ЭДВАРД БУЛЬВЕР-ЛИТТОН

WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT? — VOLUME 01

Эдвард Джордж Бульвер-Литтон

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BOOK I

CHAPTER I

In which the history opens with a description of the social manners, habits, and amusements of the English People, as exhibited in an immemorial National Festivity.—Characters to be commemorated in the history, introduced and graphically portrayed, with a nasological illustration.—Original suggestions as to the idiosyncrasies engendered by trades and callings, with other matters worthy of note, conveyed in artless dialogue after the manner of Herodotus, Father of History (mother unknown).

It was a summer fair in one of the prettiest villages in Surrey. The main street was lined with booths, abounding in toys, gleaming crockery, gay ribbons, and gilded ginger bread. Farther on, where the street widened into the ample village-green, rose the more pretending fabrics which lodged the attractive forms

of the Mermaid, the Norfolk Giant; the Pig-faced Lady, the Spotted Boy, and the Calf with Two Heads; while high over even these edifices, and occupying the most conspicuous vantage-ground, a lofty stage promised to rural playgoers the "Grand Melodramatic Performance of The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." Music, lively if artless, resounded on every side,—drums, fifes, penny- whistles, cat-calls, and a hand-organ played by a dark foreigner, from the height of whose shoulder a cynical but observant monkey eyed the hubbub and cracked his nuts.

It was now sunset,—the throng at the fullest,—an animated, joyous scene. The, day had been sultry; no clouds were to be seen, except low on the western horizon, where they stretched, in lengthened ridges of gold and purple, like the border-land between earth and sky. The tall elms on the green were still, save, near the great stage, one or two, upon which had climbed young urchins, whose laughing faces peered forth, here and there, from the foliage trembling under their restless movements.

Amidst the crowd, as it streamed saunteringly along, were two spectators; strangers to the place, as was notably proved by the attention they excited, and the broad jokes their dress and appearance provoked from the rustic wits,—jokes which they took with amused good-humour, and sometimes retaliated with a zest which had already made them very popular personages. Indeed, there was that about them which propitiated liking. They were young; and the freshness of enjoyment was so visible in

their faces, that it begot a sympathy, and wherever they went, other faces brightened round them.

One of the two whom we have thus individualized was of that enviable age, ranging from five-and-twenty to seven-and-twenty, in which, if a man cannot contrive to make life very pleasant,—pitiable indeed must be the state of his digestive organs. But you might see by this gentleman's countenance that if there were many like him, it would be a worse world for the doctors. His cheek, though not highly coloured, was yet ruddy and clear; his hazel eyes were lively and keen; his hair, which escaped in loose clusters from a jean shooting-cap set jauntily on a well-shaped head, was of that deep sunny auburn rarely seen but in persons of vigorous and hardy temperament. He was good-looking on the whole, and would have deserved the more flattering epithet of handsome, but for his nose, which was what the French call "a nose in the air,"—not a nose supercilious, not a nose provocative, as such noses mostly are, but a nose decidedly in earnest to make the best of itself and of things in general,—a nose that would push its way up in life, but so pleasantly that the most irritable fingers would never itch to lay hold of it. With such a nose a man might play the violoncello, marry for love, or even write poetry, and yet not go to the dogs.

Never would he stick in the mud so long as he followed that nose in the air.

By the help of that nose this gentleman wore a black velveteen jacket of foreign cut; a mustache and imperial (then much rarer

in England than they have been since the Siege of Sebastopol); and yet left you perfectly convinced that he was an honest Englishman, who had not only no designs on your pocket, but would not be easily duped by any designs upon his own.

The companion of the personage thus sketched might be somewhere about seventeen; but his gait, his air, his lithe, vigorous frame, showed a manliness at variance with the boyish bloom of his face. He struck the eye much more than his elder comrade. Not that he was regularly handsome,—far from it; yet it is no paradox to say that he was beautiful, at least, few indeed were the women who would not have called him so. His hair, long like his friend's, was of a dark chestnut, with gold gleaming through it where the sun fell, inclining to curl, and singularly soft and silken in its texture. His large, clear, dark-blue, happy eyes were fringed with long ebon lashes, and set under brows which already wore the expression of intellectual power, and, better still, of frank courage and open loyalty. His complexion was fair, and somewhat pale, and his lips in laughing showed teeth exquisitely white and even. But though his profile was clearly cut, it was far from the Greek ideal; and he wanted the height of stature which is usually considered essential to the personal pretensions of the male sex. Without being positively short, he was still under middle height, and from the compact development of his proportions, seemed already to have attained his full growth. His dress, though not foreign, like his comrade's, was peculiar: a broad- brimmed straw hat, with a wide blue

ribbon; shirt collar turned down, leaving the throat bare; a dark-green jacket of thinner material than cloth; white trousers and waistcoat completed his costume. He looked like a mother's darling,—perhaps he was one.

Scratch across his back went one of those ingenious mechanical contrivances familiarly in vogue at fairs, which are designed to impress upon the victim to whom they are applied, the pleasing conviction that his garment is rent in twain.

The boy turned round so quickly that he caught the arm of the offender,— a pretty village-girl, a year or two younger than himself. "Found in the act, sentenced, punished," cried he, snatching a kiss, and receiving a gentle slap. "And now, good for evil, here's a ribbon for you; choose."

The girl slunk back shyly, but her companions pushed her forward, and she ended by selecting a cherry-coloured ribbon, for which the boy paid carelessly, while his elder and wiser friend looked at him with grave, compassionate rebuke, and grumbled out,—"Dr. Franklin tells us that once in his life he paid too dear for a whistle; but then he was only seven years old, and a whistle has its uses. But to pay such a price for a scratch-back! —Prodigal! Come along."

As the friends strolled on, naturally enough all the young girls who wished for ribbons, and were possessed of scratch-backs, followed in their wake. Scratch went the instrument, but in vain.

"Lasses," said the elder, turning sharply upon them his nose in the air, "ribbons are plentiful,—shillings scarce; and kisses,

though pleasant in private, are insipid in public. What, still! Beware! know that, innocent as we seem, we are women-eaters; and if you follow us farther, you are devoured! "So saying, he expanded his jaws to a width so preternaturally large, and exhibited a row of grinders so formidable, that the girls fell back in consternation. The friends turned down a narrow alley between the booths, and though still pursued by some adventurous and mercenary spirits, were comparatively undisturbed as they threaded their way along the back of the booths, and arrived at last on the village-green, and in front of the Great Stage.

"Oho, Lionel!" quoth the elder friend; "Thespian and classical, —worth seeing, no doubt." Then turning to a grave cobbler in leathern apron, who was regarding with saturnine interest the motley figures ranged in front of the curtain as the Drumatis Persona, he said, "You seem attracted, sir; you have probably already witnessed the performance." "Yes," returned the Cobbler; "this is the third day, and to-morrow's the last. I are n't missed once yet, and I sha' n't miss; but it are n't what it was a while back."

"'That is sad; but then the same thing is said of everything by everybody who has reached your respectable age, friend. Summers, and suns, stupid old watering-places, and pretty young women, `are n't what they were a while back.' If men and things go on degenerating in this way, our grandchildren will have a dull time of it."

The Cobbler eyed the young man, and nodded approvingly.

He had sense enough to comprehend the ironical philosophy of the reply; and our Cobbler loved talk out of the common way. "You speaks truly and cleverly, sir. But if old folks do always say that things are worse than they were, ben't there always summat in what is always said? I'm for the old times; my neighbour, Joe Spruce, is for the new, and says we are all a-progressing. But he 's a pink; I 'm a blue."

"You are a blue?" said the boy Lionel; "I don't understand."

"Young 'un, I'm a Tory,—that's blue; and Spruce is a Rad,—that's pink!

And, what is more to the purpose, he is a tailor, and I'm a cobbler."

"Aha!" said the elder, with much interest; "more to the purpose is it?

How so?"

The Cobbler put the forefinger of the right hand on the forefinger of the left; it is the gesture of a man about to ratiocinate or demonstrate, as Quintilian, in his remarks on the oratory of fingers, probably observes; or if he has failed to do so, it is a blot in his essay.

"You see, sir," quoth the Cobbler, "that a man's business has a deal to do with his manner of thinking. Every trade, I take it, has ideas as belong to it. Butchers don't see life as bakers do; and if you talk to a dozen tallow-chandlers, then to a dozen blacksmiths, you will see tallow- chandlers are peculiar, and blacksmiths too."

"You are a keen observer," said he of the jean cap, admiringly;

"your remark is new to me; I dare say it is true."

"Course it is; and the stars have summat to do with it; for if they order a man's calling, it stands to reason that they order a man's mind to fit it. Now, a tailor sits on his board with others, and is always a-talking with 'em, and a-reading the news; therefore he thinks, as his fellows do, smart and sharp, bang up to the day, but nothing 'riginal and all his own, like. But a cobbler," continued the man of leather, with a majestic air, "sits by hisself, and talks with hisself; and what he thinks gets into his head without being put there by another man's tongue."

"You enlighten me more and more," said our friend with the nose in the air, bowing respectfully,—"a tailor is gregarious, a cobbler solitary. The gregarious go with the future, the solitary stick by the past. I understand why you are a Tory and perhaps a poet."

"Well, a bit of one," said the Cobbler, with an iron smile. "And many 's the cobbler who is a poet,—or discovers marvellous things in a crystal, —whereas a tailor, sir" (spoken with great contempt), "only sees the upper leather of the world's sole in a newspaper."

Here the conversation was interrupted by a sudden pressure of the crowd towards the theatre. The two young friends looked up, and saw that the new object of attraction was a little girl, who seemed scarcely ten years old, though in truth she was about two years older. She had just emerged from behind the curtain, made her obeisance to the crowd, and was now walking in front of the

stage with the prettiest possible air of infantine solemnity. "Poor little thing!" said Lionel. "Poor little thing!" said the Cobbler. And had you been there, my reader, ten to one but you would have said the same. And yet she was attired in white satin, with spangled flounces and a tinsel jacket; and she wore a wreath of flowers (to be sure, the flowers were not real) on her long fair curls, with gaudy bracelets (to be sure, the stones were mock) on her slender arms. Still there was something in her that all this finery could not vulgarize; and since it could not vulgarize, you pitied her for it. She had one of those charming faces that look straight into the hearts of us all, young and old. And though she seemed quite self- possessed, there was no effrontery in her air, but the ease of a little lady, with a simple child's unconsciousness that there was anything in her situation to induce you to sigh, "Poor thing!"

"You should see her act, young gents," said the Cobbler: "she plays uncommon. But if you had seen him as taught her,—seen him a year ago."

"Who's he?"

"Waife, sir; mayhap you have heard speak of Waife?"

"I blush to say, no."

"Why, he might have made his fortune at Common Garden; but that's a long story. Poor fellow! he's broke down now, anyhow. But she takes care of him, little darling: God bless thee!" and the Cobbler here exchanged a smile and a nod with the little girl, whose face brightened when she saw him amidst the crowd.

"By the brush and pallet of Raphael!" cried the elder of the young men, "before I am many hours older I must have that child's head!"

"Her head, man!" cried the Cobbler, aghast.

"In my sketch-book. You are a poet,—I a painter. You know the little girl?"

"Don't I! She and her grandfather lodge with me; her grandfather,— that's Waife,—marvellous man! But they ill-uses him; and if it warn't for her, he'd starve. He fed them all once: he can feed them no longer; he'd starve. That's the world: they use up a genus, and when it falls on the road, push on; that's what Joe Spruce calls a-progressing. But there's the drum! they're a-going to act; won't you look in, gents?"

"Of course," cried Lionel,—"of course. And, hark ye, Vance, we'll toss up which shall be the first to take that little girl's head."

"Murderer in either sense of the word!" said Vance, with a smile that would have become Correggio if a tyro had offered to toss up which should be the first to paint a cherub.

CHAPTER II

The historian takes a view of the British stage as represented by the irregular drama, the regular having (ere the date of the events to which this narrative is restricted) disappeared from the vestiges of creation.

They entered the little theatre, and the Cobbler with them; but the last retired modestly to the threepenny row. The young gentlemen were favoured with reserved seats, price one shilling. "Very dear," murmured Vance, as he carefully buttoned the pocket to which he restored a purse woven from links of steel, after the fashion of chain mail. Ah, Messieurs and Confreres the Dramatic Authors, do not flatter yourselves that we are about to give you a complacent triumph over the Grand Melodrame of "The Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child." We grant it was horrible rubbish, regarded in an aesthetic point of view, but it was mighty effective in the theatrical. Nobody yawned; you did not even hear a cough, nor the cry of that omnipresent baby, who is always sure to set up an unappeasable wail in the midmost interest of a classical five-act piece, represented for the first time on the metropolitan boards. Here the story rushed on, /per fas aut nefas/, and the audience went with it. Certes, some man who understood the stage must have put the incidents together, and then left it to each illiterate histrio to find the words, —words, my dear confreres, signify so little in an acting play. The movement

is the thing. Grand secret! Analyze, practise it, and restore to grateful stars that lost Pleiad the British Acting Drama.

Of course the Bandit was an ill-used and most estimable man. He had some mysterious rights to the Estate and Castle of the Remorseless Baron. That titled usurper, therefore, did all in his power to hunt the Bandit out in his fastnesses and bring him to a bloody end. Here the interest centred itself in the Bandit's child, who, we need not say, was the little girl in the wreath and spangles, styled in the playbill "Miss Juliet Araminta Wife," and the incidents consisted in her various devices to foil the pursuit of the Baron and save her father. Some of these incidents were indebted to the Comic Muse, and kept the audience in a broad laugh. Her arch playfulness here was exquisite. With what vivacity she duped the High Sheriff, who had the commands of his king to take the Bandit alive or dead, into the belief that the very Lawyer employed by the Baron was the criminal in disguise, and what pearly teeth she showed when the Lawyer was seized and gagged! how dexterously she ascertained the weak point in the character of the "King's Lieutenant" (jeune premier), who was deputed by his royal master to aid the Remorseless Baron in trouncing the Bandit! how cunningly she learned that he was in love with the Baron's ward (jeune amoureuse), whom that unworthy noble intended to force into a marriage with himself on account of her fortune! how prettily she passed notes to and fro, the Lieutenant never suspecting that she was the Bandit's child, and at last got the king's soldier on her side, as the

event proved! And oh, how gayly, and with what mimic art, she stole into the Baron's castle, disguised as a witch, startled his conscience with revelations and predictions, frightened all the vassals with blue lights and chemical illusions, and venturing even into the usurper's own private chamber, while the tyrant was tossing restless on the couch, over which hung his terrible sword, abstracted from his coffer the deeds that proved the better rights of the persecuted Bandit! Then, when he woke before she could escape with her treasure, and pursued her with his sword, with what glee she apparently set herself on fire, and skipped out of the casement in an explosion of crackers! And when the drama approached its /denouement/, when the Baron's men, and the royal officers of justice, had, despite all her arts, tracked the Bandit to the cave, in which, after various retreats, he lay hidden, wounded by shots, and bruised by a fall from a precipice, — with what admirable byplay she hovered around the spot, with what pathos she sought to decoy away the pursuers! it was the skylark playing round the nest. And when all was vain,—when, no longer to be deceived, the enemies sought to seize her, how mockingly she eluded them, bounded up the rock, and shook her slight finger at them in scorn! Surely she will save that estimable Bandit still! Now, hitherto, though the Bandit was the nominal hero of the piece, though you were always hearing of him,—his wrongs, virtues, hairbreadth escapes,—he had never been seen. Not Mrs. Harris, in the immortal narrative, was more quoted and more mythical. But in the last scene there was the Bandit,

there in his cavern, helpless with bruises and wounds, lying on a rock. In rushed the enemies, Baron, High Sheriff, and all, to seize him. Not a word spoke the Bandit, but his attitude was sublime,—even Vance cried "bravo;" and just as he is seized, halter round his neck, and about to be hanged, down from the chasm above leaps his child, holding the title-deeds, filched from the Baron, and by her side the King's Lieutenant, who proclaims the Bandit's pardon, with due restoration to his honours and estates, and consigns to the astounded Sheriff the august person of the Remorseless Baron. Then the affecting scene, father and child in each other's arms; and then an exclamation, which had been long hovering about the lips of many of the audience, broke out, "Waife, Waife!" Yes, the Bandit, who appeared but in the last scene, and even then uttered not a word, was the once great actor on that itinerant Thespian stage, known through many a fair for his exuberant humour, his impromptu jokes, his arch eye, his redundant life of drollery, and the strange pathos or dignity with which he could suddenly exalt a jester's part, and call forth tears in the startled hush of laughter; he whom the Cobbler had rightly said, "might have made a fortune at Covent Garden." There was the remnant of the old popular mime!—all his attributes of eloquence reduced to dumb show! Masterly touch of nature and of art in this representation of him,—touch which all who had ever in former years seen and heard him on that stage felt simultaneously. He came in for his personal portion of dramatic tears. "Waife, Waife!" cried many a village voice, as

the little girl led him to the front of the stage.

