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THE NEW FOREST.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c.

——"This boy is forest-born,
And hath been tutored in the rudiments
Of desperate studies."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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THE NEW FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

——————— Are not these woods
More free from peril than the envious Court?
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in every thing.

SHAKSPEARE.

ON the southern verge of the New Forest in Hampshire, and at no great distance from the sea, stands a large and populous village, to which, for special reasons of our own, we shall assign the fictitious appellation of Thaxted. Its situation and appearance were much more picturesque than might have been expected from its vicinity to the sea, an element which, in our

northern latitudes, generally imparts a sterile and unlovely character to the contiguous shores, either preventing altogether the growth of trees, or giving such a stunted, warped, and cankered appearance to those that struggle against the chalky soil and the stormy winds, as to make them rather disfiguring than ornamental to the scenery. Such was not the case at Thaxted, which was sufficiently removed from the great landscape-spoiler to be beyond the reach of its baneful influence, and yet near enough to derive from it all those scenic embellishments which so eminently enhance the beauty of a rich land view, by affording occasional glimpses of the gleaming sea, or a white sail, caught beneath the boughs of noble trees, athwart the undulating hollows of the intervening downs, or over an enclosed and cultivated level. The village stood upon the extreme edge of a heath, not of such extent as some of those which, forming spacious openings in the interior of the New Forest, are extensive enough to deserve the name of—

> "Vast savannas, where the wand'ring eye,
> Unfixed, is in a verdant ocean lost;"

and yet sufficiently large to give breadth, distance, and picturesqueness, to the surrounding scenery. Its opposite extremity was bounded by the Forest, forming woody bays and prómontories, alternately receding from, and advancing into, the heath; now opening upon some deep dark vista, athwart whose distant gloom the deer were occasionally seen to bound, or from which a timber-wain, in Hampshire called a *tug*, was slowly emerging, under the efforts of a numerous team of oxen;—now throwing forward some prominent grove so far upon the open land, that the tuftings of its noble trees fell into rich masses of light and shade, relieved by the umbrageous back-ground of the Forest.

Nor was the heath itself by any means so forlorn or dreary an object as might be supposed. Its broken surface, tufted with every variety of furze, fern, and other wild plants, and presenting here and there the red ochreous banks of a road that wound through it, was tinted with the rich harmonious hues that a painter loves: detached clumps of trees, breaking its monotony, served to unite its woody boundaries with its area; while a large sheet of water that occu-

pied its centre, was nearly bisected by a long projecting tongue of land, upon which, especially in the sunny evenings of summer, might be seen groups of cattle, or forest mares with their foals, sending their long shadows athwart the golden bloom of the little lake. The view from the opposite side of the gentle eminence on which the village stood, though totally dissimilar, was scarcely less attractive—the eye passing over enclosed corn-fields, pastures, and meadows, till it reached the Isle of Wight, the insularity of which not being perceptible to the eye, gave to the intervening Channel the appearance of an extensive lake bounded by rugged cliffs and distant mountains.

A clump of lofty elms and lime-trees, branchless for some distance from the ground, but tufting over luxuriously at top, formed an arch across the road leading to the village, around which numerous flights of pigeons were generally to be seen wheeling and careering; while beneath its aperture might be discerned the low spire of the church embosomed in foliage. Athwart the straggling irregular central road of Thaxted, dignified by the name of the High-

street, hung the sign of the chief inn, exhibiting a most bellipotent Saint George on a fiery white horse, having obviously the best of it in a conflict with a portentous green dragon, who seemed to be complaisantly opening his mouth for the express purpose of swallowing his adversary's javelin. The building to which this flaring daub was prefixed, was an ancient low edifice, constructed with solid timbers blackened on the outside, the interstices being plastered and white-washed. A sharp-pointed gable, fretted with half-decayed oak wood, crowned the front; and the roof was of large sand-stones, covered with moss and house-leek, from the midst of which issued a ponderous red brick chimney, placed edgeways, and surmounted with numerous ragged mouldings. The upper story projected over the lower, and the cornice that divided them had sunk considerably on one side, without, however, appearing to have injured the general solidity of the building, which, humble as it was, constituted the most important structure in the High-street.

In passing the irregular assortment of barns, sheds, shops, and houses, thatched, tiled, and

slated, that made up the straggling village, the attentive traveller might observe, from the various inscriptions, that there seemed to be but four names in the whole place, the two first exhibiting the unmeaning monosyllables of Wicks and Stubbs, and the remaining two the more rural compounds of Penfold and Haslegrove, which, with various baptismal distinctions, were perpetually alternated and interchanged; while a physiognomist would have been tempted to imagine, from the similarity of the faces surrounding him, that the owners of these four appellations had successively intermarried until the whole village had become, as it were, one numerous family. They who have derived their notions from the golden age or the patriarchal times, might dream that such a mutually connected society, inhabiting so beautiful and sequestered a retreat, would form an united brotherhood of peace and love; while they who contemplate our peasantry, "as truth will paint them, and as bards will not," will not widely err in forming a very different conclusion. In most large families, indeed, the claims of consanguinity are too apt to be forgotten in op-

posing interests, and the consequent feelings of jealous rivalry; in which respect, the greater part of the inhabitants of Thaxted, "a little more than kin and less than kind," offered no exception to the general rule. Towards the end of the village the road branched off in two directions round a little green, furnished with a finger-post, of which, according to the laudable practice of semi-barbarous England, one of the boards was broken off, and the other rendered totally illegible; while a milestone on the opposite side of the road was equally unserviceable, from its figures having been carefully punched out and obliterated. In front of the green stood the stocks, the neglected state of which attested either the orderly habits of the villagers, or the remissness of the constable; and behind this crumbling machine was a pool of muddy water, termed the horse-pond, on the poached margin of which might usually be seen six or eight ducks, performing their toilet with busy beak, and now and then detaching a feather from their plumage, which was lazily wafted by the wind to join those that fringed the opposite bank.

Our history commences on a Sunday, on the afternoon of which the villagers of Thaxted, who, like most other Sabbath idlers of humble life, often found the unemployed hours hang rather heavy upon their hands, were divided into two knots, one of which, including most of the women and old men, went to attend the funeral of old Isaac, one of their own body, canvassing his age, which was a matter of some doubt, and the little property he had left behind him, which seemed to be involved in equal uncertainty; while the other party, embracing the younger portion of the rustic community, betook themselves to the George Inn, to await the arrival of the London coach, which generally passed through about this hour. Nothing could more strongly mark the vacuity of the day, and the listlessness of the assemblage, than the lounging, lazy interest with which they awaited the appearance of the well-known vehicle, though they expected not that it should bring them any thing new, and they had repeatedly collected upon previous Sundays, at the same spot, at the same hour, to witness the driving up of the same coach, which, as

it did not change horses at Thaxted, seldom stopped more than three or four minutes at the George. At length it came in sight, passed under the arch of trees to which we have already alluded, blessed the eyes of such dwellers in the High-street as were drawn to the windows by the sound of the horn, and finally drew up at the George, when the spectators, who had been waiting so long for the information, were enabled to ascertain once more, that it was driven by Ned Davis as usual, was drawn by the four customary horses, and conveyed no passenger, either inside or out, whose appearance was calculated to excite the least attention. Fortunately, however, for the gazers, something new was at last discovered, which effectually prevented their dispersion. A portion of the iron binding, or tyre, had been detached from one of the wheels, and the coach could not safely proceed until it had been replaced. A board upon the very next house but one announced that its occupant was—"John Stubbs, Horse-farrier, Bullock-leech, and Blacksmith;" but it was Sunday, the shop was shut up, and the rustic Vulcan was not at home; though several voices

simultaneously declared that he would be sure to be found down at the Cricketers.

The driver, as is usual with English coachmen upon every emergency, cursed and swore very heartily at the coach-cleaner, whose business it was to have examined the wheels; the wielder of the whip being now-a-days much too important a personage to attend to any department of his own vehicle, beyond the driving it. The gaping rustics busied themselves in conjectures as to where, when, and how the accident had happened; until one of their body, a little shrewder than his companions, suggested that the truant iron must be somewhere; (a proposition which met with a ready assent and repetition from the others,) and that it might be advisable to dispatch a boy in search of it. This advice was taken by the coachman, though not until he had declared that any fool could have thought of that expedient; and lest he should be anticipated in his farther measures by some other of the bystanders, he immediately sent a second lad in quest of Stubbs the blacksmith, and himself called lustily for Sam, the ostler of the George; asking his opinion, when he appeared,

whether the wheel would go safely as far as the Mermaid, in case they could not find the missing iron.

"Ah, Master Davis," said Sam, patting and examining one of the horses, without even casting a glance upon the wheel; "so you've put old Greyhound on the off-side, have you? He'll go anywhere now; but I remember when nobody couldn't drive he nohow, without it was strait-haired Jack. Out-and-out, he was the most unrestless beast as ever I came nigh, all to nothing."

"D—n your chuckle-head!" cried the irritated coachman; "never mind old Greyhound, but look at the wheel. What d'ye think of her? Will she run on as far as the Mermaid?"

"What, black Bess! are you there?" continued Sam, tickling one of the leaders in the flank: "Ay, I've rode she many a hundred mile when she were a poster; and I thought I had pretty well seen the end of her; but a horse with good bottom will do ye a deal of coach-work still, when the boy is taken off her shoulders."

A fresh volley of oaths from the coachman

testified how much his self-importance was wounded by this dilatory and disrespectful proceeding of the ostler, and some of the passengers began to manifest strong symptoms of impatience; when, to the satisfaction of all parties, the lad who had been sent in search of the blacksmith, was seen approaching with John Stubbs by his side; who, however, to judge by his leisurely pace, was no great friend to expeditious proceedings. When he at length reached the scene of inaction, and understood the nature of the accident, he very deliberately took off his Sunday-coat, put on his spectacles, and having minutely examined the wheel, and repeatedly shaken his head, he at length drawled out—"Why, Master Davis, this be a pretty baddish bit of a job, baint it?"

"Will she go on as far as the Mermaid?" cried the coachman, pettishly.

"Na, that she won't, without I gi' her three or four long screws."

"Well, then, set to work, man; and don't stand there staring and jawing."

"Ay, ay, Master Davis, I always makes quick work of it when once I begins;" and so

saying, he began slowly to put on his coat again.

"What the devil are ye up to!" bawled the coachman; "isn't this your shop?"

"Ay, but I left the key on't down at the Cricketers, when Bill called me away in such a hurry. Howsomever, I shall be back in ten minutes."

At this certainty of a fresh delay, one of the outside passengers exclaimed in a calm voice, and with a somewhat precise and formal manner, —"Coachman, this will be a tedious affair; by sitting here I shall certainly lose my time, and I may possibly lose my temper; there is no reason why I should do either: I will therefore get down, and remain at Thaxted. Please to give me my luggage."

As the coachman opened the boot, and drew out the traveller's small portmanteau, he endeavoured to propitiate him with that mollifying language, which is usually prompted by the anticipation of the valedictory fee. "No wonder gemmen should be vexed, 'twas enough to provoke the Devil himself; but 'twasn't no fault of his 'n, and might have happened to e'er a

coach in all England. He was unkimmon sorry, and would take good care that Bill, the coach-cleaner, should be properly mulked for it. He had never been ten minutes behind time afore since he druv the Nelson." With these excuses the traveller seemed to be quite satisfied, for he paid him so handsomely as to be rewarded with thanks and a rapid touch of the hat; but he had no sooner entered the George, than the driver, dropping the shillings into his jingling pocket, observed aloud, as a hint perhaps to his remaining passengers—"What cursed nonsense it is for gemmen to go and put theirselves in a passion about what nobody in the world couldn't help!" However absurd might be such conduct in a gentleman, it did not by any means apply to his passenger, who had not evinced an atom of ill-humour, nor did it put any restraints upon his own temper, for the long absence of the blacksmith occasioned another return of his impatience, which as usual found vent in a fresh explosion of oaths, muttered, however, in a low voice, rather out of respect towards his remaining passengers, one

of whom was a Quaker, than from any particular reverence for the Sabbath-day.

Leaving him thus to solace himself until the arrival of John Stubbs should put his vehicle in a condition to pursue its route, we will follow the passenger, who had carried his own portmanteau into the George, the inmates of which neither presented themselves to welcome him to their caravansary, nor to relieve him of his burthen. The traveller was a tall, handsome young man, whose open countenance, strong hazel eyes, and singularly fine features, wore an expression of remarkable, though a somewhat sedate, not to say grave benignity, mingled with a certain character of decision that indicated a self-thinking and independent mind. Neat as it was, almost to formality, his dress was not in accordance with any of the prevailing modes of the day; a circumstance which might be attributed either to his recent return from a foreign country, or to his contempt for the frivolities of fashion. He had been too much accustomed to wait upon himself to need those little marks of inattention that signalized

his entrance into the George Inn, especially as the sordid, cringing servility of the lower orders in England presented itself to his eyes as a somewhat degrading characteristic of the country. But when he had thrice rung the bell of the little parlour into which he had made his way, without obtaining any other answer than that afforded by the echo of his own alarum, he was induced to sound a peal which might be fairly construed into an expression of some impatience. Tony, to whom, in the absence of the family, the office of waiter had been temporarily deputed, was summoned from the coach-wheel by the din, and the traveller beheld stalking into the parlour, a gaunt, meagre clown, with cold-looking, lank jaws, a long red nose, swinish eyes, and pig-coloured hair, while his scanty Sunday jacket, not reaching to his wrists, exhibited to advantage two raw hands, which he held dangling before him, as if at a loss how to dispose of them. In answer to the inquiries of the unexpected guest, Tony stated that his master, together with his daughter Sally, who usually officiated as waiter, were gone to attend old Isaac's funeral; that he himself was their sole

representative for the time being; and that a good dinner, a good bed, and every suitable accommodation might be had at the George, so long as the stranger should be pleased to remain.

"How far is it from Thaxted to Mr. Gideon Welbeck's?" inquired the stranger.

"What! Master Welbeck of the Manor-house, justice of the peace and quorum? Why, by the road, us charges six mile, and it 's that good; but across the fields it baint barely five. Phil Haselgrove, the postman, has walked it in an hour and ten minutes afore now, but then he be a mortal long legged 'un. 'Taint more nor a mile from where the coach stops."

"I know it, and it was my intention to have gone on thither, but Thaxted will suit me as well; and at Thaxted, therefore, I shall probably remain for some days."

"What! at the George, along with we? Well, that 's kind o' ye; and hang me if I baint glad on it, for our business has run cruel slack o' late. You baint going to stay at his worship's then, at the Manor-house?"

"I know him not; I never saw him; how, then, should I be going to stay at his house?"

"You've got an affidavy, then, to make, or to lodge an information, or to ax for a summons, or summat o' that sort. It's no use to go to he of a Sunday."

"I require nothing of the kind—nothing whatever at his hands," said the stranger, in a tone that seemed intended to discourage farther interrogatories.

Tony, who although a perfect clown, and little better than a simpleton, was neither deficient in curiosity nor a certain degree of cunning, seeing himself baffled in his direct attempts at pumping out the motives of the guest's visit to Thaxted, endeavoured to effect his object by a confidential communication of his own opinions touching the aforesaid Mr. Gideon Welbeck, a process which he commenced after the following fashion. "Well, hang me! if I baint glad you ha' nothing to do wi' he, for between ourselves, Sir," and here he dropped his voice to a whisper, and looked as secret and important as his vacant countenance would allow him,—"I say, Sir, atwixt you and I, he's a bigger negre nor Squire Frampton's blackamoor, a grasping, greedy, miserly old huncks! Zooks! I've a

good mind to tell ye how I sarved he when they had me up afore un for poaching a hare."

"Which is the way to the Manor-house, across the fields?" inquired the stranger, apparently not wishing to hear the story of the hare.

"Lord love ye! ye would never find the way; but old Ball's in the stable, I'll just clap he into our taxed-cart, and bowl ye over there soon as ever Sam Ostler has started the Nelson."

"I never use the limbs of animals when my own will serve the purpose. I shall walk; which is the way?" A decision in the look, manner, and voice of the stranger, declared much more impressively than any words could have done, that his purpose was unalterable; so that Tony, having given him full directions how to find the path across the fields, quitted the room, muttering to himself, "A proper rum chap! queer brutes these Lonnoners! Danged if I wouldn't stand half a pint o' beer to know what he wants wi' the Manor-house, when he has got nothing to say to Old Skinflint. Drat me, if I believe it! I'll try he again. I've caught more cunninger woodcocks nor he afore now." With a full determination to entrap the visitant, he

hurried back into the room, exclaiming, "I say, Sir, if ye walk along at a good slapping pace, ye'll catch his worship jist as he comes back from aternoon church."—Instead of noticing this intimation, the stranger, who had apparently been deep in a reverie, inquired, "Pray is Miss Welbeck staying at the Manor-house? Has she returned from Southampton?"

"Ay, that she is, and I warrant is at church wi' the justice this here very moment. Lord love ye! there wouldn't be no bearing the old tyrant, if it wor 'n't for she: she 's no more like he, than Squire Frampton's racing filly 's like our raw-boned Ball in the stable. She do a mort o' good in these parts, and is almost as much loved as his worship is hated; but, howsomdever, it don't become poor folks to speak ill of their betters, and he a justice o' the peace. Many people say she be as handsome as she be koind and generous-like; but, Lord! you 'd say she was but a poor spindle-shanked kind of body, if ye saw her by the side o' Molly Stubbs!"

The stranger took up his hat and quitted the apartment, without waiting to hear any farther illustrations of Miss Welbeck's style of beauty;

when Tony, putting his forefinger to his nose, winking one eye, and doing his best to twist his sheepish features into a knowing look, whispered to himself, "Wheugh! master! I 've found you out, have I, for all so cunning as ye thought yourself? Ecod! ye can't cheat Tony so easily. I smelled a rat all the time, danged if I didn't! but the old fox won't gi' his daughter and his fortin to none less than a lord or a baronite, I can tell ye. Hang'd if I wouldn't stand a quart any day towards cheating him, and getting Miss Emily fairly out o' his clutches. I would, danged if I wouldn't!" Chuckling to himself at the thought of thus wreaking his revenge upon the obnoxious justice, who had called him to account for poaching a hare, Tony hastened back to the disabled wheel of the coach, which had almost excited as much interest in his vacant mind, as the unexpected visit of the stranger.

The latter, meanwhile, following the instructions he had received, discovered the path across the fields, and pursuing his route with a youthful vigour which might have done credit to Phil Haselgrove himself, emerged in little more

than an hour into the high road, along which he had scarcely proceeded three or four hundred yards, when he beheld the entrance to the Manor-house. To spare the expense of a gate-keeper, the lodge, no longer tenanted, had been suffered to fall into decay, though the gate itself was kept in repair for the purpose of excluding cattle. Pushing it open, the stranger entered what had once been a spacious and stately park, but which now wore a forlorn appearance of neglect and abandonment, where it had not been intentionally disfigured to answer the sordid purposes of its present proprietor. Some of the recently-felled ornamental timber was still lying upon the ground in melancholy and unsightly confusion, and the sheet of water in which they had once been proudly reflected, was now become a wilderness of reeds and rushes. A large gravel-pit had been opened to supply materials for a new road, for which the interest of the justice had recently obtained an Act of Parliament, partly with the view of thus deriving an immediate profit from its formation, and partly in the belief that it would ultimately increase the value of his estate. Slopes and

pastures, over which deer had once bounded, were now ploughed up and planted with potatoes; other portions were enclosed with hurdles, and let out to the neighbouring farmers for sheep or cattle feeding; every thing attested that this once fair and goodly domain had fallen into the possession of a man to whom it was not endeared by any hereditary associations, and who had a much keener eye to his own interest, than to the preservation of those picturesque, but unproductive beauties, which had once conferred celebrity upon the park of the Manor-house.

While the stranger stood gazing upon this scene, rendered perhaps more desolate, or, at least, more sordid, in its appearance from occasional marks of occupancy, than if it had exhibited signs of a total dereliction; an old peasant, seated on a shady bank beside him, exclaimed, as he respectfully touched his hat, "Ah, Sir, this be another guess sort of a place now from what I recollect it when the old Squire lived at the Manor-house. 'Twas a sad loss to the neighbourhood when he died off, and the estate came to Justice Welbeek, who was but a dis-

tant relation. It 's a sad pity, baint it, Sir, to see such a fine place all cut to pieces and transmogrified, as a body may say, till it looks more like Boldre-Heath or No-man's-walk, than the manor-house park ?"

"Why, my good friend," replied the stranger, with a benevolent smile, "surely it is more useful now than it was before. All land that will repay the expense ought to be cultivated—this seems to be a good soil, therefore it is right to cultivate it. Is it not better that so large a piece of ground, instead of being withdrawn from the community to pamper the pride of an individual, or furnish an occasional haunch of venison for the riot of his friends, should thus be made to contribute towards the formation of public roads, and supply sustenance for the poor ?"

"Anan, Sir! I don't see how that argufies. Thirty years ago, I were gamekeeper to the old Squire; and I wouldn't gi' a quid of tobacco to see a park that hasn't plenty of preserves in it for game, and a good herd o' deer."

"And I, my friend, should be glad to see every park in the kingdom enclosed and planted,

that it might support human beings, rather than beasts and birds, and become a scene of peace, industry, and plenty, instead of an arena for the warfare of keepers and poachers."

"Very like, Sir, very like: but these be new-fangled notions, such as I never heard of afore in all my born days, and I ha' lived a goodish bit, too! Cut down the covers, and plough up the preserves, quotha! what would come o' all the game, I should like to larn? A pretty rig, truly!" So saying, he passed through the gate into the high road, without touching his hat on parting from such a suspicious personage as an avowed enemy to pheasants and partridges, and the stranger pursued his way along the drive that led up to the mansion. It was level and in good order, for in a neighbourhood infested with smugglers and poachers, the road to the residence of the principal magistrate was sure to be in pretty constant use; but the untrimmed borders were rank with weeds and nettles, while the shrubberies and the plantations around the mansion had been suffered to shoot up into a wild overgrowth, which had obliterated the walks that

once serpentined among them. The house itself, an extensive and venerable brick pile, seemed to have been built at different times, and in various tastes: high crocketed gables, surmounted with carved tabernacles, being intermingled with round and square castellated towers, while the pointed gothic windows alternated with projecting casements, overhung by fretted architraves. The whole building was in good repair, though the greater part of it was shut up, only that portion which looked out upon the garden appearing to be inhabited. In vain, however, did the stranger peer up at the windows to catch a glimpse of any of the inmates; nothing seemed to be moving within the dwelling, and the only signs of occupancy which presented themselves on the outside, were three cows standing in the shade, close under the walls of the building, and two sorry, lean coach-horses, haltered to the paling in the stable-yard. From the latter circumstance, the observer concluded that the family had returned from afternoon church, but he could perceive no servants moving about, not a single face at any of the windows; all was still,

silent, and motionless, a circumstance which, in combination with the deserted state of the greater part of the building, imparted to the whole scene a singularly forlorn appearance.

"And this is the residence of Emily Welbeck," said the stranger to himself; "she did not exaggerate when she described to me its melancholy character. There are some who cannot gaze upon a ruined castle without feelings of sadness; to me, it is the most cheering spectacle in the world, as an evidence that peace and liberty have triumphed over the strong holds of the feudal system; nor am I less pleased to witness the decay of these stately mansions, erected by the feudality of wealth; for the downfall of one overgrown family, cannot but assist the advancement of many; and the bloated possessions, or inordinate power of individuals, only tend to impoverish the community, at the same time that they generally entail misery upon their possessors. It is of more consequence to extend human happiness, than to preserve these cumbrous piles, not seldom built up by the spoiler and the oppressor; and their dilapidation, therefore, is to me, a pleasing

proof, that the structure of our civil society is daily receiving an accession of strength and improvement. If people would contemplate moral, instead of physical beauty, they would find no sight so pleasing as the prostration of ancient castles, the destruction of wealth's useless palaces, and the breaking up and division of inordinate domains.—Poor Emily! this must be an uncongenial dwelling-place for thee."

So saying, the soliloquiser walked two or three times round the lonely building, though at some distance from it, occasionally venting observations of the same tendency with those which we have recorded; but as he could not obtain a glimpse of a single inmate, though he failed not to examine every window that remained unbarricadoed, he at length quitted the spot, again traversed the park, which, but for the remaining clumps of noble trees, would have rather resembled the purlieus of an extensive farm, and regaining the path across the fields, returned to Thaxted at a much more leisurely pace than when he had been winning his way to the Manor-House.

CHAPTER II.

He who with pocket-hammer smites the edge
Of luckless rock or prominent stone, disguised
In weather-stains, and crusted o'er by Nature
With her first growths—detaching by the stroke
A chip or splinter—to resolve his doubts;
And with that ready answer satisfied,
The substance classes by some barb'rous name,
And hurries on; or from the fragments picks
His specimen, if haply intervein'd
With sparkling min'ral, or should crystal cube
Lurk in its cells—and thinks himself enrich'd,
Wealthier, and doubtless wiser than before!

WORDSWORTH.

HENRY MELCOMB, the stranger whom we have thus conducted back to the George Inn, was the adopted son of Captain Tenby of the Royal Navy, who, when his young charge was only two or three years old, had carried him out to Canada, the frigate he commanded being

appointed to that station, and had placed him under the guardianship of his wife, then residing at Montreal. This lady, having no children of her own, cheerfully performed for her young charge all the duties of a mother; and her benevolence, as is usual in most cases where that virtue is called into exercise, found its own reward; for the benefits she conferred, while they kindled gratitude in their object, awakened such a warm affection in herself, that she soon loved the child as much as if it had been her proper offspring, and blessed the chance that had thus removed the principal source of their unhappiness, by providing them with a recipient for their mutual affections, when they had abandoned all hope of possessing any direct issue.

As the faculties of the boy expanded, he became more especially endeared to his protectors, by the innate generosity of his disposition, the fervency of his gratitude to themselves, and the unbounded affectionateness of his noble heart, which, even at that early age, seemed to overflow with love and kindness towards all those that came within the sphere of its influence. Most unfortunately for Henry, at the very

moment when his ductile mind was ready to receive that durable impress which stamps the future character, death deprived him of the invaluable friend who, without any of the maternal ties, had so well discharged the duties of a mother. Shortly after this privation he was sent to school, where he had remained about a year and a half, when, in an evil hour, the Captain became smitten with the charms of a handsome though vulgar and illiterate American widow settled at Montreal, and married her. With the exception of her beauty, which was her only recommendation, she was in every respect totally dissimilar from his first wife, and Henry soon found a painful difference in the treatment he experienced. Cold, sordid, and selfish, the second Mrs. Tenby only beheld in him a rival claimant for that fortune which had been her sole inducement to marry, and of which the ill-health of her husband seemed to promise her no very distant acquisition; under which impression it soon became her object to deprive the child, if possible, of the Captain's affections, by representing him as totally unworthy of his favour, and every

way disqualified from becoming his heir. During her husband's frequent and long absences in the performance of his professional duty, she endeavoured, by every species of neglect, and even cruelty and oppression, to provoke Henry into some such betrayal of passion or disobedience, as might justify her complaints, and promote her secret views. But although, as was very natural, he showed little or no regard for his new mother, and evinced an occasional sense of this tyranny and injustice, so far as she herself was concerned; nothing could ever shake his unbounded gratitude and loving duty towards his father, for such he always termed the Captain. Disappointed in obtaining any real ground of accusation against the boy, she was so far overcome by her sordid disposition—for she had not been originally unprincipled, as to trump up fictitious charges, supporting them by asseverations not less circumstantial than unfounded. The Captain, who was a clear-sighted man, and soon discovered that he had made a sad mistake in the choice of his second wife, detected at once the falsehood of her criminations, and the motives that had prompt-

ed them; and being not less decisive than penetrating, he compelled her, though not without considerable domestic discomfort to himself, to abandon this ungenerous line of conduct, whenever his public duty allowed him to reside on shore. This, however, was only occasionally; and after a few intervals of this nature, his frigate was so suddenly ordered to India, that he had no time to settle any new arrangements for the protection of his adopted son, though he took care to make his will, and deposit it with a friend before he left Montreal.

Shattered and weakened by previous ill-health, Captain Tenby soon fell a victim to the enervating effects of an eastern climate, and his widow had no sooner learned his death, than she hastened, with more anxiety about her anticipated gains, than regret for her recent loss, to examine the will. It disappointed her much as to the amount of the property left behind him, but infinitely more so in the appropriation of it; for her own share was restricted to a hundred pounds a-year, while the remainder, which, however, did not exceed three or

four hundred a-year more, was bequeathed to his adopted son, Henry Melcomb. By this unequal division, her previous animosity against the youth was so aggravated, that she determined to lose no opportunity of wreaking her revenge, until the expiration of his minority should legally withdraw him from her clutches; a resolution which her authority as sole executrix, for such she had been inadvertently appointed, empowered her in many instances to perform. Under the pretext that their narrow income would not afford a schóol education, she withdrew him from the seminary at which he had been placed, and leaving him to prosecute his studies in whatever way he chose, or to neglect them altogether, she consoled herself for the testamentary mal-treatment she had experienced from her husband, by directing a constant though petty system of persecution and annoyance against his adopted son.

This was a situation which must inevitably have ruined both the head and heart of Henry, had he not been gifted with a patient, virtuous, and amiable temperament, proof against the seductions of pleasure or vice, and utterly un-

susceptible of any rancorous or revengeful feeling; at the same time that his fine intellect, hungry for the acquisition of knowledge, found in the spontaneous completion of his own education a resource and a delight which almost atoned for the hardship of his forlorn and solitary lot.—A self-educated man, if he be at the same time acute and reflective, possesses many advantages over the regularly-drilled pupil of the schools. In seminaries and colleges, where it is the system to cultivate the head and neglect the heart, the minds of our youth, without the smallest regard to their respective tendencies, are all thrown together into the same classical mould; years are devoted to the drudgery of the dead languages, that is to say, to the acquisition of sounds instead of the expansion of ideas—to the making of linguists instead of thinkers; the leaves of the tree of knowledge are more considered than its fruit; models are set before the students, that they may be servilely and uninquiringly copied;—to resemble their predecessors, and thus render the general literature of the country stationary, is the great object of their ambition; and the result of all

this elaborate fettering of the free intellect is the diffusion of an uniform, perhaps a graceful learning, of which, however, the invariable characteristics are monotony, tameness, imitation. Were our minds allowed to shoot out according to their natural propensities; were we encouraged to think more for ourselves, and trust less to the thoughts of others; to prefer sense to sound; to learn our lessons by head rather than by rote; we should doubtless witness much extravagance and error; but there would be infinitely more of character, of originality, of genius. We should have a natural landscape, in short, the more beautiful because wild and unpruned, instead of clipped hedges, uniform parterres, correspondent alleys, and trim gardens, where "half the platform just reflects the other."

Of the benefits to be derived from self-instruction, conducted by a powerful and inquiring mind, Henry, as he grew up, imbibed his full portion, while he did not by any means escape the disadvantages consequent upon a want of comparison and collision with other and more experienced intellects. Weeds had sprung

up with the flowers in the progress of his isolated education. An innate impulse directed him more earnestly towards the useful branches of knowledge, especially where they could be rendered conducive to the melioration of his fellow-creatures. He might be termed a natural utilitarian, whose laudable aspirations for human improvement led him to undervalue such literature as was merely ornamental, and to think meanly of all pursuits that were not contributary to his own philanthropic views, although these were frequently superficial or mistaken, and sometimes incapable of execution. Owing to his utter exclusion from society, he was totally deficient in tact. Such, indeed, was his reverence for the majesty of truth, that no earthly consideration would prompt him to compromise it; even its suppression seemed to him to make so near an approach to its violation, that he rarely concealed his thoughts; but, in the sincerity of his honest heart, gave vent at times to the most startling and heterodox propositions, totally regardless what prejudices or feelings he might wound, what hearers he might astound and horrify. Of a naturally

sedate temperament, his own cheerless lot, his sense of the miseries of his fellow-creatures, and his intense conviction that by a little better management among ourselves they might be materially alleviated, had combined to invest his character with a seriousness and a reflective turn, seldom seen in youth. Hence he was rather intolerant of bantering and levity—it conduced to no useful purpose—it seemed out of keeping with the real state of the world—and an idle joke seldom failed to make him look grave. He was a strict grammarian, because he thought it of importance that men should be accurate in the conveyance of their ideas; and so acutely sensitive was he to errors, or even vulgarisms of speech, that he scrupled not to correct them upon the spot, whenever they proceeded from individuals whose rank and education ought to have secured them against such lapses, although he passed them over in the lower classes without notice, deeming their ignorance a misfortune, not a fault. Conversant with books, rather than with men, and accustomed to condense his thoughts into a logical form, his own conversation was apt to

assume a syllogistic or laconic phraseology, which might well be mistaken for affectation, though it was quite unpremeditated, and he himself was utterly unconscious that his discourse was liable to any such imputation.

