



EDWARD BULWER-LYTTON

NIGHT AND MORNING

VOLUME III

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THE WORKS
OF
EDWARD BULWER LYTTON
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NIGHT AND MORNING

Book III

CHAPTER I.

"The knight of arts and industry,
And his achievements fair."

THOMSON'S *Castle of Indolence*: Explanatory Verse to Canto II.

In a popular and respectable, but not very fashionable quartier in Paris, and in the tolerably broad and effective locale of the Rue ----, there might be seen, at the time I now treat of, a curious-looking building, that jutted out semicircularly from the neighbouring shops, with plaster pilasters and compo ornaments. The *virtuosi* of the *quartier* had discovered that the building was constructed in imitation of an ancient temple in Rome; this erection, then fresh and new, reached only to the *entresol*. The pilasters were painted light green and gilded in the cornices, while, surmounting the architrave, were three little statues--one held a torch, another a bow, and a third a bag; they were therefore rumoured, I know not with what justice, to be the artistical representatives of Hymen, Cupid and Fortune.

On the door was neatly engraved, on a brass plate, the following inscription:

"MONSIEUR LOVE, ANGLAIS,
A L'ENTRESOL."

And if you had crossed the threshold and mounted the stairs, and gained that mysterious story inhabited by Monsieur Love, you would have seen, upon another door to the right, another epigraph, informing those interested in the inquiry that the bureau, of M. Love was open daily from nine in the morning to four in the afternoon.

The office of M. Love--for office it was, and of a nature not unfrequently designated in the "petites affiches" of Paris--had been established about six months; and whether it was the popularity of the profession, or the shape of the shop, or the manners of M. Love himself, I cannot pretend to say, but certain it is that the Temple of Hymen--as M. Love classically termed it--had become exceedingly in vogue in the Faubourg St.--. It was rumoured that no less than nine marriages in the immediate neighbourhood had been manufactured at this fortunate office, and that they had all turned out happily except one, in which the bride being sixty, and the bridegroom twenty-four, there had been rumours of domestic dissension; but as the lady had been delivered,--I mean of her husband, who had drowned himself in the Seine, about a month after the ceremony, things had turned out in the long run better than might have been expected, and the widow was so little discouraged; that she had been seen to enter the office already--a circumstance that was greatly to the credit of Mr. Love.

Perhaps the secret of Mr. Love's success, and of the marked superiority of his establishment in rank and popularity over similar ones, consisted in the spirit and liberality with which the business was conducted. He seemed resolved to destroy all formality between parties who might desire to draw closer to each other, and he hit upon the lucky device of a table d'hote, very well managed, and held twice a-week, and often followed by a soiree dansante; so that, if they pleased, the aspirants to matrimonial happiness might become acquainted without gene. As he himself was a jolly, convivial fellow of much savoir vivre, it is astonishing how well he made these entertainments answer. Persons who had not seemed to take to each other in the first distant interview grew extremely enamoured when the corks of the champagne--an extra of course in the abonnement--bounced against the wall. Added to this, Mr. Love took great pains to know the tradesmen in his neighbourhood; and, what with his jokes, his appearance of easy circumstances, and the fluency with which he spoke the language, he became a universal favourite. Many persons who were uncommonly starched in general, and who professed to ridicule the bureau, saw nothing improper in dining at the table d'hote. To those who wished for secrecy he was said to be wonderfully discreet; but there were others who did not affect to conceal their

discontent at the single state: for the rest, the entertainments were so contrived as never to shock the delicacy, while they always forwarded the suit.