He hobbled; there was a bandage round his eyes. The plot, in describing the accident that had befallen the Bandit, idealized the genuine infirmities of the man,—infirmities that had befallen him since last seen in that village. He was blind of one eye; he had become crippled; some malady of the trachea or larynx had seemingly broken up the once joyous key of the old pleasant voice. He did not trust himself to speak, even on that stage, but silently bent his head to the rustic audience; and Vance, who was an habitual playgoer, saw in that simple salutation that the man was an artistic actor. All was over, the audience streamed out, much affected, and talking one to the other. It had not been at all like the ordinary stage exhibitions at a village fair. Vance and Lionel exchanged looks of surprise, and then, by a common impulse, moved towards the stage, pushed aside the curtain, which had fallen, and were in that strange world which has so many reduplications, fragments of one broken mirror, whether in the proudest theatre or the lowliest barn,—nay, whether in the palace of kings, the cabinet of statesmen, the home of domestic life,—the world we call "Behind the Scenes."

CHAPTER III

Striking illustrations of lawless tyranny and infant avarice exemplified in the social conditions of Great Britain.— Superstitions of the dark ages still in force amongst the trading community, furnishing valuable hints to certain American journalists, and highly suggestive of reflections humiliating to the national vanity.

The Remorseless Baron, who was no other than the managerial proprietor of the stage, was leaning against a sidescene with a pot of porter in his hand. The King's Lieutenant might be seen on the background, toasting a piece of cheese on the point of his loyal sword. The Bandit had crept into a corner, and the little girl was clinging to him fondly as his hand was stroking her fair hair. Vance looked round, and approached the Bandit,—"Sir, allow me to congratulate you; your bow was admirable. I have never seen John Kemble; before my time: but I shall fancy I have seen him now,—seen him on the night of his retirement from the stage. As to your grandchild, Miss Juliet Araminta, she is a perfect chrysolite."

Before Mr. Waife could reply, the Remorseless Baron stepped up in a spirit worthy of his odious and arbitrary character. "What do you do here, sir? I allow no conspirators behind the scenes earwigging my people."

"I beg pardon respectfully: I am an artist,—a pupil of the

Royal Academy; I should like to make a sketch of Miss Juliet Araminta."

"Sketch! nonsense."

"Sir," said Lionel, with the seasonable extravagance of early youth, "my friend would, I am sure, pay for the sitting—handsomely!"

"Ha!" said the manager, softened, "you speak like a gentleman, sir: but, sir, Miss Juliet Araminta is under my protection; in fact, she is my property. Call and speak to me about it to-morrow, before the first performance begins, which is twelve o'clock. Happy to see any of your friends in the reserved seats. Busy now, and—and—in short—excuse me —servant, sir —servant, sir."

The Baron's manner left no room for further parley. Vance bowed, smiled, and retreated. But meanwhile his young friend had seized the opportunity to speak both to Waife and his grandchild; and when Vance took his arm and drew him away, there was a puzzled, musing expression on Lionel's face, and he remained silent till they had got through the press of such stragglers as still loitered before the stage, and were in a quiet corner of the sward. Stars and moon were then up,—a lovely summer night.

"What on earth are you thinking of, Lionel? I have put to you three questions, and you have not answered one."

"Vance," answered Lionel, slowly, "the oddest thing! I am so disappointed in that little girl,—greedy and mercenary!"

"Precocious villain! how do you know that she is greedy and mercenary?"

"Listen: when that surly old manager came up to you, I said something— civil, of course—to Waife, who answered in a hoarse, broken voice, but in very good language. Well, when I told the manager that you would pay for the sitting, the child caught hold of my arm hastily, pulled me down to her own height, and whispered, 'How much will he give?' Confused by a question so point-blank, I answered at random, 'I don't know; ten shillings, perhaps.' You should have seen her face!"

"See her face! radiant,—I should think so. Too much by half!" exclaimed Vance. "Ten shillings! Spendthrift!" "Too much! she looked as you might look if one offered you ten shillings for your picture of 'Julius Cmsar considering whether he should cross the Rubicon.' But when the manager had declared her to be his property, and appointed you to call to-morrow,—implying that he was to be paid for allowing her to sit,—her countenance became overcast, and she muttered sullenly, 'I'll not sit; I'll not!' Then she turned to her grandfather, and something very quick and close was whispered between the two; and she pulled me by the sleeve, and said in my ear—oh, but so eagerly!—'I want three pounds, sir,—three pounds!—if he would give three pounds; and come to our lodgings,—Mr. Merle, Willow Lane. Three pounds, —three!,' And with those words hissing in my ear, and coming from that fairy mouth, which ought to drop pearls and diamonds, I left her," added Lionel, as gravely as if he were sixty, "and lost

an illusion!"

"Three pounds!" cried Vance, raising his eyebrows to the highest arch of astonishment, and lifting his nose in the air towards the majestic moon, —"three pounds!—a fabulous sum! Who has three pounds to throw away? Dukes, with a hundred thousand a year in acres, have not three pounds to draw out of their pockets in that reckless, profligate manner. Three pounds! —what could I not buy for three pounds? I could buy the Dramatic Library, bound in calf, for three pounds; I could buy a dress coat for three pounds (silk lining not included); I could be lodged for a month for three pounds! And a jade in tinsel, just entering on her teens, to ask three pounds for what? for becoming immortal on the canvas of Francis Vance?—bother!"

Here Vance felt a touch on his shoulder. He turned round quickly, as a man out of temper does under similar circumstances, and beheld the sweat face of the Cobbler.

"Well, master, did not she act fine?—how d'ye like her?"

"Not much in her natural character; but she sets a mighty high value on herself."

"Anan, I don't take you."

"She'll not catch me taking her! Three pounds!—three kingdoms! Stay," cried Lionel to the Cobbler; "did not you say she lodged with you? Are you Mr. Merle?"

"Merle's my name, and she do lodge with me,—Willow Lane."

"Come this way, then, a few yards down the road,—more

quiet. Tell me what the child means, if you can;" and Lionel related the offer of his friend, the reply of the manager, and the grasping avarice of Miss Juliet Araminta.

The Cobbler made no answer; and when the young friends, surprised at his silence, turned to look at him, they saw he was wiping his eyes with his sleeves.

"Poor little thing!" he said at last, and still more pathetically than he had uttered the same words at her appearance in front of the stage; "'tis all for her grandfather; I guess,—I guess."

"Oh," cried Lionel, joyfully, "I am so glad to think that. It alters the whole case, you see, Vance."

"It don't alter the case of the three pounds," grumbled Vance. "What's her grandfather to me, that I should give his grandchild three pounds, when any other child in the village would have leaped out of her skin to have her face upon my sketch-book and five shillings in her pocket? Hang her grandfather!"

They were now in the main road. The Cobbler seated himself on a lonely milestone, and looked first at one of the faces before him, then at the other; that of Lionel seemed to attract him the most, and in speaking it was Lionel whom he addressed.

"Young master," he said, "it is now just four years ago, when Mr. Rugge, coming here, as he and his troop had done at fair-time ever sin' I can mind of, brought with him the man you have seen to-night, William Waife; I calls him Gentleman Waife. However that man fell into sick straits, how he came to join sich a carawan, would puzzle most heads. It puzzles Joe Spruce,

uncommon; it don't puzzle me."

"Why?" asked Vance.

"Cos of Saturn!"

"Satan?"

"Saturn,—dead agin his Second and Tenth House, I'll swear. Lord of Ascendant, mayhap; in combustion of the Sun,—who knows?"

"You're not an astrologer?" said Vance, suspiciously, edging off.

"Bit of it; no offence."

"What does it signify?" said Lionel, impatiently; "go on. So you called Mr. Waife 'Gentleman Waife;' and if you had not been an astrologer you would have been puzzled to see him in such a calling."

"Ay, that's it; for he warn't like any as we ever see on these boards hereabouts; and yet he warn't exactly like a Lunnon actor, as I have seen 'em in Lunnon, either, but more like a clever fellow who acted for the spree of the thing. He had sich droll jests, and looked so comical, yet not commonlike, but always what I calls a gentleman,—just as if one o' ye two were doing a bit of sport to please your friends. Well, he drew hugely, and so he did, every time he came, so that the great families in the neighbourhood would go to hear him; and he lodged in my house, and had pleasant ways with him, and was what I call a scollard. But still I don't want to deceive ye, and I should judge him to have been a wild dog in his day. Mercury ill-aspected,—not a doubt of

it. Last year it so happened that one of the great gents who belong to a Lunnon theatre was here at fair-time. Whether he had heard of Waife chanceways, and come express to judge for hisself, I can't say; like eno'. And when he had seen Gentleman Waife act, he sent for him to the inn—Red Lion—and offered him a power o' money to go to Lunnon,—Common Garden. Well, sir, Waife did not take to it all at once, but hemmed and hawed, and was at last quite coaxed into it, and so he went. But bad luck came on it; and I knew there would, for I saw it all in my crystal."

"Oh," exclaimed Vance, "a crystal, too; really it is getting late, and if you had your crystal about you, you might see that we want to sup."

"What happened?" asked Lionel, more blandly, for he saw the Cobbler, who had meant to make a great effect by the introduction of the crystal, was offended.

"What happened? why, just what I foreseed. There was an accident in the railway 'tween this and Lunnon, and poor Waife lost an eye, and was a cripple for life: so he could not go on the Lunnon stage at all; and what was worse, he was a long time atwixt life and death, and got summat bad on his chest wi' catching cold, and lost his voice, and became the sad object you have gazed on, young happy things that ye are."

"But he got some compensation from the railway, I suppose?" said Vance, with the unfeeling equanimity of a stoical demon.

"He did, and spent it. I suppose the gentleman broke out in him as soon as he had money, and, ill though he was, the money

went. Then it seems he had no help for it but to try and get back to Mr. Rugge. But Mr. Rugge was sore and spiteful at his leaving; for Rugge counted on him, and had even thought of taking the huge theatre at York, and bringing out Gentleman Waife as his trump card. But it warn't fated, and Rugge thought himself ill-used, and so at first he would have nothing more to say to Waife. And truth is, what could the poor man do for Rugge? But then Waife produces little Sophy."

"You mean Juliet Araminta?" said Vance.

"Same—in private life she be Sophy. And Waife taught her to act, and put together the plays for her. And Rugge caught at her; and she supports Waife with what she gets; for Rugge only gives him four shillings a week, and that goes on 'baccy and such like."

"Such like—drink, I presume?" said Vance.

"No—he don't drink. But he do smoke, and he has little genteel ways with him, and four shillings goes on 'em. And they have been about the country this spring, and done well, and now they be here. But Rugge behaves shocking hard to both on 'em: and I don't believe he has any right to her in law, as he pretends, —only a sort of understanding which she and her grandfather could break if they pleased; and that's what they wish to do, and that's why little Sophy wants the three pounds."

"How?" cried Lionel, eagerly. "If they had three pounds could they get away? and if they did, how could they live? Where could they go?"

"That's their secret. But I heard Waife say—the first night they

came here—I that if he could get three pounds, he had hit on a plan to be independent like. I tell you what put his back up: it was Rugge insisting on his coming on the stage agin, for he did not like to be seen such a wreck. But he was forced to give in; and so he contrived to cut up that play-story, and appear hisself at the last without speaking."

"My good friend," cried young Lionel, "we are greatly obliged to you for your story; and we should much like to see little Sophy and her grandfather at your house to-morrow,—can we?"

"Certain sure you can, after the play's over; to-night, if you like."

"No, to-morrow: you see my friend is impatient to get back now; we will call to-morrow."

"'T is the last day of their stay," said the Cobbler. "But you can't be sure to see them safely at my house afore ten o'clock at night; and not a word to Rugge! mum!"

"Not a word to Rugge," returned Lionel; "good-night to you."

The young men left the Cobbler still seated on the milestone, gazing on the stars and ruminating. They walked briskly down the road.

"It is I who have had the talk now," said Lionel, in his softest tone. He was bent on coaxing three pounds out of his richer friend, and that might require some management. For amongst the wild youngsters in Mr. Vance's profession, there ran many a joke at the skill with which he parried irregular assaults on his purse; and that gentleman, with his nose more than usually in the

air, having once observed to such scoffers "that they were quite welcome to any joke at his expense," a wag had exclaimed, "At your expense! Don't fear; if a joke were worth a farthing, you would never give that permission."

So when Lionel made that innocent remark, the softness of his tone warned the artist of some snake in the grass, and he prudently remained silent. Lionel, in a voice still sweeter, repeated,—"It is I who have all the talk now!"

"Naturally," then returned Vance, "naturally you have, for it is you, I suspect, who alone have the intention to pay for it, and three pounds appear to be the price. Dearish, eh?"

"Ah, Vance, if I had three pounds!"

"Tush; and say no more till we have supped. I have the hunger of a wolf."

Just in sight of the next milestone the young travellers turned a few yards down a green lane, and reached a small inn on the banks of the Thames. Here they had sojourned for the last few days, sketching, boating, roaming about the country from sunrise, and returning to supper and bed at nightfall. It was the pleasantest little inn,—an arbour, covered with honeysuckle, between the porch and the river,—a couple of pleasure-boats moored to the bank; and now all the waves rippling under the moonlight.

"Supper and lights in the arbour," cried Vance to the waiting-maid, "hey, presto, quick! while we turn in to wash our hands. And hark! a quart jug of that capital whiskey-toddy."

CHAPTER IV

Being a chapter that links the past to the future by the gradual elucidation of antecedents.

O wayside inns and pedestrian rambles! O summer nights, under honeysuckle arbours, on the banks of starry waves! O Youth, Youth!

Vance ladled out the toddy and lighted his cigar; then, leaning his head on his hand and his elbow on the table, he looked with an artist's eye along the glancing river.

"After all," said he, "I am glad I am a painter; and I hope I may live to be a great one."

"No doubt, if you live, you will be a great one," cried Lionel, with cordial sincerity. "And if I, who can only just paint well enough to please myself, find that it gives a new charm to Nature —"

"Cut sentiment," quoth Vance, "and go on."

"What," continued Lionel, unchilled by the admonitory interruption, "must you feel who can fix a fading sunshine—a fleeting face—on a scrap of canvas, and say 'Sunshine and Beauty, live there forever!'"

VANCE.—"Forever! no! Colours perish, canvas rots. What remains to us of Zeuxis? Still it is prettily said on behalf of the poetic side of the profession; there is a prosaic one;—we'll blink it. Yes; I am glad to be a painter. But you must not catch the fever

of my calling. Your poor mother would never forgive me if she thought I had made you a dauber by my example."

LIONEL (gloomily).—"No. I shall not be a painter! But what can I be? How shall I ever build on the earth one of the castles I have built in the air? Fame looks so far,—Fortune so impossible. But one thing I am bent upon" (speaking with knit brow and clenched teeth), "I will gain an independence somehow, and support my mother."

VANCE.—"Your mother is supported: she has the pension —"

LIONEL.—"Of a captain's widow; and" (he added with a flushed cheek) "a first floor that she lets to lodgers."

VANCE.—"No shame in that! Peers let houses; and on the Continent, princes let not only first floors, but fifth and sixth floors, to say nothing of attics and cellars. In beginning the world, friend Lionel, if you don't wish to get chafed at every turn, fold up your pride carefully, put it under lock and key, and only let it out to air upon grand occasions. Pride is a garment all stiff brocade outside, all grating sackcloth on the side next to the skin. Even kings don't wear the dalmaticum except at a coronation. Independence you desire; good. But are you dependent now? Your mother has given you an excellent education, and you have already put it to profit. My dear boy," added Vance, with unusual warmth, "I honour you; at your age, on leaving school, to have shut yourself up, translated Greek and Latin per sheet for a bookseller, at less than a valet's wages, and all for the purpose

of buying comforts for your mother; and having a few pounds in your own pockets, to rove your little holiday with me and pay your share of the costs! Ah, there are energy and spirit and life in all that, Lionel, which will found upon rock some castle as fine as any you have built in air. Your hand, my boy."

This burst was so unlike the practical dryness, or even the more unctuous humour, of Frank Vance, that it took Lionel by surprise, and his voice faltered as he pressed the hand held out to him. He answered, "I don't deserve your praise, Vance, and I fear the pride you tell me to put under lock and key has the larger share of the merit you ascribe to better motives. Independent? No! I have never been so."

VANCE.—"Well, you depend on a parent: who, at seventeen does not?"

LIONEL.—"I did not mean my mother; of course, I could not be too proud to take benefits from her. But the truth is simply this —, my father had a relation, not very near, indeed,—a cousin, at about as distant a remove, I fancy, as a cousin well can be. To this gentleman my mother wrote when my poor father died; and he was generous, for it is he who paid for my schooling. I did not know this till very lately. I had a vague impression, indeed, that I had a powerful and wealthy kinsman who took an interest in me, but whom I had never seen."

VANCE.—"Never seen?"

LIONEL.—"No. And here comes the sting. On leaving school last Christmas, my mother, for the first time, told me the extent

of my obligations to this benefactor, and informed me that he wished to know my own choice as to a profession,—that if I preferred Church or Bar, he would maintain me at college."

VANCE.—"Body o' me! where's the sting in that? Help yourself to toddy, my boy, and take more genial views of life."