To confess the truth, we have a vehement suspicion, that as our history proceeds, the reader will be occasionally prone to apostrophize Henry Melcomb as a prig, a pedant, a pragmatical fellow, and perhaps to bestow upon him still more derogatory epithets, not duly considering how fairly his little oddities and peculiarities, or even his more startling and indefensible opinions, may be attributed to the circumstances of his birth and education. Should our young friend be visited with any such petulant rebukes, we must submit to the infliction, cheering ourselves with the reflection, that we never meant to delineate a faultless monster, but to adhere as scrupulously to the truth as Henry himself would have done, had he been called upon to pourtray his own character. Whatever intermediate judgment may be passed upon his little failings, we trust that we shall ultimately insinuate him into the good

graces of all parties. His cup of life, even in his childhood, had been filled with moral bitters, which in their tonic effect had surprisingly fortified and corroborated his mind. Ignorant who were his parents, he had of course no known relations; his only friend was snatched from him at an early age; he was of a temperament unusually affectionate, and in the want of more immediate objects for its reception, his love might be said to overflow upon the community at large, although directed in an especial manner towards the poor and the lower orders, who seemed in more urgent need of his good offices. By substituting for the sordid and grasping selfishness which is now so carefully instilled into our minds, a more expansive system of benevolence and mutual assistance, he believed that the state of human society might be very materially improved, and if in developing his undigested notions, he sometimes indulged in visionary or dangerous reveries, he never recommended to others what he would not have cheerfully performed himself; and none could refuse him the praise of being a most amiable and disinterested enthusiast,

though it might sometimes be truly asserted that he was a mistaken one.

Some years after the death of Captain Tenby, his widow, in order to be near a relation, removed to an infant settlement in one of the American States, accompanied by Henry. Here a new, and, to his inquiring mind, a peculiarly interesting scene was opened to his observation. He attended the public-meetings for the regulation of the colony, took minutes of the proceedings, and in process of time acquired sufficient confidence in his own observations and reflections to suggest, both orally and in writing, several improvements, most of which were adopted, and procured for him the reputation of being a sound thinker, and a singularly promising young man. Although his advancement towards maturity rendered him independent of his mother, for such he respectfully termed her, however little she deserved the name, he continued to reside with her, subject to all the inflictions of her unconcealed dislike, which time seemed rather to aggravate than diminish. Frequently did he expostulate with her upon the unreasonableness of her aversion, in the hope

that he might conquer it by argument, though he had failed to conciliate her esteem by a long course of truly filial deference and attentions. From the expressions which escaped her upon these occasions, he discovered that the secret and insuperable cause of her animosity was the unequal distribution of her husband's property; an act of indignity and injustice to herself which ever since his death had been rankling in her sordid mind. Beyond the bare means of subsistence, money was to Henry an object of supreme indifference, if not of contempt; and he therefore hesitated not to declare that the disposition of the will was an unfair one, since he had no legal or natural claim whatever upon the Captain's bounty; professing at the same time his fixed determination, so soon as he became of age, to take the widow's portion for his own share, which would be quite sufficient for all his wants, and to make over to her in perpetuity the larger income bequeathed to himself.

"What!" exclaimed one of his American acquaintance, when he stated this intention to him, "impoverish yourself for *her*, for the unfeeling, unnatural woman who has ever hated

you, ever maltreated you, ever been your persecutor and oppressor since the Captain's death, and who would previously have alienated him from you by her infamous aspersions!"

"In the measure I propose, and which I shall certainly carry into effect," replied Henry calmly, "I do not consider what is due to her, but what is due to myself, and to the memory of Captain Tenby. It is not right that his adopted son should be richer than his widow; nor am I the less grateful for his generous kindness when I refuse to avail myself of it. One of the Roman emperors said he would destroy all his enemies by making them his friends. I will endeavour to imitate his example, and with whom can I more properly or delightfully begin than with Mrs. Tenby? Money is of no use unless where it can confer happiness—but it confers no happiness upon me, therefore I am no loser in parting with it. Or let us place the syllogism thus—Money *is* of use where it confers happiness; it can produce this effect upon my father's widow, therefore it is desirable that she should have it."

The American turned round and walk-

ed away with a look of ineffable contempt, muttering to himself; "The boy's a pedant, I guess; a born fool, little better than a nait'ral!"

Mrs. Tenby's feelings had been irritated and perverted by avarice, which was the ruling passion of her mind, but she was a shrewd and acute, and not originally an unprincipled woman. She knew that Henry never made a promise which he did not if possible perform; she had seen enough of his honest, straightforward, generous character, to believe him capahle of carrying the meditated exchange into effect, without even being conscious of the sacrifice he was volunteering; and the prospect of gratifying her darling propensity worked a sudden marvellous change in her conduct. Determined not to afford him the slightest pretext for retracting his pledge, even had he been so disposed, her demeanour now became as smooth, amicable, and insinuating as it had previously been churlish and morose. Henry, gratified even by the appearance of an affection to which he had so long been a stranger, was delighted beyond measure at the alteration, and

thought it impossible that he could ever have made a happier disposition of his little fortune, than by thus employing it to convert an enemy into a friend.

The property was in the British funds. Henry, as he approached the expiration of his minority, signified his intention of residing in England, and Mrs. Tenby resolved to accompany him, assigning as a reason, her anxiety to visit a brother of her first husband, who was settled at Southampton, although her real motive was the fear of being separated from her nominal son, until the contemplated pecuniary arrangement in her favour should be legally completed. This had been effected some little time previously to the commencement of our history, and it is gratifying to record that the mother's mind, (for such we shall continue to call her,) thus set at ease upon the great object which was always nearest to her heart, was not again visited by any of those unamiable feelings which she had previously cherished. Of Henry's understanding, indeed, she formed an immeasurably lower estimate than before, for she had always thought him an intelligent young man; but

such was now her opinion of the goodness and generosity of his heart, that she became as much attached to him as the coldness of her own nature would allow. Perhaps it was rather compassion than regard that thus drew her towards him, for believing that he must be almost simplewitted and imbecile thus to bestow the greater part of his fortune upon one who had certainly not acquired any particular claim to his liberality, she feared lest he should suffer the remainder to be wheedled away from him, and the very teeth to be drawn from his head, by any artful or insinuating associate who should once find the way to his heart. To guard him against such dangers by the interposition of her own superior sagacity, it was agreed that they should continue to live together, and in a moment of solitary and unprecedented weakness, she even consented to take such a trifling additional sum out of his scanty income for his board and lodging, that, according to her own subsequent declaration, she was sure to be a loser by the arrangement at the year's end.

Early on the morning after Henry's arrival at Thaxted, an ambiguous-looking personage

bustled into the yard of the George-inn, whistling as he entered, and then calling with a loud and cheerful voice for the landlord, Sam Ostler, Tony, and pretty Sally, apparently indifferent whether he procured the attendance of one or all, so that his summons were promptly answered. We have termed his appearance ambiguous on account of his dress, which consisted of a fustian jacket and trowsers, and a seal-skin cap, while he had a well-laden wallet slung across his shoulders, and a stout crutch-headed staff in his hand. He had neither dog nor gun to justify the suspicion of his being a sportsman, nor was it indeed the season for such recreations: he was past the meridian life, and though his look and deportment did not indicate any very polished degree of gentility, there was a freedom and self-possession, not to say a slight air of importance in his manner, which showed him to be superior to his homely habiliments, and might lead a keen observer to infer at the first glance that he was in independent circumstances, and by no means unconscious of the fact. The individual thus described, was Mr. Mark Penguin, originally a tradesman, and

latterly a merchant at Southampton, who having made a fortune during the war by privateering, according to his own version of the matter, but rather by his extensive smuggling transactions, according to the insinuations of the censorious world, had lately retired from business, upon the conclusion of the peace, and had become a resident in the neighbourhood of Thaxted, where he had purchased a house and estate. Like others who have suddenly exchanged a life of business and excitement for one of inoccupation and repose, he soon found the misery of enjoying himself (as it is termed;) but being of an active and intelligent mind, he was neither long in discovering the cause of his discomfort and *ennui*, nor in providing a remedy for it. It was indispensable, he maintained, to the happiness of every unemployed man, that he should have a hobby, and he determined that his own should be the study and practical illustration of geology. He had obtained some smattering of this science when in business, and he possessed little more now, though he had since been an extensive purchaser, and a diligent, if not judicious, reader of books upon this subject; but making up in

enthusiasm what he wanted in knowledge, he devoted himself to the pursuit *con amore*, purchased minerals, fossils, specimens, knick-knacks, and trumpery of all sorts for the formation of a museum, to which purpose he had devoted the largest room in his house; generally arrayed himself every fine morning in his geological dress, such as we have described it; and having duly deposited a hammer in his wallet, together with two or three books of geological engravings, in order that he might sit down and look them over when he was weary, or be instantly enabled to classify and name whatever specimens he might be so fortunate as to encounter, he sallied forth towards the lime and marl-pits, or the cliffs, knocking upon the head every suspicious stone that he met with by the way, and stopping to examine every bank or excavation, in order that he might pronounce upon the strata of which it was composed. In these excursions he could hardly be a loser, for they kept both his body and mind in good health; and if he picked up nothing worth having, which was almost invariably the case, he at least got rid of the time, which to him was so much clear gain.

Early as it was on the morning when he entered the George-inn, he had already walked several miles, and his wallet being laden with flints of sly aspect, and lime or other stones which looked very much as if they contained some hidden treasures, he had made for the caravansary in the hope of recreating himself with some syllabubs, for the nice manufacture of which, pretty Sally, the innkeeper's daughter, had obtained no inconsiderable portion of village fame.

Tony, the first individual who answered his general summons, knew the visitant, as well as his habitual occupations, and having always a shrewd suspicion in his mind, that a man who could voluntarily pass the whole morning in breaking stones, a drudgery to which the lowest paupers are condemned, must be nearly as much cracked as the flints that were subjected to his hammer, he could not suppress a little jerk of his shoulders, and a smothered chuckle, as he approached. To prove his respect, however, he pulled down his head by a lock of his pig-coloured hair, and with a look and tone, neither of which were entirely divested of a sneering

expression, though he endeavoured to be as grave as possible, he said, as he ushered him into the little parlour,

"You ha' been a breaking a mort o' stones, this morning, I reckon?"

"A good sportsman, Tony, knows where to find the game; and a clever geologist will seldom be at a loss for subjects for his hammer. My wallet, you see, is tolerably well filled, but my stomach is proportionably empty; wherefore, bring me quickly my morning's tiffin, some fresh syllabubs and a plate of biscuits." The foaming delicacies were speedily placed before him in long narrow glasses, when he commenced immediate operations upon his favourite refee-tion, prefacing the process by his usual inquiry of—"Well, Tony, what news with you?"

"Why, thank ye kindly, Sir, no great matter o' news, except that us ha' got a strange gemman come to stay some time at the George."

"A strange gentleman!—some time—at the George, too! Do you call that no news?" exclaimed Penguin, who having no affairs of his own to look after, took a prodigious interest in those of others, and was, in fact, the busy-body

of the whole neighbourhood. "Who is he, Tony? what's his name? do you know any thing about him?" And the first syllabub remained unfinished in eager expectation of the reply.

"Know any thing about un? Doant I, Master Penguin?" answered the clown, putting his long red finger to his nose, and winking one of his pig's eyes. "Ecod! he thought to run his rigs upon I, to come the old fox, but I pumped 'en finely; danged if I didn't!

"Did you so, Tony; and what might you discover?"

"Why, sure as ever I stand here, him be come a sweethearting a'ter Justice Welbeck's daughter."

"What! a lover of my friend Emily! Impossible, Tony! She knows no stranger, poor thing; and if she did, she would be too shy and diffident to encourage him. Besides, if this were his object, why should he stay here? He would be nearer to the Manor-house at the coast."

"Well, and him were a-going on to the coast, warn't him, only Ned Davis rattled the tyer off

o' one o' the Nelson's wheels. *I* think it were dine a-coming down Boldre Hill, and so he got out here; ay, and do mean to stop here some days."

"Some sick citizen, Tony, depend upon it, who liked the appearance of our village, and thought he might recover his health as well here, as by inhaling the sea-breezes. Has he the look of a valetudinarian?"

"No! him don't look like a valet to ne'er-a-one. Lord love ye! him be a gemman, I tell ye."

"Perhaps he expects to live cheaper here than if he went on to the coast; and sooth to say, there is no small difference in the charge for lodgings. Ay, ay, I dare say he comes here from parsimony!"

"Not he; him do come here from Lunnun, there baint a doubt o' that, for I axed Ned. You may leave me alone, Master Penguin, for finding out the right meaning o' things."

"Ay, Tony, and the wrong one too; and therefore I should be glad to know why you have formed the sapient conclusion, that Miss Welbeck—but here comes talking Timo-

thy, from whom, I dare say, we shall get the long of the matter, though we cannot expect the short of it.—Good morning, landlord, good morning."

Tony retreated from the room with another pull of his lank hair, and a simultaneous scrape of his left foot upon the floor, leaving to his master, as in duty bound, the farther developement of the stranger's character and intentions; but that the reader may understand the singular jargon of the voluble Mr. Timothy Wicks, landlord of the George, it is necessary to premise that he was a bustling, loquacious, empty-headed, little man, who had originally been a waiter, and had succeeded to his present post of landlord, by marrying his predecessor's widow. His spouse had now for many years been dead, leaving him sole proprietor of the George; the accounts of which flourishing concern he would never have been able to keep, for he was totally uneducated, but for the assistance of his daughter Sally. Finding himself in tolerably easy circumstances, our *bourgeois* resolved at length to be *gentilhomme*, so far, at least, as education was concerned;

and, in order that he might keep pace with the march of intellect, he went over once a week to attend the scientific lectures that were given at a neighbouring town.—The Mechanics' Institutes, which, by inviting a large class of the community to substitute intellectual for sensual pursuits, must tend to raise it in the scale of being, not less certainly than to embalm the name of their founder as a benefactor to the human race, had not, at this period, been established. At the lectures he attended, Tim Wicks, faithfully committing to his memory all the hard words and technical terms, which he considered to be the pith and marrow of the whole matter, (although, in other respects, he came away just as ignorant as he went,) blurted them out upon all occasions with a most ludicrous and acute misconception of their meaning. This scientific malaprop sometimes changed his Babel dialect, according to the subject of the last lecture he had heard; the only part of his discourse that remained unvaried, being the fuss and pucker with which he called about him, and interlarded his disjointed gabble with orders

to Sally, cook, Sam ostler, and Tony, in the hope of persuading others, and perhaps himself, that the quiet, little-frequented inn of the George, was full of company, and involved in a consequent hubbub of business.

Amused by the absurdities of his character, attracted by Sally's syllabubs, and, perhaps, not altogether displeased to have a peep at her pretty face, Penguin seldom missed an opportunity in his rambles of turning into the parlour of the George-inn; and upon the present occasion, thus proceeded to commune with his host, who, having left the door of the room open, that he might both hear and observe what was passing within, bustled unceasingly about the chamber, now peeping out of the window into the road, now peering towards his own tap and stable-yard, and now busily whisking the dust from the furniture with a napkin which he held in his hand.

"Where's your pretty daughter, landlord? if I saw her, I should scold her for not having made her syllabubs so good as usual."

"Gone up to Doctor Dotterel's, Sir, to settle with the clerk. Pay as you go, that's my max-

imum; and I wish all my customers would act upon the same square-root, and pay down, as I do, down upon the fulcrum, Sir. It comes to the same thing in the end, for the velocity 's always proportioned to the descent.—Syllabubs not so good as usual? Like enough. Not made by Sally to-day, but by crooked Martha, our cook.—Sam ostler! gemman wants bay mare.—You've seen crooked Martha, Sir—poor thing!—good cook, but not quite a parallelobiped—sadly out of the perpendicular—her momentum built too much upon the diagonal. Why, Sir, a right line, A. B. from her head to her foot, would describe an angle of forty-five degrees;—no beauty neither in the face: I call her my inclined plane. Hi! hi!—D'ye catch the focus?—Tony! answer bell, back-parlour. Coming, Sir, coming!—For my part, Sir, when I look at Martha, standing as she does, and describing a sort of spherical equilibrio, I often wonder how she preserves her centre of gravity."

"I'm sure I find it difficult to preserve mine," said Penguin, smiling, "when I listen to your learned discourse. You have been attending a lecture upon mechanics, I presume?"

"Yes, Sir; monstrous clever man that Professor Pulley: told me many things I never heard afore; no inverse ratio about him, nothing of the sort; all rectilinear; quite a polygon of a man, and proves all his conumdrums in the twinkling of a radii;—shows you the proper trigonometry of every thing at once, and that's what I like.—Sam ostler! gemman on the switch-tail horse.—Coming, Sir, coming!—Why, now, Sir, when you want to get up out of a chair, do you know why you draw your feet inwards, and rest upon their extreme axis? Why, to preserve the equilibrio, and have the centre of gravity right under you; and that's the reason why you do not fall slap backwards, as flat as a parallelogram. D'ye catch the focus? Ay, and the Professor proved to us—to be sure, he brings every thing point-blank to the fulcrum, that in walking you never take both legs off the ground at once, while you do so in running. Now that s a vertical truth,—a mathematical maximum, as I may say; and yet I never thought of it afore.—Tony! gemmen in the tap calling more beer.—Coming, Sir, coming!"

"Truly, landlord, you appear to have benefited more than usual by your last lecture."

"Ah, Sir! I am little better than a smatterer after all: haven't brought away half so much as I ought. I wish you could have heard the learned Professor describe a parabola, or show us the trigonometry of the categorical curve, and the Isausages wedge.—There's two bells ringing at once! Where can Sally be daudling? I expected her back in the segment of a circle."

"I am disappointed myself at not seeing her, no less than I am in the quality of the syllabubs. How comes on her love affair with the young miller?"

"Off and on, Sir, backwards and forwards; always in a state of osculation, like the pendulum of our kitchen-jack: but I suppose the problem will find its own lever some day or other.—Coming, Sir, coming!"

"But, landlord, before you go, do tell me what you know of the strange gentleman upstairs, and why he has taken up his abode at the George?"

"As to that, Sir, it's a vertical rule with me never to pry into secrets, but to let every

axis revolve upon its proper impetus. No doubt he has his own momentum for coming here: for where there's a maximum there must be a minimum; but it wouldn't become me to be ferreting out his fulcrum just as he has come into the house. Little brass-plate under the handle of his portmanteau, with the name of Melcomb engraved upon it, but that may be all a sham segment, and turn upon a false pivot, after all. He seems a shy bird, and I doubt whether his object is altogether rectangular and horizontal right line — A B. — Coming, Sir, coming!—Always in a bustle at the George, early and late—for ever on the move—toilsome work—slaving, slaving, from morning till night!"

"Well, but landlord, have you not formed a notion as to the purport of this stranger's visit to Thaxted, for every one will be questioning me about it, and I should, at least, like to have a conjecture to offer?"

"Why, Sir, mum's the word and no blabbing, that's my square-root: but, to say the truth, I have formed a little problem of my own. There has been a good deal of running lately

to the opposite coast among the free-trade gentlemen, and I have taken it into my head that he has come down to do a little bit of business upon the sly, and thinks, perhaps, he would be less observed here than upon the coast. That 's my theorem of the matter, Sir; do ye catch the focus?"

By this gentle periphrasis the landlord meant to convey his impression that his inmate was concerned in contraband trade; a business which, during the war had been carried on to a considerable extent in that neighbourhood, though he knew better than to apply harsh terms to any species of smuggling in the presence of Mr. Penguin. The latter was about to question him farther as to the grounds of his opinion, when he bolted out of the room, crying, "Coming, Sir, in the segment of a tangent! Sally! where the dickens have you been? I expected you back in a momentum.—Glass brandy and water in the Dolphin—cold, arout sugar.—Look to the tap, Tony!—Sam, ostler! saddle gentman's grey pony.—Coming, Sir, coming!"

CHAPTER III.

Mr. H. Your name is Pry, I think?

Pry. Yes, Sir; Jeremiah Pry, at your service.

Mr. H. An apt name: you have a prying temper. I mean some little curiosity; a sort of inquisitiveness about you.

Pry. A natural thirst after knowledge, you may call it, Sir. CHARLES LAMB.

PENGUIN, though not personally so locomotive as his bustling landlord, was of a disposition infinitely more prying and busy; his mind was no more able to stand still than was the body of Mr. Timothy Wicks; doing nothing was the hardest drudgery that could be imposed upon him; it was the great object of his present life to escape from it, and if he could keep himself in a perpetual though vain and useless pucker, like a squirrel in its rotatory cage, he was willing to compound with his

faculties, and sacrifice their progress to their activity. No sooner did he find himself alone, than he proceeded to decypher, for the fiftieth time at least, the fulsome scrawlings upon the parlour window, perfectly well disposed to "accept a miracle instead of wit," could he have made any such discovery; but as he observed nothing but the autographs and amatory effusions with which he was already familiar, he returned to his chair, and betook himself to sundry conjectures touching the intelligence he had received. Slight as was the foundation for such a surmise, he felt convinced that the motive of the stranger's visit to Thaxted was some important secret, and as his mind made as dead and sure a point at any mystery, as does the staunch spaniel at a concealed hare, he determined instantly to ferret it out if possible. The notion of his being attached to Emily Welbeck he treated as an idle emanation of the brainless head of Tony, for he knew her to be modest and reserved, almost to a morbid bashfulness, while he believed her to have no acquaintance beyond the immediate neighbourhood in which she lived. A remembrance, per-

haps, of his own former practices, induced him to consider the landlord's suggestion as infinitely more plausible; but he felt, or at least discovered, no sympathy whatever with his presumed brother contrabandist, since, in order to avert the imputation which he knew to be attached to his own character, he now affected an ostentatious abhorrence of all similar misdemeanours, and talked loudly and angrily against the smugglers with whom the neighbourhood was infested, though he never interfered actively to prevent any of their proceedings. While he was deliberating how he might best pump the stranger, the individual in question entered the parlour, when Penguin, who believed that the old adage of their being truth in wine, extended to edibles and potables of every description, saluted him with a cordial familiarity, and pressed him so hospitably to assist in finishing the remaining syllabubs, that Henry, who was of a singularly friendly and accostible disposition, instantly acquiesced.—"Mr. Melcomb, I believe," said Penguin, plying his spoon with renovated pleasure at the

thought that he had thus pinned down the subject of his experiment.

"That is my name," said Henry, somewhat surprised; "but I have not the honour of your acquaintance."

"Belong to the family of that name at Blackwater, in the north, of the county, I suppose?"

"I was not aware that any family of that name existed in Hampshire."

"Then you are doubtless one of the Melcombs, or Malcombs, of Cricklade, in Wiltshire?"

"They are equally unknown to me."

"There was an old Joel Melcomb,—warm Joe, we used to call him, for he was a rich old hunks—died at Southampton a few years ago."

"I never heard of him; and to save you farther trouble, I may as well inform you at once, as I used to declare to the good citizens of America, when they perpetually cross-questioned me, I neither know the birthplace nor the names of my parents."

"Humph!" said Penguin, concluding this was merely advanced to stop farther interrogatories, and feeling his curiosity rather stimu-

lated than repressed by such a suspicious declaration. "You seemed to admit that your name was Melcomb, talked of being in America; you are then an American, I suppose?"

"I believe myself to have been born in England, though in what part I cannot tell you, for I am myself ignorant of the fact?"

"*Rather* a marvellous tale," said Penguin, with an incredulous look, and an emphasis upon the first word which seemed to betray a conviction that it was altogether a fabrication. "Few people would like to make such a humiliating confession, especially to a stranger whom they had never seen before."

"What other people may or may not like is no rule to me. *I* like truth, I hate unnecessary mystery, and I see nothing humiliating in what I have avowed. In being the acknowledged son of the highest nobleman, I should not feel myself exalted; nor should I hold myself degraded, were it proved that I was the offspring of a beggar."

"All right, all very right; quite agree with you, particularly in what you say about un-

necessary mystery; nothing like frankness and candour among friends, we are all friends here, under the rose." The last words being given in a very significant tone, as if to inspire confidence in his auditor, and win him to a confession of his purpose in visiting Thaxted: Penguin, who now suspected him more than ever of being engaged in some smuggling transaction, continued—"Beautiful nights, Sir, for the trade, considering the season."

"On the contrary, the nights have been remarkably dark and rather stormy; no moon, and not a single star to be seen."

"Well, those are beautiful nights, are they not, for the *free-trade?* You understand me? There has been a good deal of working lately. Three crops of goods run ashore in the Miller's Gap, not a hoop lost. Two poor smugglers were shot, though, about a week ago, down by the Rook Cliff."

"He who defrauds the Government, and thereby the community at large, does a greater wrong than the highwayman who stops and robs an individual, in the exact proportion of one to

the whole nation. I am sorry for the smugglers you mention, as I am for all malefactors, but while laws exist they must be obeyed."

"True, true; all very right in a general way, but a little trifle of smuggling, you know, nobody objects to."

"I beg your pardon, Sir. *I* object to it, as I would to any other misdemeanour that combines certain fraud, falsehood, and duplicity, with contingent violence and bloodshed."

Finding that his companion did not by any means sympathize with the indulgent tone he had assumed towards the smugglers, in the hope of coaxing him into some sort of confession, Penguin quickly resumed his customary severity in speaking of such delinquents, acknowledged that there was good excuse for winking at their practices during the war, since they were very often highly beneficial to the nation; but added, that in a time of peace, they were not less unwarrantable than injurious, and ought unquestionably to be suppressed, as far as possible, by the strong and inexorable arm of law. In support of this singular distinction, suggested, probably, by his own mind, in vindication

of his own past conduct, he did not attempt to advance any argument, for he found the flattering unction too grateful to his soul, to run any risk of having it rudely withdrawn. There are few offenders who do not secretly attempt to vindicate their own course of life by some such subtle casuistry; and if the individual in question could persuade himself, that by smuggling during the war, and leaving it off at the peace, (when he had made a handsome fortune,) he had been all along acting patriotically, he was surely quite right not to expose such a self-reconciling conviction to the hazard of a refutation. He would have taken it for granted, that his companion's condemnation of the practice had been merely assumed for the occasion as well as his own; for he was by no means deficient in that shallow, worldly cunning, which suspects the motives of others, and presumes every man to be a rogue, till he has proved himself to be honest; but there was something so frank, ingenuous, and unreserved in the look and voice of Henry; truth was so visibly stamped upon his fine open brow, that it was impossible, even for the most mistrustful observer, to doubt

his sincerity. Still, however, he had not declared the purport of his visit to Thaxted, and Penguin, deeming that the most likely method to discover it, was to insinuate himself into his good graces, stated himself to be a resident in the neighbourhood, offered his services in farthering the views of the stranger, whatever might be their nature, and ended by inviting him to become his companion in the remainder of his morning's ramble, observing, that the weather was remarkably fine, and that he was well acquainted with all the most picturesque scenery in the vicinity.

Without entering into any detail of his motives for coming to the spot, Henry courteously thanked him for his civility, and declaring that he would gladly accompany him in his stroll, left the room, having previously deposited a book upon the table. Upon this Penguin instantly pounced, eagerly opening it, in the hope that it might afford some clue to the real name, profession, and pursuits, or, at all events, to the taste of the owner. In vain did he search eagerly for any inscription, either at the beginning or end; there was none: but, for this dis-

appointment, he was amply compensated, when, upon referring to the title-page, he found that it was an American treatise upon his favourite science of geology, illustrated with engravings. The whole truth now flashed upon him at once; the stranger was palpably a geological tourist, who meant to pass some time at Thaxted in exploring the neighbourhood, and he had no doubt that he had at that moment gone up-stairs for his hammer and wallet.

So completely did he abandon himself to this beatific vision, that when Henry returned to the parlour, he ran towards him with extended hands, exclaiming, "Aha! my young friend—for such I shall henceforth call you, close and secret as you were, have I found you out, classified you? You are a brother geologist, I see,"—and he held up the book in triumphant proof of the assertion; "and I am all anxiety to know, before we stir a step farther, or lift a hammer, whether we agree in our theories. Do you hold with Hutton or Werner? are you a Vulcanian or a Neptunian?"

A fit of coughing, brought on by the eagerness and rapidity of his utterance, as he ran on

with other questions of similar import, afforded Henry an opportunity of disclaiming all knowledge of geology, or of the different systems to which allusion had been made; a declaration that only produced an incredulous smile from Penguin, as he pointed to the book in his hand, and exclaimed, "Here is your refutation, young man; a proof in black and white that if not an adept, you are at least, like myself, a dabbler, a smatterer, an admirer of the noble and transcendent science."

"The book was given to me in America to be delivered to a friend of the author's in London. I forgot the commission, and discovering it in my portmanteau, brought it downstairs that I might dispatch it by the coach to its destination. I have not even read it, for I am no admirer of the science upon which it treats."

"What!" shouted Penguin, with a mixed look of amazement, indignation, and incredulity, "not a geologist! not an admirer of the magisterial science, which is alone worthy the devotion of a human intellect! Did I under-

stand you rightly? Surely you are not an enemy to this noble study?"

"Not at all: I would prohibit nothing. Knowledge is power: power may be applied to useful purposes, and I would, therefore, prosecute the sciences, only making them subordinate to that greatest of all wisdom which teaches us how we may best and most extensively benefit our fellow-creatures. I would have men less consider in their studies what may prove advantageous to themselves, than what may be of value to others; and I would wish them to contemplate with much greater respect the ignorant clown who practises active benevolence, than the deepest and most accomplished scholar, who is too much immersed in the lore of past generations to attend to the wants and sufferings of the present; or the scientific inquirer who attaches himself so ardently to inanimate nature, that he neglects the nobler productions of the Deity, and has neither time nor sympathy to bestow upon his fellow-creatures. 'The proper study of mankind is man,' and, for my own part, I would

rather allay a single pang of anguish, than immortalize myself by the most brilliant discoveries in science."

Penguin, feeling no interest in opinions which seemed to him little better than fantastical reveries, had been turning over the leaves of the geological treatise, instead of attending to the speaker, when Henry, nothing offended at this mark of disrespect, told him that if he wished to read it, he would defer his intention of sending it to London, and take it with him when he himself returned thither. By this offer he had unintentionally found the direct road to the heart of his companion, who eagerly accepted it, and recollecting at the same time that he had hitherto made little progress in fishing out the hidden object of Henry's visit, jumped up, exclaiming, with his former look of animation and good humour,

"Well, my young friend, what say you? Shall we prosecute our intention of taking a ramble together? The morning is beautiful! I know the whole surrounding country within walking distance; and though you are no geologist now, who knows but that I may make a

convert of you, knock down your objections with my hammer, and finally coax your heart into my wallet. Ha! ha!"

He brandished the tool in playful menace as he spoke; and Henry declaring that he would gladly accompany him, though he had no fear of being made a proselyte to such a barren, useless, and unproductive science, they sallied forth together.

"Yonder large white house amid the trees," said the gossiping geologist to his companion, "called Oakham Hall, belongs to Justinian Frampton, 'Squire Frampton' as he is sometimes named, though it seems ridiculous enough to bestow that title upon a Londoner, and a West India proprietor, who only comes down here in the summer season, and who, however rich he may be in slaves and estates in Jamaica, does not possess so much land in the neighbourhood as honest Frank Ringwood, whose family have been always called, for many generations, the Squires of Thaxted. Frampton himself is rather a pompous, purse-proud fellow, who lives in great style, feasts upon turtle and old Madeira, when he is not visited with the gout, and seems dis-

posed to be hearty and neighbourly enough, as far as Lady Susan will let him. His wife, you must know, is a bit of blood, and not wanting in proud flesh I may add, in proof of which—— Do you see how yonder stratum of flints is broken all along the side of that chalk-pit? What a convulsive wrench does this indicate! One can almost imagine that the earth in full swing must have knocked against some other planet to produce such a concussion, or that some tremendous earthquake——but, however, that is not the subject under discussion. We were considering, were we not, the probability that flint might be produced from the shells of marine animals deposited in the strata of chalk?"

"No, Sir, indeed: we were talking of Lady Susan Frampton."

