,' she cried, 'my love to me
Shall waft from far across the sea.'

"He came, the night air heard naught
But heart-throbs fast and high;

[1] Imitated from the Basque.

They met, and silence stirred not
Unless 'twas with a sigh !

"They part as midnight chimes are toll'd,
Zigeuner brave and ladye fair ;
She hears a cry, her heart grows cold,
Her voice rings forth with wild despair.
Low at her feet, oh ! youth ill-starred,
His life's blood dyes the blooming sward.

"A rival's hand hath slain him,
Black Garcia's aim was true,
The death's films on his once bright eye,
His face wears death's pale hue.

"By her fond lips are his caress'd
Her heart's asunder riven,
She falls, and o'er her loved one's breast
Sighs forth her soul to heaven.
The morn-mist shrouds them, chill and grey,
In death divided not were they !"

"Always pining, always melancholy, Ximena," remarked the minstrel, when she had finished her song. "Laugh as I do and grow fat. Ha! ha! ha! Throw care to the dogs ; be merry, girl, be merry ! Sow your sorrows upon the wind, which will blow them to the—ah, well, not to him either, for he has enough of his own, poor devil—ha ! ha! Instead of lovers killed by steel or grief, sing of those who are alive, happy—and fat.

Mind the fat, girl! for who was ever known to enjoy life without it. Look at this chicken. Listen to him as he warbles in simplicity of soul—

"I'm a rollicking, frolicking Castilian,
Deserving well of such a name,
Should I work I'd be deemed indeed a silly 'un,
Congenial *that's* not to my frame.

Fol, lol, tiddy dum! I'm none of your snivelling, grumbling, sour-faced, lean-bodied broomsticks, not I. Lament a single sorrow for a whole lifetime! Bah! it's as great a sin as suicide, every bit. Here's the sister of Hurtado de Ubeda (as jolly a dog as ever gaped) worrying herself to death because she has heard that a man whom she believed she loved, but who never to my knowledge made love to her, was shipwrecked more than ten years since. Pooh, girl! Plenty of men left. The difficulty is to get a fat one. Aye, aye! that's the difficulty. Have him fat, have him fat, girl, or not at all; one who, like me, can chirrup—

"My siesta I regularly snooze out,
Garpanzos would ne'er do for me,
Agua-fresca would ne'er spin a booze out,
My stomach can with neither agree.

I love daintier bits, and by far stronger drinks,
How my soul brightens up when glass with platter clinks!

"Carramba! your songs of blood-red suns and rivers blue, and shrieks and moans, and the Holy Virgin only knows how much more in the same strain, ought to be burnt by the hangman as soon as they leave the printer, and it ought to be made a high crime for any one to repeat them. But to our business, Ximena. Let us tell the good company here gathered we have sought them; why we have travelled over land and sea full many a weary mile, until my bones are getting to show through my carcase as though I had been a herring caught the year before last, or a hen dying of consumption, and my skin to hang about me as loosely as an alcalde's virtue."

"Hurtado, for Heaven's sake, cease thy raillery!" said his sister. "Our friends must know that we have journeyed hence from fair Castile. We have been told that the Gitanos of the Shark know of a Zingara, from the country of our birth, who was wrecked on the coast of the Celt, whose dying eyes they closed, and whom they laid at rest near the sea."

"Yes," added Hurtado; "and when you have informed my sister everything you know about the dead man, please be as good as to tell me a little of one who may be alive. A live dog is better than a dead lion you know —confusion on this tongue of mine that it should have spoken of my master's son as a dog. But to the point, gentlemen. Can you tell us anything of that which we would know?"

A pleasant-faced, middle-aged man made reply:

"The Shark has left us, stranger, for other waters. The blue wave rolls between us, and we have not set eyes on him for seven long years. Dr. Bolusem, whose medicine is known from the Bay of Biscay to the Gulf of Finland, from Anglesey to Gibraltar, greets you in his stead. It is by him that all the history which you desire can be communicated."

Doctor Obie—our old friend of Maricarbonicam celebrity—told them the tale as he knew it, and as it had been told him, of the advent of the Zingara, and the career of the boy Alberto. There were, however, he concluded, many particulars concerning the Zingara which were

only known to one man, and that man was a child of the ocean, a rover, a sailor, a sea captain, whose name was Lockbolt. This man had lately been seen in the town of Liverpool by the Doctor himself, when he was on one of his lecturing tours. He was then accompanied by a young fellow, towards whom he had always evinced the greatest fondness, whose name was Hartington. The Doctor remembered well that the younger held some sort of command under the elder man in the smuggling business during the stirring times, of which the first chapters of our history profess to treat. He thought, however, that both had relinquished the trade, for it had been told him by one of the tribe, who had called at the latter end of the previous year at a large house situated by the Thames' side, within easy reach of the great city of London, that the pair lived there with an uncle of Hartington, who was reported to be a bachelor, and immensely rich.

For this house Ximena declared they must at once make. In furtherance of her determination, the gipsy to whom Obadiah had referred was found, and with him she held a conference which extended over an hour.

As may be supposed, her object was to obtain information respecting the distance to the captain's house, the kind of road to be travelled, and the resting places by the way, all of which the gipsy furnished her with as accurately as if he had been a guide-book.

"Hurtado," said Ximena to her brother in a slightly imperious tone, "we have a long journey before us. We must begin it when the dawn begins to streak the hills of the east."

"Blessed Maria!" groaned he in reply "how far again must we travel? When, oh when, shall my poor bones be at rest?"

"When we find that which we are in search of," she replied, scornfully. "Not until then, unless we die by the way."

"Mercy on us!" rejoined her brother in a dismal voice. "You mean to make a Flying Dutchman of me, that's very clear. But consider, I entreat you, that I am not suited to the part. Vanderdecken, mia mucacha, was not fat. Holy Mother, take pity on me! I'm lugged about hither and thither, up and down, round and round, like the pot that is tied to the tail of a dog. I'm getting thin, too! My wrist is no thicker than the shin

of a duck, my back no broader than a hand-saw's. I'm being starved to death by slow degrees. I'd as lief be in the hands of the Grand Inquisitor as under the thumb of this sister of mine. She'll be the death of me, and all the consolation I shall have will be the thought that she was the means of making me a forgiving, generous man—I shall have to pray for my enemies; the destroyers of my peace, the melters of my fat."

She dragged him away with her into the open air. An hour later the pair from the crest of an adjoining hill waved adieus to their entertainers, turned their faces in the direction of the rising sun, and began their journey towards the home of the smuggler captain.

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## CHAPTER XII.

"I passed by the halls of Balclutha, and they were desolate!"—OSSIAN.

"A savage place! as holy and enchanted,
As e'er beneath a waning moon was haunted
By woman wailing for her demon lover!"

COLERIDGE.

THERE are bottles upon the table, and pipes

are being lit when we introduce the reader to the society of two individuals whom he is supposed not to have met (more than casually) for something like ten years. There is a third in the apartment whom our friend has never seen at all. John Jedburgh, late of the merchant service, and as jolly an old salt as ever trod a plank, makes his bow in these pages for the first time. He is an uncle of Jack Hartington by the mother's side, and it is to Jack that he is now addressing himself.

"A rather queer yarn, Jack, and what strikes me as curious is this: how is it that you, knowing who his father is, did not lug him away when you and Mark saw him in Liverpool?"

"The mischievous young monkey gave us the slip. We made sail on the same tack, but, Lord bless you! we had no more chance of coming up with him than a seventy-four with a sea-gull. Jack would have run him down if it had been possible, you may take my word for that, for the younker had a craft in tow, whom Mr. Hartington would like to have spoken."

It was Lockbolt who made reply.

"A petticoat, eh?" said Jedburgh quickly.

"Steer clear of that kind of vessel, lad. Take the advice of old seamen like Mark and myself. They'll run you on a reef; you'll find yourself among the breakers if you follow them long or closely."

"Don't say that that's my advice," exclaimed Lockbolt with a laugh. "'Tis your own, Captain Jedburgh. Speak for yourself, old man."

"You needn't fear for me," quoth Hartington, "I am in a fair way of being ticketed a confirmed bachelor. Eight-and-twenty this blessed night, and haven't begun to look about me for a wife yet."

"And I know why," rejoined Mark slyly.

Jack blushed, and then looked dreamily at the fire.

"Come, lads," said Jedburgh, "the bottle on the table yonder looks very big and contemptuously at us. Is the wine bad, or do you want to allow it to freeze, or what? Pass it round, Mark—hand over hand, so. Allow me to help you."

They drained their glasses, and Jedburgh refilled them.

"We must have a yarn, lads," began Uncle Jedburgh immediately he set the bottle down.

"Let it be a true one. You told me, boys, that you believed the father of this young scapegrace to be a Spanish marquis, or count, or something of that sort. Tell us how the devil you arrived at your conclusion. That'll keep the ball a-rolling, as they say."

"Jack here will do it best," said Lockbolt.

"Now, Mister Hartington, out with it, if you please. Tell it your own way. Tack a little on to it to make it interesting, if it isn't good enough already," said Jedburgh merrily.

"Well," responded Jack, "you know how we found the kid in the first place. I will tell you how I found his father, or at least how I got to know who his father was. You know that I visited Spain something like twenty times during the few years we were in——"

"The mercantile marine," cut in Lockbolt, with a wink.

"Of course, of course," said Jedburgh, with another.

"We made a little money by it, as you are aware," continued Jack.

"Honestly, of course," said Jedburgh. "The king got no discount, or premium, call it which you like, upon our profits."

"And that I travelled a little about the country every time our ship stayed at any of its ports to take in a cargo," Jack went on to say. "Well, on one of these occasions I found myself near the city of Gerona. It is a fortified place, and stands on the right bank of the river Ter, near the confluence of that stream with the Ona, whence, I fancy, it must have derived its name—Ger-ona. This little city has, in its day, stood many sieges, and with one of these the history of this boy has a good deal to do. In my rambles on the outskirts of the place I one day dropped across a very interesting-looking ruin. I entered the grounds by an archway, whose crescent-shaped head was supported by slender tapering pillars, the surfaces of which were arabesqued in the most beautiful and elaborate manner."

"Cost a mint of money, no doubt," said Jedburgh by way of comment.

Hartington, who had stopped at this juncture to take a sip at the beverage at his elbow, smiled at his uncle's remark.

"I will endeavour to be as practical and as unromantic as I can, uncle," he proceeded. "Before arriving at the once-imposing edifice

I had to descend a noble flight of steps, at the bottom of which stood a fountain, the basin of which was supported by four lions. There had been six originally, but two had given way beneath the superincumbent weight, and were lying in a rather unseemly manner upon the ground near at hand."

"Suffering from lumbago, from long strain on their backs, no doubt," commented Uncle Jedburgh laughingly.

"Will have his joke, you know," remarked Lockbolt *sotto voce* to Jack, who then laughed for company, and afterwards thus resumed :

"Well, broken legs seemed to be the complaint under which one of them laboured. The four remaining ones stood like so many Samsons, looking as though they would rather crumble into dust than withdraw their support. One of the prostrate monsters gazed up admiringly at a Nubian nymph above him, who over her head held an umbrella of silver waters whose graceful descent enclosed her in a cage of crystal. A huge, but sadly-neglected marble basin, with a dripping beard of moss, received the flashing spray as it fell. The reservoir was surrounded almost to the very brim by long, dank vegetation,

another indication, if any were yet wanting, of the decay into which the place had fallen. On nearing the main building I found pillars and windows decorated with a fret-work of vine leaves, from amidst which the wild fruit glistened in the sunlight like a million of eyes. Climbing rose-trees ascended the steps leading to the main entrance of the little chapel close by, penetrating it in a crowd, as though eager to offer up incense at the ancient and long-deserted shrine. I walked round the hallowed fane and looked up at the great edifice in whose shadow it had been built. Its lofty cupola stood in relief against the sky like the turbaned head of a Moslem giant. I entered by the main gateway, and gazed around me in wonder. I imagined the place as it must have stood in the heyday of its magnificence and splendour. As I sat on the plinth of a column and gave a glance along the concave ceiling overhead, its wealth of painted and gilded emblazonment assisted me in my imaginings. I will not tell you what these were, lest you and Mark should laugh. I will content myself with saying that they were very materially assisted by the unceasing murmur of the waters of the fountain.

The day was a sultry one : I was fatigued, and in a quiet, shady spot, resting in tolerable comfort ; what wonder was it that I fell asleep ? How long I slept I knew not, but I remember that when I awoke the crescent moon was peering in upon me through one of the ruined windows with a brilliancy which fairly dazzled me. I rubbed my eyes, looked around me, and believed myself to be Aladdin, Bedreddin Hassan, and Sinbad the sailor, by turns. Before I could collect my scattered (or rather waken my sleeping) senses, the sound of a lute fell upon my ears. So sweet and low were the vibrations when they reached me that I thought a spirit breathed upon the strings. Presently they gathered strength. They rose in majesty, and struggled for mastery with the song of the waters. I listened entranced, wishing that the strains might continue for ever. In their higher flights, however, when their melancholy sounded wildest, they suddenly died away, consumed apparently with the fierceness of their own pure fire. The sublime, never-failing hymn of the crystal waters, ere many moments had elapsed, seemed to woo the sounds back again into life. The night wind

went abroad kissing silently every leaf and blade of grass, each of which awoke with the caress and trembled. Soft upon the breeze crept again the silvery notes of the lute. Again was the music hushed and silenced, and methought I heard a footstep. I looked, like one in a dream, in the direction of the fountain. Near it, seated upon a fallen pillar, I beheld the figure of a female. She had laid down her lute beside her, and with crossed arms sat looking at the waters. I crept stealthily towards her, and observed her narrowly. I thought at first that she was some goddess who had taken the ruins under her especial protection, and I feared the consequences of a profanation of the ground by a mortal like myself. Her pure olive face was shaded by a broad hat. I was so close to her that as she raised her head and gazed at the stars I noticed the splendour of her black eyes, and the contour of her features. The nose might have been deemed a shade too broad, yet the delicate nostrils at once chased away all idea of vulgarity. The mouth was full of determination and fire. Her wavy hair thrown back over her shoulders descended almost to her feet, covering her like a cloud. She wore

a tunic of black velvet, and a scaly silver band encircled her waist, in which there rested a brace of pistols and a dagger. She had for wristlets little bells of the same material, but from thence almost to the shoulder her exquisitely-moulded arm was quite bare. Crossing her imperially-formed bust, from right to left, was a scarf of broad blue silk, tied at the hip in a kind of bowline knot, and fringed at the ends with gold. Many minutes had not elapsed ere she stood up grandly, and looking down at the basin into which the waters of the fountain descended, communed with herself in a passionate undertone.

"'Can I,' she said, 'say to the waters, Cease to be troubled? Do they not image faithfully the workings of my soul? Their broken murmurs ring upon my ears, and speak to me in words that make up the history of a life. I listen to them as I sit alone in bitterness of heart mourning my widowed love, and the tale which they tell me is ever the same: He is lost for whom thou mournest, and all thy hopes are vain. Give him back to me, ye waves! Restore him to the arms of his loved one. Satisfy yourselves with other sacrifices, but let your maw reject this one.'

"She ceased, and as if I had been suddenly released from a spell, I made a movement in the direction in which she stood. She heard it at once, drew one of her pistols, cocked it, and levelling it straight at my head, cried with a dauntless air: 'Stand, if you value your life. Tell me your business, and dare not to move another step until you've done so.'

"I didn't feel quite at ease, as you may imagine. I thought at one time that she was a little crazy, and that she would not be particular about firing, whether I told her my business or not. However—yes, well, I'll trouble you to fill my glass, if you please, uncle, for the yarn is a somewhat long one, and I feel deuced dry."

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## CHAPTER XIII.

"Over the mountains,
And over the waves;
Under the fountains,
And under the graves:
Under floods that are deepest,
Which Neptune obey;
Over rocks that are steepest,
Love will find out the way."
*Ancient Song: Author unknown.*

"PROCEED, Jack. Your tale is not half a

bad one," said Jack Jedburgh, approvingly, and with just a touch of eagerness in his tones.

"Well," continued Jack, "I told the lady my business at such a place in as few words as possible. Before I had done talking, she replaced the pistol in her sash. When I had concluded, she motioned me to follow her, and I did so. We passed out of the ruins, and walked straight into the city, by the cathedral. Turning into a large square, which I afterwards learned was called the Plaza del Toro, we struck into a lane leading therefrom and entered a building, the exterior of which was as gloomy as that of the Fleet prison. I had no sooner crossed the threshold than my guide closed and locked the door behind her. She then took my hand, and led me along a narrow dark passage until we came to another door, at which we knocked. I felt in my bosom for my pistols. The air of the place had something about it which I didn't quite like, and the manner of the being whom I had accompanied thither was beginning to breed suspicion in my breast. I was not left long to meditate, for the door almost immediately opened, and I was ushered into a tolerably

spacious apartment, in which there was a bright fire, and a lighted wax candle. My lady companion motioned me to a seat, and then proceeded to light another candle. As she was doing this I observed the person who had admitted us staring in amazement at my guide.

"'Señor stranger, my brother Urtado de Ubeda; Hurtado, a stranger from whom I hope to obtain the clue which I have long been seeking for,' said she.

"Hurtado endeavoured to make obeisance; the movement somewhat resembled the tilting forward of a barrel of salt junk before the contents are half used out. If he had not been particularly cautious he would have toppled over, and if I had been in the way it would have proved a serious matter for me.

"'Excuse me, señor stranger,' said he, 'I'm not so active as I used to be. The time has been when Hurtado de Ubeda was the best bolero dancer in Gerona, and for ten miles round. Now I could no more tread a measure than throw a somersault over the Sierra Morena.'

"I returned the salute with all the gravity that I could muster. His sister wheeled the

table towards me, and placed upon it a decanter with two glasses. Hurtado took to manufacturing cigarettes, and we soon became chatty, and at length familiar.

"'Señor stranger—' began Señora de Ubeda.

"'Call me Hartington, señora, if you please,' I interrupted pleasantly; 'it will save you a syllable at least.'

"'Señor Hartington then,' she returned. 'From something which dropped from you when you introduced yourself to me, I have concluded that you may be of assistance to me in unravelling a mystery which has weighed heavily upon my thoughts for nearly ten years.'

"'Indeed,' replied I in astonishment. 'I am not aware either that I can be of assistance to you or in what way anything that I have said could have led you to infer as much.'