LIONEL.—"You have not heard me out. I then asked to see my benefactor's letters; and my mother, unconscious of the pain she was about to inflict, showed me not only the last one, but all she had received from him. Oh, Vance, they were terrible, those letters! The first began by a dry acquiescence in the claims of kindred, a curt proposal to pay my schooling; but not one word of kindness, and a stern proviso that the writer was never to see nor hear from me. He wanted no gratitude; he disbelieved in all professions of it. His favours would cease if I molested him. 'Molested' was the word; it was bread thrown to a dog."

VANCE.—"Tut! Only a rich man's eccentricity. A bachelor, I presume?"

LIONEL.—"My mother says he has been married, and is a widower."

VANCE.—"Any children?"

LIONEL.—"My mother says none living; but I know little or nothing about his family."

Vance looked with keen scrutiny into the face of his boyfriend, and, after a pause, said, drily,—"Plain as a pikestaff. Your relation is one of those men who, having no children, suspect and dread the attention of an heir presumptive; and what has made

this sting, as you call it, keener to you is—pardon me—is in some silly words of your mother, who, in showing you the letters, has hinted to you that that heir you might be, if you were sufficiently pliant and subservient. Am I not right?"

Lionel hung his head, without reply.

VANCE (cheeringly).—"So, so; no great harm as yet. Enough of the first letter. What was the last?"

LIONEL.—"Still more offensive. He, this kinsman, this patron, desired my mother to spare him those references to her son's ability and promise, which, though natural to herself, had slight interest to him,—him, the condescending benefactor! As to his opinion, what could I care for the opinion of one I had never seen? All that could sensibly affect my—oh, but I cannot go on with those cutting phrases, which imply but this, 'All I can care for is the money of a man who insults me while he gives it.'"

VANCE (emphatically).—"Without being a wizard, I should say your relative was rather a disagreeable person,—not what is called urbane and amiable,—in fact, a brute."

LIONEL.—"You will not blame me, then, when I tell you that I resolved not to accept the offer to maintain me at college, with which the letter closed. Luckily Dr. Wallis (the head master of my school), who had always been very kind to me, had just undertaken to supervise a popular translation of the classics. He recommended me, at my request, to the publisher engaged in the undertaking, as not incapable of translating some of the less difficult Latin authors,—subject to his corrections. When I had

finished the first instalment of the work thus intrusted to me, my mother grew alarmed for my health, and insisted on my taking some recreation. You were about to set out on a pedestrian tour. I had, as you say, some pounds in my pocket; and thus I have passed with you the merriest days of my life."

VANCE.—"What said your civil cousin when your refusal to go to college was conveyed to him?"

LIONEL.—"He did not answer my mother's communication to that effect till just before I left home, and then,—no, it was not his last letter from which I repeated that withering extract,—no, the last was more galling still, for in it he said that if, in spite of the ability and promise that had been so vaunted, the dulness of a college and the labour of learned professions were so distasteful to me, he had no desire to dictate to my choice, but that as he did not wish one who was, however remotely, of his blood, and bore the name of Haughton, to turn shoeblack or pickpocket—Vance—Vance!"

VANCE.—"Lock up your pride—the sackcloth frets you—and go on; and that therefore he—"

LIONEL.—"Would buy me a commission in the army, or get me an appointment in India."

VANCE.—"Which did you take?"

LIONEL (passionately). "Which! so offered,—which?—of course neither! But distrusting the tone of my mother's reply, I sat down, the evening before I left home, and wrote myself to this cruel man. I did not show any letter to my mother,—did not

tell her of it. I wrote shortly,—that if he would not accept my gratitude, I would not accept his benefits; that shoeblack I might be,—pickpocket, no! that he need not fear I should disgrace his blood or my name; and that I would not rest till, sooner or later, I had paid him back all that I had cost him, and felt relieved from the burdens of an obligation which—which—" The boy paused, covered his face with his hands, and sobbed.

Vance, though much moved, pretended to scold his friend, but finding that ineffectual, fairly rose, wound his arm brother-like round him, and drew him from the arbour to the shelving margin of the river. "Comfort," then said the Artist, almost solemnly, as here, from the inner depths of his character, the true genius of the man came forth and spoke,—"comfort, and look round; see where the islet interrupts the tide, and how smilingly the stream flows on. See, just where we stand, how the slight pebbles are fretting the wave would the wave if not fretted make that pleasant music? A few miles farther on, and the river is spanned by a bridge, which busy feet now are crossing: by the side of that bridge now is rising a palace; all the men who rule England have room in that palace. At the rear of the palace soars up the old Abbey where kings have their tombs in right of the names they inherit; men, lowly as we, have found tombs there, in right of the names which they made. Think, now, that you stand on that bridge with a boy's lofty hope, with a man's steadfast courage; then turn again to that stream, calm with starlight, flowing on towards the bridge,—spite of islet and pebbles."

Lionel made no audible answer, though his lips murmured, but he pressed closer and closer to his friend's side; and the tears were already dried on his cheek, though their dew still glistened in his eyes.

CHAPTER V

Speculations on the moral qualities of the Bandit.—Mr. Vance, with mingled emotions, foresees that the acquisition of the Bandit's acquaintance may be attended with pecuniary loss.

Vance loosened the boat from its moorings, stepped in, and took up the oars. Lionel followed, and sat by the stern. The Artist rowed on slowly, whistling melodiously in time to the dash of the oars. They soon came to the bank of garden-ground surrounding with turf on which fairies might have danced one of those villas never seen out of England. From the windows of the villa the lights gleamed steadily; over the banks, dipping into the water, hung large willows breathlessly; the boat gently brushed aside their pendent boughs, and Vance rested in a grassy cove.

"And faith," said the Artist, gayly,—"faith," said he, lighting his third cigar, "it is time we should bestow a few words more on the Remorseless Baron and the Bandit's Child! What a cock-and-a-bull story the Cobbler told us! He must have thought us precious green."

LIONEL (roused).—"Nay, I see nothing so wonderful in the story, though much that is sad. You must allow that Waife may have been a good actor: you became quite excited merely at his attitude and bow. Natural, therefore, that he should have been invited to try his chance on the London stage; not improbable

that he may have met with an accident by the train, and so lost his chance forever; natural, then, that he should press into service his poor little grandchild, natural, also, that, hardly treated and his pride hurt, he should wish to escape."

VANCE.—"And more natural than all that he should want to extract from our pockets three pounds, the Bandit! No, Lionel, I tell you what is not probable, that he should have disposed of that clever child to a vagabond like Rugge: she plays admirably. The manager who was to have engaged him would have engaged her if he had seen her. I am puzzled."

LIONEL.—"True, she is an extraordinary child. I cannot say how she has interested me." He took out his purse, and began counting its contents. "I have nearly three pounds left," he cried joyously. "L2. 18s. if I give up the thought of a longer excursion with you, and go quietly home—"

VANCE.—"And not pay your share of the bill yonder?"

LIONEL.—"Ah, I forgot that! But come, I am not too proud to borrow from you: it is not for a selfish purpose."

VANCE.—"Borrow from me, Cato! That comes of falling in with bandits and their children. No; but let us look at the thing like men of sense. One story is good till another is told. I will call by myself on Rugge to-morrow, and hear what he says; and then, if we judge favourably of the Cobbler's version, we will go at night and talk with the Cobbler's lodgers; and I dare say," added Vance, kindly, but with a sigh,—"I daresay the three pounds will be coaxed out of me! After all, her head is worth it. I want an

idea for Titania."

LIONEL (joyously).—"My dear Vance, you are the best fellow in the world."

VANCE.—"Small compliment to humankind! Take the oars: it is your turn now."

Lionel obeyed; the boat once more danced along the tide—thoro' reeds,— —thoro' waves, skirting the grassy islet—out into pale moonlight. They talked but by fits and starts. What of?—a thousand things! Bright young hearts, eloquent young tongues! No sins in the past; hopes gleaming through the future. O summer nights, on the glass of starry waves! O Youth, Youth!

CHAPTER VI

> Wherein the historian tracks the public characters that fret their hour on the stage, into the bosom of private life. —The reader is invited to arrive at a conclusion which may often, in periods of perplexity, restore ease to his mind; namely, that if man will reflect on all the hopes he has nourished, all the fears he has admitted, all the projects he has formed, the wisest thing he can do, nine times out of ten, with hope, fear, and project, is to let them end with the chapter—in smoke.

It was past nine o'clock in the evening of the following day. The exhibition at Mr. Rugge's theatre had closed for the season in that village, for it was the conclusion of the fair. The final performance had been begun and ended somewhat earlier than on former nights. The theatre was to be cleared from the ground by daybreak, and the whole company to proceed onward betimes in the morning. Another fair awaited them in an adjoining county, and they had a long journey before them.

Gentleman Waife and his Juliet Araminta had gone to their lodgings over the Cobbler's stall. Their rooms were homely enough, but had an air not only of the comfortable, but the picturesque. The little sitting-room was very old-fashioned,—panelled in wood that had once been painted blue, with a quaint chimney-piece that reached to the ceiling. That part of the house

spoke of the time of Charles I., it might have been tenanted by a religious Roundhead; and, framed-in over the low door, there was a grim, faded portrait of a pinched-faced saturnine man, with long lank hair, starched band, and a length of upper lip that betokened relentless obstinacy of character, and might have curled in sullen glee at the monarch's scaffold, or preached an interminable sermon to the stout Protector. On a table, under the deep-sunk window, were neatly arrayed a few sober-looking old books; you would find amongst them Colley's "Astrology," Owen Feltham's "Resolves," Glanville "On Witches," the "Pilgrim's Progress," an early edition of "Paradise Lost," and an old Bible; also two flower-pots of clay brightly reddened, and containing stocks; also two small worsted rugs, on one of which rested a carved cocoa-nut, on the other an egg-shaped ball of crystal, —that last the pride and joy of the cobbler's visionary soul. A door left wide open communicated with an inner room (very low was its ceiling), in which the Bandit slept, if the severity of his persecutors permitted him to sleep. In the corner of the sitting-room, near that door, was a small horsehair sofa, which, by the aid of sheets and a needlework coverlid, did duty for a bed, and was consigned to the Bandit's child. Here the tenderness of the Cobbler's heart was visible, for over the coverlid were strewed sprigs of lavender and leaves of vervain; the last, be it said, to induce happy dreams, and scare away witchcraft and evil spirits. On another table, near the fireplace, the child was busied in setting out the tea- things for her grandfather. She had left

in the property-room of the theatre her robe of spangles and tinsel, and appeared now in a simple frock. She had no longer the look of Titania, but that of a lively, active, affectionate human child; nothing theatrical about her now, yet still, in her graceful movements, so nimble but so noiseless, in her slight fair hands, in her transparent colouring, there was Nature's own lady,—that SOMETHING which strikes us all as well-born and high-bred: not that it necessarily is so; the semblances of aristocracy, in female childhood more especially, are often delusive. The / souvenance/ flower, wrought into the collars of princes, springs up wild on field and fell.

Gentleman Waife, wrapped negligently in a gray dressing-gown and seated in an old leathern easy-chair, was evidently out of sorts. He did not seem to heed the little preparations for his comfort, but, resting his cheek on his right hand, his left drooped on his crossed knees,—an attitude rarely seen in a man when his heart is light and his spirits high. His lips moved: he was talking to himself. Though he had laid aside his theatrical bandage over both eyes, he wore a black patch over one, or rather where one had been; the eye exposed was of singular beauty, dark and brilliant. For the rest, the man had a striking countenance, rugged, and rather ugly than otherwise, but by no means unprepossessing; full of lines and wrinkles and strong muscle, with large lips of wondrous pliancy, and an aspect of wistful sagacity, that, no doubt, on occasion could become exquisitely comic,—dry comedy,—the comedy that

makes others roar when the comedian himself is as grave as a judge.

You might see in his countenance, when quite in its natural repose, that Sorrow had passed by there; yet the instant the countenance broke into play, you would think that Sorrow must have been sent about her business as soon as the respect due to that visitor, so accustomed to have her own way, would permit. Though the man was old, you could not call him aged. One-eyed and crippled, still, marking the muscular arm, the expansive chest, you would have scarcely called him broken or infirm. And hence there was a certain indescribable pathos in his whole appearance, as if Fate had branded, on face and form, characters in which might be read her agencies on career and mind,—plucked an eye from intelligence, shortened one limb for life's progress, yet left whim sparkling out in the eye she had spared, and a light heart's wild spring in the limb she had maimed not.

"Come, Grandy, come," said the little girl, coaxingly; "your tea will get quite cold; your toast is ready, and here is such a nice egg; Mr. Merle says you may be sure it is new laid. Come, don't let that hateful man fret you: smile on your own Sophy; come."

"If," said Mr. Waife, in a hollow undertone, if I were alone in the world—"

"Oh, Grandy!"

"'I know a spot on which a bed-post grows,
And do remember where a roper lives.'

Delightful prospect, not to be indulged; for if I were in peace at one end of the rope, what would chance to my Sophy, left forlorn at the other?"

"Don't talk so, or I shall think you are sorry to have taken care of me."

"Care of thee, oh, child! and what care? It is thou who takest care of me. Put thy hands from thy mouth; sit down, darling, there, opposite, and let us talk. Now, Sophy, thou hast often said that thou wouldst be glad to be out of this mode of life, even for one humbler and harder: think well, is it so?"

"Oh, yes, indeed, grandfather."

"No more tinsel dresses and flowery wreaths; no more applause; no more of the dear divine stage excitement; the heroine and fairy vanished; only a little commonplace child in dingy gingham, with a purblind cripple for thy sole charge and playmate; Juliet Araminta evaporated evermore into little Sophy!"

"It would be so nice!" answered little Sophy, laughing merrily.

"What would make it nice?" asked the Comedian, turning on her his solitary piercing eye, with curious interest in his gaze.

Sophy left her seat, and placed herself on a stool at her grandfather's knee; on that knee she clasped her tiny hands, and shaking aside her curls, looked into his face with confident fondness. Evidently these two were much more than grandfather and grandchild: they were friends, they were equals, they were

in the habit of consulting and prattling with each other. She got at his meaning, however covert his humour; and he to the core of her heart, through its careless babble. Between you and me, Reader, I suspect that, in spite of the Comedian's sagacious wrinkles, the one was as much a child as the other.

"Well," said Sophy, "I will tell you, Grandy, what would make it nice: no one would vex and affront you,—we should be all by ourselves; and then, instead of those nasty lamps and those dreadful painted creatures, we could go out and play in the fields and gather daisies; and I could run after butterflies, and when I am tired I should come here, where I am now, any time of the day, and you would tell me stories and pretty verses, and teach me to write a little better than I do now, and make such a wise little woman of me; and if I wore gingham—but it need not be dingy, Grandy—it would be all mine, and you would be all mine too, and we'd keep a bird, and you'd teach it to sing; and oh, would it not be nice!"

"But still, Sophy, we should have to live, and we could not live upon daisies and butterflies. And I can't work now; for the matter of that, I never could work: more shame for me, but so it is. Merle says the fault is in the stars,—with all my heart. But the stars will not go to the jail or the workhouse instead of me. And though they want nothing to eat, we do."

"But, Grandy, you have said every day since the first walk you took after coming here, that if you had three pounds, we could get away and live by ourselves and make a fortune!"

"A fortune!—that's a strong word: let it stand. A fortune! But still, Sophy, though we should be free of this thrice-execrable Rugge, the scheme I have in my head lies remote from daisies and butterflies. We should have to dwell in towns and exhibit!"

"On a stage, Grandy?" said Sophy, resigned, but sorrowful.

"No, not exactly: a room would do."

"And I should not wear those horrid, horrid dresses, nor mix with those horrid, horrid painted people."

"No."

"And we should be quite alone, you and I?"

"Hum! there would be a third."

"Oh, Grandy, Grandy!" cried Sophy, in a scream of shrill alarm. "I know, I know; you are thinking of joining us with the Pig-faced Lady!"

MR. WAIFE (not a muscle relaxed).—"A well-spoken and pleasing gentlewoman. But no such luck: three pounds would not buy her."

SOPHIE.—"I am glad of that: I don't care so much for the Mermaid; she's dead and stuffed. But, oh!" (another scream) "perhaps 't is the Spotted Boy?"

MR. WAIFE.—"Calm your sanguine imagination; you aspire too high! But this I will tell you, that our companion, whatsoever or whosoever that companion may be, will be one you will like."

"I don't believe it," said Sophy, shaking her head. "I only like you.

But who is it?"

"Alas!" said Mr. Waife, "it is no use pampering ourselves with vain hopes: the three pounds are not forthcoming. You heard what that brute Rugge said, that the gentleman who wanted to take your portrait had called on him this morning, and offered 10s. for a sitting,—that is, 5s. for you, 5s. for Rugge; and Rugge thought the terms reasonable."

"But I said I would not sit."

"And when you did say it, you heard Rugge's language to me —to you. And now you must think of packing up, and be off at dawn with the rest. And," added the comedian, colouring high, "I must again parade, to boors and clowns, this mangled form; again set myself out as a spectacle of bodily infirmity,—man's last degradation. And this I have come to—I!"

"No, no, Grandy, it will not last long! we will get the three pounds. We have always hoped on!—hope still! And, besides, I am sure those gentlemen will come here tonight. Mr. Merle said they would, at ten o'clock. It is near ten now, and your tea cold as a stone."