It was about eight o'clock in the evening, and Mr. Love was still seated at dinner, or rather at dessert, with a party of guests. His apartments, though small, were somewhat gaudily painted and furnished, and his dining-room was decorated *à la Turque*. The party consisted--first, of a rich *épicier*, a widower, Monsieur Goupille by name, an eminent man in the Faubourg; he was in his grand climacteric, but still *belhomme*; wore a very well-made *peruque* of light auburn, with tight pantaloons, which contained a pair of very respectable calves; and his white neckcloth and his large gill were washed and got up with especial care. Next to Monsieur Goupille sat a very demure and very spare young lady of about two-and-thirty, who was said to have saved a fortune--Heaven knows how--in the family of a rich English *milord*, where she had officiated as governess; she called herself Mademoiselle Adele de Courval, and was very particular about the *de*, and very melancholy about her ancestors. Monsieur Goupille generally put his finger through his *peruque*, and fell away a little on his left pantaloon when he spoke to Mademoiselle de Courval, and Mademoiselle de Courval generally pecked at her bouquet when she answered Monsieur Goupille. On the other side of this young lady sat a fine-looking fair man--M. Sovolofski, a Pole, buttoned up to the chin, and rather threadbare, though uncommonly neat. He was flanked by a little fat lady, who had been very pretty, and who kept a boarding-house, or *pension*, for the English, she herself being English, though long established in Paris. Rumour said she had been gay in her youth, and dropped in Paris by a Russian nobleman, with a very pretty settlement, she and the settlement having equally expanded by time and season: she was called Madame Beavor. On the other side of the table was a red-headed Englishman, who spoke very little French; who had been told that French ladies were passionately fond of light hair; and who, having L2000. of his own, intended to quadruple that sum by a prudent marriage. Nobody knew what his family was, but his name was Higgins. His neighbour was an exceedingly tall, large-boned Frenchman, with a long nose and a red riband, who was much seen at Frascati's, and had served under Napoleon. Then came another lady, extremely pretty, very *piquante*, and very gay, but past the *premiere jeunesse*, who ogled Mr. Love more than she did any of his guests: she was called Rosalie Caumartin, and was at the head of a large *bon-bon* establishment; married, but her husband had gone four years ago to the Isle of France, and she was a little doubtful whether she might not be justly entitled to the privileges of a widow. Next to Mr. Love, in the place of honour, sat no less a person than the Vicomte de Vaudemont, a French gentleman, really well-born, but whose

various excesses, added to his poverty, had not served to sustain that respect for his birth which he considered due to it. He had already been twice married; once to an Englishwoman, who had been decoyed by the title; by this lady, who died in childbed, he had one son; a fact which he sedulously concealed from the world of Paris by keeping the unhappy boy--who was now some eighteen or nineteen years old--a perpetual exile in England. Monsieur de Vaudemont did not wish to pass for more than thirty, and he considered that to produce a son of eighteen would be to make the lad a monster of ingratitude by giving the lie every hour to his own father! In spite of this precaution the Vicomte found great difficulty in getting a third wife--especially as he had no actual land and visible income; was, not seamed, but ploughed up, with the small-pox; small of stature, and was considered more than *_un peu bete_*. He was, however, a prodigious dandy, and wore a lace frill and embroidered waistcoat. Mr. Love's vis-a-vis was Mr. Birnie, an Englishman, a sort of assistant in the establishment, with a hard, dry, parchment face, and a remarkable talent for silence. The host himself was a splendid animal; his vast chest seemed to occupy more space at the table than any four of his guests, yet he was not corpulent or unwieldy; he was dressed in black, wore a velvet stock very high, and four gold studs glittered in his shirt-front; he was bald to the crown, which made his forehead appear singularly lofty, and what hair he had left was a little greyish and curled; his face was shaved smoothly, except a close-clipped mustache; and his eyes, though small, were bright and piercing. Such was the party.

"These are the best *_bon-bons_* I ever ate," said Mr. Love, glancing at Madame Caumartin. "My fair friends, have compassion on the table of a poor bachelor."

"But you ought not to be a bachelor, Monsieur Lofe," replied the fair Rosalie, with an arch look; "you who make others marry, should set the example."

"All in good time," answered Mr. Love, nodding; "one serves one's customers to so much happiness that one has none left for one's self."

Here a loud explosion was heard. Monsieur Goupille had pulled one of the *_bon-bon_* crackers with Mademoiselle Adele.

"I've got the motto!--no--Monsieur has it: I'm always unlucky," said the gentle Adele.

The epicier solemnly unrolled the little slip of paper; the print was

very small, and he longed to take out his spectacles, but he thought that would make him look old. However, he spelled through the motto with some difficulty:--

"Comme elle fait soumettre un coeur,
En refusant son doux hommage,
On peut traiter la coquette en vainqueur;
De la beauty modeste on cherit l'esclavage."

[The coquette, who subjugates a heart, yet refuses its tender homage, one may treat as a conqueror: of modest beauty we cherish the slavery.]

"I present it to Mademoiselle," said he, laying the motto solemnly in Adele's plate, upon a little mountain of chestnut-husks.

"It is very pretty," said she, looking down.

"It is very *a propos*," whispered the *epicier*, caressing the *peruque* a little too roughly in his emotion. Mr. Love gave him a kick under the table, and put his finger to his own bald head, and then to his nose, significantly. The intelligent *epicier* smoothed back the irritated *peruque*.