"'Gadso, you 're right—perfectly right! but we were not wandering far from the subject, for I believe her heart to be somewhat of the flinty order—decidedly of the siliceous genus. Ha! ha! you'll excuse my being a bit of a wag. Well, sir, Lady Susan Frampton, as I was informed, although we had met at a

house in the neighbourhood, and been introduced to one another, declined calling upon me, because I had been originally a shopkeeper. Now, as I knew myself to be as good a man as her husband, and independent of all the world, I determined to give her a wipe; so when she next honoured me with one of her cold, condescending bows, egad! I stared plump in her face, gave her the cut complete, and took no notice of her. When she found that I could be as rude and arrogant as herself, she fancied, I suppose, that I must have some sort of gentility about me, for she called next day, and we have been upon very civil terms ever since. They have two daughters, beautiful girls both of them, (though I like the youngest the best,) and a coxcomb of a son, who is in the army, and seems to have the faults of both parents, without——Aha! what have we here? This must be limestone—a small specimen—wonder how it came here. Let us see whether it contains any petrifactions. Ah! I was not mistaken—take it home to ascertain its specific gravity." And he popped it into his wallet with as much delight as the keen sportsman bags a pheasant.

A voice was now heard singing in a loud, merry tone, but with a foreign, nasal, sharp accent, when Penguin, looking in the direction of the sound, exclamed, "Yonder I see comes another part of Frampton's establishment, which I forgot to mention, though, with the exception of the younger daughter of whom I told you, he is the only lively inmate in that stately but stupid family. It is Pompey, their black servant. Some mischievous prank, at Barbadoes, occasioned the fellow to be severely whipped: his present master happened to be passing at the time of his punishment, and moved by his cries and supplications, purchased him on the spot from his unrelenting owner, intending to take him to Jamaica, and leave him on one of his estates in that island. On the voyage thither, Frampton, not having full possession of his gouty feet, tumbled overboard through a gangway that happened to be open, when Pompey, who swims like a fish, jumped after him, and saved his life by keeping his head above water till a boat was put out to their assistance. For this important service he was brought to

England, which of course ensures his freedom, and promoted to the situation of a footman, though utterly unqualified for the performance of any other duty than that of wearing a gorgeous livery, standing occasionally behind the carriage, and carrying the family prayer-books to church on a Sunday. His mistress hates him, never having forgiven, as it is shrewdly suspected, his skill in swimming; but he has no other enemy. Frampton likes him, so do his fellow-servants; and indeed the whole village are upon good terms with merry Pompey, for as he has little or nothing to do in the house, he employs nearly the whole of his time in promoting fun, frolic, and amusement wherever they are to be found. He is a good mimic, not in his voice, for that never alters, but with his limbs, performing vaults and somersets like a clown, acting a drunken man, or imitating the pompous strut of Doctor Dotterel with a drollery that is perfectly irresistible. He makes whistles, pop-guns, and bows and arrows for the children; sings songs to the women, or tells their fortunes; plays gratis upon the fiddle whenever a rustic

dance is got up in a barn, and is always ready for a prank or a freak of any sort, so that he is equally popular with all ages."

"There seems to be an insuperable merriment even in the tone of his voice," observed Henry; "it is like the shrill but cheerful crowing of the cock."

"Merriment! he knows not what it is to be either sick or sorry. Driven away by the sound of his joyous chuckle, Care seems afraid to come near him; and even age itself, for his head is grey, has silvered his woolly hair without having been able to tame or chill the boyish playfulness of his heart. With the ugliness he has all the mischievous pranks of a young baboon, and no small share of its activity."

The party thus described had by this time approached, bursting as he came up into a new song, accompanied with vehement and appropriate gesticulations, and pausing every now and then to laugh, or rather to smile, for he uttered no sound at the moment. No cachinnation, however, could be so joyous as that silent smile, which, like the sun suddenly bursting from a dark cloud, illuminated in an in-

stant his whole countenance, displaying his large white even teeth, imparting an absolute flash to his eye, and raising up his low brow in successive wrinkles, until the grey woolly scalp was thrown backwards, while the entire shining face was manifestly floating in enjoyment. The following was the snatch of negro-song, which met the ear of Henry and his companion as the black came up to them :—

Da sun begin from da sea to peep,
Buckara! buckara! cracko!
Da oberseer, him smack him whip,
Buckara! buckara! cracko!
From bed of reeds da nigger start,
Gog! if he don't, dey make him smart,
An' he go to da fiel' wid a hebby heart,
Buckara! buckara! cracko!

In da boiling-house, a'ter brekkas time,
Buckara! buckara! cracko!
Da oberseer up a ladder climb,
Buckara! buckara! cracko!
To see if da suggee boil to a crack,
When da nigger steal behind him back,
An' push him into da copper, smack!
Buckara! buckara! cracko!

"Gog! him nebber crack any mo' him dam whip. Always floggee poor nigger, and say—

'What for oo no' make mo' suggee?' Him make suggee himself in da big copper: see how him like it. Ah, massa Pingwing; morrow-morning!" And as he made his salutation, he stood still, apparently with the intention of having a little gossip, while he pursued his occupation of fashioning a pop-gun out of some alder, of which he had gathered a bough.

"Always busy in making playthings for the children," said the geologist; "I don't know what the young folks would do without you."

"Who ebber tink o' dat?—No, Massa Pingwing mean what *I* do widout *em.* I lub da little pickaninny; what for? Pompey ole man dere, (and he pointed to the grizzled wool upon his poll,) but Pompey got libely lilly boy here, (patting his heart, and unsheathing his teeth with a radiant smile.) Him blood so red and so merry as ebber, and Gog! him limbs not berry ole." With these words, he popped the knife into his mouth, let fall the branch of alder, threw his hands upon the ground, and performing a rapid somerset, con-

tinued, "Aha, Massa Pingwing, what oo tink o' dat? not berry ole, hey?"

"No, indeed, Pompey, I was just observing that you are as lissome as a monkey, and by no means unlike one in other respects."

"Berry true, massa, berry true, when I wear ma fine libbery on da Sabba'-day, and go da church ater my lady, um like Jacko monkey; dress op fine, berry fine, and um long for da fiddle to hab a dance. Ma blood berry full o' dance, him dance widout a fiddle. No get libbery now, but white jacket; no like monkey now, Massa."

"I should have thought he would have felt flattered by the comparison," said Penguin to Henry, "but he seems more ashamed of Mr. Frampton's gorgeous livery than of the sable and ugly one that Nature has given him."

Penguin did not think it necessary to lower his voice in making this observation, which he perhaps imagined to be above the comprehension of his black auditor. The latter, however, recognizing it with a nod of the head, and the exclamation of "Berry true!" continued—"Massa Pingwing always busy, same

as Pompey; Massa no mind break da stone, dig da earth, go down da pit, climb da cliff, work hard, and wear jacket all same as nigger, ony mine white and mo' smart like. 'Gog! tink it come to be da fashion; saw two gemmen dis morning all da same as Massa; look at da groun berry sharp, look at da big stone, talkee talkee one anoder, and den tap! tap! break him a pieces as if him a great cocoa-nut full o' meatee."

"Hey! how! what! Pompey; two gentlemen did you say?"

"Iss, Massa; one in da brown jacket, one in da blue."

"Ha! these must be the two geologists I heard of that came over here last week, and were supposed to be from Christ-church."

"Iss, Massa; I left 'em in da cross-road to Chrishursh, under da great marl-pit."

"Ah, ha! are they poaching upon my manor? There have been some very curious things found in that pit. Shall we join them, my young friend? I dare say they have made some interesting discovery."

Henry signified a ready assent, and Pom-

pey having declared, in answer to Penguin's enquiries, that the shortest way to the spot was over the field to their left, and across the miller's water, which they might easily pass by means of the stepping-stones placed for that purpose, pursued his way, busily employed in the completion of his pop-gun and his song, while the geologist and his companion hurried forwards in the direction that had been pointed out to them.

CHAPTER IV.

"Our gayness and our guilt are all besmirch'd
With rainy marching in the painful field."

SHAKSPEARE.

AFTER having traversed a ploughed field, not without difficulty from the heavy nature of the soil, they reached a wild brake, overgrown with thistles, nettles, burs, docks, and bramble bushes, through which they had some trouble in forcing their way. The geologist delighted in conquering little impediments of this nature, which at once stimulated his ardour, and established his character for intrepid perseverance, so that volunteering to take the lead, he manfully pushed through every obstacle, observing to his companion that a good sportsman never stood upon trifles in following the game, and that his fustian jacket and trowsers were expressly adapted for emergencies like the present. His seal-skin

cap, however, was twitched off, and it was not without a scratched face that its owner was enabled to redeem it; while his wallet was obliged to pay similar toll to the various briers which it had to pass. Thus acting as a pioneer to Henry, whose clothes were not so well calculated for the warfare in which they were engaged, they at length emerged upon the brow of a rough descent shelving down into a little glen, called the Run, on account of the increased rapidity of the miller's stream, which hurried along the bottom in its course to the sea. It was shallow, except in heavy rains, and large stepping-stones were usually thrown into it for the accommodation of such rustics or others as had occasion to cross it. On arriving at the spot it was found that these had been removed, probably by some mischievous urchin, and Penguin, who with all his geological love of the earth and its contents, did not by any means stand so well affected towards cold water, observed with a disappointed look, that it would take them a mile out of their way to go round by the mill. To this circuit he was preparing to submit, not without manifest reluctance against the

delay it would occasion, especially as the objects of his search might in the mean time have betaken themselves to some other quarter, when he heard the faint sound of voices immediately succeeded by the click of a hammer upon some hard substance.

"Gadso!" he eagerly exclaimed, grasping his own hammer as if he longed to be at work, "there they are, there they are, sure enough! I warrant me they are hard at it. The pit is only beyond the first field on the other side the bank. What say you, my young friend, shall we dash through this paltry runnel? It is not above knee deep, and a little sousing will not hurt either of us. 'Nothing venture, nothing have,' should be the motto of a staunch geologist, and though you are not one of us, you probably swimmed across the Missisippi and the Ohio before you left America, and will therefore never boggle at such a puddle as this."

"I have no objection whatever to pass it, but my reverence to truth compels me to tell you, that you are mistaken with respect to the

Missisippi and the Ohio; and my regard for grammar obliges me to add, that the preterite of swim, is swam, swom, or swum."

"All right, perfectly right, my young Domine. Bravo! here goes: follow me, and fear nothing." So saying, Penguin sprang into the stream, intending to cross it in two or three long strides, but instead of meeting the firm footing he expected, he sank up to the knee in a sort of black quicksand, and being thrown upon his face, was obliged to scramble in the best way he could to the opposite bank, where he arrived in a most ruefully ducked and besmirched condition. Quickly recovering himself, however, his misadventure seemed to have made him "bate no jot of heart or hope," for he began washing his swan-like legs, laughing at his own ridiculous plight, perhaps to conceal his real mortification, and expressing his surprise that his companion did not participate in his merriment.

"I never laugh at the smallest mischance or disappointment of my fellow-creatures," said Henry.

"All right, perfectly right, but I tell you beforehand, that I shall laugh most confoundedly if you are caught in the same trap."

"There would be small danger of that, even were the streamlet wider than it is." So saying he returned a little way up the bank to give himself the benefit of the descent, and then running forward at full speed, cleared the water at a single leap.

"Gadso, my young friend!" exclaimed the astonished geologist, "you vault like a roebuck, or rather like an arrow out of a bow. Did you learn this trick in America?"

"Athletic exercises are conducive to health; health should be our primary consideration, and I have therefore diligently practised every sport that might contribute to strength or agility, until I have obtained a command over my limbs, which I consider preferable to a knowledge of all the languages upon earth. There is both pleasure and utility in having the full possession of my own body, while there is neither the one nor the other in wasting time upon the acquisition of a foreign tongue, for the English language embodies within itself, either in

its native stores or by means of translation, all the wisdom that the world has ever known."

"All right, Domine, all right: I must needs confess, that your gymnastic exercises are better than all Latin and Greek ones in the world for carrying a fellow clean and dry over a treacherous brook like this cursed Miller's-run. Gadso! I haven't lost my hammer, have I? No, here it is, all safe."

In the triumph of the moment he twirl'd it high up in the air, again catching it adroitly by the handle, and his abstersions being now completed, so far as the sable stains could be effaced, he again hurried forward to intercept his brother geologists. After climbing up the opposite bank, and again descending, they crossed the field to which Penguin had alluded, and making their way into the cross-road, presently reached the bottom of an extensive marl-pit, of which the precipitous summit was tufted with alder and other bushes. Penguin listened eagerly for the sound of voices or implements, and gazed round in vain for the expected men of science: he could only perceive a couple of labourers sitting in the shade

and quietly dispatching their bread and cheese, while a dog, who had the charge of their hats and a little flask of beer, saluted the strangers with a bristling mane, and an angry growl. "Ah! lame Richard, how are you? how are you, Joe Penfold?" said the geologist, who knew every individual rustic and pauper for miles round—"which way are the two gentlemen gone who were here just now, making mineralogical researches?"

In answer to this inquiry, the men declared that they had not seen a soul in the course of the morning, except Squire Frampton's black-a-moor, who intended crossing the field to the Miller's-run, until they told him the stepping-stones had been removed, which induced him to go round by the road.—"What! were there not two gentlemen upon the spot? there must have been—I heard their hammers not ten minutes ago."

"Lord love ye! that was we;—we was a cracking flints for the rooad when the black chap came up to us."

"And one of them wears a brown and the other a blue jacket," observed Henry.

A blank chop-fallen look attested Penguin's conviction that he had been bamboozled by the Negro, and the angry blood quickly rushed to his features as he exclaimed—"Curse that impudent black fellow! then I have been regularly hoaxed; these were the gentlemen geologists who were breaking stones, and I have scrambled through thorns and thistles, and have been soused in the mud and dirty water of the Miller's-run all for nothing."

"Iss, Massa, iss," cried a cackling voice from above, and upon looking upwards they beheld the white teeth, and black, shining, smiling face of Pompey, protruded from the overhanging alders which had just supplied him with a new pop-gun.

"Massa Pinwing say um look like a monkey: aha! what oo look like ooseff, wid oo black legs and oo souse jacket? Better um look like a monkey nor an ass."

"This impertinence, fellow, shall be made known to your master," cried the geologist.

"Gog! berry like, cause Pompey tell um himseff, dat a may hab da fuss laugh."

This observation probably suggested to

Penguin, that as he could gain nothing by his wrath, he had better view the whole affair as a joke, for replacing his uplifted hammer in his wallet, he said with a forced smile—"After all it was not a bad hoax, and I might well have expected it, knowing the black fellow to have as many tricks as a baboon. It must be confessed, that he has made a precious fool of me."

"Iss, Massa, iss, berry true," cried Pompey disclosing his white teeth with a broad radiant smile; and being now apparently satisfied with the triumph he had obtained, he quitted the overhanging boughs, and pursued his way along the uplands, shouting at the top of his voice—

—"Da nigger steal behind him back,
And push him into da copper, smack!
Buckara! buckara! cracko!"

The two labourers in the marl-pit, although Penguin had to a certain extent conciliated their good wishes by wearing a jacket no better than their own, and by often chattering familiarly with them, as he did indeed with all the world, had still such a poor opinion of his intellects, from his volunteering the drudgery of breaking

stones, when, if he chose, he might sit at home, and swill strong ale all day long, that their looks and tone of voice in conversing with him generally betrayed the same compassionate kind of contempt that they would have assumed had they been addressing the parish idiot. Upon the present occasion they had at first observed a certain degree of respect, but when they comprehended the full extent of Pompey's trick, when they understood that they themselves had been palmed off upon Penguin for gentlemen, and that in his eagerness to share their society, he had floundered through the mud and water of the Miller's-run, as his bedraggled plight ludicrously attested, all the barriers of respect were broken down, and they both burst into a horse laugh, loud enough to send dissonant echoes from the sides of the pit, and to be answered by a distant *Da Capo* of Pompey's song as he was retreating homewards. Penguin had no alternative but to join them, which he did with an assumed hilarity, and then turning to Henry with a somewhat sardonic expression, exclaimed:—"You are the only grave fellow among us, my young friend; why don't you

laugh? Gadso, it 's a capital joke, and I really enjoy it myself: why don't you laugh?"

"I told you before, that I never laughed at the smallest misadventure of a fellow-creature, and you must allow me to observe, that you have brought this trouble upon yourself by comparing Pompey, in his own hearing, to a monkey. His retaliation is a moderate one, though no retaliation can be excusable, since two wrongs will never make one right. It is unjustifiable in principle, and may be dangerous in practice, ever to wound the feelings of another, even in jest; for as retorts and revenges generally double or quadruple in severity the last offence given, that which began in mirth may quickly end in murder."

"All right, my young Domine, perfectly right. Gad! one may learn more by listening to you than to one of Dr. Dottrel's sermons, though that, perhaps, is no great compliment. Come, shall we pursue our ramble? I don't value my sousing a single button. It 's vastly pleasant, isn't it?"

With these words, he walked away at a brisk pace, by no means sorry, as it seemed, to escape

from the boisterous merriment and ridiculing looks of the labourers, whom he quitted without his usual valedictory notice, and the click of whose hammers, as they again plied their work, fell upon his ear with a much less grateful and stimulating effect than when he had previously heard the same sound. Had Henry been what is called a wag, he would not have failed to draw his companion's attention to it, and to banter him upon the renewed labours of the gentlemen geologists; but this was foreign to his nature. His benevolence was so sensitive and delicate, his sympathy with his fellow-creatures so intense, that he never indulged in any raillery in the remotest degree calculated to give pain. Penguin, however, was fidgetting under the manifest apprehension of his malicious pleasantry, for he walked rapidly forwards, although it was up hill, in order to get beyond the sinister sound of the hammers, and talked incessantly that his companion might not have an opportunity for venting either banter or sarcasm. "Aha! my young friend," he briskly exclaimed, stopping to take a moment's breath, when they had gained the summit of the

ascent; "there 's a prospect for you! what say you to that? Is it not noble, yonder fine stretch of wood that forms the commencement of the New Forest, and shows us many a stout oak destined, perhaps, to form one of our first-rate ships, and carry the British thunder to the remotest corners of the world?"

"I see an open, rich, and finely-cultivated tract that, while it smiles in beauty, promises to yield sustenance and plenty to mankind; and which I consequently admire much more than a gloomy forest, whether it be reserved for the useless and cruel warfare of the chace, or applied to the still more hateful and guilty hostilities which we may carry on against distant nations."

"Ah! I forgot, you have been in America, come from the back settlements, and have had a surfeit of trees, of which you doubtless like the sight as little as a grocer does the taste of figs. I fear we shall find little to please you in England. You have been accustomed to a new country, and it is natural therefore that you should not like an old one."

"You are widely mistaken. In my opinion,

the inhabitants of an old country have innumerable advantages. They have the benefit of every past age—for all the previous generations of mankind may be considered as their slaves, who, for the enjoyment of the existing race, have made and perfected the public roads, dug wells and canals, rendered rivers navigable, drained morasses, fertilized the soil, beautified the surface of the country, and covered it with costly edifices "of public utility, or for private residence. It must be an additional pleasure to the dwellers in such a country, that they may justly consider it their home, since it contains the bones of their forefathers; while all the monuments of art, and much of the natural scenery, being associated with the national records, are lifted out of their mere materiality, and become endearing and ennobling memorials, which may usefully stimulate the people who live among them to maintain the greatness that has been transmitted to them. Unless, as I have done, you had witnessed the formation of a new settlement in a new country, you could hardly imagine how grievously the want of all this, how deeply the total absence of an antiquity is

felt and regretted,—how disheartening it is to begin with felling trees, making roads, digging wells, and performing the most severe and servile drudgery long before you can even attempt to raise a crop; how strange and uninteresting is the dumb scenery which can tell us nothing of our ancestors or of the past ages, though it may painfully remind us that it has been the haunt of savages and wild beasts;—how oppressive is the misgiving, when he who toils reflects that he may perchance perish before he has conquered the stubborn earth, or that, after all, he may be only slaving, like the bee, to raise honey for strangers."

"More fool he! Why can't such fellows remain where they were born?"

"Because it is better to have the hope of living in a new country than the fear of starving in an old one: over-population and want drive many to the necessity of colonizing; but a still greater number, and of a better class, have sometimes fled to the woods and wilds to enjoy that paramount moral good which more than compensates for all the physical disadvantages of a new settlement."

"Ay, ay! what may that be?"

"Civil and religious liberty; equal rights, and uncorrupt institutions, seldom to be found in an old country, where time, that rots every thing, does not even spare the bulwarks of freedom and justice, and where the very progress of civilization and luxury works the greatest perversion and abuse in those establishments which were originally the most pure and wholesome. The combined advantages of the past and the present are, perhaps, most likely to be found in an old country which has recently purged and regenerated itself by a revolution; for the moral as well as the natural soil is best fertilized by the ashes of the destroyed rankness, corruption, and overgrowth which itself had thrown up."

"Why, my young friend, what the deuce do you call yourself!—a jacobin, a radical, a revolutionist? Gadso! it's lucky Doctor Dotterel does not hear you, or you would be excommunicated, anathematised. Come, come, I understand nothing of these matters, let us talk of something rational. Do you see those men at work, digging the foundations of a

house? They turned up last week what I considered a specimen of valuable ore, and the owner of the ground, poor fellow! thought he was going to make his fortune all in a hurry; but, egad! it proved to be only a species of mica, or Glimmer, as the workmen call it, or something of that sort, and the churl threw it at my head, when he found I had elated him with false hopes.—Aha! what have we here? I must give this ferruginous clod a touch of my hammer, it has a shrewdly mineral aspeet. You see, I literally leave no stone unturned to succeed in my objects; and, indeed, I may well keep a sharp look out, for it was not far from here that, about a month ago, I stumbled upon a foliaceous, or flaky substance, that had very much the appearance of talc. I 'll tell you the whole history of my finding it, which is really interesting,—but, egad! I forgot, you are no geologist; and though Shakspeare, you know, says that there are sermons in stones, you have little inclination, I dare say, to hear sermons *on* stones. Now, between these trees, we can just catch a peep at the old-fashioned towers and pointed gables of the Manor-

house, where——Gadso! I protest I had nearly forgotten all about it."

In the multiplicity of objects which successively claimed Penguin's attention, one was very apt to push its predecessor out of his head, a process which had taken place more than once this morning since he had started from the George. The sight of the Manor-house, recalling to his recollection the surmise of Tony, as to the object of Henry's visit, reminded him at the same time that he had hitherto made no progress towards discovering it; and being now disposed to attach more importance to the ostler's assertion than he had yielded to it at the time, he proceeded without delay to sound his companion upon the subject. "Yonder old building is the residence of his worship Mr. Gideon Welbeck, one of our justices of the peace. Do you know any thing of him?"

Henry answered in the negative.

"No great loss," continued his companion. "He is a strange creature and by no means popular in the county. His legal knowledge, however, is of use to him as a magistrate, the duties of which office he discharges with such

zeal, vigilance, and impartiality, that his brother justices, too indolent or too ignorant to assist or compete with him, voluntarily abandon to him all the troublesome and executive business of the district. I told you that he was generally disliked; but, if all be true that I have heard, he is rather an object of compassion than hatred, for—stop! stay! look at this bit of slate, do you observe how the dark veins that cross it are broken and continued again half an inch lower, manifestly proving that it has once been in a liquid state. There's another bit, which I must pop into my wallet.—Gadso! let me see, where was I; were we not talking of the vertical strata which Werner—?"

"No, Sir, you were remarking that Mr. Welbeck was rather an object of compassion than—"

"All right—perfectly right, so I was, and so he is, if all be true that is rumoured; for the poor man, such I may well call him, in spite of his riches, has an only son, who, after taking to gambling, and all sorts of dissolute courses, by which he was perpetually tormenting his father in the most sensitive part—that is

to say, in his pocket, completed his own ruin and degradation by marrying a low woman of infamous character. Upon this occasion old Welbeck, who is a man of violent passions, solemnly cursed his son, struck him out of his will, and swore that he would never forgive his daughter, or any one else, who should ever mention his name in his presence. It has been even whispered that the son was subsequently guilty of forgery, for he fled to the continent with his disreputable wife, and has never been heard of since. Egad! talking of his daughter, puts me in mind that Tony, of the George, told me you were acquainted with Miss Welbeck—is it so? How comes it? She rarely leaves home?"

"We lately passed a few days in the same boarding-house at Southampton, where she went to visit an aunt, and I confess that I was much struck by the timid gentleness of her manners, and the resignation with which she seemed to submit to some deep-rooted melancholy."

"Aha! my young friend, have I found you out? So this, then, was the object of your visit to Thaxted."

"You are quite mistaken; it was not until I arrived at Thaxted, that I recollected that her father resided in its vicinity."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the geologist, casting an incredulous look at his companion's countenance, where, however, he beheld such legible evidences of sincerity and truth, that he could not doubt his assertion, and being now reduced to a non-plus, he determined to satisfy his curiosity by the point-blank question of—"Pray, then, may I inquire what *was* the object of your coming hither?"

"I come for the purpose of visiting a gentleman in this neighbourhood upon some affairs of business."

"A gentleman in this neighbourhood!—I know them all—I will introduce you to him. What is his name?"

"Mark Penguin," said Henry.

"Mark Penguin!" reiterated the geologist, with an expression of amazement, not altogether unmingled with alarm, and then endeavouring to recover himself and appear unconcerned, he added, "What can you have to say to *him?*" Taken as he was by surprise, he had still pre-

sence of mind enough to resolve on preserving his incognito till this point should be cleared up, for he was not without apprehension that the ghost of some old smuggling transaction might rise up in judgment against him, though it appeared utterly inexplicable how this young man, but just arrived from America, where he had passed nearly all his life, should have become implicated with him and his former contraband practices. Loquacious as he was, he preserved a cautious silence, and gazed with an eager, reddened face upon Henry, as the latter proceeded to state that the first husband of Captain Tenby's widow, had been a Mr. Joseph Penguin, of Montreal, brother to Mr. Mark Penguin, lately resident at Southampton, to whom the widow wished to deliver certain papers and documents left by her deceased first husband, as well as to pay her personal respects to so near a relative, and one with whom she had formerly been in habit of frequent correspondence. In point of fact, Mark had received a letter from her some years before, announcing the death of her husband, in circumstances that scarcely promised to leave her a maintenance;

but as Penguin, like most other worldly men, had an instinctive horror of poor relations, he never noticed her communication, justifying himself at the time by the reflection, that as she was an American, she ought to look for support from her connexions in that country, and vindicating his subsequent silence by choosing to take it for granted, that if she had need of his assistance, she would have made farther application to him. This she would probably have done, but that her marriage with Captain Tenby rendered such a step unnecessary, and in her pique at his leaving her first letter unanswered, she had suffered the correspondence to drop altogether, though she had now become eager to renew the acquaintance, upon learning that her kinsman had retired from business with a handsome fortune. Penguin was by no means pleased with Henry's communication at the first blush of the affair. Conscious, perhaps, that his character did not merit any extraordinary homage, he always suspected the motives of those who said they came to pay their respects to him, and as he set down the averment about the papers and documents for a mere pre-

text, he concluded that the object of the widow's visit to Europe was to make a vehement appeal to his feelings and his purse. The vision of a weeping female in weeds, a white cambric handkerchief in her hand, her heart full, and her pocket empty, began to float before his imagination, and he determined not to disclose himself until he had ascertained the probability of his being haunted with any such apparition. The subsequent information that he received, soon dissipated all his apprehensions, whether pathetic or pecuniary. So little importance did Henry attach to money, and so small an income appeared to him a competency, that without mentioning the exchange he had voluntarily made with the widow, he stated the amount of her fortune, adding that he himself, owing to the bounty of the captain, who had adopted him as his son, was in independent circumstances, and that the necessary transferring of stock, consequent upon his coming of age, which had been the cause of their voyage to England, had just been completed in London.

This unexpected intelligence effected an instantaneous and surprising change in the mind

of Penguin. Attaching a much more important meaning to the words "independent circumstances" than Henry had intended to convey, he saw at once the propriety of cultivating a strict intimacy with a sister-in-law who had a comfortable provision for life, and a young man of fortune, by connecting himself with whom he might materially increase his own consequence and the opinion of his gentility in the neighbourhood. Such anticipations had rapidly flitted through his head, while his companion had been speaking, and he had no sooner concluded, than he burst into a forced laugh, exclaiming, "Gad! I was determined to surprise you—did I not keep my incognito famously? Whom do you think you have been talking to all this while? why, to no other than the very man of whom you are in search, to Mark Penguin himself, and most happy am I, my dear young friend, to make your acquaintance; since, as you must indeed have observed, I took a strange fancy to you from the very first moment I beheld you."

Here he seized his companion's hand, and shaking it with a heartiness which might now

be pronounced genuine, since his disposition was really cordial, when unchecked by any fears of a pecuniary nature, he expressed his delight at their happy meeting, inquired very particularly after Mrs. Tenby's health, and protested that he would not part with his companion, now that they had so fortunately encountered, but that he must go home and dine with him, that they might arrange their future plans and proceedings. "My forlorn plight," said he, looking down at his bedraggled clothes, "hardly qualifies me for prolonging our ramble, which we will, however, resume to-morrow; and, to tell you the truth, I find myself so much chilled by the mud and water of that cursed Miller's-run, that I shall not be sorry to change my soiled equipments for clean and dry garments. The geologists, however, ought not to quarrel with the earth for leaving its honourable mark upon us:—We are of the earth--earthy. Ha, ha! you 'll excuse my being a bit of a wag. Come along, my young friend, come along."

Henry signified his willing acceptance of the invitation, and Penguin accordingly proceeded at an accelerated pace towards his own dwelling.

CHAPTER V.

The way is plain before us—there is now
The lover's visit first, and then the vow
Mutual and fond, the marriage-rite—the bride
Brought to her home with all a husband's pride.
But in short time he saw with much surprise
Commanding frowns, and anger-darting eyes.

CRABBE.

THEY who are young should not marry yet, those who are old should not marry at all, says Thales the philosopher. In his prudence and worldly wisdom, Penguin had observed the first clause of the apopthegm; but when his independent circumstances authorized him, as he thought, to follow his own fancy, he had neglected the last half of the position. Just as he was meditating a retirement from business, he

was seized with a tedious malady, for which change of air was prescribed; and he accordingly engaged lodgings, at the distance of a few miles from Southampton, in the house of a widow named Jarvis, apparently a very respectable woman, who, with her daughter, promised to take all possible care of the invalid, and to make him quite as comfortable as if he were at home. The mother, an exceedingly plausible, but shrewd and artful woman of the world, no sooner learned the circumstances of her lodger, than she felt a deep interest in performing this promise, having promptly formed a hope that, by proper management, she might entrap him as a husband for her daughter. Laura, for such was the name of the latter, was a fine, showy-looking girl, somewhat more dashing in her style of dress than became her station, though by no means an unattractive figure, especially to a bachelor verging upon sixty. No sooner was she apprized of her mother's designs, than she entered into them with the utmost alacrity, and prosecuted them with a proportionate address. Rendering her appearance as alluring as possible, she found an excuse, in

the invalid's state of health, for being perpetually about his person, preparing with her own hand his slops and broths, administering his medicaments, providing his little delicacies when he became convalescent, and omitting no opportunity of amusing his mind, while she contributed to alleviate his personal ailments.

Penguin was neither ungrateful for her unremitting attentions, nor insensible to the influence of her personal charms; but as she was more than young enough to be his daughter, her appearance rather suggested to him the propriety of his choosing a wife with similar qualifications, but of a more appropriate age, than presented her to his mind as calculated to supply the desiderated helpmate in her own person. In fact, he had no idea that she would accept a husband so much older than herself, even were he bold enough to overlook the disparity of their years, and make her an offer of his hand; in which persuasion he prepared to leave the house, not, however, without warm expressions and liberal testimonies of his gratitude. Alarmed at these demonstrations of departure, Mrs. Jarvis proceeded to adopt such effectual mea-

sures for the attainment of her object, and was so artfully and effectually seconded by her daughter, that in the course of a few weeks Laura became Mrs. Penguin.