She hung on his neck caressingly, kissing his furrowed brow, and leaving a tear there, and thus coaxed him till he set-to quietly at his meal; and Sophy shared it—though she had no appetite in sorrowing for him—but to keep him company; that done, she lighted his pipe with the best canaster, —his sole luxury and expense; but she always contrived that he should afford it.

Mr. Waife drew a long whiff, and took a more serene view of affairs. He who doth not smoke hath either known no great griefs,

or refuseth himself the softest consolation, next to that which comes from Heaven. "What, softer than woman?" whispers the young reader. Young reader, woman teases as well as consoles. Woman makes half the sorrows which she boasts the privilege to soothe. Woman consoles us, it is true, while we are young and handsome! when we are old and ugly, woman snubs and scolds us. On the whole, then, woman in this scale, the weed in that, Jupiter, hang out thy balance, and weigh them both; and if thou give the preference to woman, all I can say is, the next time Juno ruffles thee, —O Jupiter, try the weed.

CHAPTER VII

The historian, in pursuance of his stern duties, reveals to the scorn of future ages some of the occult practices which discredit the march of light in the nineteenth century.

"May I come in?" asked the Cobbler, outside the door. "Certainly come in," said Gentleman Waife. Sophy looked wistfully at the aperture, and sighed to see that Merle was alone. She crept up to him.

"Will they not come?" she whispered. "I hope so, pretty one; it be n't ten yet."

"Take a pipe, Merle," said Gentleman Waife, with a Grand Comedian air.

"No, thank you kindly; I just looked in to ask if I could do anything for ye, in case—in case ye must go tomorrow."

"Nothing: our luggage is small, and soon packed. Sophy has the money to discharge the meaner part of our debt to you."

"I don't value that," said the Cobbler, colouring.

"But we value your esteem," said Mr. Waife, with a smile that would have become a field-marshal. "And so, Merle, you think, if I am a broken-down vagrant, it must be put to the long account of the celestial bodies!"

"Not a doubt of it," returned the Cobbler, solemnly. "I wish you would give me date and place of Sophy's birth that's what I want; I'd take her horryscope. I'm sure she'd be lucky."

"I'd rather not, please," said Sophy, timidly.

"Rather not?—very odd. Why?"

"I don't want to know the future."

"That is odder and odder," quoth the Cobbler, staring; "I never heard a girl say that afore."

"Wait till she's older, Mr. Merle," said Waife: "girls don't want to know the future till they want to be married."

"Summat in that," said the Cobbler. He took up the crystal. "Have you looked into this ball, pretty one, as I bade ye?"

"Yes, two or three times."

"Ha! and what did you see?"

"My own face made very long," said Sophy,—"as long as that —," stretching out her hands.

The Cobbler shook his head dolefully, and screwing up one eye, applied the other to the mystic ball.

MR. WAIFE.—"Perhaps you will see if those two gentlemen are coming."

SOPHY.—"Do, do! and if they will give us three pounds!"

COBBLER (triumphantly).—"Then you do care to know the future, after all?"

SOPHY.—"Yes, so far as that goes; but don't look any further, pray."

COBBLER (intent upon the ball, and speaking slowly, and in jerks).—"A mist now. Ha! an arm with a besom—sweeps all before it."

SOPHY (frightened).—"Send it away, please."

COBBLER—"It is gone. Ha! there's Rugge,—looks very angry,—savage, indeed."

WAIFE.—"Good sign that! proceed."

COBBLER.—"Shakes his fist; gone. Ha! a young man, boyish, dark hair."

SOPHY (clapping her hands).—"That is the young gentleman—the very young one, I mean—with the kind eyes; is he coming?—is he, is he?"

WAIFE—"Examine his pockets! do you see there three pounds?"

COBBLER (testily).—"Don't be a-interrupting. Ha! he is talking with another gentleman, bearded."

SOPHY (whispering to her grandfather).—"The old young gentleman."

COBBLER (putting down the crystal, and with great decision).—"They are coming here; I see 'd them at the corner of the lane, by the public- house, two minutes' walk to this door." He took out a great silver watch: "Look, Sophy, when the minute-hand gets there (or before, if they walk briskly), you will hear them knock."

Sophy clasped her hands in mute suspense, half-credulous, half-doubting; then she went and opened the room-door, and stood on the landing-place to listen. Merle approached the Comedian, and said in a low voice, "I wish for your sake she had the gift."

WAIFE.—"The gift!—the three pounds!—so do I!"

COBBLER.—"Pooh! worth a hundred times three pounds; the gift,—the spirituous gift."

WAIFE.—"Spirituous! don't like the epithet,—smells of gin!"

COBBLER.—"Spirituous gift to see in the crystal: if she had that, she might make your fortune."

WAIFE (with a 'sudden change of countenance).—"Ah! I never thought of that. But if she has not the gift, I could teach it her,—eh?"

COBBLER (indignantly).—"I did not think to hear this from you, Mr. Waife. Teach her,—you! make her an impostor, and of the wickedest kind, inventing lies between earth and them as dwell in the seven spheres! Fie! No, if she hasn't the gift natural, let her alone: what here is not heaven-sent is devil-taught."

WAIFE (awed, but dubious).—"Then you really think you saw all that you described, in that glass egg?"

COBBLER.—"Think!—am I a liar? I spoke truth, and the proof is— there—!" Rat-tat went the knocker at the door.

"The two minutes are just up," said the Cobbler; and Cornelius Agrippa could not have said it with more wizardly effect.

"They are come, indeed," said Sophy, re-entering the room softly: "I hear their voices at the threshold."

The Cobbler passed by in silence, descended the stairs, and conducted Vance and Lionel into the Comedian's chamber; there he left them, his brow overcast. Gentleman Waife had displeased him sorely.

CHAPTER VIII

Showing the arts by which a man, however high in the air Nature may have formed his nose, may be led by that nose, and in directions perversely opposite to those which, in following his nose, he might be supposed to take; and, therefore, that nations the most liberally endowed with practical good sense, and in conceit thereof, carrying their noses the most horizontally aloof, when they come into conference with nations more skilled in diplomacy and more practised in "stage-play," end by the surrender of the precise object which it was intended they should surrender before they laid their noses together.

We all know that Demosthenes said, Everything in oratory was acting,— stage-play. Is it in oratory alone that the saying holds good? Apply it to all circumstances of fife, "stage-play, stage-play, stage-play!"—only /ars est celare artem/, conceal the art. Gleesome in soul to behold his visitors, calculating already on the three pounds to be extracted from them, seeing in that hope the crisis in his own checkered existence, Mr. Waife rose from his seat in superb /upocrisia/ or stage-play, and asked, with mild dignity,—"To what am I indebted, gentlemen, for the honour of your visit?"

In spite of his, nose, even Vance was taken aback. Pope says that Lord Bolingbroke had "the nobleman air." A great comedian

Lord Bolingbroke surely was. But, ah, had Pope seen Gentleman Waife! Taking advantage of the impression he had created, the actor added, with the finest imaginable breeding,—"But pray be seated;" and, once seeing them seated, resumed his easy-chair, and felt himself master of the situation.

"Hum!" said Vance, recovering his self-possession, after a pause—"hum!"

"Hem!" re-echoed Gentleman Waife; and the two men eyed each other much in the same way as Admiral Napier might have eyed the fort of Cronstadt, and the fort of Cronstadt have eyed Admiral Napier.

Lionel struck in with that youthful boldness which plays the deuce with all dignified strategical science.

"You must be aware why we come, sir; Mr. Merle will have explained. My friend, a distinguished artist, wished to make a sketch, if you do not object, of this young lady's very"—

"Pretty little face," quoth Vance, taking up the dis course. "Mr. Rugge, this morning, was willing,—I understand that your grandchild refused. We are come here to see if she will be more complaisant under your own roof, or Under Mr. Merle's, which, I take it, is the same thing for the present."—Sophy had sidled up to Lionel. He might not have been flattered if be knew why she preferred him to Vance. She looked on him as a boy, a fellow-child; and an instinct, moreover, told her, that more easily through him than his shrewd-looking bearded guest could she attain the object of her cupidity,—"three pounds!"

"Three pounds!" whispered Sophy, with the tones of an angel, into Lionel's thrilling ear.

MR. WAIFE.—"Sir, I will be frank with you." At that ominous commencement, Mr. Vance recoiled, and mechanically buttoned his trousers pocket. Mr. Waife noted the gesture with his one eye, and proceeded cautiously, feeling his way, as it were, towards the interior of the recess thus protected. "My grandchild declined your flattering proposal with my full approbation. She did not consider—neither did I—that the managerial rights of Mr. Rugge entitled him to the moiety of her face— off the stage." The Comedian paused, and with a voice, the mimic drollery of which no hoarseness could altogether mar, chanted the old line, —

"'My face is my fortune, sir,' she said."

Vance smiled; Lionel laughed; Sophy nestled still nearer to the boy.

GENTLEMAN WAIFE (with pathos and dignity).—"You see before you an old man: one way of life is the same to me as another. But she,—do you think Mr. Rugge's stage the right place for her?"

VANCE.—"Certainly not. Why did you not introduce her to the London Manager who would have engaged yourself?"

Waife could not conceal a slight change of countenance. "How do I know she would have succeeded? She had never then trod the boards. Besides, what strikes you as so good in a village show may be poor enough in a metropolitan theatre. Gentlemen, I do

my best for her; you cannot think otherwise, since she maintains me! I am no OEdipus, yet she is my Antigone."

VANCE.—"You know the classics, sir. Mr. Merle said you were a scholar! —read Sophocles in his native Greek, I presume, sir?"

MR. WAIFE.—"You jeer at the unfortunate: I am used to it."

VANCE (confused).—"I did not mean to wound you: I beg pardon. But your language and manner are not what—what one might expect to find in a—in a—Bandit persecuted by a remorseless Baron."

MR. WAIFE.—"Sir, you say you are an artist. Have you heard no tales of your professional brethren,—men of genius the highest, who won fame, which I never did, and failed of fortunes, as I have done? Their own fault, perhaps,—improvidence, wild habits, ignorance of the way how to treat life and deal with their fellow-men; such fault may have been mine too. I suffer for it: no matter; I ask none to save me. You are a painter: you would place her features on your canvas; you would have her rank amongst your own creations. She may become a part of your immortality. Princes may gaze on the effigies of the innocent happy childhood, to which your colours lend imperishable glow. They may ask who and what was this fair creature? Will you answer, 'One whom I found in tinsel, and so left, sure that she would die in rags!'—Save her!"

Lionel drew forth his purse, and poured its contents on the table. Vance covered them with his broad hand, and swept them

into his own pocket! At that sinister action Waife felt his heart sink into his shoes; but his face was as calm as a Roman's, only he resumed his pipe with a prolonged and testy whiff.

"It is I who am to take the portrait, and it is I who will pay for it," said Vance. "I understand that you have a pressing occasion for"—

"Three pounds!" muttered Sophy, sturdily, through the tears which her grandfather's pathos had drawn forth from her downcast eyes, "Three pounds—three—three."

"You shall have them. But listen: I meant only to take a sketch; I must now have a finished portrait. I cannot take this by candlelight. You must let me come here to-morrow; and yet to-morrow, I understand, you meant to leave?"

WAIFE.—"If you will generously bestow on us the sum you say, we shall not leave the village till you have completed your picture. It is Mr. Rugge and his company we will leave."

VANCE.—"And may I venture to ask what you propose to do, towards a new livelihood for yourself and your grandchild, by the help of a sum which is certainly much for me to pay,—enormous, I might say, /quoad/ me,—but small for a capital whereon to set up a business?"

WAIFE.—"Excuse me if I do not answer that very natural question at present. Let me assure you that that precise sum is wanted for an investment which promises her and myself an easy existence. But to insure my scheme, I must keep it secret. Do you believe me?"

"I do!" cried Lionel; and Sophy, whom by this time he had drawn upon his lap, put her arm gratefully round his neck.

"There is your money, sir, beforehand," said Vance, declining downward his betrayed and resentful nose, and depositing three sovereigns on the table.

"And how do you know," said Waife, smiling, "that I may not be off to-night with your money and your model!"

"Well," said Vance, curtly, "I think it is on the cards. Still, as John Kemble said when rebuked for too large an alms,

> "'It is not often that I do these things,
> But when I do, I do them handsomely.'"

"Well applied, and well delivered, sir," said the Comedian, "only you should put a little more emphasis on the word do."

"Did I not put enough? I am sure I felt it strongly; no one can feel the do more!"

Waife's pliant face relaxed into a genial brightness. The / equivoque/ charmed him. However, not affecting to comprehend it, he thrust back the money, and said,—"No, sir, not a shilling till the picture is completed. Nay, to relieve your mind, I will own that, had I no scruple more delicate, I would rather receive nothing till Mr. Rugge is gone. True, he has no right to any share in it. But you see before you a man who, when it comes to arguing, could never take a wrangler's degree,—never get over the Asses' Bridge, sir. Plucked at it scores of times clean as a

feather. But do not go yet. You came to give us money: give us what, were I rich, I should value more highly,—a little of your time. You, sir, are an artist; and you, young gentleman?" addressing Lionel.

LIONEL (colouring).—"I—am nothing as yet."

WAIFE.—"You are fond of the drama, I presume, both of you? Apropos of John Kemble, you, sir, said that you have never heard him. Allow me, so far as this cracked voice can do it, to give you a faint idea of him."

"I shall be delighted," said Vance, drawing nearer to the table, and feeling more at his ease. "But since I see you smoke, may I take the liberty to light my cigar?"

"Make yourself at home," said Gentleman Waife, with the good-humour of a fatherly host. And, all the while, Lionel and Sophy were babbling together, she still upon his lap.

Waife began his imitation of John Kemble. Despite the cracked voice, it was admirable. One imitation drew on another; then succeeded anecdotes of the Stage, of the Senate, of the Bar. Waife had heard great orators, whom every one still admires for the speeches which nobody nowadays ever reads; he gave a lively idea of each. And then came sayings of dry humour and odd scraps of worldly observation; and time flew on pleasantly till the clock struck twelve, and the young guests tore themselves away.

"Merle, Merle!" cried the Comedian, when they were gone.

Merle appeared.

"We don't go to-morrow. When Rugge sends for us (as he will

do at daybreak), say so. You shall lodge us a few days longer, and then—and then—my little Sophy, kiss me, kiss me! You are saved at least from those horrid painted creatures!"

"Ah, ah!" growled Merle from below, "he has got the money! Glad to hear it. But," he added, as he glanced at sundry weird and astrological symbols with which he had been diverting himself, "that's not it. The true horary question, is, WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"

CHAPTER IX

The historian shows that, notwithstanding the progressive spirit of the times, a Briton is not permitted, without an effort, "to progress" according to his own inclinations.

Sophy could not sleep. At first she was too happy. Without being conscious of any degradation in her lot amongst the itinerant artists of Mr. Rugge's exhibition,—how could she, when her beloved and revered protector had been one of those artists for years?—yet instinctively she shrank from their contact. Doubtless, while absorbed in some stirring part, she forgot companions, audience, all, and enjoyed what she performed, —necessarily enjoyed, for her acting was really excellent, and where no enjoyment there no excellence; but when the histrionic enthusiasm was not positively at work, she crept to her grandfather with something between loathing and terror of the "painted creatures" and her own borrowed tinsel.

But, more than all, she felt acutely every indignity or affront offered to Gentleman Waife. Heaven knows, these were not few; and to escape from such a life—to be with her grandfather alone, have him all to herself to tend and to pet, to listen to and to prattle with—seemed to her the consummation of human felicity. Ah, but should she be all alone? Just as she was lulling herself into a doze, that question seized and roused her. And then it was not

happiness that kept her waking: it was what is less rare in the female breast, curiosity. Who was to be the mysterious third, to whose acquisition the three pounds were evidently to be devoted? What new face had she purchased by the loan of her own? Not the Pig-faced Lady nor the Spotted Boy. Could it be the Norfolk Giant or the Calf with two Heads? Horrible idea! Monstrous phantasmagoria began to stalk before her eyes; and to charm them away, with great fervour she fell to saying her prayers,—an act of devotion which she had forgotten, in her excitement, to perform before resting her head on the pillow,—an omission, let us humbly hope, not noted down in very dark characters by the recording angel.

That act over, her thoughts took a more comely aspect than had been worn by the preceding phantasies, reflected Lionel's kind looks and repeated his gentle words. "Heaven bless him!" she said with emphasis, as a supplement to the habitual prayers; and then tears gathered to her grateful eyelids, for she was one of those beings whose tears come slow from sorrow, quick from affection. And so the gray dawn found her still- wakeful, and she rose, bathed her cheeks in the cold fresh water, and drew them forth with a glow like Hebe's. Dressing herself with the quiet activity which characterized all her movements, she then opened the casement and inhaled the air. All was still in the narrow lane; the shops yet unclosed. But on the still trees behind the shops the birds were beginning to stir and chirp. Chanticleer, from some neighbouring yard, rang out his brisk rereillee. Pleasant

English summer dawn in the pleasant English country village. She stretched her graceful neck far from the casement, trying to catch a glimpse of the blue river. She had seen its majestic flow on the day they had arrived at the fair, and longed to gain its banks; then her servitude to the stage forbade her. Now she was to be free! O joy! Now she might have her careless hours of holiday; and, forgetful of Waife's warning that their vocation must be plied in towns, she let her fancy run riot amidst visions of green fields and laughing waters, and in fond delusion gathered the daisies and chased the butterflies. Changeling transferred into that lowest world of Art from the cradle of civil Nature, her human child's heart yearned for the human childlike delights. All children love the country, the flowers, the sward, the birds, the butterflies; or if some do not, despair, O Philanthropy, of their afterlives!