"Are you fond of *bon-bons*, Mademoiselle Adele? I have a very fine stock at home," said Monsieur Goupille. Mademoiselle Adele de Courval sighed: "*Helas!* they remind me of happier days, when I was a *petite* and my dear grandmamma took me in her lap and told me how she escaped the guillotine: she was an *emigree*, and you know her father was a marquis."

The *epicier* bowed and looked puzzled. He did not quite see the connection between the *bon-bons* and the guillotine. "You are *triste*, Monsieur," observed Madame Beavor, in rather a piqued tone, to the Pole, who had not said a word since the *roti*.

"Madame, an exile is always *triste*: I think of my *pauvre pays*."

"Bah!" cried Mr. Love. "Think that there is no exile by the side of a *belle dame*."

The Pole smiled mournfully.

"Pull it," said Madame Beavor, holding a cracker to the patriot, and turning away her face.

"Yes, madame; I wish it were a cannon in defence of *_La Pologne_*."

With this magniloquent aspiration, the gallant Sovolofski pulled lustily, and then rubbed his fingers, with a little grimace, observing that crackers were sometimes dangerous, and that the present combustible was *_d'une force immense_*.

"Helas! J'ai cru jusqu'a ce jour
Pouvoir triompher de l'amour,"

[Alas! I believed until to-day that I could triumph over love.]

said Madame Beavor, reading the motto. "What do you say to that?"

"Madame, there is no triumph for *_La Pologne_*!" Madame Beavor uttered a little peevish exclamation, and glanced in despair at her red-headed countryman. "Are you, too, a great politician, sir?" said she in English.

"No, mem!--I'm all for the ladies."

"What does he say?" asked Madame Caumartin.

"*_Monsieur Higgins est tout pour les dames_*."

"To be sure he is," cried Mr. Love; "all the English are, especially with that coloured hair; a lady who likes a passionate adorer should always marry a man with gold-coloured hair--always. What do *_you_* say, Mademoiselle Adele?"

"Oh, I like fair hair," said Mademoiselle, looking bashfully askew at Monsieur Goupille's peruque. "Grandmamma said her papa--the marquis--used yellow powder: it must have been very pretty."

"Rather *_a la sucre d'orge_*," remarked the *_epicier_*, smiling on the right side of his mouth, where his best teeth were. Mademoiselle de Courval looked displeased. "I fear you are a republican, Monsieur Goupille."

"I, Mademoiselle. No; I'm for the Restoration;" and again the *_epicier_* perplexed himself to discover the association of idea between republicanism and *_sucre d'orge_*.

"Another glass of wine. Come, another," said Mr. Love, stretching across the Vicomte to help Madame Canmartin.

"Sir," said the tall Frenchman with the riband, eying the *_epicier_* with great disdain, "you say you are for the Restoration--I am for the Empire --_Moi_!"

"No politics!" cried Mr. Love. "Let us adjourn to the salon."

The Vicomte, who had seemed supremely *_ennuye_* during this dialogue, plucked Mr. Love by the sleeve as he rose, and whispered petulantly, "I do not see any one here to suit me, Monsieur Love--none of my rank."

"_Mon Dieu!_" answered Mr. Love: "_point d' argent point de Suisse_". I could introduce you to a duchess, but then the fee is high. There's Mademoiselle de Courval--she dates from the Carolingians."

"She is very like a boiled sole," answered the Vicomte, with a wry face. "Still--what dower *_has_* she?"

"Forty thousand francs, and sickly," replied Mr. Love; "but she likes a tall man, and Monsieur Goupille is--"

"Tall men are never well made," interrupted the Vicomte, angrily; and he drew himself aside as Mr. Love, gallantly advancing, gave his arm to Madame Beavor, because the Pole had, in rising, folded both his own arms across his breast.

"Excuse me, ma'am," said Mr. Love to Madame Beavor, as they adjourned to the salon, "I don't think you manage that brave man well."

"_Ma foi, comme il est ennuyeux avec sa Pologne_," replied Madame Beavor, shrugging her shoulders.

"True; but he is a very fine-shaped man; and it is a comfort to think that one will have no rival but his country. Trust me, and encourage him a little more; I think he would suit you to a T."