In explanation of the young lady's anxiety to effect this incongruous union, it may be stated that she had, a year or two before this period, been so unfortunate as to commit a *faux pas*, which, by the mother's wary management, had been carefully hushed up at the moment; but as it was by no means impossible that the affair might transpire, an event which would not tend to increase the number of candidates for her hand, she deemed it highly advisable to get married with as little delay as possible. Mrs. Jarvis was the more anxious to see her settled, from her knowledge of Laura's light, unsteady character; and when to these weighty considerations were added a present settlement of two hundred pounds a-year, and the prospect of becoming a well provided widow, should she survive Penguin, of which there could be little doubt, disparity of years appeared so trivial an objection, as scarcely to deserve a moment's thought. In the daughter's

estimation, indeed, the advanced age of her husband was rather an advantage, as bringing within nearer view that happy period when she might indemnify herself at the altar of love, for those sacrifices which she now made at the shrines of wealth and prudence.

To judge by external manifestations, never was so watchful, so diligent, so anxious a wife. She took into her own hands the complete control of his household, the superintendence of his health, the direction of almost every action of his life, so that her love, for such her husband chose to call it, soon degenerated into an absolute tyranny, which she sometimes exercised in a way rather painful to his feelings, by displaying her authority in the presence of his friends and visitants. To reconcile himself and others to this obtrusive domination, he would candidly confess that her fondness became occasionally importunate and troublesome, but that knowing how she doated upon him, how deep and tender was her solicitude for his welfare, he must be the most ungrateful of men, in fact, little better than a brute, did he not humour her in these little, affectionate, though

perhaps over-anxious interferences. Now and then he would vary the ground he took in defence of his own independence, pointing out beforehand this foible in his better half, declaring that there was nothing in which he took so much delight, after geology, as in the display of character, and volunteering to *draw out* Mrs. Penguin's foibles and peculiarities in justification of his assertions; a process by which he flattered himself that he should keep the upper hand in the opinion of his guests at the very moment that he most submissively yielded himself up to the lady's dominion.

Seeing her stand at the open door of the house as he approached, he gave Henry a hasty intimation of these particulars, as if to prepare him for an effusion of her petulant fondness, notwithstanding which caution, his companion was somewhat surprised at the shrewish tone of reprehension in which she exclaimed, as soon as she had discovered her husband's bespattered condition, "Hoity-toity! Mr. P. is this a plight for a gentleman to come home in, splashed and draggled as if he were a common hedger and ditcher, who had been dragging a fish-

pond, or cleaning out a cesspool? What! have you been diving after stones into the mud and water, like a Newfoundland dog? Faugh! it must have been some filthy place, for it has the noisomest smell I ever came nigh. You 'll be drowned or smothered one of these days, if you go on with such foolish dangerous freaks, poking into wells, and grubbing into pits, after rubbish and old brickbats."

"After minerals, spars, and subterranean rarities, you mean. Zooks! my dear, it would never do for a staunch geologist like me to boggle at every puddle or quagmire,"—and he winked his eye at Henry as he spoke, as if to intimate that he enjoyed the voluble anxiety of his spouse.

"I 'm no person to be winked at, nor is it a matter to be passed off with a nod, Mr. P.," resumed the magisterial dame; "when you may be laid up again for six weeks with a rheumatic attack, as you were with a sprained ankle, after tumbling down the cliff of Christchurch Bay, in ferreting out an old bone."

"An elephant's tooth, a rare and invaluable fossil, as I hope to be saved!" said the geologist, appealing to Henry. "That was the

pleasantest roll I ever had, for I kept the elephant's tooth in my hand all the while."

"Yes; but you had one of your own knocked out of your head, which is little better than a fool's exchange; and I found nothing so pleasant in having to nurse you early and late, night and day, and you as cross all the time as two sticks."

"Gadso! I believe I must plead guilty to that charge, though I had the best nurse in all the world. But I cannot bear to be tied by the leg; it 's like caging an eagle."

"Cooping a goose, you mean, Mr. P., and cooped you are again likely to be, if you stand talking any longer in your wet clothes, so be pleased to change them as fast as you can. Your things have been airing ever since breakfast-time, and you will find them all ready in your room; for somehow or other, I had a misgiving that you would come home as if you had been dragged through a horse-pond. I 'm sure it 's a mercy you have one like me to think for ye, and look after ye, and take care of ye."

"'Gad! there 's some truth in that," whispered Penguin to his companion, as he led him

forwards into the house: "faithful, fond creature—admirable manager—truly attached to me—invaluable wife, to be sure! Did you see how I drew her out, on purpose to exhibit the little oddities of her character to you? play'd her off famously, didn't I? That 's the way I always serve her. Vastly amusing sometimes."

By this time they had reached a handsome parlour, when the geologist, having retired to his toilet, Henry had an opportunity of observing that the room bespoke the taste of its owner, being decorated with engravings of minerals, petrifactions, shells, corals, and various vegetable and animal fossils, while the mantelpiece was encumbered with specimens of the same nature, all neatly ticketed and labelled, in Penguin's own round legible hand-writing. Only a short interval had elapsed, when the geologist, who was rapid in all his movements, re-entered the apartment, so much improved in his appearance, that Henry could hardly recognize in the really respectable-looking figure now before him, his late companion of the shabby fustian jacket, seal-skin cap, and loaded wallet. Penguin, however, had by no means changed

his habits with his habiliments; for observing that his guest had been examining, for want of better occupation, one of the fossils, he immediately exclaimed, "Aha! my young friend, that's a rarity, is it not? But these are nothing; only the dunnage of my cargo, as I may say. Come along, come along to my museum, and you shall see all my treasures." So saying, he seized the arm of his victim, and hurried him, *nolens volens*, to the room in question; a spacious apartment, surrounded with glazed mahogany-cases, well filled with geological curiosities, mineral and fossil, all bearing inscriptions and numbers, to enable their proprietor to refer them to their proper species and classes.

Being now upon his own dunghill, no cock who had found a pearl could crow more loudly and lustily, and although Henry might have truly exclaimed, "*Non sum Gallus, ideoquè non reperi gemmam*," he submitted to the infliction without a single symptom of impatience; for, however his manners might occasionally deviate from conventional forms and observances, he was never deficient in that truest and best of all politeness which has its source in benevo-

ence. No sooner, therefore, did he perceive the unfeigned delight with which Penguin rode his harmless hobby, than he gave him his entire attention, more for the purpose of gratifying his host, than from any interest that he took in the display of his treasures. He even courteously assisted in referring to sundry engravings and scientific books upon a large table in the centre of the room, when illustrations or descriptions were required of any particular specimens, a process which was facilitated by labels pasted upon the bottom of each by Penguin's own hand.

It was however no small gratification to Henry, especially as he had acquired an importunate appetite by his excursion, when he was relieved from this duty by the announcement of dinner, and ushered to a board spread with a copiousness which he had hardly anticipated. Mrs. Penguin was none of those lenten housewives who could be taken by surprise. She never had occasion to excuse a shabby dinner to an unexpected guest, by saying she wished he had given her notice of his coming; nor to an invited one, by the doubtful compliment of telling

him she had treated him as a friend. With the common mistake of under-bred people, she considered expensive clothes, and the maintenance of a handsome table, the distinguishing and infallible characteristics of gentility; and being at once vain of her person, and somewhat over-addicted to good living, she never failed to bedizen herself every day with bustling and exuberant finery, and to sit down to a very substantial and diversified dinner. During the progress of the repast, Mrs. Penguin, whose zeal for her husband's health was of a most fidgetty and fussy character, performed for him the same unwelcome office discharged by Sancho Panza's physician, laying an authoritative interdict upon all such viands as she thought calculated to disagree with him. Upon the present occasion, he would gladly have dispensed with her tyrannical veto, more especially as she herself spared none of the forbidden dishes; but she was neither disposed to relax in her vigilance, nor even to relent at his occasional appeals, to which she generally replied by a peevish—"Pooh! pooh! don't tell me, Mr. P. don't you remember how ill it

made you at such and such a time?" always taking care to specify the exact day. At the same moment she generally ordered the servant to bring from the sideboard and to place before him some little delicacy of which she knew him to be particularly fond, and it was by this sort of double solicitude, thwarting his palate when it could not be safely gratified, and indulging it where his health did not forbid, that she had established and maintained her ascendency. Penguin never opposed her officious dictation, but as he felt it to be somewhat derogatory, he again seized the opportunity of whispering to his guest, as soon as her back was turned, "Haven't I played upon her foibles finely! I didn't want any of those dishes—never touch them, but resolved to let you see what a sharp look-out she keeps upon my health; what 's the consequence? Never ill; neither sick nor sorry —don't spend five guineas a year upon apothecaries and doctors; all owing to her, excellent creature! devotedly attached to me, invaluable wife! It's really too bad of me, but I 'm so fond of exhibiting character, that I purposely humour her now and then, just to draw out

those little distinctive traits, those amiable peculiarities that I mentioned. Described her well, didn't I, hey ?"

Notwithstanding her prodigious merits as a wife, and his own skill in exhibiting them, her absence evidently freed him from a certain degree of awkwardness and restraint; for he now talked with a more cheerful volubility, severely scolded the man servant who brought in the wine, not so much for the alleged shaking of the basket, which was indeed án imaginary offence, as to prove that he could at least exercise proper authority over his domestics; extolled his claret, smacked his lips, pushed about the bottle, disserted rather pompously upon his fortune, his museum, and the respectable and wealthy neighbours who visited him; and having thus, as he thought, re-established that dignity, which might perchance have been lowered, in the eyes of his guest, by the domination exercised by Mrs. Penguin, his ruling passion of curiosity recovered its sway, and he proceeded to interrogate his companion as to his plans, prospects, and intentions. Henry, who was upon all occasions frank and open as the

day, stated that his mother designed paying a visit to her kinsman, as soon as she had learned his address, and obtained his permission for doing so, which had been the object of his own visit to Thaxted; and that he himself, purporting to settle in England, should probably fix wherever his mother did, being perfectly indifferent as to localities. The last statement was by no means unacceptable to Penguin, who, in the desire of relieving the occasional tedium of his life, and in the belief that he should increase his respectability by promoting an intimacy with Henry, whom he set down for a young man of handsome fortune, was already anxious to secure him as a permanent neighbour, an object most likely to be attained by inviting him to become his temporary guest. Such an important step, however, was not to be hazarded without the previous concurrence of his wife, whom he forthwith sought, assigning as the sole motive of his proposed arrangement the desire of contributing to her comfort by the society of Mrs. Tenby. Mrs. Penguin, who had been much struck by Henry's handsome appearance and frank manners, giving a ready assent to his

scheme, the geologist, having now plenary authority to act, returned to the dining-room, and after setting forth the peculiar recommendations of his own vicinity, as a place of residence, its salubrity, its rural beauty, its propinquity to the sea, and above all, the great advantage of his being able to introduce them to the best society in the neighbourhood, he concluded with inviting Henry and his mother to pass two or three months with him at Grotto-house, for such was the name of his mansion; observing, that they could thus form an opinion of the country, and decide whether they should choose it as a place of permanent abode. Unable to resist, even at the expense of truth, a little bravado in support of his marital authority, he added, that he had not communicated his intention to Mrs. Penguin, that it was altogether unnecessary, since he had only to signify his own wishes upon any subject whatever, to ensure her immediate acquiescence, an observation which he gave with a considerable air of self-importance. Henry thankfully accepted the invitation, adding his persuasion that his mother would be equally glad to avail herself of her

kinsman's kindness; which point being settled, and a bottle of excellent claret having been finished, he prepared to return to his inn, in spite of the pressing instances of his host, that he should make Grotto-house his present quarters.

"I wish to see a little more of the neighbourhood," was his reply. "I told the waiter at the George, that I should pass a few days at the inn, and I never forfeit my word, unless from necessity."

"All right, perfectly right, my young Domine; but a loose promise of this sort—"

"I know not the meaning of the term;—if a promise implies performance, it cannot be loose; if it do not, it is no promise. There are no degrees of comparison in truth."

"Gadso! my young friend, you are logical; but surely you may mean what you promise, and yet be subsequently prevented from performing it."

"If the prevention be absolute it is a sufficient excuse, but mere change of will is a poor apology for breaking our word. If we violate truth in trifles, we shall soon cease to respect it

in matters of moment. You must allow me to wish you a good evening, but I shall be at your service to-morrow for the renewal of our ramble."

"Well, well, I see by your peremptory look that you have made up your mind; and since, as they say, one man may lead a horse to the pond, but twenty can't make him drink, you must e'en have your own way. But you can-not think of walking, it is too far after your long morning's ramble; and my man—a very steady fellow is James—shall drive you over in the gig."

"I am obliged to you, but I never ride when I can use my own feet. All persons in good health should use exercise; I have no complaint, and it is fit, therefore, that I should walk."

"Nay, if you bring your first and third into the same denomination, and prove it by the rule of three, there's no gainsaying you; but you must at least allow me to accompany you part of the way. James, bring me my hat and stick. Shall I take my wallet and hammer? No, it will be getting too late, and besides, we shall

renew our researches early in the morning. Gad! though I cannot vault over the Miller's-run like a roebuck, I can stir about upon my legs as well as any man of my standing in the whole county, so come along, my young friend, come along."

So saying, he bustled at a brisk pace towards the hall-door, where, however, he was interrupted by the ever-watchful Mrs. Penguin, who exclaimed as he approached—"Here 's doings Mr. P.!—here's fine doings! going out again such a damp afternoon as this, after you have been already drenched and soused like a blind puppy; and never thinking of those that have got to nurse and wait upon you, should you catch cold, as ten to one you will, or be laid up again with the rheumatism. I have half a mind to say you sha'n't stir a step, but if you must needs go a gadding, when you ought to be sitting at home and drinking a treacle-posset, let James, at least, fasten on your gaiters, and take this umbrella with you, and put this handkerchief in your pocket to wrap round your throat as you return, and don't make it late. I won't have you be late, for it looks very like rain,

and God knows what might be the consequences of the wet and the night air, after being be-draggled and horseponded as you have been this morning!"

"All right, perfectly right, my dear," said the obedient husband, putting on the gaiters which the careful wife had brought with her. "Gadso! there's no harm in being on the safe side."

James in the meanwhile kept holding open the hall-door, and surveying the process as his master buttoned his gaiters; when Penguin, who wanted a set-off against his own submissiveness to his spouse, cried with an authoritative voice and look, "Why do you stand gaping there, you stupid fellow? get along with you, get along!"

The man, a quiet civil rustic in a flaming livery, withdrew without saying a word, and Penguin, carefully accoutred for his afternoon's walk, was at length allowed the liberty of quitting his own house. "This good creature," he said, as they passed into the garden, "is ever on the watch for my health and comfort. Coming in or going out, as you have

seen, she is always thinking of me: though, to be sure, I have rather led her to exhibit herself to-day for your amusement. I longed to show you her weak side. Some people would be offended at her little importunities, but that's not the case with me. Thank God! I'm not a bad husband, and with such a treasure of a wife, I should indeed be a brute if I were."

The principal object of the geologist in offering to walk part of the way back with his visitant, was to show him a grotto at the extremity of his grounds, from which his mansion had derived its name; though, as far as shells, spars, and minerals were concerned, the dwelling-house deserved the appellation quite as much as its appendage. Here Henry underwent a fresh infliction of hard words, but the catalogue being at length completed, they pursued their way together towards Thaxted.

As they had dined early, it was yet the broad daylight of a fine summer evening, when, on approaching Cowfield Cross, Penguin, having shaded his eyes with his hand, to obtain the better sight of the objects before him, exclaimed, "Yes, sure enough that

is Doctor Dotterel's carriage—I wonder for what purpose it can be stopping there?—and yonder, also, is Mr. Frampton's four-wheeled chaise, and two or three horsemen;—that long-necked black mare must be Frank Ringwood's—and the parties are all confabulating together. Very extraordinary! I must know what all this means. Let us push forward, my young friend; let us step briskly out, or they may separate before we can join them." A few minutes smart walking brought them to the party, several of whom saluted Penguin as he came up, and Doctor Dotterel, leaning out of the window of his ponderous coach, drawn by two club-tailed horses, almost as corpulent as their owner, exclaimed, "Ha! well, I protest, this is curious enough! Had we called a special meeting of the neighbourhood, we should hardly have collected more than we have done in this accidental—hem, ha!—ren-contre. I was mentioning, Mr. Penguin, to my friend Ringwood, who has just joined us—hem!—that it is incumbent upon us to put down this approaching fair. Sir, it is, as I may say—ahem!—an abominable nuisance!

Yes, Sir, a nuisance, promoting vice, and immorality, and profaneness, and all manner of —hem, ha!—in short, quite shocking; and as the vicar of this parish, and a magistrate, and moreover, a minister of the Gospel, I hold it to be my bounden duty—ahem!—in fact, the gentry, and all the persons of respectability—yes, Sir, of respectability—ahem! have determined to support me in suppressing it: and you, Sir, I am quite sure, will be happy to concur—that is, to assist—in short, Sir, to put it down—ahem!"

"Certainly, Doctor, certainly; all right, perfectly right," said Penguin, eagerly, not a little flattered at being thus included among the gentry and persons of respectability; "Any thing that you and the other gentlemen propose, I shall be most happy to support; and, as you very justly observe, we ought all to unite together upon an occasion of this sort."

"I see no necessity for *uniting* with any body," said the gouty and purse-proud Mr. Justinian Frampton, with a supercilious look; "but as holding one of the largest properties in this neighbourhood, and, I believe I might

say, in the whole county, exclusively of my being a magistrate, and one of the verderers of his Majesty's forest, I would gladly co-operate in putting down this fair, which is little better than an assemblage of rogues, and vagabonds, and thieves, and poachers, from whose depredations we have already suffered quite enough."

"'Pon my honour, now, that's parteecularly true," drawled Captain Frampton, the son of the last speaker, who was driving his father in a four-wheeled chaise. "Those dem'd poachers,—I beg pardon, Doctor Dawterel,—those confounded poachers ruined our preserves last season—not a phaisant to be seen; don't know what we shall do in October; uncawmonly disagreeable—besides, a fair's a monsous bore, ain't it now? Such a noise of drums and trumpets—and I've enough of that, you know, when I'm with my raigiment. Besides, a fair's so vulgar, ain't it now? abawminable! Oh! we'll put it down by all means. 'Pon my honour, it's quite laughable."

What was quite laughable it might have puzzled the captain to explain, but as the word

afforded him an excuse for smiling, and displaying a remarkably fine set of teeth, he was in the habit of using it as a peroration which, whether appropriate or not, would, at least, leave his countenance, which was really handsome, in a becoming and gracious expression.

"Oh! curse the fellows!" cried one of the horsemen; "let us summon the whole *posse comitatus*, and suppress the fair by all means, if it brings any more poachers amongst us. We've been quite out of luck lately, only shot a couple of them since last February, not in these parts, at least. Some of the keepers must play booty, or they might have turned a dozen of them into dog's meat in that time. The lazy rascals won't get out of their beds if they hear a night shot."

"You will never get griping old Gideon Welbeck to consent to it," observed another horseman; "for, as lord of the manor, he gets certain fees by it; and if it only puts ten pounds in his pocket, he will uphold the fair, although, as a magistrate, it is his duty to crush it."

"We are quite aware of that," resumed the former; "but we proposed to remunerate the

old curmudgeon by a general subscription, which would presently be filled."

"It is not as if there were no monied people in the neighbourhood," said the elder Mr. Frampton, with a consequential look, evidently meant to restrict that distinction to his own person.

During the latter speeches, Penguin had taken an opportunity of informing Dr. Dotterel in a whisper, that his companion, a distant connexion of his own, and the adopted son of the late Captain Tenby, of the Royal Navy, who had left him a handsome fortune, talked of purchasing an estate and settling in the vicinity of Thaxted, a communication which had such a manifest effect upon the Doctor's estimate of the stranger, that he leaned forward out of the window of his carriage, and said to Henry, with a half bow—"So I find, Mr. Melcomb, that you are likely to become one of our neighbours. Ahem! Well, I protest, it's singular that we should all meet together! And as I may look upon you as one of my future parishioners, and as a gentleman having an undoubted—ahem!—that is to say, about to hold

property in the neighbourhood; I cannot for a moment entertain a question—in fact, a doubt, that you will consider it your duty—yes, Sir, your bounden duty, should you become one of us, to co-operate in putting down this most—ahem!—this most abominable nuisance!"

"It is not probable that I shall ever be authorised to interfere in this matter," said Henry; "but if I were, I should most certainly exercise my influence in supporting, not in suppressing the fair, for if it be held by the lord of the manor, as one of these gentlemen has just observed, I doubt whether the magistrates have any legal right to interpose; and even it be not, I am sure there could be neither justice nor right feeling in such a measure."

"I protest, Sir, that I should be glad to hear a reason assigned for such a very—hem! very extraordinary opinion."

"I think the amusements of the poor, who have most need of recreation, are already infinitely too much curtailed," continued Henry; "and I have heard no valid reason assigned for still farther limiting them in the present instance. Horse races occasion a much greater

assemblage of rogues, vagabonds, and pic-pockets, than a fair; and until I see the gentry voluntarily suppressing the sports of the turf, and hunting, and shooting, as well as balls, concerts, and operas, none of which are free from objections, I cannot lend myself to that partial morality, which directs its indignation exclusively against the amusements of the lower orders. Surely the labouring classes require relaxation more than those who never toil; and if the magistrates must interfere at all, I should recommend them to begin with racing, and the sports of the field, which, as they cannot be practised without gambling, wrangling, and wanton cruelty, are infinitely more immoral than the noisy merriment, or even the occasional intemperance of a fair."

"I protest, Sir," said Dr. Dotterel, squeezing himself back into his carriage with some difficulty and a good deal of horror, "I never in all my life heard—hem!—such unprecedented,—revolutionary,—they are, in fact, as I may say, completely so." And turning away his eyes from Henry, as if he considered him unworthy of any farther notice, he continued,

addressing himself to Frank Ringwood, "You cannot surely deny, Mr. Ringwood, the mischiefs that spring from this scene of vice and iniquity—hem!—yes, Sir, iniquity, since only last year there was a case in *pint*"—

"In *point*," audibly ejaculated Henry.

"It so happened," pursued the Doctor, not noticing this little interruption—"It so happened, Mr. Ringwood—how it was, I protest, I cannot immediately discover; that is to say, recollect,—hem!—but just at that time my carriage was mending—"

"Being mended," again interposed Henry, as if talking to himself, and yet loud enough to be heard by all the party.

"I cannot submit to this," said the Doctor, reddening; "I protest it is absolutely,—nay, worse! Good evening, Mr. Ringwood,—I will tell you another time what I was about to state. Mr. Frampton, I will do myself the honour of calling at the Hall. Drive on, coachman, drive on. Aha!—shocking! shocking!—I hope we are not going to have any radicals in the parish. Drive on—home! home!—hem!"

"If the gentleman held any property in the

neighbourhood," said Mr. Frampton, "he would not, probably, entertain such wild and dangerous notions. We, of the landed interest—"

"'Pon my honour, Sir," interposed the Captain, "the dust of the Doctor's coach is quite intawlerable,—ain't it now? Railly, his horses ought not to be allowed to powder gentlemen's trowsers in this shocking manner. Shall I drive on?—Suppress racing and hunting! Never heard such an extror'nary proposition; perfectly redeeculous and laughable, 'pon my honour!" So saying, he nodded to Ringwood, displaying his white teeth in spite of the dust, and drove off, neither himself nor his father taking any farther notice of Henry or Penguin.

"Gadzooks! my young friend," cried the latter, with a look of chagrin, "how could you think of expressing your opinions so unguardedly? I'm sadly afraid you have offended the worthy Doctor, as well as Mr. Frampton; both of them gentlemen of the first consequence in this neighbourhood."

"My opinion was asked; I spoke what I thought; and I should have done the same had they been emperors. In my estimation, truth

is of infinitely more consequence than either of these gentlemen, though I am far from questioning their respectability."

"My dear Mr. Ringwood," resumed Penguin, vexed at the evident discomposure of those who had departed, and therefore the more anxious to conciliate his remaining auditors, "you will, I am sure, excuse my young friend, when I inform you, that he is but lately arrived from America, and has hardly had time to accustom himself to our manners."

"Tush! neighbour, make no apologies to me, man. I respect the young gentleman for his honest, manly candour; and whatever I may think of his opinions in other respects, I quite agree with him about this foolish and tyrannical attempt at suppressing the fair, which I shall most certainly oppose. Ay, and I should have told the Doctor my mind very plainly, had he not driven off in such dudgeon. Come, lads, shall we trot? There's a heavy shower clouding up from the westward, and we shall have wet jackets, now, before we get to Brook-Hatch." So saying, he nodded to Penguin and Henry, bade them good evening, and moved off

with his companions at a rapid pace; when the geologist again took his companion to task for his imprudence, reminding him, that whatever latitude might be allowed in America, such heterodox sentiments should never be unguardedly uttered in England, especially in the presence of the clergy and the gentry, in whom they would be sure to cause offence; and above all, reprehending his freedom in presuming to correct the Doctor's English."

"If my opinions be founded in reason and justice," said Henry, "it is precisely the clergy and gentry who ought to hear them; because these are the very classes whose conduct I condemn, in grudging every amusement to the poor, while they cling to their own, whatever evils they may entail; a circumstance which subjects them to a strong suspicion of hypocricy, when they assign moral motives for their interference with all the pastimes of the lower classes. As to the Doctor's grammatical errors, it is surely right he should be told of them; since he who sets up for a teacher of others, ought not to use active participles instead of passive."

"I tell you what, my young Domine, you will hear many blunders committed by persons in authority, in which it will much better become you to be passive than active; and, as you are a stranger among us, you will excuse my telling you, that Englishmen are instructed to respect their betters."

"In which term they are sedulously taught to include all those who are richer than themselves; an interpretation to which I can never be brought to submit. My betters in virtue and knowledge I shall always reverence as they deserve; but I cannot sacrifice my own independence to the mere claims of wealth, or even of station."

"All right, perfectly right! every man should think and act for himself; and, thank God! there is nobody more independent, more free from the control of others, than I am; but still—Gadso! it's positively going to rain. Mrs. Penguin said it would; she cautioned me not to be late; and if I should get wet twice in the same day, I shall never hear the end on't. Kind, good, careful creature! how thoughtful of her to

give me the umbrella. Good night, good night! let me see you early to-morrow."

With these word Penguin started off at a long trot, which was manifestly intended to anticipate, if possible, both the shower and the scolding; while Henry, who cared not for rain, and who had no fear of angry tongues if he did not return by a given hour, quietly pursued his way back to Thaxted.

CHAPTER VI.

At last it was hinted that there could be no way so good as that of a round robin, as the sailors call it, which they make use of, when they enter into a conspiracy, so as not to let it be known who puts his name first or last to the paper.

BOSWELL'S LIFE OF JOHNSON.

WHILE the gentry in the neighbourhood of Thaxted were preparing to concert measures for the suppression of the fair, those of the lower orders, who anticipated either profit or amusement from its maintenance, had not been idle. On the following morning, a meeting was held in the club-room of the George-inn, for the purpose of considering what were the most advisable steps to be taken in vindication of their legal rights, and for preserving the inme-

morial usages of the parish; and as it was well known that Mr. Timothy Wicks, the landlord, was in the habit of attending public meetings, as well as scientific lectures, he was unanimously voted into the chair, by a very "numerous and respectable body" of the parishioners—such being the character they bestowed upon their own assemblage, in an address to the magistrates, which was subsequently agreed upon. As the landlord had no wish whatever that the discussion should be a dry one, he had seen with pleasure the long table in the centre of the room gradually covered with porter-pots, pewter-gills, rummers, and glasses of all sorts; nor had he offered any objection to the introduction of tobacco-pipes, which, considering them as special provocatives of drinking, it was his liberal custom to bestow upon the guests for nothing. Now, however, that he was promoted to the dignity of chairman, a sense of propriety and decorum suggested to him that the latter should be laid aside, as not fitting accompaniments for oratory; wherefore, having clamorously thumped the table with a heavy pair of lemon-squeezers till his own noise had silenced

every other, Tim, who fancied himself a little bit of a wag as well as an orator, thus facetiously opened the proceedings of the afternoon. —"Gemmen! as I hope we are all in earnest upon this here occasion, determined to act upon the fulcrum, as I may, and don't mean that our proceedings should end in smoke, I beg to propose that we should begin by laying aside our pipes.—D'ye catch the focus, hey?" A loud haw! haw! attested the success of this incipient sally, several voices exclaiming at the same time—"Bravo, Tim! well said Tim Wicks! that's a good one!"—"If we sit in such a confounded smoke and smother, we shan't be able to hear a word that one another says."—The chairman again plied his lemon-squeezers, ejaculating with a voice of authority —"Chair, chair! it's a moral impossible we can go on, if you won't keep order.—Tony! put out the candle, and take away the pipes; but gemmen will please to call for whatever they like to drink; for we shall hear no worse, and speak all the better, for wetting our whistles now and then: let every man follow his own impetus, and act upon his own equilibrio, that's

my maximum. Gemmen! you all know what we are met here about; and, therefore, there 's no occasion for me to fly off at the tangent of a curve,—to speak in a parabola, which is all the same as a problem, or parable—or to go into all the trigonometry of a fine oration, instead of revolving upon my own circumference, as a body may say, and sticking to my proper diameter. I wish to be solid, rather than fluid, and never to quit—(Tony! pint purl, gemman smock-frock. Coming Sir, coming!)—and never to quit my proper angle of forty-five degrees.—What are we met here for? Why, to uphold this here fair; a question that ought to be discussed with specific gravity, and not lightly, as if we were only talking of a comic section, or any thing of that sort. Gemmen! this here 's a statute fair, founded in law, which I lay down as a vertical truth, so that we 're all rectilinear and parallel with the horizon in supporting it, which is the ratio of the whole radius; and whoever acts upon the diagonal, and stirs a single cubic-foot against us, why, he 's out of the segment of the law, and we 're warranted in knocking him down with a

pendulum or a capillary tube, or any other weapon that comes to hand. Don't ye catch the focus?—(Tony! quart bowl rum-punch two gemmen never a neckcloth. Coming, Sir, coming!)—And another thing, Gemmen;—we're supported in this here matter by Mr. Welbeck, who is not only the lord of the manor, but justice of the peace and quorum, and must surely understand the whole trigonometry of the thing better than any body else; for in all these cases, the impetus is proportioned to the momentum:—that I lay down as another vertical truth, plain as a parallelogram. Well, Gemmen, wherever there's a maximum there's a minimum; that's an axis that no one can deny; and that brings me to Dr. Dotterel our vicar, a very worthy man, no doubt, but he's not the paradox we're all to go by; he's not to set himself up as the polygon of the whole place; and besides, he always joins with the gentry—all on one side, like crooked Martha our cook—no equilibrio about him; so far from it, quite the reverse. D'ye catch the focus? He may alter the Gospel, as we all know, 'cause he's a parson; but he can't alter the law any more

than I can turn a spherical body into a round ball, or a square into a quadrangle, both of which are a moral impossible.—(Tony ! glass brandy-water, Jem Penfold. Coming, Sir, coming !)—Well, Gemmen, to come right slap-bang to the fulcrum, there's Squire Ringwood, whose family have been the centre of gravity to Thaxted time out of mind—he's all for the fair, and that will outweigh the Doctor—no, hang it ! it would take three of him to outweigh the Doctor, speaking according to hydrostatics ; but he 's a match for him upon the square-root, and that 's the same thing. Then there 's Mr. Frampton—Squire Frampton as some folks call him, he's all agin the fair, but what of that ? He may be as rich as a jew, but if he resorts to violence, and goes to put down this here fair by inert force, I maintain, as a mathematical maximum, that he understands nothing of the trigonometry of the law ; and what 's more, that he 's no good Christian.—D'ye catch the focus, hey ?"

"Oo lie, Tim Wicks !" cried the sharp voice of Pompey the Black from one corner of the room. "My massa bery good Chrishun, and he poke oo head in da fire, if oo say him not ; oo

ole talkee, talkee jackass! Dere, Tim Wicks, take dat hickory-nut for oosef to crack!"

At this flagrant insult to their chairman, and violation of all the laws of debate, a clamorous hubbub and confusion suddenly pervaded the meeting, several of the company vociferating, "Turn him out! turn him out!" and others making angry demonstrations for effecting that object; so that Pompey, notwithstanding his being so general a favourite, would have probably been ushered to the door or the window, with very little ceremony, had not the chairman, by stentorian shouts of "Chair! chair! order! order!" seconded by the loud rapping of the lemon-squeezers upon the table, drowned the strife, and again obtained silence. All eyes were turned towards him, in expectation of what important proposition he had to offer worthy of the outrage he had received, and of such a stunning exordium, when Tim Wicks, whose eye was always first directed to his own interest, ejaculated, in a gentle voice—"Tony! a noggin-brandy, gemman in paper-cap!" a mandate so little anticipated after so pointed an insult, and so clamorous an outcry

for silence, that it was received with a loud laugh. The prudent chairman had, in fact, been reflecting, that it would be highly impolitic in the landlord of the George-inn to offend a person of so much wealth and influence as Mr. Frampton, or even to quarrel with his servant; wherefore, he proceeded to state, in his usual Babel dialect, that in the observations he had felt it his duty to make, he had intended nothing disrespectful to his worship Justinian Frampton, Esq., one of their worthy magistrates, concluding with a hope that, after such a declaration, Pompey would ask pardon for the offensive expressions he had used towards himself, in calling him an old jackass.