She closed the window, smiling to herself, stole through the adjoining doorway, and saw that her grandfather was still asleep. Then she busied herself in putting the little sitting-room to rights, reset the table for the morning meal, watered the stocks, and finally took up the crystal and looked into it with awe, wondering why the Cobbler could see so much, and she only the distorted reflection of her own face. So interested, however, for once, did she become in the inspection of this mystic globe, that she did not notice the dawn pass into broad daylight, nor hear a voice at the door below,—nor, in short, take into cognition the external world, till a heavy tread shook the floor, and then, starting, she

beheld the Remorseless Baron, with a face black enough to have darkened the crystal of Dr. Dee himself.

"Ho, ho," said Mr. Rugge, in hissing accents which had often thrilled the threepenny gallery with anticipative horror. "Rebellious, eh?—won't come? Where's your grandfather, baggage?"

Sophy let fall the crystal—a mercy it was not brokenand gazed vacantly on the Baron.

"Your vile scamp of a grandfather?"

SOPHY (with spirit).—"He is not vile. You ought to be ashamed of yourself speaking so, Mr. Rugge!"

Here simultaneously, Mr. Waife, hastily indued in his gray dressing-gown, presented himself at the aperture of the bedroom door, and the Cobbler on the threshold of the sitting-room. The Comedian stood mute, trusting perhaps to the imposing effect of his attitude. The Cobbler, yielding to the impulse of untheatric man, put his head doggedly on one side, and with both hands on his hips said,

"Civil words to my lodgers, master, or out you go!"

The Remorseless Baron glared vindictively, first at one and then at the other; at length he strode up to Waife, and said, with a withering grin, "I have something to say to you; shall I say it before your landlord?"

The Comedian waved his hand to the Cobbler.

"Leave us, my friend; I shall not require you. Step this way, Mr. Rugge." Rugge entered the bedroom, and Waife closed the

door behind him.

"Anan," quoth the Cobbler, scratching his head. "I don't quite take your grandfather's giving in. British ground here! But your Ascendant cannot surely be in such malignant conjunction with that obstreperous tyrant as to bind you to him hand and foot. Let's see what the crystal thinks of it. 'Take it up gently, and come downstairs with me."

"Please, no; I'll stay near Grandfather," said Sophy, resolutely. "He sha'n't be left helpless with that rude man."

The Cobbler could not help smiling. "Lord love you," said he; "you have a spirit of your own, and if you were my wife I should be afraid of you. But I won't stand here eavesdropping; mayhap your grandfather has secrets I'm not to hear: call me if I'm wanted." He descended. Sophy, with less noble disdain of eavesdropping, stood in the centre of the room, holding her breath to listen. She heard no sound; she had half a mind to put her ear to the keyhole, but that seemed even to her a mean thing, if not absolutely required by the necessity of the case. So there she still stood, her head bent down, her finger raised: oh, that Vance could have so painted her!

CHAPTER X

Showing the causes why men and nations, when one man or nation wishes to get for its own arbitrary purposes what the other man or nation does not desire to part with, are apt to ignore the mild precepts of Christianity, shock the sentiments and upset the theories of Peace Societies.

"Am I to understand," said Mr. Rugge, in a whisper, when Waife had drawn him to the farthest end of the inner room, with the bed-curtains between their position and the door, deadening the sound of their voices,—"am I to understand that, after my taking you and that child to my theatre out of charity, and at your own request, you are going to quit me without warning,—French leave; is that British conduct?"

"Mr. Rugge," replied Waife, deprecatingly, "I have no engagement with you beyond an experimental trial. We were free on both sides for three months,—you to dismiss us any day, we to leave you. The experiment does not please its: we thank you and depart."

RUGGE.—"That is not the truth. I said I was free to dismiss you both, if the child did not suit. You, poor helpless creature, could be of no use. But I never heard you say you were to be free too. Stands to reason not! Put my engage ments at a Waife's mercy! I, Lorenzo Rugge! —stuff! But I am a just man, and a liberal man, and if you think you ought to have a higher salary, if

this ungrateful proceeding is only, as I take it, a strike for wages, I will meet you. Juliet Araminta does play better than I could have supposed; and I'll conclude an engagement on good terms, as we were to have done if the experiment answered, for three years." Waife shook his head. "You are very good, Mr. Rugge, but it is not a strike. My little girl does not like the life at any price; and, since she supports me, I am bound to please her. Besides," said the actor, with a stiffer manner, "you have broken faith with me. It was fully understood that I was to appear no more on your stage; all my task was to advise with you in the performances, remodel the plays, help in the stage-management; and you took advantage of my penury, and, when I asked for a small advance, insisted on forcing these relics of what I was upon the public pity. Enough: we part. I bear no malice."

RUGGE.—"Oh, don't you? No more do I. But I am a Briton, and I have the spirit of one. You had better not make an enemy of me."

WAIFE.—"I am above the necessity of making enemies. I have an enemy ready made in myself."

Rugge placed a strong bony hand upon the cripple's arm. "I dare say you have! A bad conscience, sir. How would you like your past life looked into, and blabbed out?"

GENTLEMAN WAIFE (mournfully).—"The last four years of it have been spent in your service, Mr. Rugge. If their record had been blabbed out for my benefit, there would not have been a dry eye in the house."

RUGGE. "I disdain your sneer. When a scorpion nursed at my bosom sneers at me, I leave it to its own reflections. But I don't speak of the years in which that scorpion has been enjoying a salary and smoking canaster at my expense. I refer to an earlier dodge in its checkered existence. Ha, sir, you wince! I suspect I can find out something about you which would—"

WAIFE (fiercely).—"Would what?"

RUGGE.—"Oh, lower your tone, sir; no bullying me. I suspect! I have good reason for suspicion; and if you sneak off in this way, and cheat me out of my property in Juliet Araminta, I will leave no stone unturned to prove what I suspect: look to it, slight man! Come, I don't wish to quarrel; make it up, and" (drawing out his pocket-book) "if you want cash down, and will have an engagement in black and white for three years for Juliet Araminta, you may squeeze a good sum out of me, and go yourself where you please: you'll never be troubled by me. What I want is the girl."

All the actor laid aside, Waife growled out, "And hang me; sir, if you shall have the girl!"

At this moment Sophy opened the door wide, and entered boldly. She had heard her grandfather's voice raised, though its hoarse tones did not allow her to distinguish his words. She was alarmed for him. She came in, his guardian fairy, to protect him from the oppressor of six feet high. Rugge's arm was raised, not indeed to strike, but rather to declaim. Sophy slid between him and her grandfather, and, clinging round the latter, flung

out her own arm, the forefinger raised menacingly towards the Remorseless Baron. How you would have clapped if you had seen her so at Covent Garden! But I'll swear the child did not know she was acting. Rugge did, and was struck with admiration and regretful rage at the idea of losing her.

"Bravo!" said he, involuntarily. "Come, come, Waife, look at her: she was born for the stage. My heart swells with pride. She is my property, morally speaking; make her so legally; and hark, in your ear, fifty pounds. Take me in the humour,—Golconda opens,—fifty pounds!"

"No," said the vagrant.

"Well," said Rugge, sullenly; "let her speak for herself."

"Speak, child. You don't wish to return to Mr. Rugge,—and without me, too,—do you, Sophy?"

"Without you, Grandy! I'd rather die first."

"You hear her; all is settled between us. You have had our services up to last night; you have paid us up to last night; and so good morning to you, Mr. Rugge."

"My dear child," said the manager, softening his voice as much as he could, "do consider. You shall be so made of without that stupid old man. You think me cross, but 't is he who irritates and puts me out of temper. I 'm uncommon fond of children. I had a babe of my own once,— upon my honour, I had,—and if it had not been for convulsions, caused by teething, I should be a father still. Supply to me the place of that beloved babe. You shall have such fine dresses; all new,—choose 'em yourself,—

minced veal and raspberry tarts for dinner every Sunday. In three years, under my care, you will become a great actress, and make your fortune, and marry a lord,—lords go out of their wits for great actresses,—whereas, with him, what will you do? drudge and rot and starve; and he can't live long, and then where will you be? 'T is a shame to hold her so, you idle old vagabond."

"I don't hold her," said Waife, trying to push her away. "There's something in what the man says. Choose for yourself, Sophy."

SOPHY (suppressing a sob).—"How can you have the heart to talk so, Grandy? I tell you, Mr. Rugge, you are a bad man, and I hate you, and all about you; and I'll stay with Grandfather; and I don't care if I do starve: he sha'n't!"

MR. RUGGE (clapping both hands on the crown of his hat, and striding to the door).—"William Waife, beware 't is done. I'm your enemy. As for you, too dear but abandoned infant, stay with him: you'll find out very soon who and what he is; your pride will have a fall, when—"

Waife sprang forward, despite his lameness,—both his fists clenched, his one eye ablaze; his broad burly torso confronted and daunted the stormy manager. Taller and younger though Rugge was, he cowered before the cripple he had so long taunted and humbled. The words stood arrested on his tongue. "Leave the room instantly!" thundered the actor, in a voice no longer broken. "Blacken my name before that child by one word, and I will dash the next down your throat." Rugge rushed to the door,

and keeping it ajar between Waife and himself, he then thrust in his head, hissing forth,

"Fly, caitiff, fly! my revenge shall track your secret and place you in my power. Juliet Araminta shall yet be mine." With these awful words the Remorseless Baron cleared the stairs in two bounds, and was out of the house.

Waife smiled contemptuously. But as the street-door clanged on the form of the angry manager, the colour faded from the old man's face. Exhausted by the excitement he had gone through, he sank on a chair, and, with one quick gasp as for breath, fainted away.

CHAPTER XI

Progress of the Fine Arts.—Biographical anecdotes.—Fluctuations in the value of money.—Speculative tendencies of the time.

Whatever the shock which the brutality of the Remorseless Baron inflicted on the nervous system of the persecuted but triumphant Bandit, it had certainly subsided by the time Vance and Lionel entered Waife's apartment; for they found grandfather and grandchild seated near the open window, at the corner of the table (on which they had made room for their operations by the removal of the carved cocoanut, the crystal egg, and the two flower-pots), eagerly engaged, with many a silvery laugh from the lips of Sophy, in the game of dominos.

Mr. Waife had been devoting himself, for the last hour and more, to the instruction of Sophy in the mysteries of that intellectual amusement; and such pains did he take, and so impressive were his exhortations, that his happy pupil could not help thinking to herself that this was the new art upon which Waife depended for their future livelihood. She sprang up, however, at the entrance of the visitors, her face beaming with grateful smiles; and, running to Lionel and taking him by the hand, while she courtesied with more respect to Vance, she exclaimed, "We are free! thanks to you, thanks to you both! He is gone! Mr. Rugge is gone!"

"So I saw on passing the green; stage and all," said Vance, while Lionel kissed the child and pressed her to his side. It is astonishing how paternal he felt,—how much she had crept into his heart.

"Pray, sir," asked Sophy, timidly, glancing to Vance, "has the Norfolk Giant gone too?"

VANCE.—"I fancy so—all the shows were either gone or going."

SOPHY.—"The Calf with Two Heads?"

VANCE.—"Do you regret it?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, dear, no."

Waife, who after a profound bow, and a cheery "Good day, gentlemen," had hitherto remained silent, putting away the dominoes, now said, "I suppose, sir, you would like at once to begin your sketch?"

VANCE.—"Yes; I have brought all my tools; see, even the canvas. I wish it were larger, but it is all I have with me of that material: 't is already stretched; just let me arrange the light."

WAIFE.—"If you don't want me, gentlemen, I will take the air for half- an-hour or so. In fact, I may now feel free to look after my investment."

SOPHY (whispering Lionel).—"You are sure the Calf has gone as well as the Norfolk Giant?"

Lionel wonderingly replied that he thought so; and Waife disappeared into his room, whence he soon emerged, having doffed his dressing-gown for a black coat, by no means

threadbare, and well brushed. Hat, stick, and gloves in hand, he really seemed respectable,—more than respectable,—Gentleman Waife every inch of him; and saying, "Look your best, Sophy, and sit still, if you can," nodded pleasantly to the three, and hobbled down the stairs. Sophy—whom Vance had just settled into a chair, with her head bent partially down (three-quarters), as the artist had released

"The loose train of her amber-dropping hair,"

and was contemplating aspect and position with a painter's meditative eye-started up, to his great discomposure, and rushed to the window. She returned to her seat with her mind much relieved. Waife was walking in an opposite direction to that which led towards the whilolm quarters of the Norfolk Giant and the Two-headed Calf.

"Come, come," said Vance, impatiently, "you have broken an idea in half. I beg you will not stir till I have placed you; and then, if all else of you be still, you may exercise your tongue. I give you leave to talk."

SOPHY (penitentially).—"I am so sorry—I beg pardon. Will that do, sir?"

VANCE.—"Head a little more to the right,—so, Titania watching Bottom asleep. Will you lie on the floor, Lionel, and do Bottom?"

LIONEL (indignantly).—"Bottom! Have I an ass's head?"

VANCE.—"Immaterial! I can easily imagine that you have one. I want merely an outline of figure,—something sprawling

and ungainly."

LIONEL (sulkily).—"Much obliged to you; imagine that too."

VANCE.—"Don't be so disobliging. It is necessary that she should look fondly at something,—expression in the eye." Lionel at once reclined himself incumbent in a position as little sprawling and ungainly as he could well contrive.

VANCE.—"Fancy, Miss Sophy, that this young gentleman is very dear to you. Have you got a brother?"

SOPHY.—"Ah, no, sir."

VANCE.—"Hum. But you have, or have had, a doll?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, yes; Grandfather gave me one."

VANCE.—"And you were fond of that doll?"

SOPHY.—"Very."

VANCE.—"Fancy that young gentleman is your doll grown big, that it is asleep, and you are watching that no one hurts it; Mr. Rugge, for instance. Throw your whole soul into that thought,—love for doll, apprehension of Rugge. Lionel, keep still, and shut your eyes; do."

LIONEL (grumbling).—"I did not come here to be made a doll of."

VANCE.—"Coax him to be quiet, Miss Sophy, and sleep peaceably, or I shall do him a mischief. I can be a Rugge, too, if I am put out."

SOPHY (in the softest tones).—"Do try and sleep, sir: shall I get you a pillow?"

LIONEL.—"No, thank you: I'm very comfortable now,"

settling his head upon his arm; and after one upward glance towards Sophy, the lids closed reluctantly over his softened eyes. A ray of sunshine came aslant through the half-shut window, and played along the boy's clustering hair and smooth pale cheek. Sophy's gaze rested on him most benignly.

"Just so," said Vance; "and now be silent till I have got the attitude and fixed the look."

The artist sketched away rapidly with a bold practised hand, and all was silent for about half-an-hour, when he said, "You May get up, Lionel; I have done with you for the present."

SOPHY.—"And me too—may I see?"

VANCE.—"No, but you may talk now. So you had a doll? What has become of it?"

SOPHY.—"I left it behind, sir. Grandfather thought it would distract me from attending to his lessons and learning my part."

VANCE.—"You love your grandfather more than the doll?"

SOPHY.—"Oh! a thousand million million times more."

VANCE.—"He brought you up, I suppose? Have you no father,—no mother?"

SOPHY.—"I have only Grandfather."

LIONEL.—"Have you always lived with him?"

SOPHY.—"Dear me, no; I was with Mrs. Crane till Grandfather came from abroad, and took me away, and put me with some very kind people; and then, when Grandfather had that bad accident, I came to stay with him, and we have been together ever since."

LIONEL.—"Was Mrs. Crane no relation of yours?"

SOPHY.—"No, I suppose not, for she was not kind; I was so miserable: but don't talk of it; I forget that now. I only wish to remember from the time Grandfather took me in his lap, and told me to be a good child and love him; and I have been happy ever since."

"You are a dear good child," said Lionel, emphatically, "and I wish I had you for my sister."

VANCE.—"When your grandfather has received from me that exorbitant—not that I grudge it—sum, I should like to ask, What will he do with it? As he said it was a secret, I must not pump you."

SOPHY.—"What will he do with it? I should like to know, too, sir; but whatever it is I don't care, so long as I and Grandfather are together."

Here Waife re-entered. "Well, how goes on the picture?"

VANCE.—"Tolerably, for the first sitting; I require two more."

WAIFE.—"Certainly; only—only" (he drew aside Vance, and whispered), "only the day after to-morrow, I fear I shall want the money. It is an occasion that never will occur again: I would seize it."

VANCE.—"Take the money now."

WAIFE.—"Well, thank you, sir; you are sure now that we shall not run away; and I accept your kindness; it will make all safe."