"'Perhaps not,' she responded; 'but allow me to explain. You told me that you were a British seaman, and that yours was a profession to which dishonesty and craft were not common. You also informed me that you intended visiting Oporto.'

"'Still I can't see how the mention of those things could have made an impression upon your mind of the kind you have hinted at,' said I.

"'Quite natural that you should not, señor,' she returned, 'especially as you are not, cannot be, aware of the state of mind of her with whom you are conversing.'

"The idea that she was crazed here returned to my brain with greater force than ever.

"'Let me enlighten you,' she went on. 'It was communicated to me not a week ago that between Britain and Oporto were bound up all the secrets my mind has so long been endeavouring to penetrate.'

"'Sister,' here broke in Hurtado, 'it's of no use whatever to expect to gain anything from Señor Hartington if you go on puzzling him like this. Now allow me, señor,' he continued, turning towards me, 'to tell in one short minute what my sister won't do under two hours if she is to have her own way. Nay, you may listen to her a whole day, a week, a month, a year, perhaps till Doomsday, without getting out of her the exact state of her mind. Now let me tell you——'

"But what's the noise outside, Mark?" said Jack, breaking off his narrative with singular abruptness. "Music, I declare. Some wandering vagabonds or other. They play very well, though. Suppose we take them in, uncle? It is my birthday, you know, and it has been about the quietest one I have spent for many a year."

"Agreed, agreed," replied Jedburgh and Lockbolt in chorus.

"Hark!" cried Jack. "There's a voice, too, a woman's! Gracious heaven, can it be——? It is! it is!" he cried wildly. "Her voice, Mark. The voice of the angel of whom I have been dreaming, of her whom I have enshrined in my heart, and whose presence has filled it to the exclusion of every other idol! Uncle, by all the love you ever bore me, go into the road, invite that warbler to your house, and her friends with her, for if this chance escape me, my life will be a miserable one as long as it lasts."

"The boy is crazed," said old Jedburgh, with apparent unconcern. "To indulge him, however, I'll go, but I think he might have found a fitter ambassador. If I go at once,

Jack, I'll spoil her singing. Let us at least hear one stave."

"Very well, uncle, but only one, mind," replied Jack, who seemed bursting with impatience.

The splendid voice of the singer as it carolled through the open window made the trio hold their breaths and listen in amaze. It were hard to say whether Captain Jedburgh or Jack Hartington was the most moved. The words were those of an old, somewhat fine, almost entirely forgotten ballad, beginning :

"I've found thee after many years,
Unaltered, loving still ;
Thy fond arms clasp me, and my fears
Are soothed, my breast grows still.
I've found thee, love, and with thee peace—
My wand'rings end, my suff'rings cease."

Old Jedburgh fidgeted as though the indented bone of the swordfish which occupied so prominent a place upon his mantelshelf had suddenly transferred itself to the cushion of his chair. Before the singer had half finished her next verse he had hove to alongside of her, and before Jack or Lockbolt could have counted twenty the old fellow had

returned to them with, as he expressed it, "three craft sailing in his wake." The one who last entered was a female. Jedburgh took her gently by the arm, led her with rough but persuasive kindness to the centre of the room, and, addressing his nephew, said: "Mr. Hartington, need I introduce you?"

Jack, advancing towards her with extended hands, exclaimed: "Emmeline—Miss Loftewalde—I cannot tell you how glad I am to meet you again. We—Mark and I—saw you at Liverpool. We endeavoured to find your lodgings and your father, but fate and your young friend there interfered, and our plans were thwarted."

He took her hand kindly. She endeavoured to make him a reply, but although her lips moved, they emitted no sound. Her already pale face became by many degrees paler; her already beating heart beat faster and louder. Without uttering a word that was understandable she fell back, and he caught her in his arms, helpless, and apparently lifeless.

"My eye, here's a go!" observed Jedburgh, with a puzzled expression of countenance.

"Ring for Mrs. Jasper, Mark," said Jack quickly.

Lockbolt immediately did as he was bid, and Mrs. Jasper, honest John Jedburgh's housekeeper, soon appeared upon the spot. To her was delegated the task of restoring to consciousness the poor girl whom Jack held in his arms. The good creature at once had her charge placed upon a sofa, and under her care Emmeline ere long recovered herself sufficiently to taste a little mulled and spiced wine which had been specially prepared for her by one of Mrs. Jasper's subordinates.

"Poor child, poor child," said the old lady, running her fingers lovingly through the young woman's hair. "She needs rest and good nourishment——"

"Both of which we must request you to let her have, Mrs. Jasper," said Jack. "Take her under your care, and keep her until she is strong again. Do the best for her that you possibly can. I leave her to you, for I have the utmost faith in your nursing."

"I am obliged to you, Mr. Hartington," returned Mrs. Jasper with a low curtsey. "Very much obliged to you for the compliment. I will do all I can by the poor creature."

"Take her with you then, and let us know how she progresses," said Jedburgh kindly.

Emmeline was at once led away by good Mrs. Jasper, in whose tender care for the present we leave her, for the exigencies of our story demand that we should pay almost undivided attention to Jack Hartington.

"How did you manage to bag the whole lot, uncle?" we next hear him say. "It was admirably done, and I should like very much to know how it was brought about."

"Well, it was a ticklish matter, and yet a very simple one," replied Uncle Jedburgh. "I bethought me of what you and Mark had been telling me, and concluding the young man here to be the very party you had been speaking of as having been thrown by the waves upon the Welsh coast, I said to myself, 'I'll try him first.' I can manage a man better than a woman. So I went up to him and said: 'Hollo! young fellow; I've been looking for you for many a long day. You're wanted inside here. I have a gentleman staying with me that would like to have a word with you. He can tell you something that you'd like to know, and his name is Lockbolt.' You should have seen how the

boy's eyes danced. I saw that my point was gained at once. He only spoke half a dozen words to the young woman before she gave her consent to follow, and that's how I managed to convoy the whole flotilla into harbour with such speed."

"Capitally managed," replied Jack; "and after that I shall go on with my tale. It has a special interest for this young man, but as to the other I am not so sure."

"If you please, sir," said Alberto, "poor Zeffy here, who is tired——"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Jack, "I under stand. We'll find him a berth in no time."

He rang, and in response, from the nether regions, appeared a jolly, ruddy individual, whom Jack addressing, said:

"Peters, take this stranger with you. Let him have as much to eat as he likes, and after he has satisfied his appetite, give him something hot and comfortable, and find him a bed."

Peters bowed, but Zeffy seemed reluctant to follow. Alberto, however, assured him that it was "all right," and that he would see him in the morning, upon which the simple fellow squeezed the youth's hand, shouldered

the heavy violoncello which he had brought with him into the apartment, and followed whither Peters chose to lead.

Jack, who had now a third listener, after some hemming and scraping of his throat, and an extra glass of Madeira, proceeded with his narration in this wise :

" My wits have been somewhat scattered by what has just occurred, and I would feel obliged if you, uncle, or you, Mark, were to give me a little prompting. Where did I leave off? Thank you, Mark, yes; it was where Hurtado undertook to inform me of what his sister meant to convey. You are right, Uncle John, my, or at least Hurtado's words were: 'Now let me tell you shortly what my sister is driving at. In the chateau which you may have seen at the other end of the town, and which now lies in ruins——'

" 'Señor Hartington has seen it, brother,' put in the lady.

" 'Carramba,' thundered Hurtado, whose words were accompanied by a frown which quieted his sister at once, 'who has ever disputed it? Let me go on with what I was about to say, will you?

" 'As I was about to tell you, Señor Eng-

lishman,' he continued, 'in this chateau, which we in Gerona called the Castiello del Braganza, there dwelt but a very short time ago (although short as it is, it has wrought a wonderful change in my sister) the Count Ramirez de Braganza, in whose family my sister and myself were servitors.'"

"Braganza, did you say?" asked Alberto.

"Silence, lad," said the narrator, gently. "Hear me out. The story, I believe, concerns you vitally."

"Go on, sir, if you please," returned Alberto. "At the mention of the name I lost all control of myself."

Replied Jack: "I resume in Ubeda's own words, as nearly as I can remember them.

"'The founder of my master's family was that Philip de Braganza, whose exploits against the Moslem upon the ever memorable and glorious field of Tolosa are celebrated throughout the length and breadth of Catalonia; with his own hand he hewed his way through a phalanx of Moorish warriors, and took their great leader Mahommed-ben-Alhamar prisoner, for which service he was ennobled on the spot. A scion of this stock was the redoubtable Bernardo de Braganza,

who remained with the gallant King Ferdinand throughout the whole of his crusade against the sons of the Crescent until the fall of Granada and the final expulsion of the hated race from the land. Pope Sixtus IV., who first proclaimed the holy war, sent for the brave Bernardo to Rome, and in recognition of his services presented him with a set of diamonds of immense value—a proceeding on the part of a pope which has never been surpassed, nor, so far as I am aware, ever equalled.

"'Other celebrated personages the family gave to the world in plenty, but these two being the most remarkable, I will not trouble you with accounts of any of the smaller fry. I will come at once to my own dear master, whose absence from the home of his ancestors we all lament. He lived at the chateau, which, it seems, you have already seen. It was originally a Moorish palace. Many a time has it occurred to me that its builder must have floated away to an ideal world in search of an embodiment of grandeur, and that he came to Spain and built this marvellous edifice. It was bestowed upon the great great grandfather of the late owner for his services

at the battle of Lepanto, where he acquired immense spoil from the Turks, one of whose galleys he captured.

"'My master, with all the warlike ardour of his illustrious forefathers, quitted his chateau at the beginning of the late troubles with France, and repaired to Madrid. Stung to madness at the sight of the departure of the young Prince Don Francisco in the custody of French troops, who were about to remove him and the remaining members of the Royal family to Bayonne, Count Ramirez charged the soldiers at the head of the populace, who fell upon them and killed nearly a thousand of them on the spot. The Count was, however, captured, tried, and ordered for execution. Murat was appealed to on his behalf by some of the most exalted personages in our unhappy land, among whom were the Queen of Etruria and King Ferdinand himself. The friends of the unhappy captive, finding Murat inexorable, endeavoured to move the Emperor; but this was only appealing from Cæsar to Cæsar. The Tyrant ordered Murat to report, and upon receiving the General's reply, confirmed the sentence.'"

"Tell me, in Heaven's name," cried Alberto, "was it ever carried out?"

Jack made reply; but if the reader would know the nature thereof, he must turn to the chapter by which this one is followed.

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## CHAPTER XIV.

"But lo! all in the dead of night,
We heard a fearful sound;
Loud thunder clapt! the castle shook;
And lightning flash'd around.

"Dead with affright at first we lay;
But rousing up anon,
We ran to see our little lord:
Our little lord was gone!"

*The Birth of St. George.*

"No, my good fellow," answered Jack. "But let me tell the story as Hurtado told it me.

"'There lived at that time,' said my burly informant, 'somewhere in Catalonia, a daring, brave, and not altogether unhandsome fellow, a Gitano named Balthasar Zamora——'"

"I knew him," said Lockholt, coolly.

"I can remember him," cried Alberto, excitedly.

"'Balthasar Zamora,'" continued Jack, "'whose life the Count had, when both were mere youths, been the means of saving. Zamora entertained such an affection for the nobleman ever after that he would have gone through fire and water to do him a service. He was not in the train of the Count when the attack was made upon the French, but the news quickly reached him that his preserver's life was in jeopardy, and he lost not a moment in reaching Madrid. The exact manner in which it was done, neither I nor any one else save the Count and Balthasar can tell, but upon the morning which had been fixed for the execution, the cell occupied by the Count was found empty, and the soldier who stood sentry was discovered to be bleeding from a wound in the head, and unconscious. Carefully though he was nursed, and assiduously though he was questioned, this poor fellow never rallied sufficiently to be able to tell how he had received his hurts, or what had become of his mosquete. On the following night the Count was in his own chateau again, and two days later the French (twelve thou-

sand strong), under Generals Duhesme and Reille, were at our gates. They never got inside the city, but they shelled the Count's chateau, and he and his family were obliged to fly for their lives.

"The horrors of that awful night I shall never forget. The roar of the deep-mouthed cannon, the dancing and bursting of the hellish messengers which their fire-vomiting jaws belched forth, the shrieks of terrified women, the groans of dying men, the blood-red glare in the night sky, the trembling of the earth beneath our feet, the chateau burning like a huge funeral pyre, illumining the space around, and showing every object with a distinctness which even the clouds of smoke emitted by the cannon could not obscure—aye, it can be imagined; but only those who saw it, as I did, can realise it. Even we who witnessed it can give you but a very faint picture of the terrible scene.

"When confusion and destruction were at their height it was that the Count, having only that moment gained the deck of a little vessel which lay in the river, inquired if all were safe. They were obliged to weigh anchor and make sail on the instant, for they

dreaded every moment that a stray ball or shell might knock a hole in the hull or carry away the mast.

"At this momentous juncture, there was heard a shriek from the Countess, who fainted and fell in the arms of my sister, who was standing near Balthasar—with head and arm leaning lovingly on his shoulder, if the truth must be told. Don't blush, Ximena; don't blush.

"The cause of her agitation was soon discovered. Her son, Alberto, and his nurse, Ercilla, were not among the passengers in the boat! With consternation in his looks the Count turned to spring ashore, but Zamora's hand restrained him.

"'Stay with your lady, noble sir,' I heard him say. 'If she has lost a son, don't let her lose a husband also. I know every inch of your grounds and house. Wait for me at the mouth of the river, and if the child be alive, I will bring him to you. Good-bye, Ximena; farewell, loved one.'

"There was an agonised embrace, and a moment later Balthasar was ashore, speeding towards the chateau like a deer.

"The master of the boat would not stay

another minute—not even for the Count, who wished to be put ashore. A moderate breeze filled our sails, and we dropped gently down the river towards the sea. We never reached it, however. Duhesme and Reille raised the siege of Gerona, and took to their heels in the direction of Barcelona, pursued by our general Caldagues. Balthasar nor the boy, Alberto, did any of us ever see or hear of again, and their fate has been no less a mystery to my sister and to me than to the Count and Countess de Braganza.

"'Until about a week ago my brother should have said,' observed Ximena, whose utterance was nearly choked with emotion.

"I was then at Oporto, and while there I accidentally came across a gipsy, who had escaped from an English transport ship, and who told me that if I went to Britain and inquired for the tribe of the Shark, I would most certainly obtain from them valuable information respecting the man whom I described to him. He added that a vessel from that very port had been wrecked upon the coast in the northern part of Wales, and that a person answering in every respect the description I had given, was cast on shore by

the waves; that he died the very same day, and that a boy who was found on the coast at the same time was still alive, and roaming the country in the company of a Showman and his daughter. From inquiries which I afterwards made, I found that a vessel named the *Donna Maria* had been lost with all hands upon the British coast, but nothing was known of her having any super-cargo. I endeavoured to find the Count to communicate to him the intelligence, but upon inquiring at his residence at Seville, whither I at once repaired, to my despair I was told that he had but two days before gone, for a second time since the destruction of his chateau, to England.

"I added to Hurtado's narrative, and to her supplement," continued Jack, "what is well known to you, Captain Lockbolt, and what I have since told you, Uncle Jedburgh. I have exhausted my log pretty nearly. All that I have to say in addition is that I left the place fully convinced that the young man whom you and I, Mark, saw one day in a sea-port town a good way off, and who then played us a very nice trick indeed, is the son, the long-lost heir of Count Ramirez de Bra-

ganza. My yarn has been a somewhat long one, although I've knocked off as much as I could safely do without spoiling the points, if it has any."

"Capitally told, Jack, capitally told!" said Uncle Jedburgh, applauding his nephew heartily.

"I am extremely obliged to the gentleman for continuing it in my presence, and I thank a kind Heaven for directing our footsteps to this hospitable place at a moment which enabled me to obtain another and a most important link in the history of my life," said Alberto, fervently.

"Poor Father Loftewalde!" continued the youth presently; "how he would have rejoiced had he been here to-night! Emmeline, my sister, my best of earthly friends, how glad she will be when I tell her the news!"

"Is Loftewalde——" began Jack, and then pausing.

"Dead, dead!" replied the youth, sadly. "His broken, troubled spirit at last found rest. He left us at the fall of the leaf in yellow autumn. Two winters' snows have fallen above him, a summer sun has once wooed the flowers from the sod under which

he lies, while his daughter, the apple of his eye, she over whom he would not have had the wind blow rudely, is left to fight life's battle with no other assistance than that which may be given her by a poor half-witted street-dancer and a friendless weakling like myself."

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## CHAPTER XV.

"—— forletten halls of merriment,
Whose ghastly mitches hold the train of fright,
Where lethal ravens bark and owlets wake the night."
CHATTERTON.

"He sinks like a gallant ship o'erthrown
By the blast and the driving surf,
'I yield me *not*' is his last faint tone,
As he falls on the trampled turf."
*The Prince and the Outlaw.*

THE night was now well advanced, but neither Jedburgh, Lockbolt, nor Hartington showed any disposition to separate. Their guest expressed his intense desire to hear the sequel to Hartington's narrative. The task of complying with his wishes was Lockbolt's, and his solely. Fresh fuel was rung for, and

the materials for punch-making were speedily produced. Jedburgh, who was an adept in the art of compounding the mixture, gave his orders with the air of a Kaiser. The brewing having been satisfactorily accomplished, and a steaming modicum having been doled out to Mark and Jack (Alberto preferring to sip a little Madeira), the former, while his glass was "cooling a bit," addressing the others, said :

"Cap'n Jedburgh, and you, Jack Hartington, and you, Alberto de Braganza—I'm not much of a hand at spinning yarns ; Jack beats me at this all to fits. He's had a better education, he's younger, his head is a good deal lighter, his blood ever so much warmer, he's fond of reading, and—he's been in love. So you see in the yarn-spinning business I'm rather heavily handicapped ; but I'll try what I can do, nevertheless.

"You have heard from my young friend Hartington how the man called Balthasar Zamora jumped from the boat and made his way towards the burning chateau. Now there Mr. Hartington, good story-teller though he may be, was obliged to stop. He was on the water, and he couldn't for the life of him

have stepped ashore to follow the Zingara. Now from this point let me pay out the line. The gipsy found his way to the chateau and into the room where the boy and his nurse were supposed to be. Finding neither of them there, he doubled the chapel which Jack spoke of, and crept on hands and knees towards an outbuilding where Josè, who was Ercilla's husband, the count's gardener, used to sleep, and sure enough there was the younker sitting upon the ground as though nothing were the matter. Balthasar took him up in his arms, and called aloud upon his nurse and her spouse, but neither of them could be got to answer. Believing that they had fled, and cursing them roundly for having left the infant to its fate, he tied the kid upon his back, and crept with him to the chapel. Here he discovered without much trouble an opening, the existence of which was well known to him, and through it he descended. The passage brought him right out to the river's bank, where he knew himself to be perfectly safe. He jumped into a boat, and pulled away in the direction which the count's vessel had taken, but somehow or another he missed her, and was driven by the current out to sea.