"Pompey ax pardon!" cried the Black: "No, no, nebber see de day!—oo no' wish say bad words o' my massa? den oo ten times oler and greater jackass than ebber, to speak what oo no mean! Dere, Tim Wicks, dere 's anoder hickory-nut for oo to crack!"

So variable is the temper of a public meeting, that this speech, which a minute or two before would have aggravated the general indignation, only afforded the auditors, now that they were

once disposed to risibility, a plea for another burst of laughter, which the chairman having at length checked by the fresh hammering of his lemon-squeezers, thus proceeded in his oration.

"You may think, Gemmen, that I 've some diagonal motive; that I don't act all together upon the square-root, down upon the fulcrum, as I may say, in wishing to support this here fair; but if you do, you 're all of you turning upon a false pivot. I stand up for our rights and liberties; no sham segment about Tim Wicks! I scorn to allude to my own interests, especially as we have business enough at the George, in a constant state of collision and percussion—in a perpetual motion—never two minutes standing upon the same centre of gravity—toiling and moiling from morning till night;—but, Gemmen, I feel it my duty to state, that on the first day of the fair last year, I took ten pounds at the tap before twelve o'clock, hard money, Gemmen, no chalking or scoring, but right slap-bang, point-blank, plump down upon the fulcrum. D'ye catch the focus?"

"Ay, and by that time the stable was not

only full of horses, but the cow-house and the cart-shed too!" observed Sam Ostler, scratching his head: "that was the day our Ball threw out another spavin right inside of the near hough."

"And afore twelve o'clock o' that day, I 'd-a got my breeches-pocket chuck full o' coppers, gi'n me by one gemman or another, danged if I hadn't!" said Tony the waiter, slapping his right thigh, as if to indicate the successful pocket.

"Order! order! chair!" exclaimed their master, apparently scandalized at this vain glorious boasting of his assistants.

Fat Sam Tapps, of the Cricketers, now felt it incumbent on him to state, that he, too, participated largely in the advantages of the fair; but this was by no means his motive for upholding it, being solely actuated by his regard for his neighbours, and the rights and privileges of the parish at large. The brewer's clerk stated that he was commissioned by his master to make a similar declaration; the traveller of a neighbouring distiller followed in the same strain; a pastry-cook and a victualler were

not a whit less pure and patriotic in their motives for supporting the fair—never was so disinterested, so public-spirited an assemblage. A long and desultory conversation next ensued, as to the measures to be adopted for maintaining their rights; several strangers who had dropped in, proposing resolutions, or urging proceedings of so violent a character, that the prudent chairman thought it high time to interfere.—"Though I am entirely of the same opinion," said he, "as the gemman in the brown smock-frock at the lower end of the table, and quite agree with the tother gemman beyond him—him in the splashed neckcloth and greasy jacket—as to the unlawfulness of putting down this here fair; and think, moreover, that we ought to show our spirit in the matter, because, according to the old proverb, 'None but the brave deserve the fair,'—D'ye catch the focus?—yet, howbeit, nevertheless, and notwithstanding, we must act upon the horizontal, and not get into any legal quandary, by going out of our own axis. For my part, I wish to walk uprightly, and go upon the square as a true parallelo-biped ought to do, without any

inverse ratio, or vulgar-fractions, or any thing of that sort; and, therefore,—(Tony! gemman calls glass of gin. Coming, Sir, coming!)—and therefore, Gemmen, I'll read you an address to the magistrates, drawn up by my nevy, who is clerk to a lawyer, and therefore understands the whole trigonometry of the matter, from the maximum to the minimum, from the axis to the horizon; and I think you'll all agree with me, Gemmen, that, though it's respectively worded, it gives the magistrates a pretty hard hit, ay, that it does, right down, slap-bang, point-blank, plump upon the fulcrum!"

The chairman accordingly read the address, which, contesting the right of the magistrates to interfere with a fair appointed by law, displayed all the forms, technicalities, and legal expletives, that could be stuffed into it by a pedantic lawyer's clerk, and concluded with expressing the determination of the undersigned parishioners to hold the fair in the usual way, paying the customary dues to the lord of the manor, and to repel force by force, should any attempt be made to interfere with their lawful recreation. As the phraseology of this paper was for the

most part utterly unintelligible, it was taken for granted that it was sound good law; the concluding resolution was at least comprehensible, and as this portion met the wish of all parties, the address was proposed and carried, *nem. con.* amidst the triumphant clattering of pewter-pots, gills, glasses, and knuckles, upon the table.—That no one might appear in the invidious light of a leader, or instigator, of these proceedings, it was agreed that the signatures should be in the form of a round robin; a measure which threatened some little graphical difficulties, until a carpenter present, placing a pewter-pot upon the paper, ran his pencil round its base, and the chairman proceeded to explain, in the clearest manner possible, that every signature should begin at the outside diameter of the circle, and describe a radii, so that the whole, when completed, should present an atmospherical shape. The majority appeared not a little bepuzzled at this darkening illustration, when an honest cartwright, after poring upon the paper, and scratching his head for a couple of minutes, exclaimed, "Heart alive, Tim Wicks! I'll be chucked right into the horse-pond, if you don't

mean that we should sign it all sloping from the round line, like the spokes of a wheel, like—"

"That 's precisely my maximum," said the chairman.

"Then why couldn't ye say so?" resumed the cartwright, "without such a mort of fine words and flummery, that are of no more use than so much shavings and sawdust. Come! shall I sign first? Bat Haselgrove ar'nt ashamed of his name."

"Write away," said the facetious chairman, a little stung, perhaps, at the reflections upon his oratory—"Write away, for as all the spokes begin at the nave, it is right that you should take the lead!"

"Haw! haw!" shouted those who understood the joke—"well said, Tim Wicks!" while Tony, not having comprehended the hit till the others had all done laughing, blusted out a posthumous "Haw! haw! haw! master had you there, Bat Haselgrove, danged if he hadn't!"

The process of signing, as soon as the first difficulty was overcome, proceeded fluently enough, although several, whose attention to

the more important branches of education had prevented their acquiring the art of penmanship, slipped under various pretexts out of the room; while others, disdaining flight, sturdily observed, "it signified no odds whether they scratched paper or not; there wasn't room for all, their names were well known, they approved of the address, and what they had said they would stick to, come what would on't." There were, in fact, enough without these parties to complete the round robin, and though many of the autographs evidently proceeded from men more accustomed to hold the plough-stilts than the pen, we can certify, from an accurate comparison of the two documents, that they were, upon the whole, much more creditable to the writers than the signatures of the lords spiritual and temporal to Magna Charta.

It now only remained to be settled who should present the address to Justice Frampton, whom it had been resolved to assail in the first instance, since it was known that Justice Welbeck was already favourable to their cause, and it was concluded that Dr. Dotterel, the remaining magistrate, would be entirely governed by

the decision of his wealthy friend and neighbour Mr. Framptom. Simple as it might appear, this question was not of very easy adjustment, for there was too much reason to apprehend that the latter gentleman might take the matter in high dudgeon, as an evidence of an insubordinate and revolutionary spirit, and few of the present assemblage, most of them tradesmen or persons of an inferior station, cared to receive the first brunt of his indignation, more especially as he was of a haughty, morose, and arbitrary temper. Who should "bell the cat" might not have been decided until the present time, had not fat Sam Tapps proposed, that they should draw lots for the performance of the obnoxious office; a proposition which was instantly adopted, and carried into execution, when it appeared that the choice had fallen upon Tony the waiter. A blank and bewildered look of alarm, a long whistling "Wheugh!" and a simultaneous slap upon his right-thigh, attested his first sense of this unwelcome dignity, which he seemed to relish no more than did Falstaff "such grinning honour as Sir Walter hath;" but ashamed of appearing

chicken-hearted before so many of his neighbours, he gathered up a long breath, and puffing it out again with a fierce look, exclaimed, "Well, I don't care a farden, not I!—who 's afeard?—I'll gi' it to un, right plump into his own hand, danged if I don't," a resolution that was fortified by cries of "Bravo, Tony! Well said, Tony!" from several of the bystanders.

At this stage of the proceedings, two additional personages entered the debating-room. The first, who had dismounted from a beautiful blood-mare, which appeared to have travelled far and fast, and which he himself had carefully installed before he entered the house, was of rather short stature, but of remarkably broad, muscular, almost Herculean frame, with a face of very singular and striking appearance. In shape it was nearly triangular, the broad chin and jowl forming the widest part. The forehead was narrow, the round, black, sparkling bold eyes were set close together, the nose was salient and well-formed, but the mouth was disproportionately wide, while the lines, or rather the cordage that drew his face in deep furrows all around it, together with the dark

hue of his muzzle, well-shaven as it was, and a profusion of black, thick curling hairs falling down to his shoulders like a mane, imparted to his whole physiognomy a pointed resemblance to that of a lion. Free from any fell or savage expression, his countenance, indeed, exhibited much of the calm, noble, imperturbable courage observable in the look of that king of the forest. He wore a frock and waistcoat of dark-coloured velveteen, blue cloth trowsers, and enormous fisherman's boots, reaching half-way up his thigh. A rare India shawl was tied round his throat, and when his waistcoat and shirt were blown open, it might be seen that his chest was as shaggy as that of the animal which he so much resembled in his visage. In his hand he carried a rich meerschaum-pipe, which he immediately began to smoke; nor did any one care to tell him of the chairman's interdict, all making respectful way for him as he entered, while a buzz of "the Capt'n, the Capt'n! make way for the Capt'n!" ran round the room, and continued till he seated himself and pursued his smoking, which he did without uttering a word.

"Ay," observed one, "they may bring their bum-bailies and malicious men, and what not, to put down the fair, but if the Capt'n were to lift up his little finger, he could soon gather a hundred men about their ears to serve them with sauce they wouldn't like!"

"Ay, and a hundred to the back of them," said a second.

"That 's what he could, and a hundred to the back of them," added a third. There was a momentary pause, when the Captain, taking the pipe from his mouth, said in a loud and deep, but calm voice,

"And a hundred more to the back of them, —all good men, and true!" when he replaced his pipe, and quietly resumed his puffing.

The other person who had entered the room at the same time with the Captain, was Henry Melcomb, who proceeded to address the assemblage, informing them that he had only just learned the object of their meeting, or he should have sooner attended for the purpose of giving it his support; condemning the illegal conduct of the magistrates in the proposed suppression of the fair; recommending to his hearers to be

peaceful and orderly, but at the same time firm in opposing it, and offering to be himself the bearer of the address, should such be the wish of the meeting. Henry's fearless honesty of purpose always imparted such an earnestness to his oratory, that it seldom failed to touch the feelings and adapt itself to the faculties of his auditors; while, upon the present occasion, it offered such a contrast to the rigmarole fustian of Tim Wicks, that his speech was received with enthusiastic applause, and cries of "None but the brave deserve the fair!" followed by buzzing inquiries of, "Who is he, who is he?" Tony, in particular, who, in spite of his assumed courage, was not a little anxious to avoid delivering the address, not knowing to what perils it might subject him, applauded the speaker still more vehemently than the rest, exclaiming, "That chap's a proper good'n!—got some pluck in him, danged if he ha'n't!" while the Captain, taking the pipe from his mouth, and coming towards Henry, said:—

"Lookee, Sir, I never interfere in these matters, never lift a hand nor stir a foot unless where Government's concerned, but it does my

heart good to see any of the gentry attending a meeting of this sort, especially a brave and honest man, like yourself; and I, for one, should be proud that you should carry our address, if so be you 're a parishioner or a settler among us, for we hav'n't any of us the honour of knowing you."

Henry confessed that he was neither the one nor the other, an admission which, in the opinion of the meeting, rendered it impossible to accept his offer without throwing an imputation of cowardice upon their own body; under which impression they recurred to their first intention of confiding it to Tony, and Henry withdrew, with a fresh declaration of his readiness to promote their object, whenever he could do so with propriety. Having been much struck with the appearance of the Captain; as he was called, he inquired of several who and what he was; but could get no other answer than that it was "the Captain," and that every body knew "the Captain" in these parts as well as they knew Thaxted Church. Any attempt to obtain more explicit information was evaded with a look of suspicion, and an air of mystery and reserve,

that induced him to forbear from farther interrogatories, and he accordingly walked over to Grotto-house to keep his appointment with Penguin.

Meanwhile the proceedings at the George suffered no interruption; the brewer's clerk observing that it was desirable their envoy should, for their own honour, assume as respectable an appearance as possible, offered to lend him a suit of clothes of his own, Tony's being by no means of an embassadorial character; while the barber generously volunteered to curl his lank hair, hitherto unacquainted with hot iron. He retired accordingly for the purpose of completing his investiture, and upon his return into the room, the Captain was so much amused with his altered appearance, that he offered to treat him with whatever he should like to drink; observing, that he would execute his commission all the better if he were well primed before he went off. Tony was not slow to accept the proffer; and at this juncture, Pompey the Black coming forward, and declaring that he was as staunch an advocate for the fair as any man present, although he was Mr. Frampton's ser-

vant, promised that Tony should have immediate admission to his master the moment that he presented himself at the Hall. This pledge gave so much satisfaction to the Captain, that he invited him to participate in his capacious bowl of rum-punch before he returned home; and as the Negro happened to have a particular predilection for that beverage, he did not wait to be twice solicited, but sate himself down, and pushed in his glass, and unsheathed his white teeth with a most radiant and cordial smile.

CHAPTER VII.

Oh! the charm that manners draw,
Nature, from thy genuine law!
Thro' benign affections, pure—
In the slight of self, secure—
If, from what her hand would do,
Or tongue utter, there ensue
Aught untoward or unfit,
Transient mischief, vague mischance,
Shunn'd by guarded elegance,
Her's is not a cheek shame-stricken,
But her blushes are joy-flushes—
And the fault, (if fault it be,)
Only ministers to quicken
Laughter-loving gaiety,
And kindle sportive wit.

WORDSWORTH.

LEAVING this party to finish their bowl, and replenish it, if they think fit, we will take the opportunity of introducing the reader to Oakham-hall, the residence of Justinian Frainp-

ton, Esq. Lady Susan, the mistress of the mansion, proud of her noble blood and ancient family, and naturally anxious to exhibit some excuse for her condescension in having married a commoner, resolved that Oakham-hall, as well as their town residence, should blazon to all the world the great wealth of a husband, who, if he had not been worth money, would have been worth nothing; a fact which no one admitted more freely than herself. Statues, paintings, immense mirrors, costly and gorgeous furniture, dazzling the eye by an obtrusive and ostentatious magnificence, seemed to say on the part of her ladyship, I married the house and the fortune, not the man; if you wish to appreciate my taste, look at the gilding and the hangings, not at the plebeian owner of them.—It was said of Philip the Second, when he made a vow to build the Escurial, and dedicate it to St. Laurence, if he won the battle of St. Quintin, that the greatness of his fear might be measured by the vast extent of the structure; and in like manner it might be affirmed of Lady Susan, that the glittering over-finery of her mansion attested her deep sense of the humilia-

tion she had endured in her marriage. If the splendour in which she lived furnished her an excuse, it did not afford her much consolation. Her husband was a purse-proud, consequential man, with no better redeeming point than a love of hospitality; though even this might be referred to a desire of displaying the state in which he lived, and of enjoying the good cheer in which he delighted, rather than to any inherent sociability or friendliness of disposition. Composed of such discordant elements, it may be imagined that the union had not proved a very happy one. Mutual disappointment was followed by reciprocal indifference; nor was it always that their feelings assumed even this comparative degree of comfort. Their family consisted of one son and three daughters; the former, a dissipated and coxcombical, but really elegant young man, being the Captain Frampton of whom the reader has already had a slight glimpse.

Augusta, the eldest daughter, and always the mother's favourite, because she had always promised to be a beauty, was a *blonde*, but without any of the insipidity that sometimes

accompanies that style of beauty; her fine stature, bright blue eyes, the somewhat disdainful, Apollo-like curl at the corners of her mouth, and even the character of her thin, aquiline nose, and arched nostrils, all combining to express a certain degree of hauteur, and to challenge admiration as a right, rather than to solicit it as a favour. When to these attractions, were added a scrupulous attention to the fluctuating elegancies of fashion in her dress, and that indefinable air of style and distinction, which seems to say its possessor was born to be a duchess, to wear feathers and diamonds, and to adorn a court, few could behold her without an exclamation of surprise and delight at her first appearance. After a laborious tuitiou and drilling under a host of masters, Augusta had been sent to one of those expensive finishing-establishments in London, where young ladies are taught to regulate every limb and motion, nay, every muscle and look, with an automatic precision; where they are instructed by a finical, priggish, dancing-master, how to enter and quit a room; how to curtsey in walking, and to bow from a carriage; how to

present or receive a card or a smelling-bottle; how to stand, sit, or go; how to do something, nothing, and every thing, until they are persuaded that the most insignificant action, requires an express formula, and that every natural movement and emotion, should be regulated by artificial modifications. As nothing is so easily seen through as these creatures of studied management and mechanism, any observer, who once possessed a clue to Augusta's ruling passion, which was the love of self-display, might immediately assign the motive of her every look, word, and action.

Unfortunately, she had not acquired these little personal artifices from her mother, without imbibing also much of her cold, haughty, and ambitious character. Remembering the constant mortifications she had herself endured from having married a commoner, and confiding in the power of her daughter's charms, Lady Susan had determined that she should be at least a countess; and Augusta, equally proud of her mother's noble relations, and of her father's wealth, willingly lent herself to the belief that she might command a titled

husband, under which conviction, she looked down upon all suitors of inferior rank with an ill-concealed disdain. Several of this class had, indeed, been refused, and no more commoners presented themselves; while the lords and lordlings hung most provokingly back. This might not have happened, had Lady Susan possessed art enough to conceal her art; but she angled so palpably for a title, that the young noblemen either shunned the bait altogether, or only played around it to laugh at it, and defy its allurements. Her Ladyship, and her ambitious projects, became a sort of by-word among them; that most anti-connubial of all feelings, a sort of compassionate ridicule, was excited by the daughter's manifest participation in her plans; a young collegian dubbed her with the unfortunate nickname of the Tuft-hunter; and at the period of our history, Miss Frampton had lost the first bloom of her youth and novelty, had satiated the town with the display of her beauty, and was infinitely less likely to obtain the great object of her life, than she had been at the dazzling outset of her career.

Fanny, who was several years younger than Augusta, had in early life laboured under some apparent disadvantages, which ultimately proved to be her greatest blessings. Inferior to her sister in personal beauty, she had been an objeet of comparative indifference to her mother, and had thus escaped the baneful influence of all her stratagems, sophistications, and ambitious manœuvres, until she was old enough to detect and reject them; while her delicate state of health not allowing her to be put in regular training at a polite seminary, her natural character had been permitted to develope itself in the progress of such education as she received at home. Illness had necessitated occasional interruptions of her studies, and her mother's neglect had left her at intervals to prosecute or abandon them, just as she thought fit; but an innate genius and singular quickness of apprehension enabled her to acquire, by a sort of intuition, that which others can only obtain by long and laborious application; while her lucky escape from the perpetual artifice and discipline to which her sister had been subjected, had left her, what she was intended to be by Nature, an

unaffected, simple, warm-hearted, sportive girl. She neither paused to calculate how she should look, nor what she should say; and yet, with all this nonchalance and submission to the impulse of the moment, she never committed an indecorum, never threw herself into an ungraceful attitude, never uttered an unbecoming sentiment. She was darker than her sister, and without being so regularly handsome, was infinitely more lovely and fascinating. Augusta's stately beauty could neither bend nor alter. Fanny's was playful and fluctuating. One was like the trained and grafted French rose, tall and majestic, but with a stiff, formal, artificial aspect in the midst of its beauty; the other resembled the same flower, with all its free and natural graces, hanging in careless elegance, and swinging as the wind directs it. Fanny's countenance had acquired no tricks, it never wore an assumed expression, and rarely concealed an emotion that she felt. All this open singleness of heart was so contrary to the conventional forms, the guarded concealments, and cold etiquette of high life, that it gave prodigious offence to Lady Susan; who having in vain en-

deavoured to correct it, at length abandoned the attempt, observing, that she should never be able to make any thing of poor Fanny; that she was a mere giddy, giggling girl, and would always remain so. Fanny was content to wear the character they had assigned to her, provided she might escape from a constant disguise and constraint which she found insupportably irksome, and indulge occasionally in a little malicious pleasantry at her sister's expense: but this giddy girl would sometime hazard a remark, or elicit a trait of feeling, that showed her to be any thing but what they termed her.

On the morning, when we have introduced our readers to Oakham-hall, Dr. Dotterel and his sister had called to pay a visit. The latter, an old maid, somewhat stricken in years, and, like her brother, inclined to corpulency, lived at the vicarage, where she superintended the household arrangements, and piqued herself upon discharging in her own person all those duties of a good old English hospitable housewife, which the fine ladies of the present day are so apt to delegate to housekeepers and servants. Although a little starch and prudish, she was a good-tem-

pered woman, of feeble understanding, and consequently of narrow notions, with a particular abhorrence of innovation of any sort, and more especially of the march of intellect, her own having remained tolerably stationary from her earliest years. In these particulars, as well as in her personal appearance, she bore a strong resemblance to her brother; so much so, as to have called forth the sarcastic observation from Lady Susan, that if both wore petticoats, it would be impossible to distinguish one old woman from the other. The Doctor, however, had several excellent points about him; it was his head not his heart that was narrow, and the kindness of the latter generally proved too strong for the old-fashioned notions of the former, so that if he seldom said a liberal thing, he never did an illiberal one: a better inconsistency, since actions are of much more consequence to the community than opinions, than if he had reversed the proposition. Measures or individuals that he the most condemned, were the most sure of his assistance, if they appealed to his charity or his kindly feelings of any sort; and it was sometimes amusing to hear him in-

vent excuses for the amiability that occasioned his good deeds to be so frequently opposed to his less generous declarations. Mr. Frampton's whole family was collected in the great drawing-room at the time these visitants called. He himself reclining in an arm-chair, with his gouty foot upon an embroidered velvet cushion, retained his position, patiently awaiting whatever might happen. "Those horrid Dotterels!" exclaimed Lady Susan, as soon as she heard their names announced: "what can they be coming for again? surely they called here last"—and then stepping forward with a smile of the most cheerful welcome, she continued, "My dear Miss Dotterel, my good Doctor, this is really kind of you, I am quite delighted to see you!—and both looking so well—pray be seated."

Miss Frampton being slightly indisposed with a cold, and not wearing in consequence her best looks, placed herself with her back to the light, assumed her reception smile, made the prescribed half bow and half curtsey, drew herself slowly up again, and reseated herself in such a way as to display a portion of her well-

turnéd leg and ankle, carefully set off by an open-work French silk-stocking, and a Parisian shoe of the last importation.

"Delighted to see you, 'pon my honour!" said the Captain, lightly throwing up his curls with one hand, while he surveyed his whole figure in an opposite mirror with a complacent earnestness that showed he experienced much more delight in seeing himself than his visitants.

Fanny, who really liked both the Doctor and his sister for their goodness of heart, in spite of their little oddities and old-fashioned notions, ran towards them as they entered, warmly pressed their hands, and welcomed them with a cordial smile infinitely more expressive than words. No sooner was Miss Dotterel seated, than not being provided with any immediate observation, and deeming movement of any kind a sort of relief from entire silence, she began to fidget about in her chair, and adjust her clothes, so as to make the rustling of her antique silk gown, as was her wont, a momentary substitute for conversation. While thus occupied, and clearing her throat at the same time that it might be ready for action, her eye fell

upon Miss Frampton's leg, which being exposed, as she thought, rather more than strict decorum warranted, she pulled down her own petticoats over her thick, cotton-clad ankles with an alarmed and squeamish look, intending it as a friendly hint to her neighbour. Augusta understood the implied meaning of the action, but without altering her position, continued talking with her brother, who whispered in his usual drawling way—"Shocking pity, ain't it now, to hide those taper legs of Miss Dotterel's? capital models for a couple of mill-posts! never saw any thing like them except her sister, the doctor's, a palpable plagiarism—quite redeculous, 'pon my honour."

Lady Susan was at the moment catechising Fanny, *sotto voce*, about some article of dress which had not been arranged *selon les regles*; Mr. Frampton had engaged the Doctor in conversation, and Miss Dotterel at length deeming it indispensable that she should signify her presence, and determined to commence with an interesting theme, exclaimed, "Brother, you were asking me about the apricots on the standard tree down by the pigeon-house. Well, I

counted sixty-two yesterday, and would you believe it, there were only forty this morning! The others must have been all blown down by the wind in the night, but I could only find sixteen, and those I put in one of the willow-pattern dishes, and sent Davy with them to Mrs. Penguin; for several of them were bruised, and none of them would keep, and she has been very civil to us lately in sending us that nice preserved-ginger that you are so fond of, otherwise I know you don't like to part with any of our fruit. Lady Susan, have you made your preserves and your raspberry vinegar yet? It *is* a troublesome job, now isn't it? and I'm sure I'm glad ours is all over."

"I am truly sorry I cannot inform you, having quite forgotten to ask Mrs. Jellicolt about it," replied Lady Susan, with a courteous smile, while, as she caught Augusta's eye, she threw up her own with an expression of contemptuous derision.

"La! how very odd!" exclaimed Miss Dotterel.

"Most extr'or'nary!" said the Captain; "couldn't railly have supposed her Ladyship

to be ignorant of such an important fact; could you, Fanny?"

Sportive as she was, and ever ready to join any raillery or bantering among themselves, Fanny could not be drawn in to assist in quizzing their present visitors, and she therefore stated, with a very serious face, that she had heard Mrs. Jellicolt express her intention of beginning the preserves on the following day. Miss Dotterel had commenced a very minute description of her own particular method of potting apricots, when the Doctor, having finished a long discussion with Mr. Frampton respecting a game of whist at their last meeting, interrupted her by exclaiming—

"Dorothy, our friends don't want to hear any such trifling matters; we can talk about the apricots another time;" a hint which immediately silenced the affectionate and submissive sister, who was not unaccustomed to such checks, and always deferred to them. "I came over on purpose to mention to you, Mr. Frampton," continued the Doctor, "only the game of whist put it out of my head, that I had a very early visit this morning from our neighbour,

Mr. Penguin,—ahem !—to make explanations touching the conduct of this young man, Mr. Melcomb, whose opinions last night, when we encountered him on the road, did appear to me completely—ahem !—and I have no doubt they struck you in the same light; did they not?"

Not always having his words at command, although he spoke slowly and pompously enough, the Doctor, whenever he boggled for an expression, would substitute a pause or a "hem !" for the required term, proceed in his discourse as if he had uttered it, and take it for granted that his auditors understood him as well as if he had. Aware of this habit, and not wishing to send back so slow a finder in search of the missing word, Mr. Frampton declared that the sentiments alluded to had made precisely the same impression upon himself; when the Doctor proceeded; "Mr. Penguin, explained to me, that the young man had not the most remote idea, that is to say, not the smallest thought of giving offence,—ahem !—but that being, as I may say, though not born in that country, an American—"

"A Yankee, is he?" interposed Mr. Framp-

ton; "that's not in his favour—I don't like any of them—they are little better than revolutionists and rebels!"

"Very true," observed Miss Dotterel; "and I fear they have not a jot of religion among them. How can they, indeed, without an established church and tithes?"

"Impossible, quite impossible! shocking! shocking!" ejaculated the Doctor, shaking his head with a look of reprobation; "but I once knew an American, nevertheless, who played an excellent rubber."

"And it must be confessed," added the sister, anxious to do justice even to a people without tithes, "that their cranberries are finer than ours. When I was last at Southampton, I bought a small cask at Jefferson and Hackle-stone's, the sign of the Golden Canister, and of all the cranberries I *ever*—"

"Dorothy! Dorothy! we can talk of them at the same time as the apricots," said the Doctor.—"Certainly, Mr. Frampton, it is bad, very bad; in short, a complete—ahem!—as I freely confess, that this young gentleman should have been educated in America, but as he may

get over, in short, get rid of all these heretical —yes, Sir, heretical notions; as he is about to settle in this neighbourhood, and is, moreover, as I am given to understand, a person of large fortune, I have consented to overlook, in short, to take no farther notice, as I may say, of our little—ahem!—yesterday, and, in fact, to be introduced to him."

"Nay, Doctor, that alters the affair altogether," said Frampton, who, for his own sake, never chose to undervalue the importance of wealth: "if he is a person of large fortune, he must, of course, be perfectly respectable, and a desirable acquaintance; and as I presume others will be entirely governed by me, I shall be happy to give him a passport into the first society of this part of Hampshire, by receiving him at Oakham-hall."

"I must request, Mr. Frampton," said Lady Susan, "that you will decide on nothing of this sort hastily, or without my concurrence. At your solicitation I consented to receive those vulgar Penguins, and I have repented it ever since."

"Surely, Lady Susan, you must yourself

admit that his East India Madeira is in comparable, his dinners are excellent, and as to his Staffordshire puddings—"

"I wish he would stay at home and eat them," interposed her Ladyship, "and not wander about the country in that ridiculous geological-dress, as he calls it. He had the presumption to approach the carriage t'other day, as I was riding with my cousin, Sir Nugent Clavering, and was about to address me, when I threw sixpence out of the window, as if I had mistaken him for a beggar, and desired the coachman to drive on."

"La! how very odd!" exclaimed Miss Dotterel. "Well, I found sixpence myself last Tuesday fortnight. It was the time we were brewing our table-ale: I had gone out at the orchard-gate, and was crossing the road to call at Laurence Penfold's to order some more hops, when who should come by but Sam Holden, driving along in his taxed-cart, drawn by that vicious black horse of his — you know his horse I dare say, Lady Susan; so I drew up on one side—"

"Dorothy! Dorothy! put the sixpence in the same basket with the apricots and cranberries," cried the Doctor.

The good gossip again looked at her brother with an affectionate smile, and held her peace.

"And Mrs. Penguin is a thousand times worse than her husband," said Miss Frampton. "If she were only vulgar she might be endured; but she is low, which is intolerable. It is really overwhelming in hot weather to see her flaring hat and red feathers, her red thick fingers loaded with rings, and her fine clothes put on 'over that, and over that, and over that,' like Betty Blackberry's, as if it were the depth of winter."

"We could not, of course, notice such people in London," said Mr. Frampton; "but as a magistrate, and the principal person in this neighbourhood, if I did not receive them at Oakham-hall, nobody would visit them; which was my sole consideration in wishing Lady Susan to leave cards at Grotto-house, and to keep up a certain degree of acquaintance."

"To say nothing of the East India Madeira, and the Staffordshire puddings," whispered

Augusta to her brother, neither of them ever scrupling to ridicule their father.

"Very good, very good; not the puddings, but the observation. You 're in high force, Augusta, this morning;—quite redeeculous, 'pon my honour!" returned the Captain, presenting his enamelled snuff-box to his nose, so as to display his white hand and glittering rings, and then returning it to his pocket.

"For my part," observed Fanny, "I think we ought to be grateful to the Penguins for favouring us with an occasional visit, since it never fails to relieve the dullness of Oakham-hall with a little amusement, and to afford us at least a laugh, which we rarely hear, unless when some of Pompey's tricks occasion one to echo up the staircase from the servants' hall."

"I 'm sure, child, you laugh often enough yourself, though I have frequently repeated to you Lord Chesterfield's opinion of that vulgar emotion. Indeed, you sometimes appear to indulge in it out of opposition, and absolutely to laugh at nothing."

"No, indeed, I am rarely without an excuse; for I cannot help laughing at our own solemn

and stately gravity; and it is precisely because Mr. Penguin breaks in upon all this, and seems to have no respect for it, that I like him."

"How comes it that you always like the vulgarest people best?" inquired Augusta.

"I suppose, sister, because they are the most natural and amusing. I know so completely by heart all our polite and titled visitants, who call, speak, and look by routine, that I could tell you beforehand every word they would utter, and every expression they would wear, with as much certainty as I can tell what o'clock it is by casting my eye upon the dial-plate."