Vance, with surprising alacrity, slipped the sovereigns into the old man's hand; for truth to say, though thrifty, the artist was really generous. His organ of caution was large, but that of acquisitiveness moderate. Moreover, in those moments when his soul expanded with his art, he was insensibly less alive to the value of money. And strange it is that, though States strive to fix for that commodity the most abiding standards, yet the value of money to the individual who regards it shifts and fluctuates, goes up and down half-a-dozen times a day. For any part, I honestly declare that there are hours in the twenty-four—such, for instance, as that just before breakfast, or that succeeding a page of this History in which I have been put out of temper with my performance and myself—when any one in want of five shillings at my disposal would find my value of that sum put it quite out of his reach; while at other times—just after dinner, for instance, or when I have effected what seems to me a happy stroke, or a good bit of colour, in this historical composition—the value of those five shillings is so much depreciated that I might be,—I think so, at least,—I might be almost tempted to give them away for nothing. Under some such mysterious influences in the money-market, Vance therefore felt not the loss of his three sovereigns; and returning to his easel, drove away Lionel and Sophy, who had taken that opportunity to gaze on the canvas.

"Don't do her justice at all," quoth Lionel; "all the features exaggerated."

"And you pretend to paint!" returned Vance, in great scorn,

and throwing a cloth over his canvas. "To-morrow, Mr. Waife, the same hour. Now, Lionel, get your hat, and come away."

Vance carried off the canvas, and Lionel followed slowly. Sophy gazed at their departing forms from the open window; Waife stumped about the room, rubbing his hands, "He'll do; he 'll do: I always thought so." Sophy turned: "Who'll do?—the young gentleman? Do what?"

WAIFE.-"The young gentleman?-as if I was thinking of him! Our new companion; I have been with him this last hour. Wonderful natural gifts."

SOPHY (ruefully).—"It is alive, then?"

WAIFE.—"Alive! yes, I should think so."

SOPHY (half-crying.)—"I am very sorry; I know I shall hate it."

WAIFF.—"Tut, darling: get me my pipe; I'm happy."

SOPHY (cutting short her fit of ill-humour).—"Are you? then I am, and I will not hate it."

CHAPTER XII

In which it is shown that a man does this or declines to do that for reasons best known to himself,—a reserve which is extremely conducive to the social interests of a community, since the conjecture into the origin and nature of those reasons stimulates the inquiring faculties, and furnishes the staple of modern conversation. And as it is not to be denied that, if their neighbours left them nothing to guess at, three-fourths of civilized humankind, male or female, would have nothing to talk about; so we cannot too gratefully encourage that needful curiosity termed by the inconsiderate tittle-tattle or scandal, which saves the vast majority of our species from being reduced to the degraded condition of dumb animals.

The next day the sitting was renewed: but Waife did not go out, and the conversation was a little more restrained; or rather, Waife had the larger share in it. The Comedian, when he pleased, could certainly be very entertaining. It was not so much in what he said as his manner of saying it. He was a strange combination of sudden extremes, at one while on a tone of easy but not undignified familiarity with his visitors, as if their equal in position, their superior in years; then abruptly, humble, deprecating, almost obsequious, almost servile; and then again, jerked as it were into pride and stiffness, falling back, as if the effort were impossible, into meek dejection. Still the prevalent

character of the man's mood and talk was social, quaint, cheerful. Evidently he was by original temperament a droll and joyous humourist, with high animal spirits; and, withal, an infantine simplicity at times, like the clever man who never learns the world and is always taken in.

A circumstance, trifling in itself, but suggestive of speculation either as to the character or antecedent circumstances of Gentleman Waife, did not escape Vance's observation. Since his rupture with Mr. Rugge, there was a considerable amelioration in that affection of the trachea, which, while his engagement with Rugge lasted, had rendered the Comedian's dramatic talents unavailable on the stage. He now expressed himself without the pathetic hoarseness or cavernous wheeze which had previously thrown a wet blanket over his efforts at discourse. But Vance put no very stern construction on the dissimulation which his change seemed to denote. Since Waife was still one-eyed and a cripple, he might very excusably shrink from reappearance on the stage, and affect a third infirmity to save his pride from the exhibition of the two infirmities that were genuine.

That which most puzzled Vance was that which had most puzzled the Cobbler,—What could the man once have been? how fallen so low?—for fall it was, that was clear. The painter, though not himself of patrician extraction, had been much in the best society. He had been a petted favourite in great houses. He had travelled. He had seen the world. He had the habits and instincts of good society.

Now, in what the French term the /beau monde/, there are little traits that reveal those who have entered it,—certain tricks of phrase, certain modes of expression,—even the pronunciation of familiar words, even the modulation of an accent. A man of the most refined bearing may not have these peculiarities; a man, otherwise coarse and brusque in his manner, may. The slang of the /beau monde/ is quite apart from the code of high breeding. Now and then, something in Waife's talk seemed to show that he had lighted on that beau-world; now and then, that something wholly vanished. So that Vance might have said, "He has been admitted there, not inhabited it."

Yet Vance could not feel sure, after all; comedians are such takes in.

But was the man, by the profession of his earlier life, a comedian?

Vance asked the question adroitly.

"You must have taken to the stage young?" said he.

"The stage!" said Waife; "if you mean the public stage, no. I have acted pretty often in youth, even in childhood, to amuse others, never professionally to support myself, till Mr. Rugge civilly engaged me four years ago."

"Is it possible,—with your excellent education! But pardon me; I have hinted my surprise at your late vocation before, and it displeased you."

"Displeased me!" said Waife, with an abject, depressed manner; "I hope I said nothing that would have misbecome a

poor broken vagabond like me.

I am no prince in disguise,—a good-for-nothing varlet who should be too grateful to have something to keep himself from a dunghill."

LIONEL.—"Don't talk so. And but for your accident you might now be the great attraction on the metropolitan stage. Who does not respect a really fine actor?"

WAIFE (gloomily).—"The metropolitan stage! I was talked into it: I am glad even of the accident that saved me; say no more of that, no more of that. But I have spoiled your sitting. Sophy, you see, has left her chair."

"I have done for to-day," said Vance; "to-morrow, and my task is ended."

Lionel came up to Vance and whispered him; the painter, after a pause, nodded silently, and then said to Waife,

"We are going to enjoy the fine weather on the Thames (after I have put away these things), and shall return to our inn—not far hence—to sup, at eight o'clock. Supper is our principal meal; we rarely spoil our days by the ceremonial of a formal dinner. Will you do us the favour to sup with us? Our host has a wonderful whiskey, which when raw is Glenlivat, but refined into toddy is nectar. Bring your pipe, and let us hear John Kemble again."

Waife's face lighted up. "You are most kind; nothing I should like so much. But—" and the light fled, the face darkened—"but no; I cannot —you don't know—that is—I—I have made a vow to myself to decline all such temptations. I humbly beg you'll

excuse me."

VANCE.—" Temptations! of what kind,—the whiskey toddy?"

WAIFE (puffing away a sigh).—"Ah, yes; whiskey toddy, if you please. Perhaps I once loved a glass too well, and could not resist a glass too much now; and if I once broke the rule and became a tippler, what would happen to Juliet Araminta? For her sake don't press me."

"Oh, do go, Grandy; he never drinks,—never anything stronger than tea, I assure you, sir: it can't be that."

"It is, silly child, and nothing else," said Waife, positively, drawing himself up,—"excuse me."

Lionel began brushing his hat with his sleeve, and his face worked; at last he said, "Well, sir, then may I ask another favour? Mr. Vance and I are going to-morrow, after the sitting, to see Hampton Court; we have kept that excursion to the last before leaving these parts. Would you and little Sophy come with us in the boat? We will have no whiskey toddy, and we will bring you both safe home."

WAIFE.—"What—I! what—I! You are very young, sir,—a gentleman born and bred, I'll swear; and you to be seen, perhaps by some of your friends or family, with an old vagrant like me, in the Queen's palace,—the public gardens! I should be the vilest wretch if I took such advantage of your goodness. 'Pretty company,' they would say, 'you had got into.' With me! with me! Don't be alarmed, Mr. Vance not to be thought of."

The young men were deeply affected.

"I can't accept that reason," said Lionel, tremulously, "though I must not presume to derange your habits. But she may go with us, mayn't she? We'll take care of her, and she is dressed so plainly and neatly, and looks such a little lady" (turning to Vance).

"Yes, let her come with us," said the artist, benevolently; though he by no means shared in Lionel's enthusiastic desire for her company. He thought she would be greatly in their way.

"Heaven bless you both!" answered Waife; "and she wants a holiday; she shall have it."

"I'd rather stay with you, Grandy: you'll be so lone."

"No, I wish to be out all to-morrow,-the investment! I shall not be alone; making friends with our future companion, Sophy."

"And can do without me already? heigh-ho!"

VANCE.—"So that's settled; good-by to you."

CHAPTER XIII

Inspiring effect of the Fine Arts: the vulgar are moved by their exhibition into generous impulses and flights of fancy, checked by the ungracious severities of their superiors, as exemplified in the instance of Cobbler Merle and his servant of-all-work.

The next day, perhaps with the idea of removing all scruple from Sophy's mind, Waife had already gone after his investment when the friends arrived. Sophy at first was dull and dispirited, but by degrees she brightened up; and when, the sitting over and the picture done (save such final touches as Vance reserved for solitary study), she was permitted to gaze at her own effigy, she burst into exclamations of frank delight. "Am I like that! is it possible? Oh, how beautiful! Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle, Mr. Merle!" and running out of the room before Vance could stop her, she returned with the Cobbler, followed, too, by a thin gaunt girl, whom he pompously called his housekeeper, but who in sober truth was servant-of-all-work. Wife he had none: his horoscope, he said, having Saturn in square to the Seventh House, forbade him to venture upon matrimony. All gathered round the picture; all admired, and with justice: it was a chef-d'oeuvre. Vance in his maturest day never painted more charmingly. The three pounds proved to be the best outlay of capital he had ever made. Pleased with his work, he was pleased even with that unsophisticated

applause.

"You must have Mercury and Venus very strongly aspected," quoth the Cobbler; "and if you have the Dragon's Head in the Tenth House, you may count on being much talked of after you are dead."

"After I am dead!—sinister omen!" said Vance, discomposed. "I have no faith in artists who count on being talked of after they are dead. Never knew a dauber who did not! But stand back: time flies; tie up your hair; put on your bonnet, Titania. You have a shawl?—not tinsel, I hope! quieter the better. You stay and see to her, Lionel."

Said the gaunt servant-of-all-work to Mr. Merle, "I'd let the gentleman paint me, if he likes: shall I tell him, master?"

"Go back to the bacon, foolish woman. Why, he gave L3 for her likeness, 'cause of her Benefics! But you'd have to give him three years' wages afore he'd look you straight in the face, 'cause, you see, your Aspects are crooked. And," added the Cobbler, philosophizing, "when the Malefics are dead agin a girl's mug, man is so constituted by natur' that he can't take to that mug unless it has a golden handle. Don't fret, 't is not your fault: born under Scorpio,—coarse-limbed,—dull complexion; and the Head of the Dragon aspected of Infortunes in all your Angles."

CHAPTER XIV

The historian takes advantage of the summer hours vouchsafed to the present life of Mr. Waife's grandchild, in order to throw a few gleams of light on her past.—He leads her into the palace of our kings, and moralizes thereon; and, entering the Royal Gardens, shows the uncertainty of human events, and the insecurity of British laws, by the abrupt seizure and constrained deportation of an innocent and unforeboding Englishman.

Such a glorious afternoon! The capricious English summer was so kind that day to the child and her new friends! When Sophy's small foot once trod the sward, had she been really Queen of the Green People, sward and footstep could not more joyously have met together. The grasshopper bounded in fearless trust upon the hem of her frock; she threw herself down on the grass and caught him, but, oh, so tenderly! and the gay insect, dear to poet and fairy, seemed to look at her from that quaint sharp face of his with sagacious recognition, resting calmly on the palm of her pretty hand; then when he sprang off, little moth-like butterflies peculiar to the margins of running waters quivered up from the herbage, fluttering round her. And there, in front, lay the Thames, glittering through the willows, Vance getting ready the boat, Lionel seated by her side, a child like herself, his pride of incipient manhood all forgotten; happy in her glee; she loving

him for the joy she felt, and blending his image evermore in her remembrance with her first summer holiday,—with sunny beams, glistening leaves, warbling birds, fairy wings, sparkling waves. Oh, to live so in a child's heart,—innocent, blessed, angel-like,—better, better than the troubled reflection upon woman's later thoughts, better than that mournful illusion, over which tears so bitter are daily shed,—better than First Love! They entered the boat. Sophy had never, to the best of her recollection, been in a boat before. All was new to her: the lifelike speed of the little vessel; that world of cool green weeds, with the fish darting to and fro; the musical chime of oars; those distant stately swans. She was silent now—her heart was very full.

"What are you thinking of, Sophy?" asked Lionel, resting on the oar.

"Thinking!—I was not thinking."

"What then?"

"I don't know,—feeling, I suppose."

"Feeling what?"

"As if between sleeping and waking; as the water perhaps feels, with the sunlight on it!"

"Poetical," said Vance, who, somewhat of a poet himself, naturally sneered at poetical tendencies in others; "but not so bad in its way. Ah, have I hurt your vanity? there are tears in your eyes."

"No, sir," said Sophy, falteringly. "But I was thinking then."

"Ah," said the artist, "that's the worst of it; after feeling ever

comes thought; what was yours?"

"I was sorry poor Grandfather was not here, that's all."

"It was not our fault: we pressed him cordially," said Lionel.

"You did indeed, sir, thank you! And I don't know why he refused you."

The young men exchanged compassionate glances.

Lionel then sought to make her talk of her past life, tell him more of Mrs. Crane. Who and what was she?

Sophy could not or would not tell. The remembrances were painful; she had evidently tried to forget them. And the people with whom Waife had placed her, and who had been kind?

The Misses Burton; and they kept a day-school, and taught Sophy to read, write, and cipher. They lived near London, in a lane opening on a great common, with a green rail before the house, and had a good many pupils, and kept a tortoise shell cat and a canary. Not much to enlighten her listener did Sophy impart here.

And now they neared that stately palace, rich in associations of storm and splendour,—of the grand Cardinal; the iron-clad Protector; Dutch William of the immortal memory, whom we tried so hard to like, and in spite of the great Whig historian, that Titian of English prose, can only frigidly respect. Hard task for us Britons to like a Dutchman who dethrones his father-in-law, and drinks schnaps! Prejudice certainly; but so it is. Harder still to like Dutch William's unfilial Fran! Like Queen Mary! I could as soon like Queen Goneril! Romance flies

from the prosperous phlegmatic AEneas; flies from his plump Lavinia, his "fidus Achates," Bentinck; flies to follow the poor deserted fugitive Stuart, with all his sins upon his head. Kings have no rights divine, except when deposed and fallen; they are then invested with the awe that belongs to each solemn image of mortal vicissitude,—vicissitude that startles the Epicurean, "insanientis sapientiae consultus," and strikes from his careless lyre the notes that attest a god! Some proud shadow chases another from the throne of Cyrus, and Horace hears in the thunder the rush of Diespiter, and identifies Providence with the Fortune that snatches off the diadem in her whirring swoop. But fronts discrowned take a new majesty to generous natures: in all sleek prosperity there is something commonplace; in all grand adversity, something royal.

The boat shot to the shore; the young people landed, and entered the arch of the desolate palace. They gazed on the great hall and the presence- chamber, and the long suite of rooms with faded portraits; Vance as an artist, Lionel as an enthusiastic, well-read boy, Sophy as a wondering, bewildered, ignorant child. And then they emerged into the noble garden, with its regal trees. Groups were there of well dressed persons. Vance heard himself called by name. He had forgotten the London world, — forgotten, amidst his midsummer ramblings, that the London season was still ablaze; and there, stragglers from the great focus, fine people, with languid tones and artificial jaded smiles, caught him in his wanderer's dress, and walking side by side with the

infant wonder of Mr. Rugge's show, exquisitely neat indeed, but still in a coloured print, of a pattern familiar to his observant eye in the windows of many a shop lavish of tickets, and inviting you to come in by the assurance that it is "selling off." The artist stopped, coloured, bowed, answered the listless questions put to him with shy haste: he then attempted to escape; they would not let him.

"You MUST come back and dine with us at the Star and Garter," said Lady Selina Vipont. "A pleasant party,—you know most of them,—the Dudley Slowes, dear old Lady Frost, those pretty Ladies Prymme, Janet and Wilhelmina."

"We can't let you off," said, sleepily, Mr. Crampe, a fashionable wit, who rarely made more than one bon mot in the twenty-four hours, and spent the rest of his time in a torpid state.

VANCE.—"Really you are too kind, but I am not even dressed for—"

LADY SELINA.—"So charmingly dressed-so picturesque! Besides, what matters? Every one knows who you are. Where on earth have you been?"

VANCE.—"Rambling about, taking sketches."

LADY SELINA (directing her eyeglass towards Lionel and Sophy, who stood aloof).—"But your companions, your brother? and that pretty little girl,—your sister, I suppose?"