He had been a day and a night out, when he happened to sight a schooner called the *Donna Maria*, an Oporto craft, laden with wines and fruit. He and the boy were taken aboard, and the vessel made sail for Britain. They intended putting into Liverpool, but before they got within fifty leagues of that port it blew big guns. They struck on a reef on the Welsh coast. The craft went to pieces, and every soul on board of her found the bottom except Balthasar and the boy here. They were washed ashore, and Zamora lived long enough to tell me what I've just been telling you. He also told me what I haven't as yet told you, and that was, that sewn up in the collar of his cloak were a number of diamonds, on the mountings of most of which had been cut *a dagger broken in the half.* The gems, he told me, he had found in a box upon the table in the room in which he had discovered the boy. He supposed that Josè and his wife had brought them there intending to carry them away, and that they were searching for other plunder when he entered their dwelling and bore away the diamonds and the boy. By this, their motto, he said, would I find the lad's parents, to whom he

begged me to restore their lost son. I tried to get him to tell me their names. He did his best, poor fellow, to do so, but the death-rattles were in his throat, and all I could get from him was, 'THEY BREAK, BUT NEVER BEND,' and as though the words were applicable only to him who had uttered them, the lamp of life went out, leaving the secret unrevealed. How I locked up the diamonds in a box which I found upon the shore, and which had, on its cover inside, the same broken-bladed dagger, done in gilt, and how they were afterwards stolen by the light-fingered lubber whom we picked up in the Bay of Malaga, you have already heard, Cap'n Jedburgh, and Jack and Alberto here know too well to need telling again. That is the whole of my tale, and I've made it as short and varnished it as little as I could. After that I'll thank you to help me to another drop of punch while I fill my pipe for a long, a strong, and a last pull."

For the purpose of drawing up a plan of future action, our friends "resolved themselves into a committee of the whole House."

There was much to talk of, many resolutions were taken, many and welcome under-

takings were given by the seafaring trio, and many thanks were returned by the youth, whose fortune each of them felt convinced had now been discovered.

Wishing them each and all

> ——"a fair good night
> And pleasing dreams and slumbers light,"

we, with a hop, skip, and jump, transport ourselves and our reader once more to the barbacan of Harnisham Castle.

It is deserted. The night wind soughs bitterly around it. The owl, the raven, and the bat are the only living things which cherish any affection for its deserted, cold, and gloomy walls. One of these gives utterance to a scream, another croaks with angry dolefulness, while the wings of the third may be heard flapping and burring as a human intruder creeps into the home which they had begun to consider exclusively their own. We hear this intruder muttering in the darkness words which, to those who have traced his history with us, are full of meaning.

"Is it for this I have chosen the crooked path? To be hunted like a rat at every turning; to be spurned and kicked by every beggar, and by those whom I served most of

all. One was burnt in a fire of his own, or at least of one of his servant's kindling. Another played into my hands as well as I could wish, although the fool thought the game was his. The third lives. Curse him! The knave prospers. The scoundrel dropped like a chicken which had soared too near the sun; the revengeful dolt fell like the elephant into the hunter's trap, but the smooth-tongued, the low-voiced, the mealy-mouthed, the polite, the silk-stockinged, the most respectable, flourishes: is at the top of the tree, is a justice of the peace—good God, *Justice!*—and Mayor of the town which he has chosen to call his own. The upright, the just, the high-minded man, whom he helped to humble and ruin, where is he? God only knows. Starved to death, maybe. Buried under a hedge, or rotting in a ditch. His daughter—she whom I heard taking my part once, even against her own father; his daughter, she who said a kind thing of me; she who said that perhaps after all I was more to be pitied than blamed—where does she rest her head to-night? I'll find her. I'll tell her all I ever knew concerning her. She shall learn from my own mouth how I wronged her father; how my

perjured breath blasted his mother's fair fame and her life. But I'll bring *his* head, grey though it be, to a felon's grave. Him, my first tutor in crime, him who taught me a wickedness compared with which all my other faults seem trifling—I'll bring him to destruction; I'll tumble him headlong to perdition. I swore a lie for you, did I? I, the simpleton, the ungrateful idiot, the ass, stopped the way of an angel, and you were the fiend that rode me. But I'll reckon with you for it. You shall pay me in full, even though it were with the last drop of your heart's blood. I'll——"

But, before he could say another word, there was a hand upon his throat, and a voice hissed in his ear:

"You'll reckon first with *me*. I've an account against you of long standing, and you can only pay it with your life."

With a spring like that of an uncoiled adder, Simeon freed himself from his assailant's grasp. His enemy, whoever he was, seemed to know every inch of the ground, and this gave him a tremendous advantage. He crept with the stealthiness of a tiger towards the spot where the sound of his vic-

tim's breathings seemed to proceed from, and put forth his hand to grasp him once again. He withdrew it, however, with a howl. Simeon had bitten off the tip of his fore-finger! In the darkness he had unwittingly thrust it right into Grubbum's mouth. Furious and maddened with the pain, he rushed at Simeon, but the latter met him midway, caught him in his arms, and held him in an embrace like a bear's. The struggle which ensued was a terrific one, for both combatants were very fairly matched. As far as mere brute force went, Simeon's assailant was the gainer; but the former's litheness and activity went a long way towards compensating him for his deficiency in strength. His assailant wriggled and kicked, but to no purpose. Simeon's arms bound him round like the folds of a boa, or the antennæ of a cuttle-fish. Writhe and strive as he would, the fleshy fetters which enwound him could neither be broken nor unlocked. To try a fall, placed as he was, would appear at first sight to be sheer madness, but it was his only resource. In the deadly encounter they careered slowly, inch by inch almost, over the creaking boards of which the floor of the

apartment was composed, until they neared the wall. This was the moment for which one of them had waited. Directly he felt his back touch the rough bare stones, Simeon's antagonist ceased struggling. He lifted his left foot to about the level of his right calf, placed the heel thereof firmly against the masonry, and, by means of the leverage thus obtained, threw himself forward with all his might. Simeon fell, but his hold of his enemy relaxed not a jot.

They rolled over and over each other like a couple of infuriated panthers, until they neared the top of the staircase by which the chamber was reached. Still the arms clasped their victim like bands of pliant steel. They are in the very jaws of the abyss, and still the fierce struggle continues with unabated vigour. Simeon's assailant knows the danger, and Simeon a moment later knows it too, but escape is impossible. He doubles himself like a frightened hedgehog, and falls into the yawning passage, and thence to the hard stone floor, with a terrible thud. His enemy lies beneath him, groaning, helpless, and supine. Simeon's fingers unclasp themselves, and seek the prostrate man's throat.

Now let thy orisons ascend, wretched being, if ever thou wast taught to crave for help when thine own strength failed thee. Hunger, pestilence, or the roaring sea are not more fell and merciless than he who now bends over thee. Thine eyes grow dim, they see naught but blood, there is a sound in thine ears as of rushing waters, thy tongue shows itself more limp and colourless than the hound's after a long day's hunt. Make thy peace with heaven, if thou canst, for from man thou need'st not hope for mercy!

Help is at hand; but it comes too late to be of use to the wretch whose throat has felt the compression of those murderous fingers. Simeon turns away from his victim to breathe himself after the terrible struggle. The next minute he is stretched as low as his late assailant. A man kneels beside him, and slips something bright and clanking round his wrists. He whistles, and two other men, attired like himself, rush from a thicket at some distance off.

"Nabbed, boys, whatever!" exclaimed he who had dealt Simeon the blow. "Guv him pounce under his ear, and he was fall like a hatchet from a bull—I was mean a bull from

the hatchet. Bring the light here, and let's see who be the other chap as we have. O, *anwl dad*,[1] it's the Capten of the Gipsies, him as was be sent over the Herring-pond for killing the man in a fight in Llangammarch Fair. He's come back before his time was up, but he was not want prosecute for that—he be dead. His master was meet him, or he be meet his master, one of the both. One was be as good a man as the other, and better too, as Dick Mock used to say. He was wrong named the Shark, for I was hear 'em say as how a shark was be fight better on his back nor in any way else; now this fish was be killed in that very shape."

"A queer fish he was too," said one of the men, with a grim smile.

"Yes, Harry, him was," replied the first speaker. "Now you, Tom, must tramp to the nearest inn and bring over here a cart. The Harnisham Arms was be the next for you. We must have them two at the town as soon as we can. Put your first leg best now—I was mean your best leg first—for we must let the Crowner see one of these chaps, and the judge at the 'Sizes the other.

[1] *Anglicé*, "Dear father."

## CHAPTER XVI.

"You undergo too strict a paradox,
Striving to make an ugly need look fair:
Your words have took such pains as if they labour'd
To bring manslaughter into form."

*Timon of Athens.*

THE Harnisham Arms from cellar to garret is crowded. The landlord has been heard to say that the inquest was a godsend. He stands behind his bar puffing and blowing, perspiring and laughing, giving orders and executing them, remonstrating with, and endeavouring to cajole into quietness his ill-tempered wife, whose face through the cloud of smoke which fills the apartment glowers like that of a harpy or a griffin. To the latter species of creature she has often been compared, and some of the waggishly disposed, who frequented the house, had been heard to say that the establishment ought to have been called the Griffin's Head, and that Mrs. Jolliboy should have sat to the sign painter. Jolliboy himself was a thoroughly good-natured dog, with a smile and a joke for everybody. It was never cloudy in the at-

mosphere where his face shone; no fear of its being "Quaker's Meeting" if he were one of the congregation. Mrs. Jolliboy, on the other hand, suffered from perpetual tooth-aches, head-aches, ear-aches, influenzas, low-ness of spirits, and a chain of other disorders and infirmities difficult to name, and still more difficult to explain or remember. It would be easiest for the reader if he were to follow the example of her husband, and divide them all into two great families—the mumps and the megrims. Under the first of these John Jolliboy placed all those disorders under whose influences his partner became silent, while the last served to characterise all those which had an opposite tendency. It were hard to say to which of the two kinds she was most liable, but on this day she appeared to suffer from megrims. Her head was tied up in a red stocking, one end of which over-lapped the other, and hung loosely behind, like the tassel on a smoking-cap. The post assigned her was that of money-taker. By this excellent arrangement of her husband, her loquacity and ill humour had a very limited field of operation.

The inquest had been fixed for two o'clock.

It is now within a quarter of an hour of that time. The noise is at its highest. In one of the rooms the company consists entirely of gipsies—male and female—with their brats. In the bar, chatting merrily with Jolliboy, is a group of personages, prominent among which are Uncle Jedburgh, Captain Lockbolt, Jack Hartington, and Alberto. They have listeners who appear eager to glean even the smallest scrap of information respecting the man concerning whose death the inquisition was about to be held.

"Knew him, did you, Mr. Jedburgh?" said Jolliboy, handing a customer a foaming jug of ale. "Rum card, they say."

"Well, well, John, I didn't exactly know him either," replied Jedburgh. "The Captain here and Mr. Hartington know more about him than I do."

"Devilish good thing to do," Jolliboy went on. "The fellow who killed him must have been a tough un. I saw him at Llangammarch fair having a mill with the celebrated Bilston Smasher, and smashing work he made of it, I can tell you. He was transported for that business, and his time isn't near up yet. It would have been better for him if he had served it out."

"Well, you know the old proverb, John," said Uncle Jedburgh. "He that's born to be hanged will never get drowned."

"I do remember it," returned Jolliboy, "and I gets more comfortable the more I think on it, because, you see, the man that's born for either of those events must at last have a 'quest held on him, and 'quests now and then turn out very good things."

"That's me own opinion, ivery bit av it," said an Irishman who had just entered. "It's meself that 'as manny a time sed the same."

"What! Brothovaboy?" exclaimed Lockbolt in wonderment. "It's a long time since I clapped eyes on you. Where do you hail from? What'll you have to drink?"

"I'll answer the last queshtyun fusht," replied Pat. "A dhrap of whisky, av yer hanner plases. Hurroo, Captain, an' is it yer own father's son that's before me? Tare an' ouns, now, if I remember meetin' av ye since that night when ye were in the——"

"Mercantile marine, friend," interposed Jedburgh with a wink.

"Ye're wrong there, sor," returned Pat. "It was in the fishing loine we was."

"Fishers of men," observed Lockbolt.

"But the remark only applies to yourself and some others, Mr. Brothovaboy. I had nothing to do with it, you know, if it is the capture of a certain interfering beak you're alluding to."

"Oh! it's yerself has nothin' to do wid anythin', Captain," returned Pat. "Everythin' is shure to be done and done right well if you has yer hand in. But, av coorse, you has nothin' to do wid it. Av coorse nat," and the speaker put his glass to his lips in order to stifle the laugh to which they were about to give birth.

"Has the crowner come, sor?" he asked, turning towards Jolliboy.

"No," replied the latter, "we expect him at two o'clock."

"Oh, bad 'cess to thim. I was tould to be here by half-past one. Shurely they wouldn't want one gintleman to wate half an hour far another?" quoth Brothovaboy, with a comical leer.

"But you were a quarter of an hour late yourself," remarked Jolliboy with a smile and a shake of the head.

"Oh, thin," rejoined the other, "we're shquare, as the parson's books said to his

bottle. He's a quarter of an hour after my time, and I'm a quarter of an hour afther his."

The listeners, not being able to understand Pat's logic, laughed at it.

"I've been shummoned, d'ye untherstand," continued he, "to tell the crowner what I knows about the poor dead Shark. Faith, it's Doctor Obie and mesilf are the only two as can shware to him now in thish part of the counthry. Great changes in ten year, Captain Lockbolt. But tell me, sor, who is the gintleman at yer soide there? I don't know him, but still I belave I've seen him at one time av me life."

"His name is Hartington," replied Lockbolt.

"Hoo! my life on him," replied Pat. "How do you do, sor? How goes it wid ye? Be jabers, I remember ye the blithest young birrud that ever sang. Arrah, sor, it's no trouble you've met wid, I hope? Oh, sure! how you've grown now, an' filled out loike, an'—oh, faith! that beard of yours, how it has thrived to be sure. Here's wishin' you the besht of healths, sor; the longest of loives, the sweetest of woives, the mosht dutiful cartlood of childer, sor."

"Have another drop, Mr. Brothovaboy?" said Jack, whose manner was absent—but so were his thoughts, and he must therefore be excused.

"Gentlemen," said Jolliboy, just as he set Brothovaboy's replenished glass before him, "the crowner comes; he's oncommon punctual, I wish he had stayed away another quarter of an hour."

"You would like another 'quest for him, no doubt, Mr. Jolliboy," snarled his wife. "You are the most unfeeling brute as never was born. Your heart is like flint. You'd stand talking there for ever, and see me dropping a stone stiff and dead corpse at your feet. You thinks of nothink nor nobody but yourself. I'll leave the house to you, for I sees plainly you wants to get me out of the way. You are tryin' your best to kill me, and then you'll get somebody what is younger to step into my shoes and spend what I've been scrapin' for you. You'd——"

"My dear," began John mildly.

"Don't haddress me in that manner, sir," said she snappishly. "Talk in that manner to your servants, sir. As I was sayin', you'd" —but John stayed not to hear any more. He

bounced out of the bar, and made his way to meet the coroner, whom he proceeded to show into the room where the inquest was to be held.

"That's how it is," said Mrs. Jolliboy, addressing the bar customers in general, "whenever I tells him a word as is meant for his own good he runs away and won't hear me. I've been preachin' and preachin' to him ever since I fust know'd him, about givin' over his unthinkin' ways, but he won't do it. If he was only to listen to what I say——"

"Perhaps he thinks like the man in the old song, ma'am," said a person who had only that moment arrived. "Him what lists and runs away will live to list another day."

"Unless he gets shot by court-martial for deserting," chimed in Uncle Jedburgh.

Mrs. Jolliboy was about to say something in reply, but her voice was drowned by the bawlings of a man whose head only was beyond the doorway.

"Obadiah Hopwell, Patrick Brothovaboy, this way, this way. They am want you before the jury. Drink up, drink up, and follow me," cried the voice.

The two persons addressed at once did as

they were bid, and Jedburgh, Hartington, Lockbolt, and Alberto followed them. Their conductor ushered them into a large room, in which sat in solemn conclave twelve men and one other, and that one other's clerk.

The business upon which the aforesaid twelve were assembled was very clearly explained to them by that one other, their legal leader and head. It was to inquire into the death of a person whose body the gentlemen of the jury had but just returned from viewing, and which would be sworn to by witnesses to be the body of a man belonging to a tribe of gipsies which had from time to time been located in various parts of the kingdom. Deceased was a kind of leader or chief among these men, and was considered to be a person of a violent and desperate disposition. It would be shown that he had met his death by a sudden and continued obstruction of the action of the organs of respiration, occasioned by inordinate compression or constriction of one of the most important of them, namely, the trachea. The jury may not, perhaps, be aware of the fact, but he would take this opportunity of explaining it to them, that in order that man might live he

must respire; and in order that he be enabled to respire, nature had furnished him with organs of respiration. The word respiration was derived from two Latin words, *re,* which meant "again," and *spiro*, which, being interpreted, signified "I breathe." It was very important for the purposes of the present inquiry that this should be borne in mind. The object of the respiratory organs was the introduction of a fresh supply of oxygen into the system, in order that the excreting organs, the skin, lungs, kidneys, and so forth, might be enabled the better to remove the products resulting from the deterioration, the general breaking up of the various tissues of the body. To speak more plainly, respiration was a sort of deobstruent, which by arterialisation deodorised the carbonic acid (which was the most noxious of the products he had referred to) and eliminated it through the lungs in air-breathing animals, and through the *branchiæ* or gills in water-breathing animals or fish. Now, the most important of all the organs of respiration was the trachea. He would illustrate what he meant by the trachea in a very few words. If they would be kind enough to consider the human body

as a representation on a small scale of the city of Venice, the trachea might be taken to stand in the same relation to that body as an historical and well-known *duct* or *pathway into the interior* did to the city. In other words, if they supposed the human body to be Venice, the trachea would be its *Grand Canal.* As he had said before, it would be proved to them beyond all possible doubt that death had resulted in the case which they were now about to investigate by inordinate constriction of the tracheal orifice——

A juryman: "I've heard the people say, sir, as how the feller kicked the bucket 'cause another chap squeezed his weasand for 'n; is the two diseases the same?"