"I protest, Miss Fanny," said Dr. Dotterel, "I hope you don't include me in this polite list, for I flatter myself I am not to be so easily read, —a little more variety in my discourse, I hope, and in fact I trust. To do this, you must not only possess great discrimination, but be, as I may say, a complete—ahem!—don't you think so, Miss Augusta?"

"You have exactly expressed my own sentiments," replied Miss Frampton, bowing to the Doctor, and casting a side glance at her brother.

"And mine too," said the Captain. "Most

extr'or'nary coincidence; the very phrase that was on the tip of my own tongue, 'pon my honour! But you 're wrong, Fanny, to re-deecule any of our visitants, whether genteel or vulgar; it 's a thing I never do myself—quite abawminable; don't you think it is, Miss Dotterel?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, I was a *leetle* surprised at Miss Fanny's observation. To be sure, present company 's always excepted, you know; but I must say for myself, that no one can tell beforehand what I am going to talk about, can they, brother? Just at this time o' year, indeed, one naturally talks of what 's going on in the great world—of jams, and jellies, and preserves, and such like; and that reminds me of a question I had intended to ask you, Lady Susan, whether you have made your ketchup yet, for we can't get any good mushrooms at the Vicarage."

"And that reminds me," said Lady Susan, evading the question, by turning the subject, "that we have wandered from the point at which we started, as to this Mr. Henry Mel-comb, whom it is wished to introduce at the

Hall. Who is he? whence is he? what is he?"

"The two former questions become of very little consequence, when we can answer the latter, by stating that he is rich," said Mr. Frampton.

"You can hardly expect *me* to forget the value and importance of birth and rank, whatever may be your own opinion," said Lady Susan, haughtily; "though I am quite willing to allow the secondary importance of wealth. Who has seen this Mr. Melcomb? What is he like?"

"A remarkably handsome young man, I protest," said the Doctor; "though I cannot say I was pleased with his notions altogether, nor indeed with his—ahem!"

"As to those," remarked the Captain, "I never attended to them; though I remember he talked some nonsense: quite redeeculous, now railly wasn't it? about putting down horse-races and the opera; but I couldn't keep my eyes from his dress, 'pon my honour! I don't know what sorts of coats gentlemen may wear in America, but I wouldn't exhibit such an article myself in any of the streets of Lon'on, for a

farthing less than a thousand pounds. A most Trans-atlantic turn-out—irresistibly ludicrous—can't help laughing when I think of it."

Mr. Frampton and the Doctor becoming now deeply engaged upon the important subject of the fair, Miss Dotterel, moving her chair close to Lady Susan, and carefully covering her ankles, an action which generally accompanied every change of position, resumed her inquiry about the ketchup; and then, in a most confidential whisper, proceeded to give her Ladyship an account of the funeral of old Isaac, a poor villager who had recently been buried, of the little property he had left behind him, and of the silver-watch he had bequeathed to Sally Wicks.

After two or three ineffectual attempts to escape from this infliction, Lady Susan, fixing her eyes on the splendid clock upon the mantel-piece, exclaimed with an assumed look of surprise, "Almost three o'clock, I declare!"

"La! so it is," said her tormentor, not in the least taking the hint; "but I've nothing particular to do this morning, for I've finished my preserves and ketchup, thank Heaven! and

we don't dine till five. You've got a new French clock, haven't you? What a beauty! I never saw any thing so handsome!"

"It *ought* to be handsome, madam!" cried Mr. Frampton, whose ear quickly caught any admiration of his gorgeous finery, and who measured every thing by what it had cost. "There is nothing, I flatter myself, at Oakhamhall, that is not of the very best and most expensive kind."

The Doctor, notwithstanding frequent syncopes of speech, had contrived to make his auditor understand that it was absolutely necessary to suppress this formidable fair, and to compel the lower orders to submit to the wills of their pastors and masters, who were so much richer, and, consequently, so much more respectable than themselves; sentiments in which Mr. Frampton so perfectly coincided, that he puffed out his cheeks with mingled complacency at his own importance, and indignation against those who would presume to oppose it; when the door suddenly opened, and, without the announcement of any new visitant, a strange figure bolted into the centre of the apartment. It was Tony,

the bearer of the address voted at the George, but not less disguised by his borrowed habiliments and the efforts of the barber, than by the potent contents of the frequently replenished bowl, in which he had been allowed to participate. Sobered to a certain extent by finding himself, for the first time in his life, in so grand a room, and among so many of the gentry, he remained for some seconds bowing very reverentially. His form was reflected by the numerous long mirrors surrounding him; and being utterly unable to recognise his proper figure in its present transmogrified state, he thought that he beheld so many of the inmates greeting and welcoming him to Oakham-hall; under which impression he kept making profound bows to himself, turning round and round, like a dog pursuing his own tail, and exclaiming at the same time, "Sarvant, Sir, sarvant; this is kind on ye to receive a body so hearty like, dang 'd if it baint!" While thus backing and bowing, he bumped against a marble statue of Minerva, standing on a low pedestal, and starting round, ejaculated, "Ax your pardon, ma'am! Lord! Lord! ye be as white in the feace as our Ball!—I hope

I haven 't frought ye: take my arm, ma'am, if you want to step down." And he held up his hand, thinking, probably, that the lady had jumped upon the pedestal to get out of his way.

Miss Frampton, who was seated close beside it, had, however, no sooner caught his eye, than he quitted the statue, placed himself opposite to her, and surveying her with the maudlin and fond look of intoxication, continued, "Adad! you 're a jolly wench, handsomer nor Molly Stubbs, danged if ye baint!"

"Good heavens! who is this strange creature, and what does he mean?" cried Augusta, in some alarm.

"Lord love ye!" continued Tony, "don't ye be frought; I 'm a friend to the fair."

"Fellow! fellow!" cried Mr. Frampton, sternly, "it appears to me that you have been making a beast of yourself."

"Thank ye, Sir, kindly; and I hope you 're the same," replied Tony, again bowing with great respect.

"Speak, booby!" exclaimed the Doctor, "What do you want?—are you drunk?"

"No, parson; are you?" responded the

clown, with a look and tone of honest inquiry, as if he really considered it a matter of doubt.

Hitherto the rest of the company had stared at these inexplicable proceedings, as if they had been transfixed with amazement; but Lady Susan, beginning now to comprehend that the intruder was intoxicated, called angrily to her son, bidding him throw the horrid fellow out of window, or kick him down stairs.

"Railly, now," replied the Captain, "I am the last person to be fasteedious upon an occasion of this natur; but pawsitively the creature smells so abawminably of rum, a leequor to which I have a most parteecular objection, that I must decline being personally concerned in his ejectment; must indeed, 'pon my honour! We have plenty of people, however, who will see him speedily conveyed to the horse-pond." And he rang the bell to summon some of the servants for that purpose.

Tony, in the meanwhile, finding the address in his hand, and being determined to present it to some one, advanced towards Mr. Frampton, mumbling, as he tendered it to him, "Sarvant, your worship, sarvant, Sir. I do ax leave to

hand you, right into your own paw, as I said I would, this here address, whereby you 'll see that we mean to keep up the fair; and having the law on our side, I 'm desired to say, with the respects and submission of the whole parish, that we don't care a farden for your worship, nor for Doctor Dotterel neither."

"Sirrah! sirrah!" cried Mr. Frampton, reddening and swelling with anger, "you shall be set in the stocks for this insolence to a magistrate, and a person of my consequence."

"No, but I sha'n't though: got the law o' my side, danged if I baint! so I don't care a brass button for your worship," cried Tony; who having now completely recovered his confidence, set his arms a-kimbo, and looked most stolidly resolute.

"I protest," exclaimed Dr. Dotterel, "this is most audacious behaviour; in fact it is, as I may say, a complete case of—ahem! This fellow ought to be horse-whipped; such conduct really beats every thing."

"Ah, like enough, but nobody sha'n't beat me. You baint in the pulpit now, Muster Parson; and so, having the law on my side, I

shouldn't mind fighting ye for a gallon of beer, danged if I should! Hurra! None but the brave deserve the fair!"

In this interval the bell had been rung several times with increased vehemence, and, as Tony was evidently becoming pot-valiant and pugnacious, all eyes were turned towards the door with considerable anxiety, when it at length flew open, and Pompey the Black, still more decidedly under the influence of the rum-punch than his friend Tony, reeled into the room, singing or rather shrieking,

"'Tis Saturday night, wid a hi! hi!
'Tis Saturday night, wid a ho!
Da market he done, and da nigger he run,
To dance round and round to da Banjore's sound;
Den all clap hands, and jump and sing,
Hi! ho! tink a ting-ting!"

Clapping his hands and jumping, as he shouted the last lines, he looked round him with a smile, which drew up the thick curtain of his lips from his white teeth, and betrayed at the same time, by its vacant expression, that he was utterly unconscious what he was about.

"How, sirrah!" exclaimed his master, "what's

the meaning of this? Do you forget where you are? Take this drunken fellow, who has found his way into the drawing-room, and kick him instantly down-stairs."

"Gorry-mirree!" exclaimed Pompey, "who ebber tink o' dat? Tony, ma friend, him dam good fellow, him lub rum-punch, and nebber drink warra; but him no more drunk dan mysef, debble a bit! Pompey and Tony, um dance to-gedder, all the same, like two grasshopper. Hi! ho! tink a ting-ting!" In the awkward capers that accompanied these words, he kicked away the stool on which was propped the gouty foot of his master, who, snatching up his leg with a shout of pain, and, at the same time, seizing his crutch-headed stick, prepared to launch it at the head of the offender. But morose as he naturally was, and irritated by his present sufferings, he could never forget that the black had once saved his life at the risk of his own, so that he quietly replaced the stick, rubbed his foot, and contented himself with exclaiming, "Confound the rascal! — the poor fellow, I mean; he doesn't know what he is about, or

he would rather break his own limbs than hurt mine."

"Mr. Frampton! Mr. Frampton!" cried Lady Susan, who hated the Negro, "I always told you he would one day be the death of you, if you kept this odious black wretch in the house."

"What, da debble!" cried Pompey, indignant at such an imputation, even in the midst of his drunkenness; "Me be de dess of ma massa! and I da same Pompey what fotch um up fom da bottom of da sea, when um got no more speesh in um's mous dan a droun rat! Black wresh! oo black wresh ooself to tink me sush bad mans; so dere 's a hickery-nut for oo to crack!" His complacency, however, quickly returned, for suddenly advancing towards Miss Dotterel, he chucked her familiarly under the chin, to her inexpressible consternation, and then seizing her hand, exclaimed, with a most fond, fuddled, and asinine look, "What oo say, missee? oo danse da Jumbee-Jumbee dance wid Pompey? Oo rader ole, and little bit ugly, and bery hebby and lumpy; but neber mind, jump op and stir

you stum, ole one, and once oo begin, oo danse all da same like da fat big porpus when um flounder in da warra. Hi! ho! tink a ting-ting!"

"Hurra! none but the brave deserve the fair!" echoed Tony, balancing on his tottering knees, and holding out his hands to the Black for a renewal of their wild dance, to the infinite dismay of the company. The horrified Miss Dotterel had already waddled out of the room, ejaculating, "O the filthy animal!—to be chucked under the chin for the first time in my life, and the creature to be a black!" The other females were preparing to follow her example, when the Captain, who had gone in search of the men-servants, and had found them all assembled in the court-yard, gaping at the performances of Punchinello, arrived to the rescue with a timely reinforcement. The butler took charge of Tony, who quietly suffered himself to be led out of the room, shouting at the same time, "None but the brave deserve the fair!" while Joseph, a stout under-servant, firmly collared Pompey, who showed a disposition to resist this summary process, until he

should have completed the Jumbee-Jumbee dance. Joseph, however, hauled him away, the black wriggling and giggling, and expostulating with him as he retired, "Hosepp! Hosepp! oo comical dog! what oo bout? Gog! how oo tickle ma troat wid oo dam knuckles! Hosepp, I say!"—Doctor Dotterel called lustily after the servants to secure both offenders, that they might be set in the stocks for drunkenness; but Mr. Frampton limited his threats to Tony, saying, that he would himself take care to punish Pompey. In England, however, a drunken man is sure to excite a good-humoured smile, and awaken the sympathy of the lower order, a feeling of which the present delinquents found the advantage, for the servants, who were moreover all staunch advocates for the fair, dismissed Tony scot free, to find his way back to the George, and inducted Pompey to his own room, that he might sleep himself sober.

CHAPTER VIII.

There was a love-born sadness in his breast,
That wanted stimulus to bring on rest;
These simple pleasures were no more of use,
And danger only could repose produce;
He join'd th' associates in their lawless trade,
And was at length of their profession made.

CRABBE.

NOTWITHSTANDING the ill-timed intoxication of Tony and of the Black ally by whom he had been admitted into Oakham-hall, the Captain, who had treated them at the George, was too veteran a practitioner upon bowls of punch, to be in the smallest degree affected by his own potations, or even to suspect that his companions could be injured by what appeared to him to be very temperate draughts. After their departure, therefore, he mounted his black blood mare, and still retaining his meerschaum-

pipe in his mouth, shortened by taking out some of the joints that composed it, struck at a brisk pace across the country towards the New Forest, into the wild recesses of which he quickly plunged. The real name of this man was Lawrence Boulderson, though he had long ceased to be saluted by either of those appellations. Born in the Forest, his father, one of the under-keepers, who had charge of an extensive walk, employed him for some years in brouzing and feeding the deer, cutting and faggoting underwood, or watching for deer-stealers and other trespassers upon his walk; but the youth had an innate predilection for the sea; the sight of the numerous vessels coasting the Isle of Wight channel, or passing round the Needles, which he could distinctly see from the high ground of his ordinary station, corroborated this tendency, and an accidental connexion with a band of smugglers, who had a concealed store in the haunts of the New Forest, enabled him to gratify it. His natural affections, however, which were strong, retained him for some time at home, until his father, a stern violent man, having unmercifully punished him

for some trivial offence, his proud bold heart revolted from the injustice, he quitted the paternal roof, and joining the smugglers, was not only allowed to indulge the long-cherished wishes of his bosom by being sent to sea, but was gradually initiated in all the mysteries, and inured to all the hardships and dangers of the lawless career upon which he had entered. For this mode of life, one that requires a rare union of almost incompatible qualities, in order to prosecute it with a fair chance of safety and success, he seemed to be so especially qualified by nature, as almost to justify the hyperbolical praise of one of his friends, who declared that he must have been born a smuggler; considering that character not in its paltry details, to which any sorry rogue may be competent, but with reference to its more enlarged, complex, and mercantile operations. Capable of every endurance, whether of fatigue or privation, absolutely insensible to fear, and yet discreet and cautious in encountering danger; never known to be intoxicated—a circumstance, however, which might rather be attributed to the singular strength of his constitution, than to

his temperance; as acute and judicious in planning an exploit, as he was undaunted and indefatigable in executing it; and above all, so unimpeachable in his integrity, that he would rather deny himself his own fair share, than defraud an employer or a colleague, it may easily be supposed that the superiority of his mind quickly manifested itself, and that he rapidly rose through all the gradations of employment, until he finally became the leader of that band which he had joined as a boyish volunteer.

As his means and his confidence increased, his operations, though always confined to the illicit or *free* trade, as its followers term it, assumed something of a mercantile character. He was connected, indeed, with several eminent merchants in London, for whom he had executed delicate and difficult commissions during the war, either by the conveyance of important information from one coast to the other, or by the transport of guineas and other valuable freightage to and fro; in all which tempting situations he had never violated the confidence reposed in him, never done any thing calculated

to impugn the general opinion of his united boldness and address. Such was the line of life in which he had now been engaged for many years and with varied success, sometimes as an agent for others, though more often, latterly, upon his own exclusive account; but as such an illegal career could hardly be pursued with impunity, all his wariness and ingenuity had not enabled him to elude the vigilance of the law. He had been repeatedly arrested, tried, and condemned to various fines and imprisonments, while warrants and capiases for the various penalties he had incurred, sometimes outstanding against him to the amount of many thousand pounds, had compelled him more than once to fly the country. Not less generous and humane than intrepid, he made it a rule to abstain from blood and violence, except when they were forced upon him in self-defence, often exposing and surrendering his own person to screen his comrades, or to protect his antagonists when they were overpowered; so that if he was engaged in any desperate affray, his individual conduct seldom failed to command the esteem even of those who were opposed to

him. For the purpose of perplexing or baffling the law, in case of being subjected to prosecution, it is customary with all smugglers to drop their real names and assume an alias, or a nickname, frequently one of a ludicrous description, consonant to the appearance or supposed character of the wearer. Boulderson had for many years alternately borne the appellations of Blacklocks, from his profusion of dark curling hair, and of Lion, from his strong resemblance to that noble animal; but latterly, since he had become by tacit consent of the whole fraternity along the coast, a sort of general leader and manager in all important enterprises, he had received the distinctive, honorary title of "The Captain," by which he was familiarly addressed, in all the ports from the Land's End to Yarmouth; even the King's officers, to most of whom he was known, and by whom, notwithstanding his avowed profession, he was generally respected, invariably bestowing that appellation upon him. Without any dereliction of their duty, many of the latter were upon the most amicable terms with him. Theirs was a mutual contest of courage and

cunning, but one which, like any other generous warfare, was not incompatible with a certain degree of friendliness among the individuals waging it. This was the light in which the Captain loved to view it, for he always considered himself as a sort of legitimate belligerent, pitted avowedly against the King's revenue officers, but in all other respects as loyal, honest, and orderly a subject, as any in the realm. Upon the continent, where the untoward state of his affairs had occasionally compelled him to be a resident, he was as much at home, even in the midst of the war, as if he had been in England; and the "English Lion," for such was his continental *sobriquet*, had smoked his pipe with Mynheers, Burgomasters, and Frenchmen, and was as perfectly well known upon almost every exchange from the Texel to Cherburg, as he was along all the southern shores of his native island.

Exclusively of his numerous confederates along shore, and his acquaintance with all the fishermen, most of whom were ready to assist, now and then, in "running a crop of goods," or doing "an odd job in the free trade;" he

was in immediate fellowship and league with a band of landsmen, as resolute and sturdy abettors of his enterprises, as any of the regular smugglers. These were the tenants of that multitude of cabins and cottages, run up in defiance of trespass, upon the borders and purlieus of the New Forest; a set of men, who, in addition to the advantages of rearing cattle and hogs upon its commons and waste lands, found occasional employment in cutting furze, and conveying it to the brick-kilns, but who, having no regular returns of weekly labour to subsist on, were generally poor and profligate, and depended, for their collateral support, upon deer-stealing, poaching, purloining timber, and assisting, whenever their services were required, in running spirits or other goods ashore, after they had been floated up Southampton-water, or the forest rivers, for the purpose of concealment within its coverts and recesses. Most of these dispersed bands could be assembled at a given point, and at a short notice, whenever any important enterprise required a concentration of their forces. The captain had numerous emissaries, while he himself, riding

a thorough-bred mare which defied pursuit, and possessing a fast-sailing cutter, which could outstrip any vessel in the King's service, had the means of issuing his orders with a celerity and secrecy that generally baffled discovery, by accident or treachery. It was not, there-ed at the George-inn, that by holding up his little finger, he could collect some hundreds he might undertake.

At the period of our history, the Captain, discouraged by two or three heavy losses, was half disposed to secure what remained of his for-tune, which, after all his risks and toils, scarcely exceeded a competency, and to listen to the earnest entreaties of his only child, a daughter, abandon a mode of life which she abhorred, as not less disgraceful than perilous, and scru-pled not to stigmatize in indignant terms. That he might have some ostensible pursuit, and elude the keen suspicions to which his

past life had exposed him, he had some time before returned to his native haunts, to which he had always been attached, and hiring a farm in the New Forest, near Beanley river, gave out that he had abandoned the free trade, and meant, in future, to plough the earth instead of the seas for his support. His real motive, however, for taking the farm-house, a solid ancient edifice, which had formerly been a detached grange, appertaining to Beaulieu or Beauley Abbey, was the accidental discovery of an extensive range of vaults beneath it, which had remained hidden and unknown for several centuries. These he converted into a store for smuggled goods, concealing the entrance in such an effectual manner, that though his premises had been repeatedly searched by the officers, they had never been able to detect it. This dwelling now constituted his home; he made no more trips across the Channel, rarely went to sea, but still carried on the free trade, although in a narrower circuit, hoping to redeem his recent losses, and solemnly pledging himself to his daughter, that when

he had done so, he would forswear smuggling, give up the farm, and retire to live at Southampton.

Her mother having died when she was young, and her father having no settled home, Mary, for such was his daughter's name, had been sent to school at Southampton, where she had latterly remained as a lodger, under the care of the same lady who had superintended her education; but when he took the farm, her father, who was doatingly fond of her, brought her home to superintend it, sending her back to Southampton whenever he was obliged to be absent for any length of time. Mary had become much attached to the schoolmistress, who had been as a second mother to her; and it was on this account, as well as that she might effectually withdraw her father from his old haunts and associates, that she had stipulated for his selecting Southampton as his residence, when he should decide upon retiring, a period which she was perpetually imploring him to accelerate.

When the Captain, after leaving the George, arrived at his sequestered dwelling, which still

bore the name of the Grange Farm, it was his first care to stall and feed his mare; when he entered the house, noisily welcomed by three or four mastiff dogs, and passed into a large low parlour, of which the ceiling was bisected by a massive beam of oak that had doubtless once flourished in the woody vicinity, while the walls were decorated with engravings, all of which bore some allusion to the New Forest. There was a smoke-blackened portrait of Henry Hastings, the memorable keeper and sportsman in the time of James the First; a view of the celebrated groaning tree of Badsley, which about sixty years before had been visited by the Prince and Princess of Wales, that they might be ear-witnesses of its portentous sounds;—another of the Cadenham oak, the rival of Glastonbury thorn, in budding at Christmas;—a third of the great yew-tree in Dibden church-yard, and a drawing of the famous stag which, after receiving a keeper's shot, collected its dying energies in a bound that cleared eighteen yards, a fact commemorated by two posts fixed at the extremities of the leap in the vicinity of Hound's-down.

The inmates of the parlour, at the moment of his entrance, were, first, a short, thick-set, square-built, bull-headed man, nick-named Rough-and-ready, a staunch, sturdy fellow, whose prodigious strength, blunt honesty, and readiness to apply himself to any work, whether in farming or smuggling, had recommended him to the special favour of the Captain, though he had no talent for plotting or planning, or for any of the various contrivances requisite to make an accomplished smuggler; and secondly, a sly-looking, hump-backed man, called My Lord, generally employed as a scout or spy, but more especially retained on account of his wife, a handsome woman, who formed part of the establishment, and who was highly useful in negotiating bribes with the coast blockade men, or decoying the officers. These two individuals appeared to be no otherwise occupied than in smoking. A boy, called Moon, probably from the roundness of his vacant face, was gazing through a telescope at the open window which commanded the Channel, where it was his business to keep a constant watch, and give information of every thing that he observed.

Reclining upon a chair, and holding a book in his hand, though with an air of abstraction that showed he was not reading it, there was another individual in the room, but oh! how unlike those we have been describing, and how much exalted by the contrast they presented! It was a tall young man, whose symmetry of form was perceptible even through the homely habiliments in which he had invested it, evidently for the purpose of disguise; while his fine countenance, in which sorrow and perhaps vice had made manifest inroads, without having been able to eclipse its pale beauty, could be compared to nothing but that of a fallen angel. His redundant glossy brown hair was thrown wildly, and yet not inelegantly, about his head; his fair hands, so dissimilar from those of his comrades, were adorned with rings; and in spite of the negligence and coarseness of his dress, which was adapted to the degrading occupation he followed, his suavity of manner, his polished language, his courteous demeanour, imparted to him a certain air of gentility and distinction, of which the effect was rather heightened by the deep melancholy in which he was generally plunged. Gen-

tleman George was his common name, although some of his rude companions, jealous of the favour shown him by the Captain, bestowed upon him the less complimentary appellation of George the Swell. His generosity, indeed, and a courage so reckless as almost to deserve the name of desperation, had early endeared him to the Captain; whose attachment had been strengthened by his conduct in a sharp affray with some of the Preventive Service-men, wherein he had received a wound in his anxiety to screen and bring off his leader. In intrepidity and nobleness of feeling the two men resembled each other; in all other respects they were totally dissimilar.

For a well-educated, right-principled girl like Mary, it would have been difficult to imagine a more inappropriate residence than the Grange-farm, considering the character and pursuits of its ordinary inmates. Even with her own father, however strong might be her filial affection, she did but partially sympathise, for the coarseness of his manners sometimes repelled her, while she was at once alarmed and revolted by the lawless tenor of his life. George, it is

true, was a similar delinquent, but this appearing in his case to be the result of some stern necessity, not of choice, it rather provoked pity than censure. Secluded from other society, she beheld in him the only inmate of the farm whose education and taste assimilated in the smallest degree with her own; the mystery that attached to him, the profound sorrow of which he was the victim, the contrast offered by his fine form, gentle manners, and cultivated mind, to those of his associates, presented themselves to her in a romantic point of view, that could not fail to strike the imagination of a girl so circumstanced; and when we add that he played at times upon Mary's guitar, and sang plaintive love-songs with a most touching melody, it may be hardly necessary to state, that he had completely won her heart long before she suspected that she had lost it. More than once had he given her reason to believe, though not in any direct declaration, that he was fervently attached to her; but upon this interesting point his conduct was so wavering and even contradictory, that she could form no conclusion as to his real wishes; an uncertainty which agitated her

feelings, without diminishing the tenderness of their nature.

Scarcely had the Captain entered the parlour, when Mary, having heard his arrival, ran into the room to receive his embrace, which she returned with as hearty a cordiality as it was bestowed; her profuse black locks falling over her glowing face as he roughly saluted her. Although comely, if not handsome, she bore a marked resemblance to her father; every trait of her countenance being, of course, softened and harmonized, and the round, lion-like eyes of the sire expressing only a becoming decision and firmness in the child.

"What cheer, girl?" cried the father, again kissing her with a loud smack; "not sorry to get home again, and in time for dinner, I can tell you that, Polly; for I was at Swanage Bay when the sun rose this morning, and never unshipped bit till I got to the George at Thaxted, where I was obliged to give Black Bess a feed and a rest. George, boy! what makes thee always so down in the mouth? Oh! no wonder; thee 'st been reading, I see, which is but dull work for a brave man. Start my timbers!

I never read nothing but invoices and bills of lading, and what 's the upshot? I 'm always taut, and braced gaily up. All right, Rough-and-ready?"

"Ay, ay, master, all right. The cages are set, and if we do but get beaks enough, we shall soon clap the sparrows into them."

This piece of slang, which we do not pretend to translate, since the smugglers are constantly changing their vocabulary, and have new passwords for almost every fresh adventure, seemed to afford satisfaction to the Captain; who next addressing My Lord, inquired whether he had planted his potatoes agreeably to the orders he had received:

"They have been upon the look-out these three hours," answered the hunch-back; "not an oar can move nor a foot stir without their blowing the balloon. Who 's to be spots-man?* and where 's the shy?"

"Time enough to know that, My Lord, when we come to the start. Hallo! Moon, ahoy! look out, platter-face, and tell me what

* The man who fixes the *spot* where the smuggled goods are to be landed.

you see at the Jack-in-the-Basket, off Lymington."

"I see a row-boat that seems to be moored to the buoy, and two men in her."

"Start my timbers! two men in her! that 's a lie, I 'm sure; unless your telescope sees double; and that 's another lie, for it 's the best in all Hampshire. Give us the peeper."

His own practised eye discovered instantly that there was but one man in the boat, and returning the glass to the boy, with the observation that he had either got no eyes, or one too many, he bade him go and station himself at the Pigeon-house, charging him not to lose sight of the Jack-in-the-Basket, and to bring him immediate word when the boat began to move.

Having sent My Lord out of the room upon some other commission, he shut the door and window, and observing to his remaining companions, with a wink and a smile, that six ears, and two of them belonging to a woman, were five too many for hearing a secret, and that he was an ass for trusting them, he proceeded to inform them that the Longsplice, which was the name of his cutter, would arrive off the coast in

the course of the week, with a valuable crop of dry goods; and that he had been making arrangements for extensive co-operation in running them ashore at the breaking of the cliff, about three or four miles from Hordle, in the vicinity of which place he had another secret store.

"And I hope, father," said Mary, "this is the last time you will ever be engaged in such dangerous and lawless transactions. How often have you promised me—"

"What do you mean, girl, by lawless tráns-actions?" interposed the Captain. "Start my timbers! I never wronged a fellow-creature of a sixpence in all my life; and my word 's good for a thousand pound on either side the Channel. I honour the King; and if I make war upon the preventive and the blockade, why, it's because they make war upon the free-trade, which every Englishman had a right to carry on, before these fellows started up. Every body knows that I did the Government more than one good service during the war, or else they wouldn't have granted me the free pardon they did, and cancelled all the warrants and capiases against me; and its 'nation hard, if I mayn't

run a crop now and then, which does good to many, and no harm to no one. Howsomdever, if we make a clean job of the Longsplice this trip, without losing a hoop or a halfpenny, I don't know but what I may strike flag, and lay myself up in ordinary."

"Then I'm sure, father, I shall pray most heartily for your success."

"Who brings over the Longsplice this trip?" inquired Rough-and-ready.

"Stockings, Ragged Robert, Popgun, and Young Oysters," replied the Captain.

"Ay, ay, all right," growled the other, who was a man of very few words. The boy Moon now came tapping at the window, to say that he saw a skiff making from Keyhaven towards the Jack-in-the-Basket.

"Start my timbers! a skiff?—How is she rigged, boy?"

"Cutter-rigged, with a jib and boom."

"Why then, as sure as ever I'm standing here, that must be Skeleton Jack out of Lymington. Come along, Rough-and-ready, we shall soon know if it's his skiff, by the red streak;" and so saying, they hastened to the pigeon-house,

which being the highest point on the farm, not only enabled them to make better observation of what was passing, but to hoist certain telegraphic signals for the guidance of their confederates at sea.

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Mary, as they quitted the room, "what a harassing, dangerous, and disreputable life does my infatuated father persist in following!"

"Horrid!" exclaimed George, with a deep sigh.

"I beg your pardon," cried Mary, recovering her recollection at the sound of his voice; "my anxiety for my dear father, made me forget that you were following the same career, or I should not so harshly have condemned it. And yet you termed it horrid. Why, then, do you pursue it?"

"Oh! do not ask me, Mary; do not turn my thoughts inwards upon the hideous spectacle of myself; for 'that way madness lies.' Why do I pursue it?" he exclaimed in a louder voice, starting into one of those bursts of vehement passion which were perpetually alternating with his fits of profound dejection—"Why

do I pursue it? Because I am a wretch, a reprobate, a forlorn, abandoned, hopeless outcast from the world! Oh, Mary, Mary! I have found more peace—no, peace will never more be mine;—more solace of my incurable anguish in this life of hardship and peril, than ever I have experienced amid bowers of luxury, and scenes of extravagance and riot. And yet even here, in this comparative state of relief, have you not seen how miserable, how wretched, how heart-broken I have been. Oh, God! have I not cause enough for my despair? To know that I was born with prospects of wealth, respectability, and happiness; to feel that I was destined by heaven for nobler pursuits, and higher purposes; to reflect that I have sacrificed my youth, wasted my health, perverted my talents, alienated and embittered my friends; that my short career has been maddened by dissipation, by folly, by crime; and that, now driven from society, degraded in my own opinion, as well as in that of others, I am condemned to lead the life of an outlaw—

> "To hovel me with rogues, and swine forlorn,
> In short, and musty straw."

Oh, forgive me, Mary! I know not what I say. Not to your brave and generous father could I allude; not to any abode in which you are a dweller: you, who have filled me with mingled thoughts of happiness and despair; you, who have at once soothed and tormented my heart; you, alas! of whom I have only been able to think with unalloyed pleasure in my dreams."

"I can easily forgive you, George, for I never reflect upon the disgraceful purposes to which our dwelling is applied, without sharing your own feeling of humiliation at being one of its inmates. I see, however, by your agitated and desponding looks, that you have not forgiven yourself. But what could you mean by saying, I had filled you with thoughts of despair; that I had tormented your heart? Indeed, indeed, George, nothing could have been farther from my wishes and intentions."