VANCE (shuddering).—"No, not relations. I took charge of the boy,— clever young fellow; and the little girl is—"

LADY SELINA.—"Yes. The little girl is—"

VANCE.—"A little girl, as you see: and very pretty, as you say,—subject for a picture."

LADY SELINA (indifferently).—"Oh, let the children go and amuse themselves somewhere. Now we have found you; positively you are our prisoner."

Lady Selina Vipont was one of the queens of London; she had with her that habit of command natural to such royalties. Frank Vance was no tuft- hunter, but once under social influences, they had their effect on him, as on most men who are blest with noses in the air. Those great ladies, it is true, never bought his pictures; but they gave him the position which induced others to buy them. Vance loved his art; his art needed its career. Its career was certainly brightened and quickened by the help of rank and fashion.

In short, Lady Selina triumphed, and the painter stepped back to Lionel. "I must go to Richmond with these people. I know you'll excuse me. I shall be back to-night somehow. By the by, as you are going to the post-office here for the letter you expect from your mother, ask for my letters too. You will take care of little Sophy, and [in a whisper] hurry her out of the garden, or that Grand Mogul feminine, Lady Selina, whose condescension would crush the Andes, will be stopping her as my /protege/, falling in raptures with that horrid coloured print, saying, 'Dear, what pretty sprigs! where can such things be got?' and learning perhaps how Frank Vance saved the Bandit's Child from the Remorseless Baron. 'T is your turn now. Save your friend. The

Baron was a lamb compared to a fine lady." He pressed Lionel's unresponding hand, and was off to join the polite merrymaking of the Frosts, Slowes, and Prymmes.

Lionel's pride ran up to the fever-heat of its thermometer; more roused, though, on behalf of the unconscious Sophy than himself.

"Let us come into the town, lady-bird, and choose a doll. You may have one now, without fear of distracting you from what I hate to think you ever stooped to perform."

As Lionel, his crest erect and nostril dilated, and holding Sophy firmly by the hand, took his way out from the gardens, he was obliged to pass the patrician party, of whom Vance now made one.

His countenance and air, as he swept by, struck them all, especially Lady Selina. "A very distinguished-looking boy," said she. "What a fine face! Who did you say he was, Mr. Vance?"

VANCE.—"His name is Haughton,—Lionel Haughton."

LADY SELINA.—"Haughton! Haughton! Any relation to poor dear Captain Haughton,—Charlie Haughton, as he was generally called?"

Vance, knowing little more of his young friend's parentage than that his mother let lodgings, at which, once domiciliated himself, he had made the boy's acquaintance, and that she enjoyed the pension of a captain's widow, replied carelessly,—

"His father was a captain, but I don't know whether he was a Charlie."

MR. CRAMPE (the wit).—"Charlies are extinct! I have the last in a fossil,—box and all."

General laugh. Wit shut up again.

LADY SELINA.—"He has a great look of Charlie Haughton. Do you know if he is connected with that extraordinary man, Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE.—"Upon my word, I do not. What Mr. Darrell do you mean?"

Lady Selina, with one of those sublime looks of celestial pity with which personages in the great world forgive ignorance of names and genealogies in those not born within its orbit, replied, "Oh, to be sure. It is not exactly in the way of your delightful art to know Mr. Darrell, one of the first men in Parliament, a connection of mine."

LADY FROST (nippingly).—"You mean Guy Darrell, the lawyer."

LADY SELINA.—"Lawyer—true; now I think of it, he was a lawyer. But his chief fame was in the House of Commons. All parties agreed that he might have commanded any station; but he was too rich perhaps to care sufficiently about office. At all events, Parliament was dissolved when he was at the height of his reputation, and he refused to be re-elected."

One SIR GREGORY STOLLHEAD (a member of the House of Commons, young, wealthy, a constant attendant, of great promise, with speeches that were filled with facts, and emptied the benches).—"I have heard of him. Before my time; lawyers

not much weight in the House now."

LADY SELINA.—"I am told that Mr. Darrell did not speak like a lawyer. But his career is over; lives in the country, and sees nobody; a thousand pities; a connection of mine, too; great loss to the country. Ask your young friend, Mr. Vance, if Mr. Darrell is not his relation. I hope so, for his sake. Now that our party is in power, Mr. Darrell could command anything for others, though he has ceased to act with us. Our party is not forgetful of talent."

LADY FROST (with icy crispness).—"I should think not: it has so little of that kind to remember."

SIR GREGORY.—"Talent is not wanted in the House of Commons now; don't go down, in fact. Business assembly."

LADY SELINA (suppressing a yawn).—"Beautiful day! We had better think of going back to Richmond."

General assent, and slow retreat.

CHAPTER XV

The historian records the attachment to public business which distinguishes the British legislator.—Touching instance of the regret which ever in patriotic bosoms attends the neglect of a public duty.

From the dusty height of a rumble-tumble affixed to Lady Selina Vipont's barouche, and by the animated side of Sir Gregory Stollhead, Vance caught sight of Lionel and Sophy at a corner of the spacious green near the Palace. He sighed; he envied them. He thought of the boat, the water, the honeysuckle arbour at the little inn,—pleasures he had denied himself,—pleasures all in his own way. They seemed still more alluring by contrast with the prospect before him; formal dinner at the Star and Garter, with titled Prymmes, Slowes, and Frosts, a couple of guineas a head, including light wines, which he did not drink, and the expense of a chaise back by himself. But such are life and its social duties,—such, above all, ambition and a career. Who that would leave a name on his tombstone can say to his own heart, "Perish Stars and Garters: my existence shall pass from day to day in honeysuckle arbours!"

Sir Gregory Stollhead interrupted Vance's revery by an impassioned sneeze. "Dreadful smell of hay!" said the legislator, with watery eyes. "Are you subject to the hay fever? I am! A-tisha-tisha-tisha [sneezing] —country frightfully unwholesome

at this time of year. And to think that I ought now to be in the House,—in my committee-room; no smell of hay there; most important committee."

VANCE (rousing himself).—"Ah—on what?"

SIR GREGORY (regretfully).—"Sewers."

CHAPTER XVI

> Signs of an impending revolution, which, like all revolutions, seems to come of a sudden, though its causes have long been at work; and to go off in a tantrum, though its effects must run on to the end of a history.

Lionel could not find in the toy-shops of the village a doll good enough to satisfy his liberal inclinations, but he bought one which amply contented the humbler aspirations of Sophy. He then strolled to the post-office. There were several letters for Vance; one for himself in his mother's handwriting. He delayed opening it for the moment. The day was far advanced Sophy must be hungry. In vain she declared she was not. They passed by a fruiterer's stall. The strawberries and cherries were temptingly fresh; the sun still very powerful. At the back of the fruiterer's was a small garden, or rather orchard, smiling cool through the open door; little tables laid out there. The good woman who kept the shop was accustomed to the wants and tastes of humble metropolitan visitors. But the garden was luckily now empty: it was before the usual hour for tea-parties; so the young folks had the pleasantest table under an apple-tree, and the choice of the freshest fruit. Milk and cakes were added to the fare. It was a banquet, in Sophy's eyes, worthy that happy day. And when Lionel had finished his share of the feast, eating fast, as spirited, impatient boys formed to push on in life and spoil

their digestion are apt to do; and while Sophy was still lingering over the last of the strawberries, he threw himself back on his chair and drew forth his letter. Lionel was extremely fond of his mother, but her letters were not often those which a boy is over-eager to read. It is not all mothers who understand what boys are,—their quick susceptibilities, their precocious manliness, all their mystical ways and oddities. A letter from Mrs. Haughton generally somewhat fretted and irritated Lionel's high-strung nerves, and he had instinctively put off the task of reading the one he held, till satisfied hunger and cool- breathing shadows, and rest from the dusty road, had lent their soothing aid to his undeveloped philosophy.

He broke the seal slowly; another letter was enclosed within. At the first few words his countenance changed; he uttered a slight exclamation, read on eagerly; then, before concluding his mother's epistle, hastily tore open that which it had contained, ran his eye over its contents, and, dropping both letters on the turf below, rested his face on his hand in agitated thought. Thus ran his mother's letter:

MY DEAR BOY,—How could you! Do it slyly!! Unknown to your own mother!! I could not believe it of you!!!! Take advantage of my confidence in showing you the letters of your father's cousin, to write to himself— clandestinely!—you, who I thought had such an open character, and who ought to appreciate mine. Every one who knows me says I am a woman in ten thousand,—not for beauty and talent (though I have had my

admirers for them too), but for GOODNESS I As a wife and mother, I may say I have been exemplary. I had sore trials with the dear captain—and IMMENSE temptations. But he said on his death-bed, "Jessica, you are an angel." And I have had offers since,—IMMENSE offers,—but I devoted myself to my child, as you know. And what I have put up with, letting the first floor, nobody can tell; and only a widow's pension,—going before a magistrate to get it paid! And to think my own child, for whom I have borne so much, should behave so cruelly to me! Clandestine! that is that which stabs me. Mrs. Inman found me crying, and said, "What is the matter?—you who are such an angel, crying like a baby!" And I could not help saying, "'T is the serpent's tooth, Mrs. L" What you wrote to your benefactor (and I had hoped patron) I don't care to guess; something very rude and imprudent it must be, judging by the few lines he addressed to me. I don't mind copying them for you to read. All my acts are aboveboard, as often and often Captain H. used to say, "Your heart is in a glass case, Jessica;" and so it is! but my son keeps his under lock and key.

"Madam [this is what he writes to me], your son has thought fit to infringe the condition upon which I agreed to assist you on his behalf. I enclose a reply to himself, which I beg you will give to his own hands without breaking the seal. Since it did not seem to you indiscreet to communicate to a boy of his years letters written solely to yourself, you cannot blame me if I take your implied estimate of his capacity to judge for himself of the nature

of a correspondence, and of the views and temper of, madam, your very obedient servant." And that's all to me.

I send his letter to you,—seal unbroken. I conclude he has done with you forever, and your CAREER is lost! But if it be so, oh, my poor, poor child I at that thought I have not the heart to scold you further. If it be so, come home to me, and I 'll work and slave for you, and you shall keep up your head and be a gentleman still, as you are, every inch of you. Don't mind what I've said at the beginning, dear: don't you know I'm hasty; and I was hurt. But you could not mean to be sly and underhand: 'twas only your high spirit, and it was my fault; I should not have shown you the letters. I hope you are well, and have quite lost that nasty cough, and that Mr. Vance treats you with proper respect. I think him rather too pushing and familiar, though a pleasant young man on the whole. But, after all, he is only a painter Bless you, my child, and don't have secrets again from your poor mother. JESSICA HAUGHTON.

The enclosed letter was as follows:—

> LIONEL HAUGHTON,—Some men might be displeased at receiving such a letter as you have addressed to me; I am not. At your years, and under the same circumstances, I might have written a letter much in the same spirit. Relieve your mind: as yet you owe me no obligations; you have only received back a debt due to you. My father was poor; your grandfather, Robert Haughton, assisted him in the cost of my education. I have assisted your father's son; we are quits. Before, however, we decide

on having done with each other for the future, I suggest to you to pay me a short visit. Probably I shall not like you, nor you me. But we are both gentlemen, and need not show dislike too coarsely. If you decide on coming, come at once, or possibly you may not find me here. If you refuse, I shall have a poor opinion of your sense and temper, and in a week I shall have forgotten your existence. I ought to add that your father and I were once warm friends, and that by descent I am the head not only of my own race, which ends with me, but of the Haughton family, of which, though your line assumed the name, it was but a younger branch. Nowadays young men are probably not brought up to care for these things: I was. Yours,

GUY HAUGHTON DARRELL.

MANOR HOUSE, FAWLEY.

Sophy picked up the fallen letters, placed them on Lionel's lap, and looked into his face wistfully. He smiled, resumed his mother's epistle, and read the concluding passages, which he had before omitted. Their sudden turn from reproof to tenderness melted him. He began to feel that his mother had a right to blame him for an act of concealment. Still she never would have consented to his writing such a letter; and had that letter been attended with so ill a result? Again he read Mr. Darrell's blunt but not offensive lines. His pride was soothed: why should he not now love his father's friend? He rose briskly, paid for the fruit, and went his way back to the boat with Sophy. As his oars cut the wave he talked gayly, but he ceased to interrogate Sophy on

her past. Energetic, sanguine, ambitious, his own future entered now into his thoughts. Still, when the sun sank as the inn came partially into view from the winding of the banks and the fringe of the willows, his mind again settled on the patient, quiet little girl, who had not ventured to ask him one question in return for all he had put so unceremoniously to her. Indeed, she was silently musing over words he had inconsiderately let fall,—"What I hate to think you had ever stooped to perform." Little could Lionel guess the unquiet thoughts which those words might hereafter call forth from the brooding deepening meditations of lonely childhood! At length said the boy abruptly, as he had said once before,

"I wish, Sophy, you were my sister." He added in a saddened tone, "I never had a sister: I have so longed for one! However, surely we shall meet again. You go to-morrow so must I."

Sophy's tears flowed softly, noiselessly.

"Cheer up, lady-bird, I wish you liked me half as much as I like you!"

"I do like you: oh, so much!" cried Soppy, passionately. "Well, then, you can write, you say?"

"A little."

"You shall write to me now and then, and I to you. I'll talk to your grandfather about it. Ah, there he is, surely!" The boat now ran into the shelving creek, and by the honeysuckle arbour stood Gentleman Waife, leaning on his stick.

"You are late," said the actor, as they landed, and Sophy

sprang into his arms. "I began to be uneasy, and came here to inquire after you. You have not caught cold, child?"

SOPHY.—"Oh, no."

LIONEL.—"She is the best of children. Pray, come into the inn, Mr.

Waife; no toddy, but some refreshment."

WAIFE.—"I thank you,—no, sir; I wish to get home at once. I walk slowly; it will be dark soon."

Lionel tried in vain to detain him. There was a certain change in Mr. Waife's manner to him: it was much more distant; it was even pettish, if not surly. Lionel could not account for it; thought it mere whim at first: but as be walked part of the way back with them towards the village, this asperity continued, nay increased. Lionel was hurt; he arrested his steps.

"I see you wish to have your grandchild to yourself now. May I call early to-morrow? Sophy will tell you that I hope we may not altogether lose sight of each other. I will give you my address when I call."

"What time to-morrow, sir?"

"About nine."

Waife bowed his head and walked on, but Sophy looked back towards her boy friend, sorrowfully, gratefully; twilight in the skies that had been so sunny,—twilight in her face that had been so glad! She looked back once, twice, thrice, as Lionel halted on the road and kissed his hand. The third time Waife said with unwonted crossness,—

"Enough of that, Sophy; looking after young men is not proper! What does he mean about 'seeing each other, and giving me his address'?"

"He wished me to write to him sometimes and he would write to me."

Waife's brow contracted; but if, in the excess of grandfatherly caution, he could have supposed that the bright-hearted boy of seventeen meditated ulterior ill to that fairy child in such a scheme for correspondence, he must have been in his dotage, and he had not hitherto evinced any signs of that.

Farewell, pretty Sophy! the evening star shines upon yon elm-tree that hides thee from view. Fading-fading grows the summer landscape; faded already from the landscape thy gentle image! So ends a holiday in life. Hallow it, Sophy; hallow it, Lionel! Life's holidays are not too many!

CHAPTER XVII

By this chapter it appeareth that he who sets out on a career can scarcely expect to walk in perfect comfort, if he exchanges his own thick-soled shoes for dress-boots which were made for another man's measure, and that the said boots may not the less pinch for being brilliantly varnished. —It also showeth, for the instruction of Men and States, the connection between democratic opinion and wounded self-love; so that, if some Liberal statesman desire to rouse against an aristocracy the class just below it, he has only to persuade a fine lady to be exceedingly civil "to that sort of people."

Vance, returning late at night, found his friend still up in the little parlour, the windows open, pacing the floor with restless strides, stopping now and then to look at the moon upon the river.

"Such a day as I have had! and twelve shillings for the fly, 'pikes not included," said Vance, much out of humour—

"'I fly from plate, I fly from pomp, I fly from falsehood's specious grin;' I forget the third line. I know the last is—"

'To find my welcome at an inn.'

You are silent: I annoyed you by going—could not help it—pity me, and lock up your pride."

"No, my dear Vance, I was hurt for a moment, but that's long since over!"

"Still you seem to have something on your mind," said Vance, who had now finished reading his letters, lighted his cigar, and was leaning against the window as the boy continued to walk to and fro.

"That is true: I have. I should like your advice. Read that letter. Ought I to go? Would it look mercenary, grasping? You know what I mean."

Vance approached the candles and took the letter. He glanced first at the signature. "Darrell," he exclaimed. "Oh, it is so, then!" He read with great attention, put down the letter, and shook Lionel by the hand. "I congratulate you: all is settled as it should be. Go? of course: you would be an ill-mannered lout if you did not. Is it far from hence must you return to town first?"

LIONEL.—"No, I find I can get across the country,—two hours by the railway. There is a station at the town which bears the post-mark of the letter. I shall make for that, if you advise it."

"You knew I should advise it, or you would not have tortured your intellect by those researches into Bradshaw."

"Shrewdly said," answered Lionel, laughing; "but I wished for your sanction of my crude impressions."

"You never told me your cousin's name was Darrell: not that I should have been much wiser if you had; but, thunder and lightning, Lionel! do you know that your cousin Darrell is a famous man?"