The learned coroner, in replying, said this was a question of such tremendous import that it was impossible at that stage of the inquiry to give a direct reply to it. The seriousness of the consequences involved in the answer was too vast for conception or even speculation. Besides, the gentleman who had asked it had anticipated the whole of the question which they had met there to decide, and not only the whole of the question but the answer as well. These things,

according to the regular course of nature and the practice laid down by the courts, could only be arrived at by slow degrees. The rest of the gentlemen of the jury would pardon a digression which the question put by their brother had caused. He (the learned coroner) had but very few words more to address to them. Besides proof of the immediate cause of death, evidence would be forthcoming to show through whose agency——

"That's clear enough wi'out any evidence," interrupted the intelligent foreman of the jury. "We don't want any evidence for that. It was the devil's agency right enough."

"The gentleman is not aware of the legal maxim which forbids the finding of any one guilty until he has been heard in his own defence," gravely observed the coroner in reply. "The personage, the being to whose agency this man's death is attributed by Mr. Foreman, cannot be summoned for examination."

"Well, but I've been at 'quests where they have brought in verdicts of 'Murder by some persons or person *not known*,' and I don't see why we should not do the same here," said the foreman. "Besides, I wants to get back

to my shop, and I think a verdict like this would settle the business out of hand," he added.

The coroner frowned, and again referred to "the course of nature and the practice of the courts," after which he went on to say that the compression of the trachea, from the effects of which the deceased had died, could be distinctly proved to be the work of a human being, and moreover, that that human being would be brought before them and examined. He had been caught *in flagrante delicto*—well, perhaps he ought not to have used this term either, he should have said "immediately after the act." He hoped the jury would excuse him this *lapsus linguæ*.

We can answer for the jury that they *did* excuse him, for not a soul among them understood either his apology or for what he meant to apologise.

A constable named Gruffydd Ap Shenkin, proceeded the coroner, than whom he did not know a more active or worthy servant of the public, secured the person of an individual named Simeon Grubbum, immediately after the affray in which the deceased lost his life. Since this man had been in custody he had

made certain statements to the officer, which would be detailed in evidence by-and-by. He (the coroner) would not enter more into particulars concerning those statements, but he would tell the jury at once that the gist or substance of them seemed to be that the deceased man had made an attack upon the life of the prisoner, and that the latter was obliged to make dispositions, to adopt means, to repel such attack and preserve his person from injury. That the deceased had a motive for such attack seemed probable enough, if they believed the explanation given by the man Grubbum. The latter admitted having exhumed the body of a gipsy——

"Without warrant from the Secretary of State?" inquired the foreman, with horror and amazement in his looks.

"Without warrant from the Secretary of State," replied the coroner; "but to this, gentlemen," he added, "and to the other question, whether the body not having been buried in consecrated ground its exhumation was or was not an illegal act, you need not, for the purposes of the present inquiry, give any consideration. The body was buried by certain members of the tribe of which the

deceased was the chief, but for what purpose it was exhumed by Grubbum seems not at all clear from the statements which he has made. Our indefatigable officer Ap Shenkin, however, has hunted out two witnesses who will be able to throw the necessary light upon this matter. Both these are gentlemen of great respectability; one of them is a retired sea captain, and the other, who is the heir to a very handsome fortune, was at that time his lieutenant. Both were then engaged in——"

"The mercantile marine, if you will kindly allow me to suggest, sir," said Uncle Jedburgh suavely.

"I'm obliged to the gentleman," said the coroner, bowing. "The mercantile marine. These two gentlemen will, upon their oath, tell you a very strange story, but with its strangeness (beyond the gratification of a passing curiosity) you have nothing to do further than this; it will give you an explanation of the motive which the deceased had for considering the person through whose agency he met his death his mortal enemy."

"He has proved himself his mortal enemy, whether he was ever considered so or not," muttered Jedburgh.

"Having listened to this evidence," continued the coroner, who had not heard the remark, "it will be for you to say whether or not any violence was used towards the deceased, and if your finding is that violence *was* used, then it will be for you to say whether that violence was accidental or premeditated. If accidental, then no blame attaches to any one. If premeditated, somebody must be in fault. Should your finding be that it was premeditated, then the question will arise, premeditated by whom? If your answer should be, 'By Simeon Grubbum,' then the duty will devolve upon you of finding whether such violence was necessary for the preservation of his person from injury or from death, in which case you will by your verdict exonerate the suspected person from blame; but if, on the other hand, you find that the violence was wanton (by which term I mean the attack in the first place being by the person implicated, or being continued after all resistance from his antagonist had ceased), *then*, gentlemen, *then*, I say, *you will bring in a verdict in accordance with your finding!* Thanking you cordially for the very patient hearing which you have given me, I dismiss

you to your duties, feeling confident that you will discharge them in that upright, fearless, dispassionate, unprejudiced, conscientious manner so eminently characteristic of English juries in general, and of those over whom I have had the honour of presiding in particular."

Each of the twelve good men and true, looking at least a couple of inches taller in his chair, turned him to his "duty," as the coroner had expressed it, which duty principally consisted in staring at his neighbour, nudging him, winking at him, shaking his head knowingly, whispering across the table loudly enough for every one in the room to hear, and then composing himself in his seat with the air of one who knew all about it.

With the evidence of the principal witnesses the reader is, or at least ought to be, already acquainted. With the story of one or two of the minor ones, and with a few other collateral matters necessary to our now maturescent narrative, we propose dealing in the very next of our chapters.

## CHAPTER XVII.

"Oh! the wondrous cunning that is in you! Do you think, by this whimsey, to save yourself from my power, and the indignation of the king? But think what you will, you scoundrel, I am resolved you shall hang for't, or else let me pass for the most miserable poor-spirited devil in the world."

MACHIAVEL: *The Marriage of Belphegor.*

* * * *

LOCKBOLT and Hartington have been examined. The coroner's court has elicited from them no more than, perhaps some of our readers will be inclined to say not half as much as, we already know.

Following them came a turnkey from the county gaol. He knew the deceased well. Had had him several times in custody upon almost every kind of charge—poaching principally. Heard him swear that if ever he came across Simeon Grubbum he would murder him.

The coroner and his jury shook their heads. The coroner, in addition, tilted his hat backwards, so that its broad brim rested upon the nape of his neck—sure sign that things were beginning to look favourable for the accused.

Among other evidence given was that of the parish doctor. He was a pleasant little fellow was the parish doctor, and the jury were very much pleased with him. In Latin and the learned tongues generally he was a match for the coroner himself. The jury didn't understand a word of the erudite battle which raged so long between the two, but that made no manner of difference—they enjoyed the fun as well as if they did.

"You say, sir," quoth the coroner, "that the tracheal orifice presented——"

"No, sir—no, sir," replied the little doctor doggedly. "It was the larynx, sir—the larynx, with its cartilages, the thyroid, cricoid, and arytenoid, sir; that is what I meant, sir."

"Exactly—yes—quite so; and you spoke of an appearance presented by one of the glands — I forget which," continued the coroner.

"I said, sir, that I thought the deceased was affected with tracheocele or bronchocele, but I am not able to swear that he was. The only thing that I am certain of is that he had trachitis."

"Yes, trachitis, of course. And are you of

opinion that this trachitic—I hope I am right in my adjective, doctor—trachitic affection was due to a blow on the head ?" asked the coroner.

"On the head, sir ! no. I am of opinion that it was due to severe compressure of the trachea or windpipe," replied the doctor.

"That's what I thought all along," said a juryman, "but the crowner would have it as it was some'ut else. The doctor and me is of the same huppinion ezactly. *Track 'ere* and *Track there*, *Track 'igh 'tis* or *Track low 'tis*, it's the same thing at last—squeejing the win'pipe, nothin' more nor less."

The doctor and the coroner, after flinging a few more big words at each other's heads, parted company, the former quite convinced that he had floored the other, who, in his turn, was certain that his opponent had not much to crow about after all.

One or two other witnesses are examined, and then comes Simeon Grubbum, attended and closely watched by his captor, Gruffydd ap Shenkyn.

Whether you tell the truth or don't, Simeon, is a matter of not the slightest con-

cern to any one but yourself. *We*, author and reader, know all about you and *it*—the death you know, the winding of your serpent fingers round the bull-neck of your enemy as he lay stunned and helpless in your merciless grasp. *We* know what coroner and jury are ignorant of. They have an inkling of the truth; they debate long and seriously the question whether the compression of the dead man's throat was done in the course of his struggle with you, or afterwards. He, through whose means you were brought to justice, has testified to facts, arguing from which they consider it extremely probable that resistance had ceased, and that the crushing out of your enemy's life was done under the impulses of revenge. There is a doubt, however, in their minds, and you get the benefit of it. You are acquitted, and we hear you saying to Gruffydd:

"Well, I'm free now, ain't I? Take away the darbies, will you? They've said that it was a death by misadventure, haven't they? It was what nobody could help; they believe that I was bound to do it. Come, Gruffydd, strike the irons off."

"Wait a bit, now," Gruffydd replies; "you

am always so very fast. You are so very fast this time that I was be very unwillin' to let you loose. There was be another charge against you, and I be glad as how you got out of this, for if you was be hang on this, I was praps got no reward for the other. There's a little matter about diamonds which you was be wanted for. Sir Titus Oldfogie would like to have *hanner gair*[1] with you, and I was mean that he should have it. And I'll tell you another secret—there be a big man from Spain as was only find me very late; he was want to have a look at you about these same diamonds. Holloa, there! you Mr. Lock-and-bolt, you Mr. Hartingtoon, and you Mr. Albert, more 'tickler nor all, don't you leave this blessed place without me have a word with you. I mustn't lose sight of you. I was want you three on king's business, but most so on your own. So partickler is it that I must call on you in his Majesty's name to 'ssist me in taking this man to the county gaol. I've got a warrant to lodge him there, and you must help me to have it execute."

The trio whom he addressed looked at

[1] *Anglicé*, half a word.

each other in surprise, and Lockbolt at once consulted their common oracle "Uncle Jedburgh." Acting on the advice of that worthy man, they determined to accompany the constable as he had requested.

Grubbum having been safely lodged in prison, Gruffydd and the four friends returned to the Harnisham Arms, the landlady whereof was still suffering from the disorder by her husband ycleped megrims.

"Mr. Jolliboy," said Gruffydd, "you was please to find us a room where we was have no one to disturb us."

"The very room for you," said Mr. Jolliboy, pointing over his shoulder to his own smoking sanctum. "I shan't be there to-night, that's certain; house too full, gentlemen. Must attend to business, you know; there's a little extra grist for the mill to-day, and I must look after it."

"Quite right you was, too," returned Gruffydd. "Mind that; but mind they wasn't take too much, or your bail was suffer for it."*

* To render this sentence intelligible, the author takes the liberty of informing his readers in a note that, previous to the passing of the Licensing Act of 1828 (9 Geo. IV., cap. 61), alehouse keepers were obliged by

"I'll take care of that," said Mr. Jolliboy, pleasantly.

"You will please to bring us something to wet the clay," said Gruffydd. "Give your orders, gentlemen. I'll stand this round, whatever."

Immediately Jolliboy had left them, Gruffydd addressing Alberto, said:

"Now come you and listen to what I was say, young man. I want you to go to London with me, and you gentlemen all, or two of you, whatever, you must come along, and

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law to give bail for their good behaviour. By an Act passed in 1496 (11 Hen. VII., cap. 2) "against vacabounds and beggers," two justices of the peace were empowered "to rejecte and put awey comen ale-selling in towns and places where they shall think convenyent, and to take suertie of the keepers of alehouses of their gode behavyng, by the discrecion of the seid justices, and in the same to be avysed and aggreed at the tyme of their sessions." Within the memory of persons now living "Licensing Day" used to be one of feasting and merriment, for the licensee invariably found his bail a bottle of wine and a dinner. In case of a first application, two sureties were required, and this involved the applicant in two bottles of wine and two dinners. The cavilling of a parsimonious freshman at this double expense gave a death-blow to the good old observance so far as the town of St. Tydfil-le-Martyr was concerned.

if you knows of a young 'ooman as was used to travel about the place with her father as was carry the Judy and Punch, who would make one of the party, I was stand you bottle each of anything you be like."

"It is my sister you mean," said Alberto, joyously.

"Emmeline," said Jack, "the daughter of Showman Loftewalde. "We'll bring you to her without delay."

"Yes, yes, that was the name. I met him father in Sir Forganwg* once, and I was promise him then I wouldn't forget him if ever I was have a chance to put some'at in his way. The chance was come, and I did keep my word. Now let me tell you my business a little more plain. I was in a little place in Sir Forganwg, not very long ago, a constab', but I was make a bet and I did leave. The bet was made one night with a funny chap who they was call Peg-legged Jack. There was a sailor with him who you do know perhaps, because his name was Lumpkin. We got talk about Simeon, as I've just locked up. Says I to Jack, 'I should like catch that chap.' He was say to

* *Anglicé*, Glamorganshire.

me, 'It was take much 'cuter man nor you to do that.' Then I was say back, 'Bet you my father's farm, which be comin' to me after he be dead, and he was now eighty-five, to your leg of wood that I was catch him.' 'Done!' says he, and puts his peg in my fist. 'Done!' says I, and shakes it until he tumble heel over head (he wasn't have two heels, you was be understand). Well, next day I was ask the head constab' for absence of leave—I was mean leave of absence—for a month, and after I was threaten to run off if I didn't have it, he was give it me. Before me leave the town, somethin' very odd did happen. I was stand before a blacksmith's shop, when a gentleman was pull up in his carriage to have a nail put in the shoe of one of his horses. The horse was rather fresh, and the blacksmith's boy as was try to put the nail in was no better, so I told the boy to take the horse by the head, and I would put the shoe on myself. I was do it at once, and the gentleman was look very pleased. He put his hand in his pocket, and was draw out—what was you think?"

"A five-shilling-piece," said Lockbolt, looking amused.

"No," replied Gruffydd.

"Half-a-guinea?" Alberto ventured to say.

"No," said Gruffydd, who appeared delighted with their puzzled looks.

"A guinea, then?" said old Jedburgh.

"Not a bit, indeed," rejoined Gruffydd. "Was you give it up?"

"Yes," responded the quartette, in a perfect unison.

"Then 'twas a pistol," said Gruffydd.

His hearers seemed astonished, whereat he burst out laughing.

"Not pistol as was be shoot with, gentlemans," he said, by way of explanation. "Him was a Spaniard, and the pistol he was give me was of gold."

"Oh!" said Lockbolt, upon whom the constable's meaning had now fully dawned, "you mean a pistole, a gold coin of Spain."

"You am quite right, sir," said Gruffydd. "It was a pistol. I told the gentleman it was no good in our country, but I would keep it, as it was be a odd piece, and wear it on my watch chain. Here it is now, you see," and he pulled, as he spoke, a short piece of chain from his fob, strong enough to have

held—say the watch that was attached to it, which is saying a good deal.

"Go on, sir, if you please," said Alberto, who neared his chair to that of the constable, to whose every word he now paid the most scrupulous attention.

"Well," resumed Gruffydd, "it was the gentleman as was tell me what the money was called, and he be say they am use it in Spain. It was then I be notice his face for the first time. 'Good gracious!' I was be say, and he was ax me what was the matter. I turned round, and I then saw in the corner of the carriage a lady, and then I was say 'good gracious!' the second time. He was ax me what was the matter once more, and I was be tell him that he was be very much like a boy I was know; no, that a boy I was know was very much like him."

"'Impossib',' said he, for he was as bad a Englishman as I was. 'Impossib'; I don't belong to this country, and you have never been to Spain.'

"'Well, I have seen someone who was come from that place, whatever,' said I. 'Only month ago there was a young man as did go from this very village, as was as much native

of Spain as you be, sir, if what I was be told was true. And what is more, sir, if you was live in the same town as his mother I should be say as how the young feller was your own son.'

"'Can it be possible?' said the lady in the carriage, nearly going into 'sterricks. 'May the Virgin grant that the wishes of my heart may come true.'

"'Tell us, my dear fellow,' said the Count, who was catch me by both arms and look in my face, like as if he was going to eat me with kindness, 'tell us all you know about this youth.' You see, gentlemen, I was be able to give their very words. I am used to give evidence, and I was remember what is told me.

"I told the gentleman and his lady all I was know and remember about Mr. Albert here. I thought they would kill me with nice attentions. The gentleman was drag me into the carriage; the lady was put her head on my shoulder, and cry, and cry, and cry, and then laugh, and laugh, and laugh, and I was look as foolish as a hen as stands on the bank when the ducks as she was hatch be run in the water to swim. The gentleman was ask

me to ride with them in the carriage to Brecon, and when we got there he sent the carriage back, and we took coach for the town of Builth. From there we got to Rockington Manor, and we found from the gardener that an old man, and a young one, and a girl, had been there a fortnight before. From there, as we could get no 'count of them, we got to London. I swore (the gentleman made me do it) that I would find you, Mr. Albert, if you were in the country. If I brought you to him, and you turned out to be the one he had come to England in search of, he said—and I got his promise in black and white in my pocket—he would give me—ah, never mind, gentlemen, I musn't hatch my chickins before I count them; booh, I am mean as how I musn't count 'em before they was hatched. I came to this place in search of Simeon, who I was track to the castell ruins outside the town. I was nab him safe as ninepence, and at the inquest I saw you; so I was kill about a dozen birds with the same stone."

"I think, my friend, you will have well-earned whatever you have been promised," said Lockbolt. "You are a downright straight-

forward fellow, as active as you are shrewd, and as truthful and good-natured as you are penetrating."

"Now, Mr. Lockbolt," rejoined Gruffydd, with a deprecatory motion of the hand, "don't you go on like that, whatever. I shall want you to help me out with my evidence about this young man, young gentleman I was hope to be able to call him, and you, Mr. Hartington, was have to give testimony in corroboration. I must find the girl as he calls sister, for she will put matters out of all question, whether the boy was the same as was picked up on the shore from the vessel as was wrecked."

"We can take you to her to-morrow," said Hartington.

"We'll start the day after, if you was not mind," said the constable. "I must take Simeon before the jestis, and have him remanded, or committed, if I can."