"Generous, kind-hearted, Mary! I believe it—I feel it, and this it is that aggravates my regret, my anguish. Do not ask me to explain myself; I must not, dare not! Trouble not

yourself about such a castaway as I am; but leave me to pursue to its end, (and God grant that it may be a speedy one!) my wretched and dishonourable career."

"Why should it continue to be either wretched or dishonourable? You are young, you may redeem your early errors; sincere repentance may atone even for your crimes, if such you have committed, and a future life of virtue and respectability—"

"Forbear, oh! in pity forbear, to tantalize me with a delicious dream that can never be realized. There is no redemption, no happiness in store for me. My follies are irremediable."

"Not all, George, surely not all. Might you not, for instance, withdraw yourself from this life of lawlessness and peril?"

"Peril! It is its danger in which I delight. Oh, if you knew the fierce, gloomy joy with which my bosom pants when I find myself in the midst of flying bullets and deep darkness, in the desperate hope that some friendly ball may find its way to my heart, and still its throbbings for ever! And why should I con-

tinue to live? Who would regret me? Every body spurns, repudiates, hates me!"

"Oh no, George, no! Does not my father love you, do not I love you?"

"You love me!—*you!*" exclaimed George, striking his hand upon his forehead—"oh! gracious Heaven! this is the keenest pang, the most dreadful trial of all."

Unaccustomed to measure and weigh her words, the artless girl had merely meant to say, that she shared her father's respect and esteem for their inmate; but instantly conscious of the different interpretation that had been given to her expression, she stood utterly abashed, blushing from brow to bosom, and so confused as to be unable for the moment to explain herself.—"Surely, Sir," she at length faultered, as she held her head proudly up, and shook back the black ringlets that had fallen over her face—"you understand my meaning? I have the same regard for you that my father has;—is it not proper that his friends should be mine? This was what I meant to say, nothing more whatever."

"Heaven knows that I deserve nothing

more! And yet, if the fond wishes of my heart, this fluttering heart, which is ready to leap out of my bosom at the thought, could be realized—but no, no, no—there is no such happiness for me! I am doomed to hopeless misery and degradation." The wretched man again struck his hand violently upon his forehead, and sunk with a deep sigh into the chair from which he had risen.

A pause ensued, of which the still blushing Mary felt the embarrassment; but not knowing how otherwise to escape from it, she snatched up her guitar, and tendering it to her companion with a sportive look, exclaimed:—

"Come, George, away with these gloomy thoughts! What! can neither my smiles nor my entreaties gladden that melancholy face? You shake your head mournfully. Nay, then, you shall not continue in this sad mood. Positively you shall sing yourself into a more happy feeling, for we may sometimes dissipate sorrow by the sound of our own voice."

As he fixed upon her a look at once empassioned and desponding, the tear glistened in his eye; he took the guitar, and in plaintive

tones, that seemed, indeed, to come from a stricken heart, thus complied with her request.

"Oh! turn away, in pity turn
Away from me that fatal smile;
It does but make my bosom burn
With grief that nothing can beguile.
The charms that I can ne'er forget,
I know that I can ne'er obtain.
Oh! would that we had never met,
Or that we ne'er might meet again!

Such fascinating power is thine,
That tho' I feel 'tis mad to stay,
And doat on what must ne'er be mine,
I cannot tear myself away.
But do not, do not smile—and yet
My heart would break with your disdain—
Oh! would that we had never met,
Or that we ne'er might meet again!"

Scarcely had he concluded, when the hoarse voice of the Captain was heard, exclaiming, as he tapped impatiently at the window:—"Start my timbers, George! are you caterwauling here along with Polly, when there's a strange skiff upon the sly off the Jack-in-the-Basket? Come along, man, and see what you can make of her with the Pigeon-house peeper."

This summons was immediately obeyed, and Mary, now left in the parlour by herself, remained agitated and bewildered by contending emotions. Her eager explanation of the inconsiderate phrase into which she had been betrayed, had by no means removed her glowing confusion, while the tender tone, the impassioned looks, and above all, the love-breathing sentiments uttered by George in his song, so much more pointed and explicit than any that had been previously addressed to her, had set her bosom heaving, and filled her with tender thoughts, at once pleasing and distressing. It was delightful to her, to believe that she had awakened a reciprocal passion in a man who, notwithstanding the errors of his former, or the degradation of his present life, was not only brave, generous, and accomplished, but one who had evidently been born and had moved in a sphere infinitely superior to her own. Perhaps there is nothing more flattering to a female of comparatively humble station, than the homage of a man thus circumstanced; and if, as in the present instance, personal advantages and every winning endowment be added to the

accidental grace of birth, there are few hearts that can resist the combination. Mary felt that hers had not been proof against such dangerous attractions. Whatever George might have been, she believed that a virtuous woman's love might redeem him, might reclaim him from his present evil courses, might eventually save him from destruction; a conviction that sanctified her affection into a sort of duty; whilst she perhaps felt too great a confidence in the questionable dictum that a reformed rake makes the best husband. But the more her own feelings became undeniable to herself, the less could she account for George's contradictory phrases and ambiguous conduct. Why all this vacillation of passion, this fierce struggle against his own apparent wishes? Why not come manfully forward and avow his attachment, if he really felt it? Alas! thought Mary to herself, how do I know, after all, that he *is* attached to me? This idle song, from which I would draw such vain conclusions, was doubtless written by some distant bard for a different mistress, and has probably been sung to hundreds of silly, credulous girls besides myself. As this con-

viction stole over her mind, she heaved a deep sigh, she felt oppressed by a mingled feeling of humiliation and disappointment, and, in the unconsciousness of her reverie, took up the book that George had left upon the chair when he had been so hastily summoned away. It opened spontaneously where a paper had been placed within it, upon which she beheld some pencil lines in George's well-known hand-writing. They were the words of the song he had just been singing to her, so altered and interlined, as to show that it was manifestly his own composition; while the verses, which appeared to have been left unfinished, were headed with the words, "Stanzas to Mary."

The fluttering of her heart, the trembling of her whole frame, the deep suffusion of her face, attested the sudden agitation into which she was thrown by this unexpected discovery. Her eye again hurried confusedly over the words, without exactly comprehending their import, or indeed seeing them distinctly; but as she went over them a second and a third time, she became enabled to comment upon them in an eager whisper. "'I know that I

can ne'er obtain—' How does he know that? —what does he mean?—'And doat on what—' —He loves me, then—George *does* love me! He says 'he doats on me!" —'Ne'er might meet again!'—Why should he express this cruel wish? What prevents —" At this instant she heard footsteps approaching, and in her first surprise and alarm, hastily crumpled up the paper and thrust it into her bosom; but in the next moment, recollecting the conclusions that George might draw if he imagined her to have taken it, she smoothed it out again in a violent hurry, and replacing it in the book, rushed out of the room to her own apartment, crimsoned with blushes, and almost breathless, from the united rapidity of her flight and the vehemence of her emotions.

CHAPTER IX

——— Ha! ha! false to me? to me?—
Avaunt! begone! thou hast set me on the rack:
I swear 'tis better to be much abused,
Than but to know a little.

SHAKSPEARE.

WHILE the Captain took good care to keep his farm in a proper state of cultivation, that it might afford the better cover for his real pursuits, he contrived to render it subservient in various ways to the more important business of smuggling. The borderers upon the New Forest are so subject to the depredations of the neighbouring deer, when these animals have once gotten a haunt of their corn-lands, that they are often obliged to burn fires all night for the purpose of driving them away. By lighting these at certain hours, and in particular quarters, the Captain made them answer the additional purpose of affording signals to his

confederates at sea; while another expedient was devised, for those seasons of the year when such beacons could not be kindled without exciting suspicion. It has been mentioned that there was a pigeon-house attached to the farm, situated upon a little eminence, and used as an observatory. Around the bottom of the beam that supported it, had been constructed a circular apartment, with glazed windows, for the ostensible purpose of serving as a smoking and drinking-room, but in reality, that when the Captain and his comrades were carousing in it at night, they might convert it into a species of telegraph, by dividing the light by means of shutters, or leaving it open, for the guidance of their friends afloat, who could see and interpret this notice from different parts of the coast. Near the centre of the knoll upon which this out-building stood, was a clump of wild, forlorn-looking trees, consisting of a feeble, shattered, withered oak, that had been apparently struck by lightning; two or three bald-topped, meagre, decaying elms; and a large spruce-fir, some of whose branches had been torn away, as if by the same thunderbolt that had scathed the oak,

while the remainder hung ragged and drooping on one side, waving mournfully in the breeze, like so many singed and tattered banners. Springs oozing from the bottom of the knoll had worn themselves a channel around three of its sides, the runnel itself being hidden by bushes and underwood, although its course was betrayed by its gurgling noise, as it fell from one little stony ledge to another. Landward, the pigeon-house commanded an extensive view of noble forest scenery; while in the opposite direction it afforded an uninterrupted prospect of the coast and sea.

To this spot, on the second morning after the conversation detailed in our last chapter, Mary had betaken herself with the intention of speaking to her father. He had quitted it, but she found George plying his telescope from the window of the smoking-room, or the summer-house, as she always preferred calling it. Though not altogether free from embarrassment or agitation at meeting him, for it was the first time they had encountered since she had perused the verses addressed to herself, and which, during a great part of the night, she had been

endeavouring to recollect and repeat, she tried to conceal her confusion as much as possible, but she was still so uncollected, that, after having quitted the room with her companion, she almost unconsciously turned as he turned, and found herself walking up and down with him upon the turf. When our inward feelings occasion any delicacy or difficulty in the choice of a topic, we naturally betake ourselves to external appearances; and Mary, in order to break a silence, rendered more painful by her companion's evident depression of spirits, observed, that she loved to linger about the summer-house on account of the beauty of the view, which she had seldom seen to more advantage than at the present moment.

"I, too, find a melancholy pleasure in visiting this spot," said George, "for I see in it many objects that remind me of my own fate. Like this oak, my hopes are all withered and blasted; I feel myself perishing, like these leafless elms at top," and he struck his hand to his forehead; "and yonder forlorn fir, smitten with premature decay, does but too painfully recal my own unhappy doom. Nay, as if every thing

that surrounds me were destined to turn my thoughts upon myself, I am reminded by this brawling runnel that my own dark and turbulent career will eventually dash me to pieces over some precipice, or occasion me to be lost and buried in ignoble obscurity."

"If you were but in a fit frame of mind," said Mary, "you would draw much more cheerful than desponding images from the face of Nature. To do this, however, you must be at peace with yourself, and *that* you can never be while you pursue this illegal and disreputable occupation. Oh, that my father and yourself would both abandon it!"

Abstracted by his own remorseful thoughts, he had not heard her observation, and pointing to the plot on which they stood, which happened at the moment to be involved in deep shade, he continued,—"Once more does this knoll remind me of myself; for I, too, am under a dark cloud, and Heaven only knows whether it will pass away without pouring forth its thunder upon my head. I care not—I care not: indeed, I could wish to be the instant victim of its fury, if so I might be at peace."—As he spoke, the

sun suddenly darted its streaming rays from behind the cloud, still leaving the eminence upon which they stood, and the nearer landscape in shade, but illuminating the tufted tops of the forest as it rose amphitheatrically in the distance, and sending fragments of green light into its glimmering lawns and glades. "Look, look!" exclaimed Mary; "how beautiful, how glorious! Does not Nature herself bid you hope for better and brighter days, by showing you, that though the present be shrouded in gloom, the future may be lighted up with brilliancy and sunshine?"

"It *is* beautiful—it *is* full of cheering and consoling suggestions," cried her companion, while a languid smile passed over his pale, jaded countenance. "Oh, Mary! Mary! if I could only say with Burns, that the light which led me astray, was "light from heaven."

"Say it not with Burns, nor with any one else, for no light that really comes from heaven can ever lead man astray. Yonder glow of radiance is indeed a celestial one; it comes not, however, to lead you astray, but to beckon you to virtue; to fill you with the exhilarating con-

fidence that the coming days shall be better and more cheerful than those which now o'ershadow you."

"Would I might believe it! would I might believe it! And why should I not? why may I not lend myself to the sweet and soothing influences of this forest, within whose silent recesses I have felt more of the solemn awfulness, the tranquillizing sublimity of religion, than ever visited my heart amid the proud domes built by human hands. Oh! there is no temple like a natural grove, where the columns have been reared by an immortal Architect, and into which the Deity seems to be looking down from the glorious roof of azure with which he has overhung it. I have stood, here in this forest have I stood, in the midst of such a sublime fane, lost in silent ecstasy, gazing upon the figures in the evening sky, imagining them to be the spirits of the departed, who have escaped from all the troubles of earth, and wishing myself to be floating peacefully among them, until I have forgotten you, and the world, and even the sense of my own incurable miseries."

"These, George, are ennobling thoughts,

and feelings which you would do well to encourage. I am only amazed that you can entertain such elevating impressions, and yet pursue the degrading career in which you are now engaged."

"What avail these higher and more holy promptings of a spirit originally destined perhaps for better things, but now irretrievably sunk and lost? How can I obey its yearnings, how listen to its whisperings? Whither can I go, where hide my head, in what unfathomable abyss bury and smother up my shame? Ask me not what it is—be content to know that—

"Mine was th' insensate, frenzied part,
Ah! why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart,
'Tis thine to pity and forgive."

"If they are now abhorrent to your heart; if you have indeed repented of them, every one should pity and forgive them, and above all, you should forgive yourself. For my own part, I can never, never believe any man to be irreclaimable to virtue who retains the fervour of his first

attachment to poetry, and I know that you are still an occasional votary of the Muses."

"Me! how can you know this?"

Mary, who had quite forgotten that George was not aware of her little discovery about the song, blushed deeply and was confused; but her companion, not noticing her embarrassment, continued—"If you allude to the lines I have just quoted, they are not my own, but from Burns; whose beautiful poetry I perhaps admire the more, because I have sometimes imagined that there is a degree of similarity in our faults and follies, however little there may be in our respective talents."

"At all events, it is a miserable waste of your life as well as talents to throw them away upon the lawless and ignoble occupation of a smuggler. Oh that this night's adventure may succeed, that so my father may redeem his pledge to abandon it for ever! In that case, would you not follow his example?"

"I know not, I care not: joyfully, yes, yes, gladly, if I might only accompany you in your retreat. Oh! if I had any one fair and good as you are to cheer and counsel me, to guide me from

error, to confirm me in virtue, to be the companion and delight of my remaining years—but, no, no, no! there is no such happiness for me—it is impossible, quite impossible, and it is worse than madness to dream of it!"

Not knowing what reply to make to these passionate and perplexing declarations, which seemed to admit an attachment, and deplore some inexplicable difficulty that rendered it impossible to be gratified, Mary was preparing to take her departure in some confusion, when she saw Rough-and-ready pacing his sturdy, measured way towards the Pigeon-house. "What!" exclaimed George, "are you come already to relieve guard at telescope? is it the time we had appointed? I had no idea it was so late."

"Ay, ay, all right," replied the taciturn smuggler, who seldom wasted a word, and who, taking the telescope in his hand, directed it immediately towards Lymington.

"Mary!" said George, joining her as she descended the knoll, and speaking in a low earnest voice, as he looked at his watch; "I have not a moment to lose, I must be absent for two hours, and you will oblige me by not men-

tioning it to the Captain. It is most vexatious that I must be a truant at such a busy time, and on the morning of such an eventful night as this may prove; but the affair upon which I am engaged is imperative—it concerns my last and dearest hopes, and must not be neglected. I trust the Captain will not notice my absence; I pledge myself that it shall not exceed two hours." So saying, he hastened down the knoll, and struck into the forest at a brisk pace.

Seating herself upon a bench outside the summer-house, Mary remained for some time watching him as he was alternately lost and seen amid the clustering beeches of Boldre-wood-walk, until he turned to the right towards Purley, when, as he was no longer visible, she sauntered thoughtfully back to the house, and took her customary seat at the parlour-window. But she could not pursue her usual avocations; in vain did she endeavour to ply her needle, to amuse herself with her guitar; she sunk into an unconscious reverie, of which George was always the predominant object. The more she reflected upon his conduct, the more extraordinary did it appear. She knew that the cargo

which was expected at night consisted entirely of silks, to the amount of several thousand pounds; and that he should absent himself on the near approach of such an important crisis; one that, by its result, might determine her father's future course of life, and perhaps his own too, seemed doubly marvellous. Still more inexplicable was it, considering the perfect confidence between them, that he should so anxiously desire his absence to be concealed from her father, and pledge himself to hurry back with all possible speed to prevent its being noticed. His engagement, therefore, whatever might be its nature, was obviously unconnected with the night's enterprize, in which he was to be engaged. He had said that the affair that called him away was imperative, and could not be neglected; that it concerned his last and dearest hopes. As she more than once repeated these latter words to herself, a vague, uneasy misgiving arose in her bosom. She recollected the mystery that involved his fate, the close reserve in which he had always wrapped himself up, the contradictory nature of his declarations, his frequent allusions to some insuperable ob-

stacle that opposed itself to the gratification of his wishes, and a doubt, a suspicion of she knew not what, began to agitate her bosom. She was not without her sex's share of curiosity; many motives concurred to interest her most deeply in every thing that related to George, and in addition to these stimulants, she reflected that it was her bounden duty, on such a critical day, to watch most narrowly the minutest actions of her father's comrades. Already had he suffered most extensively from treachery, the constant besetting danger to which the smuggler is exposed, and to which the temptation was great, in proportion to the known value of the cargo to be run. It was the first time that treachery and George had ever been associated together in her mind; even now she absolved him in her heart from such baseness; but she wanted a valid plea, a salvo to her conscience, for endeavouring to penetrate the secret of this mysterious engagement. She had given a tacit consent not to communicate his absence to her father, and this implied pledge she scorned to violate: but she was bound to nothing more. Appearances were indisputably strange, if not fairly

suspicious; it was due to her father and his other comrades to neglect no measure of precaution; there could not, therefore, be a shadow of impropriety in her following George, and striving to discover the nature of the business which could withdraw him from his friends at this momentous juncture.

So subtle a casuist is the will, that it can presently overpower the clearest judgment, and persuade it that any strong inclination is a paramount duty; under the influence of which process, Mary determined to lose no time in pursuing and watching the operations of her lover, for such he might truly be termed, although he had never made her any explicit declaration of his attachment. Her father had purchased for her a beautiful horse, bred in the forest, and consequently diminutive, but of great spirit and docility, and, like many others of the same hardy race, almost, literally, indefatigable. Without imparting her intentions to any one, she ordered the boy, Moon, to saddle him, mounted, cantered into Boldre-wood-walk, and turned into the umbrageous avenue that led towards Purley. From the

frequent habit of riding in the forest, she was perfectly conversant with—

> "Each land, and every alley green,
> Dingle, or bushy dell of this wild wood,
> And every bushy bourn from side to side,"

a circumstance that rather increased than diminished the difficulty of her present search; since, as she had no clue to guide her in her perquisitions, she had no reason for preferring one path to another. She rode on, however, still keeping a general direction towards Purley, but allowing her nag to make his own choice of the various openings that tended thitherward, when, after having ridden for some time, not knowing how she should accomplish her design, and yet loth to abandon it, she beheld through the spray of some tall underwood a white object on the opposite side of a small forest-lawn. She stopped suddenly, for both herself and her horse were effectually screened by the bushes, and quickly ascertained that the figure was a female, evidently of genteel station in life, winning her way slowly and stealthily, and looking anxiously around, as if she expected to be joined by

some one appointed to meet her. She advanced half-way across the little lawn, and as Mary perceived that she was both young and handsome, her heart thrilled with a sickening sensation, immediately after which a burning glow rushed over her whole frame. A thousand fears and misgivings flitted like lightning-flashes athwart her brain, as with a breathless and intense anxiety she riveted her eyes upon the figure, which had no sooner come forward enough to be recognised from an open deer-shed, at one end of the lawn, than a man ran out of it to meet her. It was George! He flew towards the stranger, he embraced her with ardour, with transport, he placed her arm within his own, and leading her to the shed, seated her upon a pile of faggots that had been left within it, and placed himself beside her.

Mary was of a vehement and ardent temperament; for a moment she was overcome by rage and indignation; flashes of light, seeming to sparkle before her eyes, deprived her for some seconds of all power of distinct vision; but when she could again distinguish the shed,

she observed that the parties within it were conversing together with every appearance of animated and tender interest. It was a hateful, a hideous spectacle, and she again averted her eyes: indeed she had seen quite enough; there could be no doubt of George's infamous duplicity and treachery, and her wounded pride quickly gaining the predominance over every other feeling, she became now solely anxious to effect her retreat without discovery. She turned her horse gently round, the turf prevented any sound from his retiring footsteps, she selected the most umbrageous alley before her, and had no sooner gained unobserved a safe distance from the shed, than she struck her animal with an unwonted sharpness, and galloped with speed towards the farm, her face still crimsoned with anger, and her heart beating with violent pulsations against her bosom.

It had been her intention to communicate instantly to her father what she had seen, and her rapidity had reference to this primary act of duty; but as her first ebullient feelings in some degree subsided, she not only recollected

her promise to George not to betray his absence, but began to reflect that her father was no ways interested in the discovery she had made. Towards *him* there was no evidence of treachery; but as the affair affected herself, it seemed impossible to paint in colours sufficiently black, the atrocious conduct of the delinquent. She had now ascertained the secret object of "his last hopes and dearest wishes;" she had detected the insuperable obstacle to which such frequent and mysterious allusion had been made —he was evidently attached, probably betrothed, nay, perhaps, actually married to the young and beautiful girl whom she had seen in the Forest; and under either of these circumstances that he should attempt, as he manifestly had done, to delude her own affections, and trifle with her tenderest feelings, was an act of gratuitous duplicity, of wanton falsehood, of heartless insult, that filled her with unbounded scorn and indignation. True, he had never made any positive declaration of his love, he had never openly offered her his hand—so much the baser was his meanness and hypocrisy; but had he not laboured to convey the same impression by

a thousand equivalent modes, by demeanour, looks, and language, the most expressive, perhaps, when they were the least explicit? For her own part, she was heartily glad that he was unmasked; she had never cared for him, she had never thought of him beyond the passing moment; it was impossible, indeed, that she could have ever bestowed any serious regard upon such a self-condemned profligate and open violator of the laws; and if she felt angry and agitated, it was not that it gave her the smallest concern to throw off the offender for ever, but that she could not advert to his offence without feelings of just detestation and abhorrence.

Thus argued Mary to herself, as, after her return to the farm, she sate in the parlour, endeavouring to work, but only snapping her thread, breaking her needle, unpicking what she had sewed amiss, venting impatient exclamations at her own awkwardness, and immediately repeating the same mistake; when, after she had been for some time thus occupied, the door opened and George entered the apartment. Though flushed and heated from the haste he

had made in returning, there was an unwonted expression of complacency upon his features, which Mary, in the momentary glance that she cast at him, observed, and attributed to the pleasure he had derived from his recent interview. The thought was not calculated to allay her feelings, which were again boiling in her bosom at the presence of the supposed traitor. Her cheeks burned, her eyes flashed, her veins swelled, but in the pride of her indignant heart, she determined to be composed, to affect indifference, and she accordingly fixed her eyes upon her work, which she plied with increased diligence.

"I am back, you see, within the two hours," said George, extending his watch; "I hope the Captain has not been apprised of my absence."

"Indeed, Sir, I know nothing at all about it," said Mary, speaking in a constrained, unnatural voice, in the unavailing attempt to be perfectly composed: "at all events, *I* have not apprised him. Though I only gave you a silent promise to that effect, I scorn to violate it. Thank God! *I* am no specious hypocrite;

I am no smooth-tongued dissembler; *I* am no habitual dealer in falsehood."

"Good heavens, Mary! what means this strange language? You are angry, what can have happened to offend and disturb you?"

"Angry! disturbed! Oh dear no, Sir, not in the least; I was never more calm in my whole life. I can neither be surprised nor offended at any thing that *you* may think proper to do."

"That *I* may think proper to do! how can *I* have incurred your displeasure? Surely my temporary absence——"

"Nay, Sir, prythee give yourself not the trouble to devise an explanation, which, can only increase the number of your falsehoods, and entitle you the more to my supreme contempt. I will not decoy you into more untruth by pretending ignorance of your proceedings. If the imperative affair upon which you were engaged; if your last and dearest hopes compelled you to make an assignation with a lady in Boldrewood-walk, it concerns not me; and I must beg, therefore, that you will not offend my ears with any of its offensive details."

"O Mary, Mary! have you tracked my footsteps, dogged me through the mazes of the Forest, to discover this secret; and was this worthy of you?"

"I suppose, Sir, I am at liberty to ride where I please; I was on horseback when I accidentally beheld your clandestine meeting," said Mary, condescending to equivocate, as she could not altogether rebut the imputation.

"Mary, you are mistaken: the conclusions you have apparently drawn from what you saw, are wrong, totally wrong. I swear to you most solemnly," he continued, observing that she shook her head with a look of incredulous scorn, "that there is nothing, absolutely nothing whatever in the nature of my acquaintance with that lady which should prevent any other attachment that I might——"

He hesitated, and Mary, striving to maintain an indifference which she was far from feeling, exclaimed in a taunting tone, "Nay, Sir, what you swear, must of course be true; who can doubt it? I have no right to demand any explanation of your conduct, and I am far from wishing to hear it: if you

proceed, therefore, it will be for your own pleasure, not for mine."

This speech was made in the hope of stimulating him to some sort of confession, even while she disavowed any desire of the kind; and she was therefore proportionably mortified, when George replied, "No, Mary, no. I must not, cannot follow the dictates of my heart by laying open to you all its wishes, all its hopes and fears. I have sworn secrecy, and whatever may be the consequences, my lips shall be sealed upon the subject of this misapprehended interview. My own safety, and that of another who is still dearer to me than I am to myself, might be fatally implicated by the smallest disclosure."

Mary's warm and impetuous disposition would not allow her to maintain for any length of time a tone of sneer or sarcasm. Frank and straightforward herself, she had a profound hatred of double dealing in others; nor was she by any means scrupulous or measured in the expression of her opinion, when her mind was once made up. In the speech she had just heard, she could perceive nothing but a paltry

equivocation, or a direct avowal that his promise to this unknown lady, and his regard for her safety, were of greater value in George's opinion, than any considerations connected with herself; under the impulse of which irritating impression, she darted at him a look of ineffable scorn, as she exclaimed, "Enough, Sir, enough; attempt not any more evasions; you stand already sufficiently low in my contempt. But I warn you, once for all, that if you remain beneath this roof, and presume again to address me in such terms as you have often used, or in any other than those of the coldest civility, I shall expose your insidious falsehoods, and desire my father to chastise and dismiss you from his house, for having dared to insult his daughter!"

"I was wrong, I confess I was wrong, if I have betrayed to you the secret wishes of my heart; wishes which should never have been indulged, because it is impossible they should be gratified. But, however culpable I may be, surely, Mary, I deserve your pity rather than your anger, when I swear to you that the attractions which I have not been able altogether

to resist, have added bitterness to a cup that was already overflowing."

"I understand not this ambiguous language," said Mary, haughtily, "and I will save you the humiliation of any farther shuffling and subterfuge." So saying, she hastily quitted the room, ran up-stairs to her own chamber, and threw herself into a chair; when her feelings, no longer sustained by wounded pride and fierce indignation, presently found vent in an hysterical burst of tears.

CHAPTER X.

O Heaven, how horrible it is to be
A prey to the wild waters—to contend,
And feel how vain the contest, with the waves,
Th' infuriate winds, and every element
That wars on the wide ocean—to look round,
But look in vain for hope; and to behold
Fear in the face, and in the soul despair.

G. F. RICHARDSON.

THE Captain, who had been absent upon some of the arrangements connected with the night's adventure, now returned, and roused George from the painful reverie into which he had sunk, by the hoarse exclamation of—"Start my timbers! what are you dreaming on? Come, man, be alive, and stir your stumps, for it's most time for us to be jogging." The party

thus rudely summoned, jumped immediately up, and proceded to assist his companion in making preparation for their departure. They looked out the smock-frocks in which the whole company were to be arrayed—a dress not only serviceable in assimilating individuals, so as to prevent recognition; but one that had been found by experience to be less perceptible upon the sea-shore at night, than any of a darker hue. The Captain possessed an old-fashioned lumbering whiskey, that had apparently been employed for many years in conveying farmers to market, but which he had procured to be so fitted up with hiding places, secret drawers, and a false bottom, that he could stow away silks in it to the value of some hundreds, in such a manner as not to excite the smallest suspicion. In this vehicle, drawn by a fast horse, George, accompanied by Rough-and-ready, took his departure towards the coast, carrying with them a large shaggy black mastiff, known by the unflattering appellation of Belzebub; probably from his colour alone, for he shared none of the bad qualities of his great spiritual namesake. On the contrary, he was a prodigious favourite with

the whole fraternity of smugglers; but, above all, with the Captain, by whom he had been taught to act as occasion might require, either as a scout, a guard, or an ally; in all which capacities he possessed the inestimable advantage, in his master's eye, of being the only coadjutor, on whose fidelity he could implicitly depend. My Lord and his wife Nelly, the nature of whose services we have already mentioned, together with the boy Moon, were ordered to remain, and mount guard at home, and give signals from the pigeon-house, should any suspicious appearances induce them to believe that officers were upon the watch in the neighbourhood of the farm. The Captain himself, whose boyish practice of chasing the wild forest horses, and throwing himself upon their back without saddle or bridle, had rendered him a much better horseman than might have been supposed from the nautical nature of his more recent life, got ready his favourite black mare; but as he never quitted home, even on the shortest excursion, without embracing his daughter, and bidding her adieu, he returned to the house, shouting "Polly," with his stentorian voice as

soon as he had crossed the threshold. Neither finding her in the parlour, nor receiving any answer to his summons, he proceeded to her room, bolting out, as soon as he beheld her, his usual exclamation of "Start my timbers, Polly! what 's the matter? what are ye piping your eye about? has any of our chaps offended ye? Tell me who it was, and if I don't bring him on his marrowbones to ask your pardon, or else clap a piece of lead in him, unship my rudder; that 's all!"

Alarmed at the thought of any dissension between her father and his comrades, which, as she knew by experience, too often terminated in treachery, Mary eagerly declared that he was quite wrong in his supposition; but that it was natural she should be cast down, and a little overcome in spirits, when she saw him about to depart upon another of those dangerous and disgraceful expeditions which she had so often implored him to discontinue.

"As to disgrace, Polly, that 's all my eye; unless the first merchants in Lonnon are disgraced: and as to danger, I don't believe there 's any; and if so be there should, why,

I've been too much used to 'em, to mind a few slashers and barkers. But look ye here, Polly; ye know I love ye better than any thing else in the whole world, and can't bear to see ye snivelling—can't upon my soul! so, if all goes right to-night, as twenty to one it will,—give us your hand—there!—I promise ye to strike my flag, and give up the free-trade for ever! There, girl, now you've got my promise, and Lawrence Boulderson's bare word is good for five thousand pounds, ay, for ten, upon half a dozen different exchanges, here and abroad; and there ain't many a man in England can say that. So cheer up, Polly; give us a buss, girl, and God bless ye!"

With these words he left her, mounted his black mare, and rode towards the coast, taking a different road from that chosen by his companions, the better to elude observation and suspicion.

During the remainder of this solitary evening, Mary was quite unable to recover her calmness and self-possession; a circumstance which she attributed to anxiety upon her father's account, but which might have been assigned,

in at least an equal degree, to her unappeased resentment against George. That he should positively refuse to explain the nature of his relationship with this strange lady, whose safety was dearer to him than his own, or his intentions with regard to herself, when an opportunity was afforded him, and when candour and honesty so imperatively dictated such a course, convicted him of equivocation and pusillanimity, even if it did not point at some baser designs against her own honour. His conduct at once irritated her feelings, and baffled all her attempts at its elucidation. What was the meaning of all this mystery; what the motive for so much inconsistency; how reconcile his acts and his professions? These problems she attempted to solve in vain, and when she felt that every conclusion to which they led her imparted some new pang to her bosom, all her pride and indignation could not prevent her from sighing to herself, in the concluding words of the song she had so recently heard—

"Oh! would that we had never met,
Or that we ne'er might meet again!"

As these causes of agitation were combined

with considerable anxiety on her father's account, it need not be stated that she felt little inclination to sleep, even although the usual hour of her retiring to rest, which was an early one, had arrived. At this juncture, while she was pacing up and down the parlour, too much disturbed in thought to sit still, she heard a gentle tapping at the door, which was cautiously opened, and the boy Moon, stealing into the room, told her in a whisper that My Lord was playing booty, scamping, going to blow the whole concern. Being asked his reasons for this alarming conclusion, he added, that he had seen him covertly banging a lantern upon one of the branches of the old oak, on the knoll, as a private signal; making preparations with Nelly, that evinced an intention of decamping from the farm during the night, with all their effects; and finally, that he had observed him steal down to the turnip-field gate, and talk to a strange man, whom he could not distinctly recognize, but who looked a good deal like Gentleman George.