LIONEL.—"Famous!—Nonsense. I suppose he was a good lawyer, for I have heard my mother say, with a sort of contempt,

that he had made a great fortune at the bar."

VANCE.—"But he was in Parliament."

LIONEL.—"Was he? I did not know."

VANCE.—"And this is senatorial fame! You never heard your schoolfellows talk of Mr. Darrell?—they would not have known his name if you had boasted of it?"

LIONEL.—"Certainly not."

VANCE.—"Would your schoolfellows have known the names of Wilkie, of Landseer, of Turner, Maclise? I speak of painters."

LIONEL.—"I should think so, indeed."

VANCE (soliloquizing).—"And yet Her Serene Sublimity-ship, Lady Selina Vipont, says to me with divine compassion, 'Not in the way of your delightful art to know such men as Mr. Darrell!' Oh, as if I did not see through it, too, when she said, /a propos/ of my jean cap and velveteen jacket, 'What matters how you dress? Every one knows who you are!' Would she have said that to the earl of Dunder, or even to Sir Gregory Stollhead? No. I am the painter Frank Vance,—nothing more nor less; and if I stood on my head in a check shirt and a sky-coloured apron, Lady Selina Vipont would kindly murmur, 'Only Frank Vance the painter: what does it signify?' Aha!—and they think to put me to use, puppets and lay figures! it is I who put them to use! Hark ye, Lionel, you are nearer akin to these fine folks than I knew of. Promise me one thing: you may become of their set, by right of your famous Mr. Darrell; if ever you hear an artist, musician, scribbler, no matter what, ridiculed as a tuft- hunter,—seeking

the great, and so forth,—before you join in the laugh, ask some great man's son, with a pedigree that dates from the Ark, 'Are you not a toad-eater too? Do you want political influence; do you stand contested elections; do you curry and fawn upon greasy Sam the butcher and grimy Tom the blacksmith for a vote? Why? useful to your career, necessary to your ambition? Aha! is it meaner to curry and fawn upon white-handed women and elegant coxcombs? Tut, tut! useful to a career, necessary to ambition!'" Vance paused, out of breath. The spoiled darling of the circles,—he, to talk such republican rubbish! Certainly he must have taken his two guineas' worth out of those light wines. Nothing so treacherous! they inflame the brain like fire, while melting on the palate like ice. All inhabitants of lightwine countries are quarrelsome and democratic.

LIONEL (astounded).—"No one, I am sure, could have meant to call you a tuft-hunter; of course, every one knows that a great painter—"

VANCE.—"Dates from Michael Angelo, if not from Zeuxis! Common individuals trace their pedigree from their own fathers! the children of Art from Art's founders!"

Oh, Vance, Vance, you are certainly drunk! If that comes from dining with fine people at the Star and Garter, you would be a happier man and as good a painter if your toddy were never sipped save in honeysuckle arbours.

"But," said Lionel, bewildered, and striving to turn his friend's thoughts, "what has all this to do with Mr. Darrell?"

VANCE.—"Mr. Darrell might have been one of the first men in the kingdom. Lady Selina Vipout says so, and she is related, I believe, to every member in the Cabinet. Mr. Darrell can push you in life, and make your fortune, without any great trouble on your own part. Bless your stars, and rejoice that you are not a painter!"

Lionel flung his arm round the artist's broad breast. "Vance, you are cruel!" It was his turn to console the painter, as the painter had three nights before /a propos/ of the same Mr. Darrell consoled him. Vance gradually sobered down, and the young men walked forth in the moonlight. And the eternal stars had the same kind looks for Vance as they had vouchsafed to Lionel.

"When do you start?" asked the painter, as they mounted the stairs to bed.

"To-morrow evening. I miss the early train, for I must call first and take leave of Sophy. I hope I may see her again in after life."

"And I hope, for your sake, that if so, she may not be in the same coloured print, with Lady Selina Vipont's eyeglass upon her!"

"What!" said Lionel, laughing; "is Lady Selina Vipont so formidably rude?"

"Rude! nobody is rude in that delightful set. Lady Selina Vipont is excruciatingly—civil."

CHAPTER XVIII

Being devoted exclusively to a reflection, not inapposite to the events in this history nor to those in any other which chronicles the life of men.

There is one warning lesson in life which few of us have not received, and no book that I can call to memory has noted down with an adequate emphasis. It is this: "Beware of parting!" The true sadness is not in the pain of the parting, it is in the When and the How you are to meet again with the face about to vanish from your view! From the passionate farewell to the woman who has your heart in her keeping, to the cordial good-by exchanged with pleasant companions at a watering-place, a country-house, or the close of a festive day's blithe and careless excursion,—a cord, stronger or weaker, is snapped asunder in every parting, and Time's busy fingers are not practised in re-splicing broken ties. Meet again you may; will it be in the same way?—with the same sympathies?—with the same sentiments? Will the souls, hurrying on in diverse paths, unite once more, as if the interval had been a dream? Rarely, rarely! Have you not, after even a year, even a month's absence, returned to the same place, found the same groups reassembled, and yet sighed to yourself, "But where is the charm that once breathed from the spot, and once smiled from the faces?" A poet has said, "Eternity itself cannot restore the loss struck from the minute." Are you happy in the

spot on which you tarry with the persons whose voices are now melodious to your ear? beware of parting; or, if part you must, say not in insolent defiance to Time and Destiny, "What matters! —we shall soon meet again."

Alas, and alas! when we think of the lips which murmured, "Soon meet again," and remember how in heart, soul, and thought, we stood forever divided the one from the other, when, once more face to face, we each inly exclaimed, "Met again!"

The air that we breathe makes the medium through which sound is conveyed; be the instrument unchanged, be the force which is applied to it the same, still the air that thou seest not, the air to thy ear gives the music.

Ring a bell underneath an exhausted receiver, thou wilt scarce hear the sound; give the bell due vibration by free air in warm daylight, or sink it down to the heart of the ocean, where the air, all compressed, fills the vessel around it,' and the chime, heard afar, starts thy soul, checks thy footstep, unto deep calls the deep, —a voice from the ocean is borne to thy soul.

Where then the change, when thou sayest, "Lo, the same metal,—why so faint-heard the ringing?" Ask the air that thou seest not, or above thee in sky, or below thee in ocean. Art thou sure that the bell, so faint- heard, is not struck underneath an exhausted receiver?

CHAPTER XIX

The wandering inclinations of nomad tribes not to be accounted for on the principles of action peculiar to civilized men, who are accustomed to live in good houses and able to pay the income tax.— When the money that once belonged to a man civilized vanishes into the pockets of a nomad, neither lawful art nor occult science can, with certainty, discover what he will do with it.—Mr. Vance narrowly escapes well-merited punishment from the nails of the British Fair—Lionel Haughton, in the temerity of youth, braves the dangers of a British Railway.

The morning was dull and overcast, rain gathering in the air, when Vance and Lionel walked to Waife's lodging. As Lionel placed his hand on the knocker of the private door, the Cobbler, at his place by the window in the stall beside, glanced towards him, and shook his head.

"No use knocking, gentlemen. Will you kindly step in?—this way."

"Do you mean that your lodgers are out?" asked Vance.

"Gone!" said the Cobbler, thrusting his awl with great vehemence through the leather destined to the repair of a ploughman's boot.

"Gone—for good!" cried Lionel; "you cannot mean it. I call by appointment."

"Sorry, sir, for your trouble. Stop a bit; I have a letter here for you." The Cobbler dived into a drawer, and from a medley of nails and thongs drew forth a letter addressed to L. Haughton, Esq.

"Is this from Waife? How on earth did he know my surname? you never mentioned it, Vance?"

"Not that I remember. But you said you found him at the inn, and they knew it there. It is on the brass-plate of your knapsack. No matter,— what does he say?" and Vance looked over his friend's shoulder and read.

> SIR,—I most respectfully thank you for your condescending kindness to me and my grandchild; and your friend, for his timely and generous aid. You will pardon me that the necessity which knows no law obliges me to leave this place some hours before the time of your proposed visit. My grandchild says you intended to ask her sometimes to write to you. Excuse me, sir—on reflection, you will perceive how different your ways of life are from those which she must tread with me. You see before you a man who—but I forget; you see him no more, and probably never will.
>
> *Your most humble and most obliged, obedient servant,*
> *W. W.*

VANCE.—"Who never more may trouble you—trouble you! Where have they gone?"

COBBLER.—"Don't know; would you like to take a peep in the crystal— perhaps you've the gift, unbeknown?"

VANCE.—"Not I—bah! Come away, Lionel."

"Did not Sophy even leave any message for me?" asked the boy, sorrowfully.

"To be sure she did; I forgot-no, not exactly a message, but this—I was to be sure to give it to you." And out of his miscellaneous receptacle the Cobbler extracted a little book. Vance looked and laughed,—"The Butterflies' Ball and the Grasshoppers' Feast."

Lionel did not share the laugh. He plucked the book to himself, and read on the fly-leaf, in a child's irregular scrawl, blistered, too, with the unmistakable trace of fallen tears, these words:—

> Do not Scorn it. I have nothing else I can think of which is All Mine. Miss Jane Burton gave it me for being Goode. Grandfather says you are too high for us, and that I shall not see you More; but I shall never forget how kind you were, never—never. Sophy.

Said the Cobbler, his awl upright in the hand which rested on his knee, "What a plague did the 'Stronomers discover Herschel for? You see, sir," addressing Vance, "things odd and strange all come along o' Herschel."

"What!—Sir John?"

"No, the star he poked out. He's a awful star for females! hates 'em like poison! I suspect he's been worriting hisself into her nativity, for I got out from her the year, month, and day she was born, hour unbeknown, but, calkeiating by noon, Herschel was dead agin her in the Third and Ninth House,—Voyages,

Travels, Letters, News, Church Matters, and such like. But it will all come right after he's transited. Her Jupiter must be good. But I only hope," added the Cobbler, solemnly, "that they won't go a-discovering any more stars. The world did a deal better without the new one, and they do talk of a Neptune—as bad as Saturn!"

"And this is the last of her!" said Lionel, sadly, putting the book into his breast-pocket. "Heaven shield her wherever she goes!"

VANCE.—"Don't you think Waife and the poor little girl will come back again?"

COBBLER.—"P'raps; I know he was looking hard into the county map at the stationer's over the way; that seems as if he did not mean to go very far. P'raps he may come back."

VANCE.—"Did he take all his goods with him?"

COBBLER.—"Barrin' an old box,—nothing in it, I expect, but theatre rubbish,—play-books, paints, an old wig, and sick like. He has good clothes,—always had; and so has she, but they don't make more than a bundle."

VANCE. "But surely you must know what the old fellow's project is. He has got from me a great sum: what will he do with it?"

COBBLER.—"Just what has been a-bothering me. What will he do with it? I cast a figure to know; could not make it out. Strange signs in Twelfth House. Enemies and Big Animals. Well, well, he's a marbellous man, and if he warn't a misbeliever in the crystal, I should say he was under Herschel; for you see,

sir" (laying hold of Vance's button, as he saw that gentleman turning to escape),—"you see Herschel, though he be a sinister chap eno', specially in affairs connected with t' other sex, disposes the native to dive into the mysteries of natur'. I'm a Herschel man, out and outer; born in March, and—"

"As mad as its hares," muttered Vance, wrenching his button from the Cobbler's grasp, and impatiently striding off. But he did not effect his escape so easily, for, close at hand, just at the corner of the lane, a female group, headed by Merle's gaunt housekeeper, had been silently collecting from the moment the two friends had paused at the Cobbler's door. And this petticoated divan suddenly closing round the painter, one pulled him by the sleeve, another by the jacket, and a third, with a nose upon which somebody had sat in early infancy, whispered, "Please, sir, take my picter fust."

Vance stared aghast,—"Your picture, you drab!" Here another model of rustic charms, who might have furnished an ideal for the fat scullion in "Tristram Shandy," bobbing a courtesy put in her rival claim.

"Sir, if you don't objex to coming into the kitching after the family has gone to bed, I don't care if I lets you make a minnytur of me for two pounds."

"Miniature of you, porpoise!"

"Polly, sir, not Porpus,—ax pardon. I shall clean myself, and I have a butyful new cap,—Honeytun, and—"

"Let the gentleman go, will you?" said a third; "I am surprised

at ye, Polly. The kitching, unbeknown! Sir, I'm in the nussery; yes, sir; and Alissus says you may take me any time, purvided you'll take the babby, in the back parlour; yes, sir, No. 5 in the High Street. Mrs. Spratt,—yes, sir. Babby has had the small-pox; in case you're a married gentleman with a family; quite safe there; yes, sir."

Vance could endure no more, and, forgetful of that gallantry which should never desert the male sex, burst through the phalanx with an anathema, blackening alike the beauty and the virtue of those on whom it fell, that would have justified a cry of shame from every manly bosom, and which at once changed into shrill wrath the supplicatory tones with which he had been hitherto addressed. Down the street he hurried and down the street followed the insulted fair. "Hiss—hiss—no gentleman, no gentleman! Aha-skulk off—do—low blaggurd!" shrieked Polly. From their counters shop-folks rushed to their doors. Stray dogs, excited by the clamour, ran wildly after the fugitive man, yelping "in madding bray"! Vance, fearing to be clawed by the females if he merely walked, sure to be bitten by the dogs if he ran, ambled on, strove to look composed, and carry his nose high in its native air, till, clearing the street, he saw a hedgerow to the right; leaped it with an agility which no stimulus less preternatural than that of self-preservation could have given to his limbs, and then shot off like an arrow, and did not stop, till, out of breath, he dropped upon the bench in the sheltering honeysuckle arbour. Here he was still fanning himself with his cap, and muttering unmentionable

expletives, when he was joined by Lionel, who had tarried behind to talk more about Sophy to the Cobbler, and who, unconscious that the din which smote his ear was caused by his ill-starred friend, had been enticed to go upstairs and look after Sophy in the crystal,—vainly. When Vance had recited his misadventures, and Lionel had sufficiently condoled with him, it became time for the latter to pay his share of the bill, pack up his knapsack, and start for the train. Now, the station could only be reached by penetrating the heart of the village, and Vance swore that he had had enough of that. "Peste!" said he; "I should pass right before No. 5 in the High Street, and the nuss and the babby will be there on the threshold, like Virgil's picture of the infernal regions,

"'Infantumque anima; flentes in limine primo.'

We will take leave of each other here. I shall go by the boat to Chertsey whenever I shall have sufficiently recovered my shaken nerves. There are one or two picturesque spots to be seen in that neighbourhood. In a few days I shall be in town! write to me there, and tell me how you get on. Shake hands, and Heaven speed you. But, ah! now you have paid your moiety of the bill, have you enough left for the train?"

"Oh, yes, the fare is but a few shillings; but, to be sure, a fly to Fawley? I ought not to go on foot" (proudly); "and, too, supposing he affronts me, and I have to leave his house suddenly? May I borrow a sovereign? My mother will call and repay it."

VANCE (magnificently).—"There it is, and not much more left in my purse,—that cursed Star and Garter! and those three

pounds!"

LIONEL (sighing).—"Which were so well spent! Before you sell that picture, do let me make a copy."

VANCE.—"Better take a model of your own. Village full of them; you could bargain with a porpoise for half the money which I was duped into squandering away on a chit! But don't look so grave; you may copy me if you can!"

"Time to start, and must walk brisk, sir," said the jolly landlord, looking in.

"Good-by, good-by."

And so departed Lionel Haughton upon an emprise as momentous to that youth-errant as Perilous Bridge or Dragon's Cave could have been to knight-errant of old.

"Before we decide on having done with each other, a short visit,"—so ran the challenge from him who had everything to give unto him who had everything to gain. And how did Lionel Haughton, the ambitious and aspiring, contemplate the venture in which success would admit him within the gates of the golden Carduel an equal in the lists with the sons of paladins, or throw him back to the arms of the widow who let a first floor in the back streets of Pimlico? Truth to say, as he strode musingly towards the station for starting, where the smoke-cloud now curled from the wheel-track of iron, truth to say, the anxious doubt which disturbed him was not that which his friends might have felt on his behalf. In words, it would have shaped itself thus,—"Where is that poor little Sophy! and what will become of her—what?"

But when, launched on the journey, hurried on to its goal, the thought of the ordeal before him forced itself on his mind, he muttered inly to himself, "Done with each other; let it be as he pleases, so that I do not fawn on his pleasure. Better a million times enter life as a penniless gentleman, who must work his way up like a man, than as one who creeps on his knees into fortune, shaming birthright of gentleman or soiling honour of man." Therefore taking into account the poor cousin's vigilant pride on the /qui vive/ for offence, and the rich cousin's temper (as judged by his letters) rude enough to resent it, we must own that if Lionel Haughton has at this moment what is commonly called "a chance," the question as yet is not, What is that chance? but, What will he do with it? And as the reader advances in this history, he will acknowledge that there are few questions in this world so frequently agitated, to which the solution is more important to each puzzled mortal than that upon which starts every sage's discovery, every novelist's plot,—that which applies to MAN'S LIFE, from its first sleep in the cradle, "WHAT WILL HE DO WITH IT?"