"Be it the day after, then," responded Hartington.

* * * *

Alberto's thoughts ran wild that night; but defiling into one broad, deep channel, they were not altogether devoid of order. Amidst

the rush of the tide, he remembered distinctly the words and action of dear old Loftewalde, as a chariot drove by, near a bend in the road, on the outskirts of the town of St. Tydfil-le-Martyr.

"Turn to the light here . . . . It must have been a dream . . . . yet the impression remains . . . . that there was a resemblance," his poor old protector had said, and the words were re-called as easily, nay, heard as plainly by the ear of his mind (for has not the mind an ear as well as an eye?), as though they were but then being uttered.

This clearing away of Time's rust and mildew from the deeply-cut inscription upon the tablets of the youth's memory; this recollection of the face and of the voice of him who, though dead, yet spoke, brought from those sluices of the feelings, his eyes, sleep-weighted though they were, the dew of emotion in runnels of pearl.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

"Smiles, dew'd with tears, the pleasing strife expressed
Of grief and joy, alternate in her breast.
Her fluttering words in melting murmurs died;
At length abrupt—'My son, my king!' she cried.
His neck with fond embrace infolding fast,
Around his neck their longing arms they cast;
Eager they viewed; with joy they stood amazed;
With tearful eyes e'er all their master gazed,
His head, his shoulders, and his knees embraced."

*The Odyssey.*

SHIFT we the scene from night to day break, from the country inn to a suburban and superb villa near beautiful Thames. We gaze upon a man of princely deportment who paces the charmingly laid-out walk in the front of his veranda to take the morning air. His slouched hat but ill conceals his high, noble forehead and large, lustrous eyes, whose fire sorrow has softened into an expression meditative and tender. Their long dark lashes fall like a veil of melancholy, shadowing their brightness, but heightening their benignity. His sable cloak, which is half thrown over his person in a negligent but graceful manner, his silver buckles and

buttons, the sword at his side, the bushy jetty moustache, the long wavy hair, the slightly olive hue of his face, accord admirably with each other and all combined serve to proclaim him a native of another country than that in which he is now tarrying. Briefly, it might be said of the general bearing of this self-banished lord, that the influences of an adverse Fortune, strong as they must have worked upon him, had not been able to subdue the dignity which seemed his by a birthright peculiar and inalienable.

"For six long weeks have I never once heard from him," he said to himself, during a pause in his walk. "It seems as though he had forgotten us and our trouble. Why should he remember it, though? For no reason, unless for the reward which I promised him. Still, I thought he had a soft, compassionate heart, and that he could be faithful to his promise. If he fails me, then I have nothing left but despair. Let me hope that this day will prove propitious, for upon it the star of my house was ever in the ascendant. It was upon this day that our great ancestor won his spurs at Tolosa, on this day that the holy head of the Church blessed the

progeny of the de Braganzas for ever; on this day it was that Zamora, poor devoted fellow, rescued me from the jaws of death at the risk of his own life. It was on this day twelve months ago that my ears were first gladdened with tidings of one whom I hope and pray will turn out to be our long-lost child. This day is the anniversary of our happy marriage and of the birth of our only son; ah me, yes!" and as the thought flashed through his brain, his face grew cloudy, and a sigh escaped his lips, "but it was on this day that that son was lost."

"If you was please, sir, now," said a voice behind him.

The Count de Braganza turned hastily round, and stood face to face with the Welsh constable.

"If you was please, sir. I was wish you good-morning, and am hope you are well," said Gruffydd.

"My dear friend," said the Count, grasping his hand. "You have returned, then. Tell me how you have sped. Am I to hope, or must the longings of my heart die for ever?"

"Well, you was see, sir," replied the constable, twirling his three-cornered hat round the

thumb of his left hand, "it be very nice poser, that, but if I am answer you at all, I be say, 'hope, sir, hope.'"

The Count's eyes sparkled with unwonted splendour. There was something so cautious, and yet so assuring in the constable's manner.

"Now, sir," continued Gruffydd, "I am only come to report myself. You be my superior officer, you see, and I am work on your instructions. I am only come to say that things was looking pretty well on my beat. I am work up the case you put in my hand, and it will be afore long ready for trial."

The Count fairly embraced his servant. He had not released him when he asked:

"When, when will the trial come off, good Gruffydd?"

"Softly, now, or *gambwyll*, as we was say in Welsh; softly, sir. I was not so sure that you am able, or be ready to have it off directly," replied the constable.

"Now; this moment, and in this spot," cried the Count, eagerly.

"I was be 'fraid," returned Gruffydd, "that I was not be ready soon enough for that. I have one little job to do, sir, first. If that

come to answer as I was hope, then I will see you, and bring you good report. Now, I have ten miles to go."

"Let me accompany you," said the Count, quickly.

"You must excuse me saying 'no' to you, but no I must say," replied Gruffydd, firmly. "That am altogether upset my business. No, no, sir. You stay in this place. Don't you leave the house nor go to bed until you see me again, never mind what the time may be. When I see you again, I am hope, please God, to give you good account of what I am be done since my last report."

"Do you want money?" asked the Count, as the officer was about to leave him.

"Not now, sir. Perhaps I am have it all in a lump when we next meet," replied Ap Shenkin. "Good-morning, sir; keep up good spirits, and hope for the best always, as I do. Good-morning, sir," and Gruffydd bowed himself away through the outer gate, whither the Count, in their talk, had accompanied him.

We pass through the gate and follow.

At the very first posting-house he came to —the White Horse it was called—Gruffydd

found waiting his return Uncle Jedburgh, Captain Lockbolt, Jack Hartington, Emmeline, and Alberto.

"Now, gentlemen, and you, miss, I was be sorry if you was kept waiting, and I am sorry I am bound to ask you to do a little more waiting this day. You, Mr. Landlord, hi you there! Tell the post-boy to put in two of his best horses for a drive of twenty miles—ten there and ten back. Please to have them ready at once. Alberto, you must come along, sir, if you was please, and I must beg of the others to wait here until we come back."

They are in the post-chaise, and are being driven away in the direction pointed out by Gruffydd.

It is a long drive and a rough road, but both drive and road come to an end at last.

"Wait at the inn over there until you was see us again," said Gruffydd to the post-boy. "Rub down the horses and feed them well; see that they was get full measure of oats, and don't let the stable-boy cheat you. Here's half-a-crown for you to make yourself comfortable with until we was come back."

"Thank you, sir," said the post-boy, and drove off.

Gruffydd and his charge wended their way up the principal street of the village, and stopped before a not very attractive-looking building, which the constable, after he had made a motion to his young friend to follow, entered with boldness.

"Have you two persons locked up here on a charge of vagrancy?" asked Gruffydd of a formidable-looking individual, who had on a three-cornered hat and a large bottle-green coat, with a cape attached, laced down the sides with an infinity of yellow buttons.

"Vagrancy, yes. We have six; which two d'ye mean, sir?" queried the other in the shortest of tones.

"Two foreigners, sir," replied Gruffydd, mildly.

"We have four furriners," replied the other.

"Well, the two I mean was Spanish; a man and a woman," continued Gruffydd.

"Is your name Ap Shenkin, sir?" said the other, with a good-natured growl.

"That was it, sir, ezakly," said the constable, eyeing his interrogator closely. "What!" he presently exclaimed, "Mr. Flashford; is it you that I am see before me?"

"The same," replied the other. "How goes

it, my old cucumber? Take a walk inside my private room, my precious. We'll have a swig and a talk of old times."

Gruffydd, with Alberto at his heels, complied. Flashford and Ap Shenkin greeted each other as old and long-separated friends only can, but Gruffydd, with an eye to the business which he had in hand, managed to direct the conversation at last in that direction.

"Yes, upon my honour, now," said Tom Flashford at length. "That old village on the coast was too quiet and dead for me, so I gave it up as soon as I found this station here. I was made beadle for this parish over the heads of nineteen others, ten of whom were natives. I was lucky, Griff, wasn't I?"

"You was lucky, Mr. Flashford, and I suppose all the vagrants in the country am consider themselves the same if they was to keep clear of your parish?" replied Ap Shenkin.

"Yes, they don't let themselves be cotched in my district in a hurry," Flashford rejoined, with the most knowing of winks.

"Ah," said Gruffydd, as though suddenly

recollecting himself, "talking of vagrants was put me in mind that I came after two of them class; but I say, Mr. Flashford, was you have any objections to do me a favour?"

"Not the slightest," replied Flashford. "I tell you what it is, Gruffydd, I'd go half way across the world for you. I'd——"

"Well," interposed Ap Shenkin, quietly, "it is that you should let me have half a word with those two vagrants I was spoke of."

"Ah, the Spanish rascals. Yes. Where are my keys? Reg'lar cells here, Griff; none of your cussed old round-houses. Cells is more convenient by far. Here, you there! come out of it; you Barrel-belly and Tiger-cat (for I forgets your proper names), come out, for I've a gent here as wants to speak to you," Flashford commanded.

"Turn your face to the fire, and don't look this way until I was give you the word," whispered Gruffydd in the ear of Alberto, who at once did his bidding.

"Now, you two be from Spain, as I was understand?" said the constable, addressing them.

Both shook their heads—the male in a

most doleful manner, the woman with a little more of haughtiness.

"Very well. You was not know what I mean, but I will make you understand, for all that, by-and-by. Step closer, my good woman," he continued, motioning the female prisoner to approach. "You was know no English, I believe, but I know two things in Spanish, which, if you are the parties I want, will be sufficient."

He drew from his bosom a ribbon, at the end of which was suspended a brooch, and held it before the female, who, on seeing it, shrieked and fell into the other prisoner's arms.

The other prisoner addressed her in a strain of fondness, the only word of which Gruffydd could understand (and this, probably, only because he had heard it before), was "Ximena." The fainting woman quickly came to herself, and immediately she did so she stretched forth both hands imploringly towards the son of Shenkin.

"Zamora," said the constable, in answer to her looks of entreaty. The male prisoner, who, let us at once say, was Hurtado de Ubeda, caught the word, and looked more

surprised than he did when his sister fainted.

Gruffydd clapped his hands to attract their attention, and immediately the eyes of both were fixed upon him, he exclaimed:

"Braganza."

Hurtado looked more amazed than before, while his sister's wonder, though less demonstrative, was every bit as deep. The constable, after giving them full time to recover themselves, walked towards Alberto, and turned him round so that they had a full view of his face.

The effect of this move upon the brother and sister was extraordinary.

Ximena, addressing the youth in her own language, called him "Master," threw her arms round his neck, kissed him, wept upon his breast, laughed, held his face between the palms of her hands, told him to speak to her, his mother's favourite maid: thanked the Virgin for the great happiness which had been reserved for her, and cried and laughed again for joy. Hurtado, on his part, fell at the astonished youth's feet and embraced his knees, kissed his shoe-strings, laughed, got up, danced, rubbed his hands, shouted, ran

round the apartment waving his arms and kicking up his heels in a grotesque and, considering the ponderosity of his carcase, wonderfully active manner.

When these manifestations had subsided, Gruffydd, who had watched them with a secret delight, muttered:

"I be much obliged to you, Miss Emmeline, for the loan of that bit of ribbon and the thing at the end of it. You am tell me they was belong to Mr. Zamora, and that you was keep 'em about you ever since your father be give 'em you, specting they am come of use some day for the boy. You am right, miss, and I am very much thank you." Turning to Flashford, the constable whispered something in his ear which Alberto failed to catch.

Tom shook his head, and responded:

"Impossible. Entered it on our books, you know. Couldn't think of it, Griff, upon my honour. Duty, you know, is duty, between man and man, and there's an end on it."

"Enter after the charge, 'Evidence insufficient; prisoners not detained,'" said Ap Shenkin. "The job was worth a couple of guineas for you."

"Well, if I was sure of the money," replied Flashford wistfully.

"Hands behind," rejoined Gruffydd instantly, and a moment later the unimpeachable Thomas Flashford was two guineas the richer.

"It's perfectly legal, I think," observed Tom, with a pleased smile, and pocketing the money.

"Oh, quite," replied Ap Shenkin. "A magistrate would be sure to discharge them if you took them before him after he did hear what I was have to say. I want to have 'em in London this very night, or I would wait to see 'em tried. Good-bye, Mr. Flashford, for I was bound to leave you at once. In a few days I shall run down and spend a week with you."

Gruffydd and Alberto departed immediately, with Hurtado and Ximena in their train, and in less than a quarter of an hour the post-boy was again whipping his horses, their heads being this time turned in the direction in which their tails had waved in the morning.

* * * *

The only person who had become tired of

waiting their return was Uncle Jedburgh. According to the testimony of his nephew, he betook himself to rest two hours before the chaise and its freight drove up to the door. Gruffydd, after ordering some refection for himself and his companions, and making other necessary though minor dispositions, bade the party to at once prepare themselves for a walk of about a mile. Lockbolt and Hartington, who were competent Spanish scholars, were now entirely occupied with answering questions and putting some of their own to Hurtado and Ximena. Jack, who recognised, and who had been recognised by, the brother and sister immediately upon their entrance, explained to them, as far as he was able, how matters stood. Lockbolt acquainted Ximena with the fate of her lover, and she bore the news (having been doubtless long schooling herself to expect the worst) bravely and without a murmur.

All being ready, they set out, under the guidance of Gruffydd, towards the Count's villa. Jack Hartington took Emmeline under his special protection. Lockbolt paired off with Ximena; while the constable hooked himself to Hurtado, to whom he kept con-

stantly talking, whereby the rest were afforded the most exquisite amusement the whole of the way. Enlivened by the constable's clatter, and the irrelevant replies made by him to Hurtado and by Hurtado to him, the journey proved a most delightful one, and the villa was reached ere Gruffydd himself believed they were half way.

Lights shone brilliantly from the lower windows, and Gruffydd knew that they were kept alive by loving hands, and that expectant hearts were awaiting his appearance.

* * * *

Who shall describe the welcome given the long-lost son and heir by the parents whose longing eyes had not rested on him for so many weary years; or the feelings of that son upon finding himself in the arms of a mother, the stately patrician lady whose head now rested so lovingly upon his shoulder? The father stood by the while clasping his disengaged hand, and covering it with kisses. The Countess nestled to her darling boy as though afraid that he would leave her and again be lost to her. Her eyes glistened with tears, but they were tears of joy; her

heart was too full for the utterance of anything save, "My child, my child."

The Count advanced to the constable, led him aside, shook his hand warmly and long, thanked him, and presented him with a plethoric and weighty purse.

A magnificent supper was laid, and while sitting down to it explanations were made on all sides. Upon the constable, bad as his English was, devolved the task of conducting the conversation.

"I was bring these two gentlemen here, sir," he said, addressing the Count, and pointing towards Lockbolt and Hartington, "to satisfy you of the way your son was be cast away from the wreck on the sea. Then, because I was afraid that the boy might not be yours, I found out how this gentleman and sister was in the country in search of news about the man who was thrown ashore the same time as young Mr. Braganza was. After they be identify him I was, of course, sure. Now let me draw your 'tention, if you please, to another matter. Your son, sir, has to thank somebody for taking care of him. Mr. Lockbolt and Mr. Hartington had to go to sea, and it was lucky for the little gentle-

man that there was somebody on land to look after him. That somebody is the lady who am sit near the Countess there. She did educate him like as if he be brought up in *athrofa Caergrawnt.*"[1]

"Gruffydd is right, by Heaven," said Alberto. "Father, mother, allow me to bring to your most favourable notice one of the noblest, most unassuming creatures that ever walked the earth—Emmeline Loftewalde—who sits by you, mother, and to whom I owe a debt which I shall never be able to pay."

"Yes, indeed," said Gruffydd. "She am done a lot more than I. She kept the boy and brought him up, while all I was do was to find him for his father. If she had not behave splendid, my work would not have been wanted."

Emmeline (whose looks and apparel, by the way, had wonderfully improved under the care of Mrs. Jasper, Uncle Jedburgh's housekeeper, who was acting under instructions from Mr. Jack Hartington, whose interest in her was assiduous and unceasing), with her face covered with blushes, replied to the con-

[1] *Anglicé*, the University of Cambridge.

stable's remark by saying that Senor Alberto de Braganza owed her nothing. His dutiful behaviour and devoted friendship had more than compensated her for any trouble which she might have been put to on his account.

It was the Countess who replied: "Alberto has told us, among the very first things which he related to us, of the watchful care and unremitting attention of Miss Loftewalde. We have been considering in what way we can best requite her for her great services."

"Indeed, madam," said Emmeline modestly, and with earnestness of tone, "I did nothing but my duty, and I sometimes think that I did not do all that. If the fact that I shall be henceforth deprived of the society of one whom I have learned to consider my brother were not a painful one, I should deem myself more than repaid by the recollection that I had seen your son restored to you."

"I shall never leave you, Emmy. You must live with us. You shared adversity with me, and bore more than your share, too, in order that my portion should be less. I would be an ingrate indeed if I were to leave you now," said Alberto with fervour.

"I will take good care that ample provision

is made for Miss Loftewalde's future," said the Count. "We should not be doing *our* duty if we were to allow such kindness, such care, to pass unremembered. No, senora, we must make some return. You must (it would be absolutely ungenerous in you to refuse) allow us to do this as an acknowledgment of the obligations we are under to you."

"I assure you, noble sir," rejoined Emmeline simply, "that my conduct towards your son was neither heroic nor great. It was dictated purely by a sisterly feeling. I found I had a heart, and I obeyed its promptings."

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## CHAPTER XIX.

"And what unto them is the world beside
With all its change of time and tide?
Its living things—its earth and sky—
Are nothing to their mind and eye.
And heedless as the dead are they
Of aught around, above, beneath;
As if all else had passed away,
They only for each other breathe."

BYRON.

THE Count insisted that the entire party

should be his guests for the whole of that week. There was such an immense amount of business to go through. There were consultations many and long between de Braganza and his lawyer, Mr. Widdigrew, in which Emmeline frequently participated. Lockbolt and Jack also had each a share in some of them, while as to the constable, he was the lawyer's right-hand man, his alter ego—his "junior," Mr. Widdigrew termed him. Into one (the first) of these "business meetings," as they came to be called, let us take a peep. Seated at a table we see the lawyer, a sharp, though pleasant-faced, grey-eyed man, before whom, in confused heaps, lie documents in paper and parchment, tied and untied, sealed and unsealed, yellow with age, fusty with damp, some tarnished, crumpled, and torn. A bundle of these latter Mr. Widdigrew, spectacles on nose, is closely scanning. The Count, Emmeline, and the constable are the only other occupants of the room.