Convinced from these and other particulars that treachery was brewing, Mary, who like her

father was bold, decisive, and energetic, desired the boy to return and remain at his post as if nothing had happened; when hastening to the stable, she saddled and bridled her horse, and led it slowly round the back of the premises, so as not to be heard or seen by My Lord and his wife, who were indeed at this moment too busily engaged in packing up, to be particularly observant of what was passing immediately around them. Once clear of the farm, Mary's familiarity with all the by-paths and horse-tracks, enabled her to select such as would effectually veil her from observation, especially as it was now deep night, and she accordingly jumped into the saddle, and galloped fearlessly across the lonely forest, in the direction of Hordle. There was no moon, for smugglers seldom execute any of their operations when that luminary is likely to display her countenance, so that the forest was wrapped in gloom, save when flashes of heat-lightning from the distant horizon irradiated for a moment the long vistas, or open lawns and glades, which glimmered before her in the flitting gleam, and then appeared to be plunged in tenfold obscurity. Without this

occasional assistance, however, she would have experienced no difficulty in finding her way; and she accordingly proceeded with unrelaxed rapidity, startling the deer who came out into the open plots to browze, or scaring their lurking enemy the night-stalker, who, with his toils and engines, concealed himself in the adjoining bushes, that he might ensnare and carry off the fattest of the herd. She passed a fine stag, one of the "native burghers of the wood," making pitiable but vain efforts to escape, having been caught by a hook baited with an apple, and hung from the bough of a tree. But the forest was by no means abandoned to the depredations of poachers and marauders. More than once she was hailed and menacingly ordered to stop by some of the under-keepers, apportioned to the several walks into which that woody district is divided. On these occasions the mention of her name, even the sound of her voice, served as an immediate passport; for however severe these men might be against poachers, deer-stalkers, or timber-stealers, neither their duty nor their interest urged them to take cognizance of the smugglers. They were, in fact, on

friendly terms with them, but more especially with the Captain, who had purchased their tacit connivance by acceptable gratuities; so that Mary, with only a few of these momentary interruptions, threaded the forest, crossed Lymington River by Battramsley, and approached the coast in a shorter space of time than could have been accomplished by any one less conversant with the country. Indignation against George spurred her on to the utmost speed in the hope of defeating his designs; for having set him down as a traitor to herself, she believed him capable of every other atrocity, and guided by the boy's information, she did not for a moment doubt that he was perfidious enough to have betrayed her father, and to have given information of the intended landing. Just before the morning began to dawn, her anxiety was increased to the utmost degree of intensity by the sound of fire-arms, and shouts in the direction of Hordle Cliff; shortly after which she could perceive several of the light carts usually employed in running dry goods, driven empty and at full speed back into the interior, too sure an evidence that the enterprise had been

discovered and rendered abortive, and that the country people and others engaged to carry off the goods were making their escape in all directions.

This was indeed the case. The Captain had adopted such precautions that nothing but treachery could have prevented his success. Always his own *spotsman*, he had fixed upon a gap near Hordle as the place for running the goods; the commander of the Longsplice, his partner in the adventure, was the only person privy to this determination, until it became necessary to confide it to the various confederates who were to be assembled at night. At the dark hour appointed, the Captain, being provided with a long tube like a telescope, lined with polished tin, and containing a lighted taper, stood upon the beach, placed it against his body, and moved it gently backwards and forwards, so that it might be seen from the sea at a considerable distance, while the light was utterly invisible from the shore. For this signal the cutter steered, coming as near as the depth of the water would allow; a low whistle announced her arrival, the galley loaded with

valuable silks, secured in painted bags to prevent damage from sea-water, was rowed to the gap, and the men, divided into parties, each of whose leaders was held accountable to the concern for the number of bags respectively delivered to them, began to unload with incredible rapidity, and in perfect silence. Ere the first boat-load, however, was completely cleared, a small revenue-cutter ran upon the beach, the crew jumped ashore, an alarm was given, and the country people, most of whom had no deeper interest in the concern than the half-crown which is usually paid them for their assistance, and perhaps a small subsequent gratuity when all goes well, fled to their homes and hiding-places with the utmost precipitation. The galley was the first object of attack; the Captain and his remaining comrades making the most desperate efforts to repel their assailants until they had completed her unlading, and calling out at the same time to their own cutter to slip and run instantly to sea. Regardless of the bullets which now came whistling around the immediate object of contention, it was not until the boat was nearly cleared out,

and he was assured that all his comrades were safely up the cliff, that the lion-hearted Captain quitted the beach, and mounting his black mare rode off towards Milford.

Such was the information that Mary received from honest Rough-and-ready, whom she encountered plodding as unconcernedly inland as if nothing whatever had happened, and who had not long before parted from the Captain, having been ordered to return to the farm. He added, that since they separated, he had learnt bad tidings respecting Gentleman George, who, according to his informant, in attempting to cover the Captain, had received a shot in the leg, though it was still believed that he had managed to make his escape.

"George!" ejaculated Mary—"Was *he* among you! I had reason to believe that it was he who had betrayed you all."

"What, Gentleman George!" exclaimed Rough-and-ready in his turn, with an indignant surprise,—"Not he, a truer or braver fellow never smelt powder; he was foremost in the fray, covered us all, and if I didn't think he had got clear off, sink me, if I should ever have

left the beach! George turn traitor! No—no!"—So saying, he pursued his way with his usual dogged, stubborn look, and Mary, relieved from all immediate apprehensions on her father's account, continued to advance at a more leisurely pace, towards the shore, her thoughts now anxiously reverting, though with far different feelings, to the supposed traitor. —Perhaps the heart never yearns so fondly towards a once cherished object as when we discover that we have been accusing it unjustly; in addition to which outbursting of affectionate remorse, Mary, upon the present occasion, was agitated with the deepest distress at the rumour of George's wound, and the probability of his capture. It was in attempting to rescue or protect her father, that he was stated to have been shot—a noble self-devotion, that entitled him to her deepest gratitude, especially as it was the second time that he had suffered in the same manner. If she had so cruelly wronged him in this instance, might not her jealousy have precipitated her into a similar error, when she suspected him of perfidy towards herself? Might not his conduct, however

mysterious, be susceptible of the most satisfactory explanation? He swore that it was, and was it not cruel to doubt him? Generous, noble, heroic, in his conduct towards her father, could the same man be false, mean, perfidious, towards herself? Impossible! She would await his justification, and she now felt confident that it would establish his honour and veracity. Prompted by a secret love which, though it had been momentarily checked, had suffered little or no diminution, thus argued Mary, until she, who had so lately visited George with all the fierceness of contemptuous indignation, now thought of him with mingled feelings of penitence, gratitude, and affectionate admiration, heightened by the keenest anxiety for his safety. It had been her intention to rejoin her father at Milford, and as her riding along the coast would not materially lengthen her route, while it might enable her to collect some certain information of George's fate, she pushed forward to the seashore.

The object of her solicitude was, at that moment, not only suffering the extremity of mental and bodily anguish, but in a perilous predica-

ment, that hardly allowed him a chance of escaping with his life. In his attempt to screen the Captain, he had received a ball which had broken the bone of his leg, notwithstanding which he had contrived to scramble some little distance along the shore, and, favoured by the darkness, threw himself down beneath a crag, which had been detached from the cliff, and lay near the water's edge. In this situation he remained, propping himself against the crag, and groaning with torture, until the morning broke, when, upon casting his eyes to the sea, he could just recognize the cutter scudding away to the south, and chaced by the revenue vessel, though far a-head of her. No other vessel was in sight; he was hidden from the beach; he could hear no sound of voices; all was silent where but lately all had been clamour and tumult. Ignorant of his fate, his comrades had probably left the shore; it was not impossible, however, that some of them might still be lurking under the cliff, waiting for daylight to look out for him; and, in order to avail himself of their services, it was necessary that he should render himself visible by climbing to the top of

the crag. Easy as it appeared, he found it impossible to carry this design into execution. Sick, dizzy, faint with fatigue and the loss of blood, he found that his powerless limbs refused to obey him, and, after several ineffectual efforts, which only aggravated his sufferings, he fell back into his former position, and resolved to abandon the attempt. Almost at the same moment, he made the appalling discovery that he had crawled beneath this fatal rock at low water, and that the flowing tide, which now nearly touched his extended feet, threatened speedily to overwhelm and destroy him!

At the first conviction of this inevitable fate, the perspiration started in large beads from his forehead, a sudden and deep flush overspread his features, which almost immediately resuming their ghastly paleness, wore an expression of mingled agony and horror. He was naturally of a resolute and almost undauntable spirit, but the hopelessness of all succour or escape, now inspired him with a gloomy despair. Life, however, had long been a burden to him, and now that he could no longer retain it without the probability of his being made a prisoner and

exposed to public shame, or the certainty that, even if he were rescued by his comrades, he must undergo some painful operation for his broken leg, perhaps after all to die in miserable anguish, he became in some degree reconciled to his fate, and resolved to encounter his approaching death without flinching, and, if possible, without even a regret. Fixing his eyes therefore upon the advancing waters with a stern composure, his thoughts reverted to all the faults, follies, and crimes of his past life, a retrospect that filled him with compunction and remorse; while the hopelessnes of the future, even if he could escape his doom, left him little to bewail in dying. A pang, indeed, shot through his heart as the image of Mary passed athwart his mind, and he murmured her name with a deep sigh; but such was the cruel waywardness of his lot, that even this, his last, his only chance of happiness upon earth, was rendered unattainable by insuperable impediments. Conscious that his end was approaching, he withdrew his thoughts from all worldly objects, and determining to employ the short space that was yet to be allowed him in imploring forgiveness

of his offences, he fixed his haggard looks upon the sky, and remained absorbed in penitent and fervent prayer.

Not so completely, however, could he abstract his thoughts from the earth, but that he felt an involuntary shudder as the waters flowed over his legs, while he imagined that he heard his death knell ringing with a terrific loudness in his ears as the waves broke with a plash against the crag. Every succeeding surge rose higher and higher, sending a more icy chill to his heart, and as he mentally calculated to what part of his frame the next would reach, and how long it might be before his sufferings would terminate, nature recoiled from a death so appallingly slow and protracted, and yet apparently so inevitable. While thus gloomily meditating, he felt the buoyancy of the element which had already began to enwrap his body, and a sudden flash of hope shot like lightning through his mind. By the assistance of the rising waters he might perhaps lift himself to the top of the little crag. This too, he was well aware, must be speedily overflowed by the tide, and in that case he would only have deferred his wretched fate;

but in the short interval he might be seen by some of his comrades, he might be saved!

Life is sweet even to the most miserable: his despair was momentarily chaced away; a new hope inspired him with fresh energy; instead of contemplating the waves as his fell, inexorable executioners, he hailed them as his guardian angels, his preservers, and buoying himself as well as he could upon their surface, he succeeded, after the most painful and convulsive efforts, in dragging himself to the top of the crag, so weak and exhausted that he lay outstretched upon its summit, just able to raise up and wave his right-arm as a signal.

At this critical moment Mary, having reached the summit of the cliff above, threw her anxious eyes along the beach in the direction of the Isle of Wight, over the hills of which the sun had just risen, throwing broad shadows from its shores, and tipping with a crown of light the summits of the Needle Rocks. She could perceive no moving object except some distant fishing-boats, but as her looks wandered in another direction, she discerned something moving upon the crag. At first she imagined

it to be seaweed, blown up by the wind; but on viewing it more intently, she discovered that it was a human being, and the instant suspicion of the truth sent an electrical shock through her whole frame. It might be, it must be George, rendered helpless by his wound, and left thus miserably to perish? Be it whom it might, not a single second would her generous heart pause to deliberate. She leapt from her horse, ran like an antelope down the precipitous gap, plunged into the waves, hurried to the crag, and uttering a piercing shriek as she recognized the agonized features of George, she fell upon the rock beside him. Conscious, however, that not a moment was to be lost, she instantly recovered herself and started up, intending to support and assist him to the shore; but his blood-shot eyes, his death-like countenance, his faltering, gasping voice, his wounded leg, which had dyed the crag with gore, superadded to her fatigues during a sleepless night, and the shock of violently contending emotions, were altogether too much for her. Her's was a courageous heart, but after all it was a woman's; nature was unequal to the

struggle she had previously undergone, and the hideous, the withering spectacle on which she was now gazing with looks of horror. The scene floated dimly before her eyes, a hollow noise rung in her ears, she murmured a few inarticulate sounds, and slipped fainting from the crag.

George had convulsively grasped her hand, but totally powerless to raise her from the sea, he was doomed to the unutterable anguish of seeing her sink into the waters beside him. Her dishevelled tresses floated around her head; once—twice—thrice did the waves flow over her pale lifeless face, as she lay extended like a beautiful marble statue. He could no longer bear the heart-rending sight, but with a deep groan sunk down insensible upon the hand which he still retained in his unconscious grasp.

CHAPTER XI.

——— And for your reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity.

SHAKSPEARE.

HAVING in the first chapter of our work given a description of the Manor-house, the residence of Justice Welbeck and of his daughter Emily, we should not so long have withheld our readers from a visit to it, but that Henry Melcomb, who was unacquainted with the Justice, and had, therefore, no excuse for intruding himself unaccompanied, could not easily persuade Penguin to go with him and introduce him, although it was his first request that he would do so. It will be recollected, that immediately upon his arrival at Thaxted, he had walked over to the neglected, wild-looking park,

and had wandered round the venerable but forlorn mansion, half of which was shut up, while the whole wore a still more desolate aspect from its partial occupancy than if it had been totally tenantless. What he had seen upon that occasion, had but the more deeply interested him in the fate of Emily, cloistered in so sequestered and gloomy an abode, with a father whose penurious habits would not allow him becomingly to enjoy the immense wealth which, as he was now informed, he had accumulated by not very creditable means, and whose character, at once violent and hypochondriacal, seemed to account for that pensive, if not melancholy temperament which he had observed in the daughter. In Emily it was united with a bashful, retiring timidity that accorded well with the style of her beauty, and rendered her altogether inexpressibly interesting. Although her face exhibited an habitual paleness, or rather a blanched delicate hue, more the result of sorrow than of sickness, it was frequently suffused with blushes, whose fugitive visits imparted a still more exquisite grace to the transparent fairness that succeeded them. A

tear seemed to be not seldom trembling in her mild, dove-like eyes, which were often diffidently cast down beneath the fringe of their long sable lashes; while there was a mournful expression in the slightly-depressed corners of her mouth, and the soft plaintive tones of her voice, that told touchingly of some secret sorrow, endured with resignation, but felt with deep sensibility. At such an age as hers, for she was now in the first bloom of youth, it might be expected that she should be somewhat more sprightly and loquacious, and she had been even reproached by superficial observers with a want of animation; but when her heart was kindled by any noble action, or affecting sentiment, she spoke and looked with an enthusiasm that quickly brought words to her tongue, the blood to her glowing cheek, and the tears of generous sympathy to her eyes.

Henry, as has already been stated, had lodged for some little time in the same boarding-house with her at Southampton, whither she had gone on a visit to a sick aunt. Circumstances had thrown them much together, for the invalid lady had taken a fancy to him, and fre-

quently invited him to join her tea-parties at home, or the excursions in the beautiful neighbourhood, which had been recommended for the benefit of her health. Struck by Emily's appearance, suffering as she manifestly was from some concealed heart-grief, and not less interested in her conversation, Henry had attached himself to her upon these occasions as much as was consistent with the avoidance of such particular attentions as might lead to a misconstruction of his motives. Had not his high and honourable feelings led him to abhor with a special detestation the character of a male coquet, another principle would have decided him not to compromise either his own affections or Emily's. Must we confess a truth which, in the estimation of some of our fair readers, may place him, we fear, in a most unsentimental light? He was a disciple of Malthus, deep in the theory of the preventive and positive checks to population, a subject in which he felt a profound interest, from its importance to the happiness and independence of the lower orders. No man, in his opinion, was warranted in marrying, unless he had a reasonable prospect

of maintaining a family, so that it should not become burthensome to the community. His own situation at present afforded him no such prospect. Emily might be as poor as himself, for he had then heard nothing of her father's wealth, having made no inquiries upon the subject, and he therefore considered her as out of the question of marriage, at least to an individual so scantily provided as himself, without pausing to consider whether his own feelings or hers, when exposed to the influence of the passions, could be always made to square themselves by the rules of political economists, or the calculations of cold abstract reasoning.

Young gentlemen, even such as Henry, whom we should be very sorry to confound with the vulgar herd of gentility, make bad philosophers; but young ladies can be seldom brought to philosophise at all. In spite of himself, and notwithstanding a demeanour that had been strictly guarded, Henry had unconsciously awakened a flutter of tender emotions in the bosom of Emily, who, without adverting to theories and systems, or sufficiently considering the sanctions of prudence, listened to his gene-

rous and disinterested sentiments with a moral homage which her sensitive heart soon kindled into personal admiration. This sort of process is amazingly accelerated by a contrast of impressions, at least, where the change is from repugnant modes of action, and revolting habitudes of thinking, to those with which our whole soul eagerly and delightedly sympathises. At home, Emily heard nothing but sordid and grovelling maxims, saw nothing but the grinding oppression of a crafty, covetous, penurious man, constituting the very element in which she was condemned to live, and from which she could only make occasional and stealthy escapes, when the generous dictates of her own heart led her to soften the lot of those who were subjected to her father's exactions, or to any other calamity. This she was often enabled to do more extensively than might have been imagined; for however mean and mercenary he might be to others, towards Emily he was liberal even to profusion; so that she had it in her power secretly to remedy many grievances, and alleviate much of the distress with which the neighbourhood was afflicted.

Though she could thus covertly indulge in more congenial modes of action, she could never, in the presence of her worldly-minded father, give vent to those sentiments of disinterested virtue and benevolence with which her own mind was imbued, without being ridiculed as chimerical, or hearing her opinions stigmatized as the perilous aberrations of a romantic girl. Escaping, for the first time in her life, from such an uncongenial moral atmosphere, and thrown into the society of Henry, it may be supposed with what delight and avidity she listened when he expatiated, as he was so fond of doing, upon those views of enlarged and liberal philanthropy, which had not for their object any particular tribe or district, but the melioration of the whole human race. He condemned that odious conflict of opinions upon subjects either unimportant or undeterminable, which only serves to embitter life; when, by substituting practice for theory, by performing duties instead of squabbling about idle dogmas, and indulging in no other rivalry than the generous race of active benevolence, we might, in a material degree, amend the errors of our social

system, and diminish the general sum of misery. To such sentiments every chord of Emily's heart vibrated in unison; in spite of all her efforts to suppress them, the tears of enthusiasm stole down her cheeks, and Henry often attributed to her own secret grief an apparent distress, which was in reality the overflowing of a generous and delighted sympathy.

These affecting meetings were over. Emily had returned to the Manor-house, uncertain whether she might ever again behold the companion of her Southampton excursions, but ever thinking of him, and of his exalted doctrines, with an admiration heightened by the contrast of all that now surrounded her. Her first return increased the general depression of her spirits; but still she did not regret her visit to her aunt: it had furnished her with a store of pleasant and ennobling recollections, which, amid many sources of disquietude and regret, seldom failed to afford her a solace.

Henry, on the other hand, who found his thoughts perpetually reverting to his fair acquaintance, attributed the interest that he took in her fate to compassion at her evident

unhappiness. The young philosopher had yet to learn that the pity felt for an amiable and beautiful girl is soon fostered into a warmer sentiment; a fact which, if he had suspected, he would not have been so importunate with Penguin to introduce him at the Manor-house. Perhaps the *ci-devant* contrabandist felt an instinctive dislike of a magistrate, who, whatever might be his offences in other respects, was rigid and impartial in the discharge of his judicial functions. "Gad, my young friend!" he exclaimed, in reply to Henry's application, "I like Emily—a sweet girl! rather dumpy and down in the mouth, as well she may be: but as to the old curmudgeon, I can't abide him; I term him a specimen of primitive trap, hey! Well, well, don't look so glum; I told you I was a bit of a wag. I had much rather call when he is not at home; it will be the quarter sessions soon, when he is sure to be absent: by that time you will have brought Mrs. Tenby down from London, and we can then all go together."

"Pray speak for yourself, Mr. P." said his wife; "I am by no means sure that I shall

accompany you: it's a horrid gloomy house, makes one quite mopish; and besides, I don't like the daughter much better than you do the father. Instead of throwing away her money upon the good-for-nothing poor, and all sorts of fantastical charities, methinks she would act more becoming her station in society if she were to dress a little handsomer; though, to be sure, it's hardly worth while, with such a mealy face and insignificant little figure. This is the second year she has worn that old-fashioned lilac pelisse." As she concluded this observation, the speaker complacently surveyed in the glass her own substantial form and over-fine dress, which bristled with novelty, while she adjusted her ringlets, in order to display the sparkling rings with which her fingers were loaded.

"And yet nobody ever looks so neat and tidy as Miss Welbeck," observed Penguin.

"Neat and tidy! pray give up these trades-men-like ideas, Mr. P. Why, any shopkeeper's daughter can be neat and tidy upon twenty or thirty pounds a year. With the money that Miss Welbeck evidently has at command, she must be a poor, mean-spirited creature not to

cut a greater dash. Why doesn't she dress like me, or Lady Susan, or Miss Frampton? Ay, they carry money upon their backs, and let you see that they know it. As to Fanny Frampton, she's a silly, wild girl, too fond of nonsense and trifles, and perhaps too young to feel the importance of wearing real good things, and none of your plain, cheap, old-fashioned trumpery."

"But what is there about the father that renders him so objectionable?" inquired Henry, who considered the observations levelled against Emily to convey an encomium much rather than a censure.

"What first unhinged the old gentleman's mind, for he was not always thus," replied Penguin, "is a secret which I would give a trifle to know: but the fact is, that he has for many years been subject to sudden fits of passion, and dismal attacks of hypochondria; some say, indeed, that he is at times half mad; and these symptoms have become so much aggravated since his son disappointed all his hopes and ran away to the continent, that the servants, I am told, are frequently disturbed in the night with his cries

and groans, though he will allow no one to approach him upon these occasions but his daughter, poor Emily, who sleeps in an adjoining chamber, that she may be always ready to console and assist him."

"Oh! he's a horrid old skinflint!" cried the wife. "Would you believe it, that, though he is rolling in riches, he hardly keeps any table, and never makes the least display, though he has a strong-room in the house cram full of heavy old-fashioned plate? Now and then it is raked out when he gives a half-yearly dinner to his brother magistrates and some of the neighbours; but it is a sad blundering business, the things badly dressed, and worse put upon the table. His wines, indeed, are decent, for in his possession they are sure to get old!"

"It is sometimes very unpleasant to be in his company," continued Penguin; "you are never sure of him, for while he is conversing agreeably enough, he will all at once stop, and sink into a stern, moody reverie; or start off from the subject, and rant as wildly as a moon-struck tragic actor."

"That which is common," said Henry,

" we have little wish to see; but the being you have been describing is a singular one, and you have therefore been increasing my desire for an interview, while you have been striving to diminish it. Poor Emily! what a melancholy abode! what a painful lot! You will really oblige me by accompanying me this morning to the Manor-house; and besides, I thought you delighted in the developement of character."

" Who?—I! not in the least. Oh! ay, I recollect, all right, all right, so I do, it's quite my hobby-horse, after geology; but I can't go this morning, for you see I have got on my vagabondising dress, with my wallet and hammer."

" These may be easily changed, and if you would escort me to the Manor-house, we might afterwards visit the bed of shells you were mentioning, which cannot be much out of our road."

" Egad! my young Domine, and so we might. Ay, that stratum runs from the coast quite through the Forest, and what's curious, they're all tropical shells, and found only in this neighbourhood. I can show you a good many of them in my museum, and there are above a

hundred and twenty engraved in the Fossilia Hautoniensia, which you can look over while I am changing my dress. But it will be a long round, and my legs are not quite so young as yours; not able to vault across the Miller's-run, hey? so I'll drive you over in the gig."

"Indeed, Mr. P. you will do no such thing," cried his better half, with a look and tone of great decision: "you will never drive that gig again. Remember how you upset it coming down the hill by Lady-cross Lodge and nearly killed yourself; and how you nearly drowned the horse another day by driving him to drink in the deepest part of Avon-Water Bottom. James shall drive you, and it will besides look much genteeler, for he has got a new livery, and a glazed hat, with a gold-lace band, and there's plenty of room for three in the gig; I had it built roomy on purpose."—Henry declared that such an arrangement was perfectly unnecessary, as he was himself so practised a whip, from having driven vehicles of all sorts in America, that he would be responsible for the safety of his companion."

"Oh! that's another matter!" exclaimed the

lady: "in that case, I can willingly trust him to your care; but poor dear Mr. P. is so perfectly *non compos* when he is thinking about those nasty shells, and dirty, rubbishing bones, that I am determined he shall never handle the reins again. Come, my dear, let me see about helping you to change your clothes. God knows what would become of you, if you hadn't a good wife to look after you, and to care for you!"

"Capital! capital!" whispered Penguin, shrugging his shoulders, and winking to Henry as his spouse left the room: "I proposed driving on purpose, just to try her; knew how it would set her off—you were quite right, I *do* like to draw out people's characters." So saying, he hurried after her, having previously placed in Henry's hands the promised book of engraved fossils, which he thought calculated to beguile a much longer time than he was likely to consume in dressing, for he was brisk and expeditious in all his operations.

Philosophically indifferent as Henry generally was to the fashion and cut of his habiliments, although punctilious in the preservation of an

almost quaker-like neatness, he found that, upon the present occasion, his dress required some little improvement; a discovery which would probably have never been made, had he not been about to visit Emily. He proposed, therefore, that they should pass through Thaxted in their way, and stop for a short time at the George; an arrangement to which Penguin gave a willing assent, as it would enable him to enjoy his favourite luncheon of syllabubs and biscuits. On their arrival at this rural caravansary, Sam Ostler, who had a shrewd ear for the sound of a carriage-wheel or a horse's hoof, took hold of Penguin's mare as they drew up, and patting her on the nose, while he surveyed her whole figure, exclaimed, "She be in rare condition, Muster Penguin, baint she? Ay, and as steady a mare as any in all England, I look upon 't, if people can but drive. A little hair off the near knee from that ere tumble down Lady-cross-hill, which is a good ten pound off her value, but she don't seem to have got no sprain from dragging the chay out of Avon-Water Bottom. Heart alive! only to think of your driving her in there!"

"Curse these fellows!" cried Penguin, pettishly; "they fasten as naturally upon a man's sore places, as the flies upon the raw back of a horse."

"Sarvant, Sir, sarvant!" cried Tony, who now ran out, pulling a lank lock of his pig-coloured hair. "What! Muster Penguin, you ha'n't got your worky-day dress on this morning; too hot to break stones, baint it? Bodikins! that were a prime good one, warn't it, that trick as Squire Frampton's Blackeymoor sarved ye down by the Miller's-run and the marl-pit? Lame Richard and Joe Penfold took a quart here last night, and told we all about it. How us did laugh, sure-*ly*! I'd ha' stood a pint to see the Black fellow making mouths at ye from the alder bushes, danged if I oodn't!"

"Confound your jabbering!" cried the geologist, with a look of offended dignity: "Shut up your own ugly mouth, or you'll never see another sixpence of mine." So saying, he passed hastily into the house, followed by Henry; while Tony, pulling his features into a grimace, and putting his bony finger to his nose, looked at Sam with such a ludicrous

distortion, that the latter was obliged to stoop and hide his face behind the mare, lest his chuckling visage should be seen from the parlour-window, to the diminution or total forfeiture of his expected groat. Henry ran upstairs to make the requisite alteration in his dress, and Penguin, having inquired after Sally, and ordered some syllabubs, provided they were prepared by her, and not by crooked Martha, proceeded to make his usual inquiry of the landlord, who came bustling into the room, of what news was stirring at Thaxted. "News, Sir!" exclaimed Timothy: "Bless us! such a life as I lead here at the George, toiling and moiling from morning to night, I have no time for news, not I. Just snatched half an hour last night to run over to our 'sociation, and hear a bit of a lecture upon chemistory; but he was a poor creature, quite a borax of a fellow; couldn't catch his focus; never came right slap bang, point-blank, plump upon the fulcrum, like Professor Pully, but all curvilinear and gelatinous like, and if it puzzled me I'm sure he must have finely bothered the

hopperatives who were present, for instead of acting upon the equilibrio, he was always in a state of osculation. Couldn't fix him no-how.—Why, what are Sam and Tony snigger-ing at yonder? There's always some secret coagulation going on 'twixt those two.—What bell was that?—Tony! Tony, I say! cold meat, tankard ale, Gemman, Dolphin. Coming, Sir, coming!"

"But surely, landlord," said Penguin as he assaulted his second syllabub, "you must have picked up something new at the lecture, how-ever short a time you stayed."

"But little, Sir, but little: couldn't make out his trigonometry; never gave him a mini-mum of attention till he mentioned ox-hides of iron! Don't tell me: I hold it as a vertical truth, a mathematical maximum, that ne'er a tanner in England can make them as hard as iron! Odds life! I had a mind to give him a hint that the shoemaker should stick to his last, when he went into a comic section about hydro-gin and oxygin, for I've kept a tap these twenty years, and I know there's none equal to Booth's

best. Only think of people lecturing when they know nothing about the density and diameter of what they 're talking of!"

"Ay, that 's bad enough, landlord, but we must make allowances; your society is but newly established, and cannot yet afford to have the best lecturers."

"Very true, Sir, very true; we can't all be equally learned, for the impetus must depend upon the circumference. I don't wish to be hard upon the gemman, for give and take 's my maximum—nothing diagonal about Tim Wicks, all upon the square root, straightforward as a parallelogram: but how can I sit still and hear a chap talk about sugar of lead, and salt of lead, when I must know more of the trigonometry of them things than he does; for father were a plumber, and melt or hammer his lead which way he would, I'll swear he never got sugar or salt neither but what came from the grocer's! He may talk till he's black in the face about malleability, and fusibility, and friability, ay! and roastability if he likes, but he can't have a segment, no, not a tangent of real ability, which after all, is the only solid hydrostatical fulcrum!

Sam Ostler! draw off gig, Lymington coach driving up—water horses. Coming, Sir, coming!"

"I don't wonder, Tim, that you soon came away, since there was so little to be learnt, and your time is so precious."

"Why, Sir, to tell you the vertical truth, I had half a mind once to stay till the end, on account of poor crooked Martha, my inclined plane, as I call her—d' ye catch the focus, hey?—for as he talked about empy-rheumatic oil, I thought I'd step and ask him for a shilling's worth, since Martha, poor soul! is sadly troubled with the rheumatiz all over her whole hemisphere. But he went on to humbug us, that a diamond was made of charcoal, which appeared to me such a downright false pivot and sham segment, that I clapped on my hat, bolted out of the room, and as Bat Haselgrove was driving by at the moment in his taxed-cart, I jumped into it, he drove me over to the George, and sat me down right slap bang point blank, plump upon my own fulcrum."

"Gadso, landlord! that was lucky; but have you no other news than this? you have gene-

rally some of the chit-chat of Thaxted to tell me."

"Why, Sir, the great first principle and primum mobile with us at present is this here fair, which we mean to make a grander one than has been seen here for many a year, and if the gentry attempt to put it down by inert force, we are determined to stand up boldly for our own inverse ratio. No, no, we're not such gudgeons as to be caught with an angle of forty-five degrees; their opposition will only enlarge our axis; and this must ever be the case in a free country like ours, since the percussion is alway proportioned to the area—d' ye catch the focus, hey?"

Before Penguin could reply, a carriage drove up to the door, and the landlord ran out of the parlour, calling in the same breath for Tony, Sam Ostler, and Sally Wicks, and muttering to himself a *da capo* about his bustling life, no peace, toiling from morning to night, &c. &c. Penguin had by this time dispatched his syllabubs, a process, indeed, which had been going on uninterruptedly during the whole of Timothy's catachrestical gabble; Henry shortly after re-

appeared, when mounting their vehicle, they proceeded towards the Manor-house, into which mansion we shall take the liberty of introducing our readers, while the geologist and his companion are driving thither.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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