"A very nice tale—a very nice tale," the lawyer may be heard remarking. "To begin with, here is the leaf of a book, of a particular register, somewhat clumsily torn out, but entire notwithstanding. Among others we

have an entry of the marriage of Launcelot Lorrimer and Helen Porchester, of the parish of Frampton-Mucknard both then being—Pray do not interrupt, miss, just for one moment. Next comes a bundle of—hum—love-letters from Helen Porchester to Launcelot Lorrimer."

"Into which bundle," interrupted Emmeline, "I desire you minutely to search. I wish most particularly to know whether it contains one in which the lady, while pressing for a speedy union with the object of her love, counsels Mr. Lorrimer, for the purposes of their marriage ceremony, to give any name he likes?"

"The great point in the case of the defendant in Loftewalde against Loftewalde," exclaimed Mr. Widdigrew. "I was a clerk at Mr. Gottimore's chambers when it came off. I was present, indeed, in court when the cause was argued, and I remember the defence perfectly well. But why, may I be allowed to ask, does it interest you, miss?"

"You doubtless remember, sir," replied Emmeline, "that the plaintiff in that action married."

"Why, yes—let me see," returned Mr.

Widdigrew, "he married—of course he did, how bad my memory is becoming—Constance Ingram, the daughter of a very dear old friend of mine. Romance—elopement—rumpus—smash—and so on."

"And I, sir," rejoined Emmeline in the calmest tone at her command, "am the daughter of the plaintiff and of Constance Ingram."

The lawyer thrust his goosequill behind his ear, his hands dived deep down into the pockets of his nether garments, he threw himself back in his chair, stared in amazement for several seconds at the fair girl before him, and then relieved his feelings with a whistle.

"You'll give me a retainer in this business, miss, I trust?" he at length said. "You may sue for restitution *in formâ pauperis* if you like."

"No need of that," put in the Count. "I will bear the cost of the suit with pleasure. You may consider the case your own from this moment, and myself the person entirely responsible for every expense attendant upon it."

"To business then," resumed Mr. Widdi-

grew. "We have here another document. Eh! what? 'Last will and testament of Sir Lawrence Loftewalde, of Harnisham Castle!' Now is your fate dependent upon a cobweb, Miss Loftewalde. . . We have triumphed —gloriously triumphed!" he exclaimed the next instant. "It is in the Baronet's own handwriting, acknowledges in full his marriage and his wife's ignorance of his true name and rank, makes loving mention of his son, whom he constitutes his sole heir, and of whom he asks forgiveness for all the troubles he has caused his mother and himself. Now have we a case strong as the constitution itself."

"And if you was want to make it a bit stronger, sir, please to read that," said Gruffydd Ap Shenkin, handing Mr. Widdigrew a piece of paper. "Squire Simeon Grubbum did write me out that there only yesterday. He said it would make things plainer nor ever when they was come to be look up from the bottom. He did it after I am tell him what the papers I be find upon him were about. He saw the game was up, I s'pose, and that am *his* last will and testament."

"A fitting sequel to the history of this re-

markable case," observed the lawyer, after glancing his eye down the document. "Confesses that after having escaped in a miraculous manner from death at the hands of a gipsy named Ezekiel Manhaggo, he (the writer), fearing that the gipsy might go before a magistrate and swear a lie against him, fled for his life. Takes refuge at Harnisham Castle, from the owner of which he claims hospitable treatment on account of services rendered during the law-suit, and for which he had, theretofore, been but scantily paid. An attempt to murder him is made by Sir Gustave. His providential escape and return to the room just in time to snatch the papers found upon him by Ap Shenkin from the flame to which the Baronet was about to consign them. Is sorry (rogues always experience a sort of eleventh-hour sorrow—at being found out) for the dreadful oaths he took when young Mr. Loftewalde was fighting for his rights. Admits that his evidence at the trial was a string of lies from beginning to end, and hopes (for no reason, as far as I can see) that on the day on which he will be hung, the Mayor of Hotchpotchingham will hang too. Written and signed in the presence of

Henry Locks, governor of the county gaol, and G. Ap Shenkin, constable. A nice document, truly."

The conference shortly afterwards breaks up, but so numerous and long are the subsequent ones that when the week was over Mr. Widdigrew declared they had not mastered more than half the details of his case, and that the attendance of the whole of the personages whom we have named was necessary to the proper working out thereof. Emmeline, of course, stays at the villa. Lockbolt, of nights, walks back to the White Horse to Uncle Jedburgh. Jack doesn't. The Countess is scarcely ever from the side of her darling boy, who in a mother's affection revels as in a delightful dream. His heart, in which before he had felt a sad, undefinable void, is now permeated with a new feeling—filial love, than which there never burnt in human bosom flame more pure.

The lovely girl who had tended him, who had watched over him, who had suffered for him more than the world, more than he himself ever knew, ever could know—where was she? What were her feelings at finding herself deprived of the society of one whom long

companionship, common miseries, had endeared to her? If she mourned, it must have been in private. Whenever she and Albert met, her face wore a smile. She determined, with a resolution and a fortitude almost stoical, that his joy, his triumph, should not be blurred or spotted by the thought that she was unhappy. That she wept in secret, there could be no doubt. That silent grief preyed upon her mind was certain. Quick eyes and eager discovered this plainly enough, and something which happened on one occasion placed the matter high above the level of conjecture.

It was evening, and she had crept away from the house to a spot in the shrubbery, where she endeavoured to while away the time, and to illumine with a book the shadow of loneliness pervading her soul. She pored over its pages assiduously and long, but her thoughts could not be held in control by any such leash. The letters ran into each other, and no single sentence, not even a word of what the book contained, could she either decipher or remember. She closed it, and rose from her seat beneath a tree with the intention of retracing her steps to the villa, but

she had not taken a dozen paces when a voice arrested her.

"Your handkerchief, Miss Loftewalde. You dropped it. Allow me to return it to you."

She turned suddenly round, to find herself face to face with—Jack Hartington. She blushed deeply, and stammered forth her thanks.

Jack at once saw how it was that the handkerchief was so wet. Her eyes were red, swollen, and charged to the brim with tears. There was a brief but mutually awkward and painful pause. Jack, who stood hat in hand, at length mustered courage to say :

"I undertook to search for you, miss, at the request of the Countess, who seemed to wonder very much at your long absence."

"Indeed, sir!" she replied. "I must have been particularly absorbed in my book, I suppose. Time has passed so quickly with me."

"She told me," Jack went on, "to bring you this shawl for fear of your being hurt by the night air. The evenings, though fine, are chilly."

"I thank her for her considerateness, you for your trouble, Mr. Hartington," said Em-

meline, in one of her richest, most musical tones. "Neither of you remembered how well-used to the night air I have been," she added, her voice changing into a minor key of sadness, "or you would have known that I needed no such protection."

"And if neither of us wished to remember such a thing, I hope you will think none the worse of us, miss," returned Jack, who hardly knew what reply to make.

"No, Mr. Hartington, no," responded she; "far be such a thought from me. I will always strive to be grateful, let my other shortcomings be what they may."

Instead of making any direct rejoinder, Jack helped her to adjust her shawl.

"Do you know, miss," he presently went on to say, "that it was on this very night eleven years ago that I first made your acquaintance at that camp of the gipsies upon the Welsh coast?"

"How time has flown by; and how it has changed us!" she replied with a long-drawn sigh.

They were nearing the Count's drawing-room windows, when Jack, who had never felt so qualmish in his life, said:

"Shall we take the path to the right here, miss? It leads to the vineries, and by them to the seat where I found you reading. It will bring you round to the main entrance, and as the Count and Countess are expected home very shortly from their evening drive, we shall be at the gates in nice time to meet them."

Emmeline hesitated a moment, but Jack's pleading looks at length prevailed.

"Miss Loftewalde," he presently said, "we are not entire strangers to each other, are we? We have been acquainted for eleven years, as I have before observed to you. I have done nothing, have I, which has forfeited my claim to the title of your friend?"

"Nothing, sir," she replied, "if you think it worth while to urge such a claim in regard to so poor an object as myself."

"But supposing I *do* think it worth my while?" he asked earnestly.

"Then your claim would be at once allowed," she responded modestly.

Jack felt himself at a loss how to proceed. He amused himself for a while by knocking the pebbles from his path with his cane. The situation was becoming oppressive. He felt

that his lips must come to the assistance of his heart, upon which there was a load, or that his heart must give way beneath it at once and for ever. Chance seemed to favour wonderfully the execution of his dearest wish. His fair companion happened to make a false step, and her tiny foot received such a sprain as to induce a temporary lameness. Jack's arm, under these circumstances, became a necessity. The pain soon passed away, but Jack resolutely stuck to his prize, and the imprisoned limb, after a few short ineffectual struggles for liberty, gave itself up to its fate.

They passed the vineries and approached a conservatory, which lay but a very short distance beyond them, and here they paused to admire the hue and perfume of its many splendid specimens. Although autumn had laid its withering hands upon the world outside, here everything wore the bloom and fragrance of a perpetual summer.

Emmeline was enthusiastic upon the variety and magnificence of the furniture of this gorgeous floral palace, when Jack, who had listened with unbounded delight to her words, took advantage of a pause which she made to observe :

"I know a flower which I don't remember having seen here, various though the Count's collection is."

"Indeed!" returned Emmeline in surprise. "May I ask the name of this rare gem, because I thought that the Count had gathered together all that was beautiful or worthy of care."

"I will tell you, miss," said Jack, gazing fondly down upon the upturned face, and into those wondrous dark blue eyes, 'Heartsease.'"

He felt the arm linked within his own tremble like the pinion of a frightened dove. He saw the face which had looked up into his, beaming and bright as ever innocence and loveliness could have made it, flush crimson, as though from the secret recesses of its owner's heart there had ascended the reflection of a fire kindled long ago, but now quickened into a roseate glow. He saw that face droop as though modesty wished to draw the curtain over betrayed feelings; he noticed Love's quiver in the tone of the attempted reply, and felt the drip of tears soft and gentle as Heaven's dews in summer upon the hand which now held hers, and over which that

face was silently bent, and the barrier of icy reticence which a variety of circumstances (not the least among which was the possession of feelings courteous and chivalric as those of any romance-created knight) had built around his love was melted and broken for aye.

"Emmeline, my dearly-cherished idol, you whom my heart has worshipped secretly and long—by the memory of your dead father I conjure you," he broke out, "to listen to me. Listen to words of honour and of truth; true, because I used them in a compact with the dead; honourable, because I uttered them to one whom I never suspected, one whom I knew to be as high above dishonour as heaven is above earth—I mean your upright, high-souled father. Before I had been a day, an hour even in your company, my heart, young as it then was and as I hope it still is, went forth unto you and cleaved to you as to the substance does the shadow. I told him who has passed away from you and from me (for in my soul I have always thought of him as my father), I told him, Emmeline, that you possessed my heart, and, bending before him, I entreated him to give his consent to my wooing. He smiled upon me a glorious

benign smile, patted my head, which rested upon my hands on his knee, and said in his own grave kind manner, 'Take my consent, Jack, and my blessing along with it, but more do not expect of me—Emmy's heart you must win without my aid.'"

"Oh, Mr. Hartington," sobbed Emmeline.

"Jack, dearest, say Jack," rejoined he eagerly.

"How could you, you who were rich, happy, and had friends, have thought that I, a poor, miserable wanderer and outcast, was a fitting object for your affection?" she continued in a broken voice.

"Ask not of me, darling. Question Love, by whose dictates my heart has ever spoken to and of you," replied Jack.

"And were Love asked?" she said timidly, and after a pause:

"It would tell you," he responded quickly, "that like draws to like. That my affection for you has been tried by the stern assayer Time, and that it has left his hands, as it entered them, pure and unalloyed gold. Think you that my soul is so sordid that my heart could cling to yours only because you were my equal in wealth and station? Think

of me at my best, darling; the multitude of my faults let your love cover as with a cloak."

"I always have so thought of you," she replied. "To me you have been the prince, before whom I could not remember having seen another man; but to you I have never thought I could be anything but the vassal or slave."

His hand, which had hitherto lovingly held hers, now gradually stole around her form, and as he whispered tenderly in her charmed ears the words, "I will make you not my vassal, but my queen, love," he drew her gently towards him. His face bent down to hers; he drew her fondly to his bosom, and there, withdrawn from the world and worldly, each in fancy heard the beatings of the other's heart keeping time with its own!

It was a dream of bliss for two happy souls —this mutual outpouring of hearts, this unrestrained flow of pure, ennobling, holy feeling. It was not the evanescent delirious rush of youthful passion, consuming itself with its own fire, but an affection tried on the one side by absence, travel, sights of other fair faces in a score of other climes, and a fortune such as might (and did) render its pos-

sessor a welcome guest in the highest circles of any of them—on the other by privations, an ever-present thought-tormenting whisper that the man for whom her heart had yearned since the very first moment of her girlhood when she found she had a heart to lose, had torn—or, rather, that Time had done this for him—the image and remembrance of her face from his breast; that if he had thought of her at all in the long interval of their separation, it was only as the interesting beggar-maiden of whom he had once been foolish enough to dream.

Hope, however, had thus spoken in its own still small voice to each in the years that had gone by. "It may be that the absent one thinks kindly of thee, cherishes thee as the recollection of a pleasing vision, looks up to thee as the pole-star of destiny, loves thee with a love which age can only strengthen and invigorate, which Time itself can only make the younger." Hope's flattering unction healed and nourished broken and fading love. The seedlings which long before had been sown in the gipsies' camp found congenial soils, had budded and developed into plants which neither the blight of care nor the frost

of absence had succeeded in killing, and to-night they blossomed forth glorious and lovely as any in Paradise, where love first drew breath.

He was toying with the long golden curl which descended over her mourning dress like a trail of light. Her face, innocent, lovely, intellectual, and with the beams of the sunlight of happiness playing upon it, looked up wistfully into his, drinking in his every word as he said :

" Emmy, darling, Heaven never intended you should be unhappy. I will wear you as a flower next my heart, and in each other's love we will bid care and sorrow defiance. Holy Church shall make us one, and death only shall part us. I will tell Uncle Jedburgh this very night my intention. I will never, never again lose sight of you till you are bound to me by the strongest and most sacred of all human ties."

" But—your uncle—Mr. Hartington—I mean—well—won't he——" the fair girl murmured with blushing face.

" Yes, 'object,' you would say, dearest, 'to such a speedy union,'" said Jack tenderly. " Bless you, no. He has been told all about

you and about my love for you by Mark. He is the dearest old soul alive—and if he wasn't he would not be so unreasonable as to think that we have not been lovers long enough. Tell me, Emmy, love, may I ask him, have I your consent that I should go to him at once, and say, 'Uncle, I take to myself a wife. I bring home with me her with whom my heart has long lain in keeping. Set your house in order to receive us as quickly as you can, and tell me this night with your own lips that you give us without reserve and without stint your good wishes and blessing?'"

The stilly night to their enraptured thoughts grew stiller. A word was whispered, but in a tone so fluttering and silvery and low that none but the ears of love could have drunk it in. Whilst it was being uttered silence itself only nodded, as though it had dreamed of intrusion, after which it slept on in undisturbed repose.

Jack led his affianced to the Villa, but he might shortly afterwards have been seen taking hasty strides towards the hostelry, wherein were billeted his uncle and Mark Lockbolt, both of whom he startled by his abrupt and unceremonious entrance.

"You look fluttered, boy; white; nervous," exclaimed Uncle Jedburgh. "Waiter, brandy hot, a stiff glass here. What is it, Jack; what is it?"

Jack ran through the events of the night in a hurried manner, and in a slightly excited tone of voice.

"Drink the grog, lad," said Mark kindly, and with a half smile. "Good news, boy, good news. That indefatigable fellow Gruffydd, who has just left us——"

"But, tell me, shall I marry her, uncle?" asked Jack impatiently.

"Tell me first of all," said old Jedburgh, "whether you know the person you are about to splice yourself to? Do you know she is the daughter of a——"

"Beggar, you mean to say, I have no doubt," said Jack, reddening with anger.

"Gently, lad, gently. For beggar substitute BARONET," replied his uncle. "Lucky dog you are. Sit down and let me tell you the tale as Griff told it to Mark and myself. But take another swig at the grog there. We ought to have a double allowance served out all round, and at your expense too, Jack, you rascal. Made a lucky thing of it, Jack.

When it gets abroad what a stir it will make. Griff tells us that the lawyer says the case is as plain as a pikestaff. Hartington for ever! Although he won't get the title he'll get the acres, which is a much more substantial thing."

"But I say, uncle," said Mark, "the title may be secured too. There'll be a son, you know. Sir Lawrence Hartington-Loftewalde. My eye, what a name for a baronet!"

Jack listened attentively to as much of the history of his betrothed as had been communicated by Gruffydd. It took a long time in telling, but the spirits of neither of the three ever for an instant lagged. Jack, when it was concluded, addressing John Jedburgh, said:

"You have astonished me, uncle. Now that I have learnt all, I have a duty to perform. I will return to the Villa at once, and will tell Miss Loftewalde all I have heard concerning her, and give her full, unconditional leave to revoke the contract which she has entered into with me. I loved her for herself, and when I asked her to be mine I never dreamt I was paying suit to a baronet's daughter. I must tell her so, and until she knows this I shall never be at ease."

"Quite right, boy," said Jedburgh. "But you may tell her also, if she should insist upon it, that every penny of her wealth shall be settled on herself, and that I will add such a sum to your own as will make you at least her equal."

"And that I'll put a trifle to it, if needs be," said Lockbolt quietly.

Jack sought his betrothed, told her all he had lately learned, and bravely, though with modest demeanour, and a voice which occasionally faltered, urged her to reconsider her decision.

"Listen to me, Mr. Hartington," she responded firmly. "You offered me your love when you believed me to be the daughter of a poor strolling showman. It was noble of you to do so; it is still more noble of you to tell me that you are willing to renounce me now that I know myself to be the heiress to a great estate and name. But answer me this plain, simple question: what reason have you for supposing that my birth and position were secrets to me when I told you I would be yours?"

"No earthly reason," replied Jack, quickly.

"And why have you doubted me; why

have you thought that my love was less strong than your own?" she asked, looking him steadily and earnestly in the face.

"Have I?" replied he, wildly. "The Lord forgive me for a stupid, impulsive fool. I see my fault. Jumping to conclusions without arguing them out. Mark told me that long ago, and I thought I had cured myself of the habit, but I see that it remains with me as strong as ever."

"Don't say that," she replied tenderly. "Blame rather my modesty. I should have told you before what you have learned from another. It would have——"

Jack caught her in his arms, and stopped her mouth with kisses.

"We have both been to blame, love," she said, directly he released her.

"No, no," he exclaimed eagerly. "Mine was the blame, mine entirely."

"And mine be the task of punishing you for it," she responded. "I insist, and this is all the penance I shall ever ask you to do, that you set a seal upon your lips forthwith as far as this matter is concerned."

"Let me place one upon yours, too," he re-

plied, right gaily, and giving a practical illustration of his meaning.

"Jack," said she, gently, "for doubting that my love would have remained unaltered, were you beggar and I princess, your punishment has been a light one. "Perhaps," she added playfully, "you still wish me to say whether I consider our engagement revoked?"

He didn't, you may take our word for it, reader dear.

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## CHAPTER XX.

"Perish for ever; with this stroke I send thee
A medicine that will do thy thirst much good;
Take noe more care for drink before I end thee,
And then we'll have carouses of thy blood;
Here's at thee with a butcher's downright blow,
To please my furye with thine overthrow."

*Guy and Amarant.*

OUR story leads us, whither it has already led us more than once—into a court of justice. It was a case with which all England rang at the time—the King against Grubbum, for murder. The prisoner was also indicted for

the larceny of a number of diamonds, nominally the property of Sir Titus Oldfogie, Lord of the Manor within the boundary of which a certain ship called the *Donna Maria*, of Oporto, had been wrecked some eleven years previously, but really belonging to the Count Ramirez de Braganza. The unhappy wretch was further charged, upon his own confession, with having, upon the hearing of a certain trial then pending between Lawrence Loftewalde of the one part, and Sir Gustave Loftewalde of the other, in which the succession of the latter to the title and estates of Harnisham, in the county of ——, was being disputed, committed wilful and corrupt perjury respecting certain statements alleged to have been made to him by Helen Porchester, otherwise Loftewalde, the mother of the plaintiff in such trial.

The court was crowded to excess. It had gone forth to the public that there were incidents of an unusually romantic and sensational character connected with the prisoner's career, such as, for example, that he had been the means of depriving a noble family of its birthrights, and of causing its present representative hardships innumerable. The stories set

afloat concerning the heiress to the Harnisham estates were numerous, astounding, and in some instances fanciful. Collaterally with her history, said Rumour, ran that of the son of the owner of the diamonds, who was heir to a throne, and so madly in love with her that he only waited the result of the trial to marry her out of hand.

It was expected that the trial would last for the whole of that week at the least, on account of the large number of witnesses to be called.

The crowd outside the court was an immense one, and it required the united and untiring efforts of stout javelin-men and stouter constables to clear a way for his lordship and the sheriff, upon whose arm his lordship was leaning. How was it that the eyes of Mr. Sheriff wandered with such frequency and furtiveness into the crowd on each side of him? Had he been a felon whom the judge was dragging to his doom, instead of the great dignitary that he was, one would have thought that he was searching about him for a look of encouragement or a mode of escape. Every face that met his, however, wore a stony, unsympathetic stare,

and the living avenue through which he walked seemed packed and dovetailed so firmly together that a troop of cavalry might have charged it without effecting a breach. Who was the sheriff? People knew him only as a man who lived in a great house a good many miles from the assize town, who was reported to be as wealthy as a Jew—and as mean. What was his name? The inquirer must read on to find that. His cheeks appeared particularly white, and it was noticed that the hand of the arm whereon the judge leaned, fidgeted with the frill of his shirt-front, and rumpled it unmercifully; that at almost every shout of the attendant officers he started nervously, and that the flourish blown by his own buglemen made him shudder and appear pained in the face. He passed dreamily into the court, and took his seat at his lordship's left hand.

"Silence" having been roared by half a dozen lusty throats for nearly as many minutes, silence, or something approaching thereto, was gained. The murmur from the sea of heads which the sheriff saw before him having subsided, the herald proceeded to read the King's proclamation against crime

and immorality. This formality having been satisfactorily disposed of, as well as two or three women who had fainted, and four or five babies that were unmusical, the judge proceeded to charge the grand jury, and ultimately the great case of the term was entered upon.

The prisoner was undefended, but his lordship directed a scion of the briefless family to watch the case on his behalf. The prisoner, however, declined the well-meant favour. He could conduct his own case, or as much of it as he cared about conducting, he said. It was decided to proceed first with the gravest of the charges, for if, as the counsel for the prosecution sagely observed, a conviction ensued upon this, the hearing of the other two might be dispensed with.

"Prisoner at the bar," said the clerk of arraigns, "the indictment presented by the jurors of our Sovereign Lord the King charges you, for that you, Simeon Grubbum, late of the parish of Harnisham, in this county, of no known occupation, not having the fear of God before your eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, on the 13th day of August, in this the

—th year of our Sovereign Lord the King, with force and arms, at the parish aforesaid, in the county aforesaid, in and upon one Elkana Quironko, *alias* 'The Tiger,' *alias* 'The Shark,' late the head of a tribe of gipsies, called the 'Forest Roamers,' in the peace of God and our Sovereign Lord the King then being, feloniously, wilfully, and of your malice aforethought, did make an attack, and your fingers about the throat and neck of him the said Elkana Quironko, did entwine, fix, fasten, and clench, and him the said Elkana Quironko then and there feloniously, wilfully, and of your malice aforethought did choke, suffocate, and strangle, of which choking, suffocation, and strangulation the said Elkana Quironko did then and there instantly die. And the jurors aforesaid do, upon their oath, further present that you, the said Simeon Grubbum, in manner and form aforesaid, feloniously, wilfully, and of your malice aforethought, did kill and murder him the said Elkana Quironko, against the peace of our Lord the King, His Crown and Dignity. Prisoner at the bar, are you guilty or not guilty of the offence so charged against you?"

"Not guilty, sir," replied Simeon, in a low but steady voice.

"There is another count in the indictment against you," proceeded the clerk, "for that you did, in manner and form aforesaid, feloniously kill and slay the said Elkana Quironko. What say you to that? Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"Not guilty," again ejaculated Simeon, in a somewhat louder tone than before. "I thought, sir," he said, "that they had let me off on this business. I was tried for it before the crowner, and acquitted."

The judge here was seen bending down to his clerk, and the words *autrefois acquit* might have been plainly heard more than once during their short consultation.

"Prisoner at the bar," said the judge, "the indictment which the clerk has just read to you charges you with the murder and also with the manslaughter of the man Elkana Quironko. It is a mere formality of law, which requires that if you are acquitted of the graver charge you may be tried also for the lesser without going over the evidence again. With reference to your plea that you have been tried and acquitted, we must tell

you that you were only acquitted by the coroner's jury, and that you were afterwards committed by a bench of magistrates, who arrived at a different decision."

"I know I was before the magistrate, but I didn't understand half of what took place," returned the prisoner. "But it's all right, my lord, I suppose. I'm not guilty, at any rate. The fellow tried to kill me, and I was bound to defend myself. It's a case which you can't make me swing for, I'm certain."

The counsel for the prosecution was the eminent Serjeant Gottimore, assisted by Mr. Henry Nottipoint, Q.C., and a junior, Mr. George Gettbred, of the Middle Temple; but the trial ended by the acquittal of the prisoner upon both charges; indeed, the learned serjeant, after a hint which had been given by his lordship, and a subsequent conference with his colleagues, decided upon throwing up his brief.

The prisoner unreservedly pleaded "Guilty" to the next two indictments as read to him, and to the facts as laid before the court in the opening statement of the leading counsel for the prosecution.

Every one upon whom the words of the

learned serjeant fell declared the story to be wonderful, and almost past belief. When he came to that part of it which treated of the perfidy of the prisoner at the bar in blackening with foul lies the purity and honour of a lovely, virtuous lady—when the speaker, with an eloquence under the influence of which the crowd became spell-bound, detailed her sufferings and her death, her husband's banishment, persecution, and wanderings in social exile, his daughter's virtue, beauty, and fortitude, strong men held down their heads; wives, mothers, and daughters gave way to their feelings in a loud wail of sorrow; while the culprit against whom the terrible accusations were brought, fell backwards in the dock as though the arrows shot from the serjeant's mouth had pierced his very heart.

The only being unmoved in that vast assembly was the sheriff.

"Silence!" he screamed. "Is the court to be turned into a playhouse. Let there be an end of the acting, and business be proceeded with."

The sound of that voice caused the prisoner, who was already recovering himself,

to start to his feet almost as suddenly as he had fallen.

"Ho, ho!" he cried, grinning at the sheriff like a ghoul. "Friend of the long robe, dost know me? We have not met for years. How goes it with you? Business has prospered pretty fairly, I think, with you. I was of service to you once; favour me in the same way now, will you? Tell the judge on your right there to hang me!"

The sheriff turned a little whiter, but otherwise he maintained a wonderful composure, both in demeanour and in tone of voice, as he said:

"Prisoner at the bar, you are a criminal—one of a very deep dye, too, if half that has been told against you can be proved. With criminals I have often had to deal, but never in the capacity of an associate."

"Eh?" said Simeon, with a malicious leer. "You've made cat's-paws of them, then—is that it?"

"Cease, fellow," replied the sheriff, waving his hand haughtily. "I know you not. Address yourself to his lordship if you have anything to say."

"Very well, then," returned Grubbum.

"You see, my lord, the person on your left there; he's a thief, he's a liar, he's a perjured, designing, heart-blackened traitor. See me in front of you, my lord, I may be all that I have said he is, but he was my tutor. It's the truth, man, look as black as you like; you know it. If I liked the crooked, downward road my own self, you should not have pushed me into and along it. I am charged with perjury, am I? Who bribed me? who, by his threats, made me do it?"

The sheriff glared at the prisoner with the wide, rolling, fire-lit eyes of a tiger. The manacled wretch, seeing the effect of his words, laughed loudly—the old ferocious, demoniac laugh—until the walls of the court rang again.

"Truth tells on you, does it? It must when a born liar and scamp speaks it; its very strangeness lends it force. Think of those to whom you paid your court, Bob! Jilted first for father and then for son bred more venom and deadlier in your already black heart. What else could you have expected? Why you are as big a fool as you are knave and coward. You should have known that the eagle mates not with a carrion

crow, nor the lioness with a fox. But their faces, Bob, when you come to look at them—which you shortly must—think of that and tremble. The Baronet, your first love's idol—aha! *that* bites, does it?—whose mind you poisoned, who, at your bidding, cast from him the wife of his bosom; his son, for whom you were again passed by, and who, though you ruined him, yet triumphs, for his daughter is here to witness your downfall and your shame, how will you answer *them* when reckoning day comes round?"

The prisoner delivered his fierce words with such rapidity that the court was fairly astonished, and no one, not even the judge, had the presence of mind to command silence. His lordship, taking advantage of the pause which Grubbum here made, told him gravely that he was not before them to make but to answer charges. There could be no truth in his words, and even if there were, this was not the time nor place to listen to them.

"Ain't I charged with perjury? Ain't I charged with theft, my lord?" asked Simeon, with a scowl. "Don't I admit that I've been guilty of both? but look at him, my lord, him by your side there. He put me up

to it; he first got me to swear a lie, and against the side that he himself was employed on, too. It was he who told me to do it, and I did as he bid me exactly. It was he that learned me the lesson, and I remembered it only too well. It was my words that robbed young Sir Lawrence of his title, and made a beggar of him for ever, but it was he—Bob Neal, the lawyer—that put them in my head. I'm charged with stealing some diamonds, am I? Didn't he receive them from me? Ain't the receiver as bad as the thief, and worse? Didn't he share the swag?"

"Liar!" thundered the sheriff.

"He says true, sir, by de Gar!" vociferated a voice in court. "I vosh you know, sir, you mit de long beard and de hump on de nose —me vosh know who you be, sar, quite well —Count d'Artfullmann, sar!"

The sheriff turned ashen as an individual forced himself to the front, and shaking his fist at him, exclaimed furiously:

"Me, sar, of de ferm of Vikumspoke, Isaachar, and Co., whom you did shell de dimands to as vos shtole from de wreck of de von ship of Spain. You am de shcoundrel, sar, and I vill have you put in prison, sar, and

you vill hang, sar, for de von big teef. I shakes de dusht off mine foot at you, sar; I shpits on you for a villain and a dog."

The detected scoundrel glowered at his new accuser and at the prisoner, and ground his teeth. He, however, by a mighty effort, steadied himself, and with outstretched hands implored the judge to interfere, and to put an end to the horrid farce which was being played before his lordship's very eyes.

"See!" exclaimed Simeon, with a scream of delight, pointing to the extended hand of the sheriff, "one of the very diamonds I am accused of stealing. Is the owner here? Let him look at it—a broken-bladed dagger on the mounting. 'Twill hang you, Bob," he cried, with a shout of wild triumphant glee; "it has trumped your last card, and the game is gone. Seize him," he commanded, waving his hands frantically, and addressing himself to some of the ushers of the court. "Let's have him by my side here; we'll hang together now as we've done many a time before. What!" he continued, looking round on all sides of the astonished audience, "will none of you dare lay hands on crime because the offender lives in high

quarters? I'll do it for you then. Bob owes me a big debt, but this, this, will wipe it off at a stroke."

He vaulted over the dock's high railings, descended with a bound upon the barristers' table, skimmed its broad surface like a swallow, and would have clutched the sheriff's collar, but that the latter with a yell of rage sprang forward to meet him. Before Simeon could grapple with him, Neal drew from his sleeve a dagger which had lain concealed there, which he buried to the hilt in his antagonist's side. Grubbum glared horribly a moment at the assassin, and then lifting his heavily-ironed hands, brought them down upon the other's head with terrific force. The sheriff fell forward at the very feet of his lordship, a corpse! Simeon sank back upon the table, from their places at which the terrified barristers in a body fled. The judge fainted at the sickening sight, but so thoroughly astounded had every one in that vast assemblage become, that not a hand was put forward to assist him until an individual, terribly emaciated in face, and uncouth in dress and in manner, sprang to his side and, after beckoning to some of the jurymen to follow,

carried his lordship bodily into the ante-room, where he left him in charge of his stupefied attendants. Whether it was from curiosity, or from some other cause, this strange individual then performed a very strange freak. He advanced to the judge's desk, placed his elbows thereon, and looked the now dying Grubbum steadily in the face. The wounded wretch shuddered with horror at the sight.

"Keep away; take me from him!" he presently shrieked. "Don't give me over. I repent. I'll tell all. The parson's register—I stole it. Helen Porchester—the baronet—I swore lies about them. That will do, won't it? You'll let me off after that. Off! off! Guilty! guilty! Manhaggo! I'll tell them where you lie! But let me be; let another judge me; let not a dead man try me, nor one from the grave be my accuser! Give me a chance, 'Zekiel, as I once gave you! I—"

But the miserable being never uttered another word. The flame of life, of which these sentences were the flickerings, had burnt to the socket, and was quenched for ever.

They were carried away, were those partners in guilt, and the earth was rid of their presence for ever. They were mourned, bad

as they were, but only by one person. His grief was poignant, loudly expressed, and—genuine. His motive for it might have been mercenary, but his sorrow on that account was only the more real. It came like a blessed relief to the load of horror under which every one in that crowded building writhed and groaned. The mourner stood near the doorway, wringing his hands and wiping his eyes and nose alternately with the corners of a capacious blue neckerchief. He turned an agonising glance upon the court, and raised his hands as though imploring their compassion upon his dreadful case. His actions elicited a titter, a giggle, and finally a roar. The spectators had discovered him to be—the hangman!

Whilst the hall was emptying, an individual was seen making desperate struggles to reach the spot whereon the Count de Braganza and his son were standing. By them he passed into one of the corridors whither the Countess and Emmeline had been removed, under the convoy of Gruffydd and Lockbolt, out of reach of the terrible scenes enacted before the seat of the judge. This being shot past Emmeline, and snatching up

the end of the Countess's mantle, kissed it with an ecstasy of fervour a moment, and then sped onwards, and became lost in the crowd.

It was Mohey. In the Countess, the mother of the wandering boy to whom, a year before, at the Mumper's Inn at St. Tydfil le Martyr, he had told the story of his life and his downfall, he had discovered the idol of his youthful dreams and love, Maria de Leczinski!

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## CHAPTER XXI.

——" 'I am but a voice;
My life is but the life of winds and tides.'
Ere half this region-whisper had come down,
Like to a diver in the pearly seas,
Forward he stooped over the airy shore,
And plunged all noiseless into the deep night."
*Hyperion.*

THE last chapter of what, we hope, has been a not undiverting, uneventful, uninstructive history, has come to be written. The creatures of the author's brain make their bow before his audience ere he dismisses them for ever to the elements whence erewhile they

were summoned. His project has gathered to a head, but before he lays down his conjuring-wand (which he is afraid he has wielded but feebly) he rings, and the curtain once more ascends for a final glimpse at the puppets of which he has been the wire-puller, and whose every lineament and habit his own unaided hand hath fashioned. He takes his leave of them with regret—a regret which he hopes some, at least, of his readers will share with him. Of the fact that many of them—his Fantoccini, be it understood, and not his readers—are but poorly dressed, unskilfully moulded, defective in the painting, indifferently handled, and show their strings here and there, he is as cognisant as the most captious of his critics. He can only urge in extenuation of his faults that his aim has been to please, and, as far as within him lay, to show folly and vice and crime in the aspect in which they fled by him in the course of the development of his story. If his indulgent friend, the reader, upon whose patience and time he has trespassed so persistently and long, will but think of him as of one with whom (under the mask of an assumed name) he has communed in thought when the hours

hung heavily upon his hands, as of one whose prattle—for the scribe is but a lisping babe in the republic of letters—has beguiled him of the cares and thoughts which crowd upon the mind when the day's toil and trouble are over; if but to one of the careworn or overworked, either in mind or body, anything herein written has brought a gleam of sunshine, raised a single hearty laugh, drawn forth but one genuine tear, then the author will consider his reward to have been exceeding great.

"But your principal actors, my dear sir—what has become of them?" we fancy we hear somebody impatiently exclaiming. Just so. Well, here are two of them alighting from a carriage, drawn by four prancing greys, at the door of Foretopsail House, the splendid and elegantly appointed mansion of John Jedburgh, late a captain in—the mercantile marine. One is a gentleman, and a right gallant one, too. His handsome eyes light up with pleasure as he receives in his arms the form of a female enveloped in a cloud of tulle, satin, lace, and orange-blossoms. Blushing through her veil like Aurora, she takes the arm of the gentleman, and after

them into the spacious hall, which is lined with servants in and out of livery, file at least half a dozen other couples, each female half of whom was, like the bride herself, arrayed in spotless white. Jedburgh, although he avers he was never similarly circumstanced before, leads the van with a charming little miss of sixteen—Miss Kershaw we believe her name to have been. Then comes Mark Lockbolt, bluff and hearty as ever, and decked in such resplendent colours that you might have thought the occasion was the birthday of his sovereign, and that he had been ordered to display all the bunting available. He, too, was convoying a lady, and a right pretty, good-humoured one she was—the elder Miss de Rosherville, of Flamborough Abbey. The third couple were the Hon. Augustus Fitzwalkinghame and Miss Ethel Delamere (eldest daughter of Sir Ralph Delamere, of Swartlecombe Hall, and niece of the late Sir Gustave Loftewalde, of Harnisham Castle). Then followed Major Hartington, of the Lancers, half-brother of the bridegroom's father, with the Hon. Miss Clara Fotherincourt, only child of Lord Herbert Fotherincourt and his lady, who was the Major's

sister; Rear-Admiral Sir Sholto Capstanbarr—a cousin of Uncle Jedburgh—and Lady Capstanbarr; Alberto de Braganza and (tell it not in Gath) the charming Miss Kathleen O'Meara, the accomplished and beautiful daughter of Sir Arthur O'Meara, M.P. for the county of Tullymickeymalone; the Count and Countess de Braganza, and—well, well, if the reader wants a complete list of the guests who sat down to the magnificent breakfast provided by Uncle Jedburgh, he had better consult the files of the *Morning Post*. We can give him the exact date. It was the 24th of June, 18—. As to the breakfast itself, we could write a chapter about it; but those eminent confectioners, Messrs. Mortnum and Wason (purveyors by special appointment to the Royal Family of this realm) have entered into arrangements with us to supply our readers, at a moderate rate, with detailed catalogues of the dainties provided by them on the occasion. And then the speeches, the blushes, and laughter; the good wishes, the thanks, the smiles, the hand-shakings, the applause—bless you, sir or madam, whichever you may happen to be, we couldn't do anything like justice to them

under three whole chapters at the very least. Here are one or two of the most characteristic.

Captain Jedburgh, in proposing "The Bridegroom," said :

"Jack, my boy, put out your fin for a shaking. Thank you, lad. I've tried to nail down my feelings like I have often done the hatches in a storm, but hang me, my blinkers will be leaky, do what I will. It's a happy moment for you this, Jack. You've secured the neatest, trimmest, tautest little craft that ever man could wish to be commander of. She has weathered the stiffest gales, but a brave heart has floated her through them all without a single timber being sprung or a spar lost. Instead of the jaunty little schooner you took her to be when you first sighted her, she has turned out a galleon, laden not only with virtues, but with specie. Jack, you rascal, I give you joy of your prize. God bless you, lad, and your consort, to whom our friend, the Count, who is more fitted for the business, will say a word or two instanter."

Then the Count de Braganza, his pale, patrician face lighted up with the joy kindled in his soul, his breast glistening with crosses

and orders, looking towards the bride, who, red as a rose, hung down her gentle head to hide her emotion, addressed her thus:

"Mrs. Hartington, as I know you to have acted nobly in the past, so am I confident that you will be to the husband of your affection a shining, brilliant ornament in the future. The wish once lurked within my breast that I myself should have the honour of calling you daughter-in-law, but that has passed away. You cherished—and Heaven ever bless you for it—our son as a sister, as a saint would have done, and for your guardian care no words of mine nor anything that I can ever do will sufficiently reward you. Your husband, my dearest lady, is a gentleman of whom every one who has known him speaks in terms of praise. Brave, honest, single-hearted, and devoted to you; wealthy, handsome, and chivalrous, what more can fond heart desire? May each of you treasure the other as a jewel beyond all price, and may you float down life's stream one in heart and in soul for aye. Let your past actions be the guide for your future, and the consciousness of rectitude, the blessings of children and friends, shall ever precede you, and strew

your path with flowers. I drink health and long life to you! You are worthy of each other. Be happy."

Jack gets up to reply, but his heart is too full. A look at his darling Emmeline, whose eyes are distilling tears of joy, and whose ruby lips, though bitten by her pearly teeth, will quiver with emotion, gives the *coup de grâce* to the effort which he has been making to find words to reply. He looks round, mutters fervidly, "Thank you, uncle; thank you, Count. Heaven bless you for your kind words and wishes; you have made me too happy, and my Emmeline—my—my wife here, she—well, well—Fitz, my dear fellow, say something for us—I can't;" and he subsides into silence and his seat, looking the happiest man alive.

The Hon. Augustus Fitzwalkinghame rushes to the rescue. Your real dandy, of which genus Fitz was not a bad specimen, is cool, collected, and ready to obey the call of duty at any emergency, and, barring some little eccentricities (a charge to which, by the way, we are all of us more or less open), is a gentleman *sans peur et sans reproche.* Eyeglass in position, his knuckles placed gracefully

upon the extreme edge of the table, not a hair in his well-brushed, centrally-parted head out of place, his coat-breast (in which there are two little gems of rosebuds) inclining the least bit in the world towards the guest opposite, his manly, gloriously white-shirted bosom gives a slightly theatrical heave, and he plunges into his subject.

"Upon an occasion tho happy, when the pair whoth union we have jutht weturned" (in reading his words, roll your r's as lightly as possible, reader, if you please) "from withnething theem to bweathe an ambwosial athmothphere of good wisheth, let me add my mite to thwell the alweady overflowing tweasury. (Loud applause.) If I can but pwethume, at this authpiciouth moment, to intwodoos thuch a thubject ath that of pwopinquity of welationship, I hope that the dithtinguished company here athembled will, when I come to ekthplain to them the thir cumthantheth which have led me to bwoach the thubject, pardon me. The bwidegwoom, on whoth behawf I have the honaw of weturning thankth ith, ath you are all aware, a gentleman of immense meanth. A man with theven hundwed thouthand in the thwee

per thents ith a dethirable acquithition to any thocial thircle. (Hear, hear.) It may be athked why it ith that I allood to thith. Thimply ath a hint to Mr. Hartington of lights hidden under bushelth, and of thweetnetheth wathted neath the thkyth of a dethert. (Cheers and laughter.) He hath fwends and welations in high quarterth, under whoth authpitheth he may shine in a political atmothphere or in any other atmothphere which a man of hith rethourtheth may choth ath hith thpheaw of action. (Renewed cheering.) He hath welations in plenty, whoth acquaintanth he hath for thome weason or anothaw neglected to cultivate. I mythelf, howevaw, feel pwoud to claim kindwed with such a man. (Applause.) The familith of Fitzwalkinghame and Hartington are welated by marriage and by blood. My mother, the Lady Clementina Fitzwalkinghame ith the thithtaw of Captain John Jedburgh."

"She wanted to marry a lord, and my father gave Fitz fifty thousand for taking her off his hands," whispered Uncle Jedburgh to Jack.

"She wath a Jedburgh, Mr. Hartington," said Fitz, "and a woman of whom any man,

lord or pwinth, might be pwoud. That being tho, you will at onth perthieve that I am yore cousin, thir, and ath thuch welation I take the liberty of gwathping yore hand, thir."

This "theremony" being over, Fitz proceeded :

"The Lady Clawa Fothawincourt, thir, Meejaw Hawtington's thithtaw's child, thir, ith altho yore couthin. Embwace her, my dear thir. Mith de Washawille, thir, ith a couthin of Lady Clawa, and, therefore, anuthaw welation of yores, thir. Yore othaw welations you know already, thir, and I hope you will know them yet bettaw. And now, ladies and gentlemen, let me pwoceed to the bithneth upon which I wath called to thpeak. The bwidegwoom ith, ath I have already hinted, a gentleman well qualified to shine in public life. Those who are verthed in political matterth know that Lord Fitzwalkinghame hath some intwest with the minithtry, and that the humble perthon who has now the pwivilege of addwessing you (cheers) has some intwest with Lord Fitzwalkinghame. (Cheers and laughter.) Mr. Hartington, who has thith day thecured a glorious partner (loud and continued cheering), and on whoth

behawf I beg to weturn my splendid and dazzling audience thanks, ith my couthin, and ought to enter Parliament. If hith couthin hath any influenth with him he'll thtand for the very next wacanthy; if that couthin hath any influenth with hith father, and if that father hath any influenth in the Houth, he'll get in." Uproarious cheers, in the midst of which the Honourable Augustus may be seen with a pleased face, bowing in all directions, laying his hand gracefully over the region of his heart, and moving his lips by way of thanks for the manner in which his speech had been received, after which delightful pantomime he resumes his seat.

There were more speeches, more toasting, more returning of thanks, but of what use is it to reproduce them? We content ourselves, and, let us hope, our readers also, by saying in a general way that each and every one felt intensely happy. The ringing of bells, the scattering broadcast of flowers and rice and old boots on the departure of the wedded pair for their tour; the ball given in the evening by Uncle Jedburgh, at which some "awfully big folks" (according to Mark Lockbolt) were present, the return home, and

the welcomes attending that event, must be left unchronicled. We merely give the outlines. Let the reader, who has doubtless a brisk imagination, fill in the details of the picture. One or two things, however, we must not omit to mention. Harnisham Castle, although known by that name no longer, has been rebuilt—entirely at the expense of the Count de Braganza, Uncle Jedburgh and Mark Lockbolt, and its hospitable walls are known far and wide to the needy and the suffering.

The picture of the father of the persecuted heir of the Harnisham estates, although only from the easel of the obscure D'Aubansmudge ranks as high in the estimation of the Hartingtons as any in their gallery—which is admitted by competent judges to be an exceptionally fine one. The purchase of the "loikniss" gave Farmer Gilpin to the day of his death (which happened not until he had acquired an ample fulness of years and of honour) other reasons for self-gratulation than those arising from the consciousness of a good deed done to a deserving woman in distress. One of these, although perhaps, the least of them, was based entirely upon a principle of

commercial dealing; was a purely financial reason in fact.

"Paid vive hunderd per zent., lad. Never med zuch a bargin by a horse, or a cow, or a pig, or a rick of hay in me loife as when I bot thick pictur of me voster-brother, and the husband of the lass whom I wuz oncet zo zweet on—Helen Porchester," was his oft-repeated declaration, usually made, however, with the reservation that he "only tooked the money cos Helen's gran'daughter vorced it on un, and he thot it moight be uzevool vor his childrin and his childrin's childrin arter un."

Although the memories once connected with it are fast fading away, there is still rife among the domestics a tradition that one portion of the earth is "no better nor it should be." This portion, which the more timid among them have begun to regard as a sort of Blue Beard Chamber, is, however, so small in area that when mentioned in conjunction with the bright and sunny totality which the edifice is veritably allowed to be, its significance becomes a nullity. It is merely an ordinary one-windowed apartment, and if "master and missis" did but give up the keys and allow free ingress and egress to their dependents,

the mystery would be scotched at once. We, who have been inside, give the curious our word of honour that it contains nothing in the world beyond a high wooden box parallelogrammatic in shape, with a stage at the top (which is open), and painted at its nether extremities with representations of a pair of funny human faces, male and female, and a dog. Lying beside this apparatus are a few tarnished spangled dresses, a set of pandean pipes, and a drum. Mr. and Mrs. Hartington have reasons of their own for cherishing these paraphernalia, and for preserving them from the decay to which irreverent hands would speedily bring them. We are sure that our readers will echo our wish that they may never have in their cupboards worse skeletons than these.

The De Braganzas, father, son, and mother, returned to their native land, in one of the most charming corners of which the Count has a château, whose only fault is its modernness—it is not the grand old Moorish dream-built palace of which Jack Hartington gave such a glowing description on the night of his birthday, when his fancy was so warmed with love and madeira—nothing like that,

but a charming, handsome building notwithstanding, garnished within and without with all that wealth could buy and good taste devise. The family are as much in favour with the people as they are at court and in the Cortes. Alberto, of whom we very recently heard, has been some time married, his wife being the daughter of Marshal O'Meara, who, though long settled in Spain, is undoubtedly of Irish descent.

There is but little fear of the titles pertaining to either the Hartington or De Braganza families and estates lapsing for want of heirs male. In this particular, both, when we take leave of them, are amply supplied. Mr. Jack Hartington makes a famous landlord, and is one of the members for the county in which he resides. His wife and children are the pride of the country round. They make frequent trips to Spain, and are in their turn frequently visited by one or other of the De Braganzas.

We cannot conclude our history of the latter family without a word respecting the fates of two of its faithful servitors. Hurtado de Ubeda was until recently the jovial host of the Casa Nueva at Gerona, his native

dwelling-place. He is now the tenant of another and a colder house, through which his wanton spirit shall never sparkle more. Good cheer, reader—alas! that we should be obliged to say it—killed him. His sister, Ximena, who assumed with a conventual veil the conventual appellation of *La Hermana Desgraciada*, or the Unhappy Sister, although by an entirely different route and mode of travelling, arrived shortly after him at the same end. So do extremes meet.

Lockbolt and Jedburgh stick to Foretopsail House, although recently signs have not been wanting that the elder of them will soon be voyaging upon a sea to which there is no earthly port. Poor Mark, when he thinks of the separation, cries like a child, and vows that when Uncle John weighs anchor, he too will lower his flag, and strike to the common enemy. He has only as yet taken one important step with his worldly tackle--he has made his will, and his heir-at-law is Lawrence Hartington-Loftewalde, the first-born of his *protégé* Jack. It is the general opinion, however, that a long lease of life remains to him. He still keeps religiously a vow of bachelorhood which he must have

made long ere we or our readers became acquainted with him, and the reasons for which must die with him.

Like him in one respect must we consider Gruffydd Ap Shenkin, who, though it was never breathed of him that he was ever disappointed in love—each of the episodes of the gipsy wench Pinketta Carey (who married the roving, sportive Professor Bolusem), and, of Polly Carberry, the "good-looking" and "industrus" kitchen-maid at the Sir Davydd Gam (who preferred mating with a man whose English was not quite so broken as that which dropped from the untutored Welshman's unwieldy ton gue), being of too fleeting, unsubstantial a nature to deserve the name of such a passion—remains a bachelor to this day. He soon succeeded to that paternal farm, possession of which he was one time rash enough to stake against a mumper's wooden leg. There he flourishes luxuriantly, the wealth with which the Count de Braganza endowed him, judiciously invested, having won for him the right to be called "the largest freeholder in the county."

Sir Titus Oldfogie, perceiving that, by dint

of contrasted qualities, the popularity and importance which his old servant was acquiring and likely to acquire would lower him (Sir Titus) in the public esteem, retired into, and not long afterwards from, private life—a yellow fever which he contracted during a stay at Jamaica, whither he had repaired to look up some estates of a deceased relative, cutting him off while he was yet in the prime of his days.

By escaping any very serious results from the murderous cudgelling bestowed upon him by Simeon Grubbum at that lonely spot on the outskirts of St. Tydfil-le-Martyr, Ezekiel, the man of cast-iron, proved conclusively that that title was his by virtue of a natural copyright. The discoverer of that extraordinary specific Maricarbonicam, appropriated more to his medicine than to himself the credit of Manhaggo's ultimate recovery. The patient, on the other hand, whilst admitting that it was a most lucky thing for him that the Doctor came across him when he did, believed at the time, and for the remainder of his natural life, that, bad and desperate as was his case, the little of the remedy which he had been induced to take was worse and

more desperate. On the whole, however, he was not inclined to be disputatious about the point, for he always believed at heart that but for the timely arrival of the Doctor, Simeon would have had another crime to answer for. This cure the professor was ever afterwards most eloquent upon, as well on the rostrum as in printed pamphlets. It was honoured with a whole page of closely-printed matter, thickly strewn with italics, hands with extended index fingers, and "N.B's" in his catalogue of testimonials. The reader, if he has a copy of this valuable work, will be able to verify our words if he takes the trouble to turn to case No. 78546193A. about the middle of the book.

The professor himself, who when we last saw him was an octogenarian, hale, hearty, and still with a box—a smaller one than that which of yore he used to carry, but a box for all that—upon his back, publicly attributes his own wonderful health to the continual lubrication of his constitutional machinery with Maricarbonicam, fluid and solid, elixir and pills, although we, to whom he repeatedly unbosomed himself, always felt convinced

that, to put it at its very mildest, he must, upon this point, be labouring under a strong delusion. We once had the temerity to hint as much to him, but to our scruples he made the reply that if the case was as we conjectured it to be, it didn't affect us in the slightest, and that if an error had been committed at all, it had been committed solely for state purposes, on which account it was as deserving of the name of diplomacy or polity as any other bit of "double shuffle." These being the words of a king (friend Thomasino, you should be told, reader, had succeeded the Shark in the command of the tribe), we received with all the deference due to him who gave them utterance—a course of conduct which, we are strongly tempted to think, every one of our audience will applaud, and not a few, in the event of their being at any time similarly circumstanced, will not fail to imitate.

We have never been able to learn that the frequenters of Mumper's Inn (Mad Zeffy, whom the Hartingtons have taken under their especial protection, excepted) turned to other ways of living, or that the "Forest

Roamers," who, under the rule of Dr. Obie, have thrived better than under that of any other potentate of which their annals tell, have exchanged their traditionally peripatetic for sedentary modes of existence. Smuggling they have given up, it is true, most of the inducements for its continuance having long since died away.

*A propos* of smuggling and smugglers, both of which have played no inconsiderable part in the scheme of our book, we may mention that until within a very few years ago there stood sentinel at the entrance-gates of the Hartingtons an old fellow whose head, grey with age, the neighbouring peasantry knew as well as that of the Squire, round which the nut-brown curls still cluster in profusion. Over the fire-place of this ancient servitor, in an excellent state of preservation, stood an image which devout and unsophisticated people often took to be that of a Madonna. As a matter of fact, however, the carving was but the figure-head of a vessel wrecked years before upon the Welsh coast. Jerry, when asked about it, would nod his head, or if in the humour,

wink at you (the profane old rascal), shift his quid into his cheek, and exclaim, "You're currect as you can be, sir. 'Tis a Me-donna right enough, your honour—Me Donna Maria."

THE END.

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