Here the attendant engaged for the evening announced Monsieur and Madame Giraud; whereupon there entered a little--little couple, very fair, very plump, and very like each other. This was Mr. Love's show couple--his decoy ducks--his last best example of match-making; they had been married two months out of the bureau, and were the admiration of the neighbourhood for their conjugal affection. As they were now united,

they had ceased to frequent the table d'hôte; but Mr. Love often invited them after the dessert, *pour encourager les autres*.

"My dear friends," cried Mr. Love, shaking each by the hand, "I am ravished to see you. Ladies and gentlemen, I present to you Monsieur and Madame Giraud. the happiest couple in Christendom;--if I had done nothing else in my life but bring them together I should not have lived in vain!"

The company eyed the objects of this eulogium with great attention.

"Monsieur, my prayer is to deserve my *bonheur*," said Monsieur Giraud.

"*Cher ange!*" murmured Madame: and the happy pair seated themselves next to each other.

Mr. Love, who was all for those innocent pastimes which do away with conventional formality and reserve, now proposed a game at "Hunt the Slipper," which was welcomed by the whole party, except the Pole and the Vicomte; though Mademoiselle Adele looked prudish, and observed to the *epicier*, "that Monsieur Lofe was so droll, but she should not have liked her *pauvre grandmaman* to see her."

The Vicomte had stationed himself opposite to Mademoiselle de Courval, and kept his eyes fixed on her very tenderly.

"Mademoiselle, I see, does not approve of such *bourgeois* diversions," said he.

"No, monsieur," said the gentle Adele. "But I think we must sacrifice our own tastes to those of the company."

"It is a very amiable sentiment," said the *epicier*.

"It is one attributed to grandmamma's papa, the Marquis de Courval. It has become quite a hackneyed remark since," said Adele.

"Come, ladies," said the joyous Rosalie; "I volunteer my slipper."

"*Asseyez-vous donc*," said Madame Beavor to the Pole. "Have you no games of this sort in Poland?"

"Madame, *La Pologne* is no more," said the Pole. "But with the swords of her brave--"

"No swords here, if you please," said Mr. Love, putting his vast hands on the Pole's shoulder, and sinking him forcibly down into the circle now formed.

The game proceeded with great vigour and much laughter from Rosalie, Mr. Love, and Madame Beavor, especially whenever the last thumped the Pole with the heel of the slipper. Monsieur Giraud was always sure that Madame Giraud had the slipper about her, which persuasion on his part gave rise to many little endearments, which are always so innocent among married people. The Vicomte and the *_epicier_* were equally certain the slipper was with Mademoiselle Adele, who defended herself with much more energy than might have been supposed in one so gentle. The *_epicier_*, however, grew jealous of the attentions of his noble rival, and told him that he *_gene'_d_* mademoiselle; whereupon the Vicomte called him an *_impertinent_*; and the tall Frenchman, with the riband, sprang up and said:

"Can I be of any assistance, gentlemen?"

Therewith Mr. Love, the great peacemaker, interposed, and reconciling the rivals, proposed to change the game to *_Colin Maillard-Anglice_*, "Blind Man's Buff." Rosalie clapped her hands, and offered herself to be blindfolded. The tables and chairs were cleared away; and Madame Beaver pushed the Pole into Rosalie's arms, who, having felt him about the face for some moments, guessed him to be the tall Frenchman. During this time Monsieur and Madame Giraud hid themselves behind the window-curtain.

"Amuse yourself, men ami," said Madame Beaver, to the liberated Pole.

"Ah, madame," sighed Monsieur Sovolofski, "how can I be gay! All my property confiscated by the Emperor of Russia! Has *_La Pologne_* no Brutus?"

"I think you are in love," said the host, clapping him on the back.

"Are you quite sure," whispered the Pole to the matchmaker, that Madame Beavor has *_vingt mille livres de rentes_*?"

"Not a *_sous_* less."

The Pole mused, and, glancing at Madame Beavor, said, "And yet, madame, your charming gaiety consoles me amidst all my suffering;" upon which Madame Beavor called him "flatterer," and rapped his knuckles with her

fan; the latter proceeding the brave Pole did not seem to like, for he immediately buried his hands in his trousers' pockets.

The game was now at its meridian. Rosalie was uncommonly active, and flew about here and there, much to the harassment of the Pole, who repeatedly wiped his forehead, and observed that it was warm work, and put him in mind of the last sad battle for *La Pologne*. Monsieur Goupille, who had lately taken lessons in dancing, and was vain of his agility--mounted the chairs and tables, as Rosalie approached--with great grace and gravity. It so happened that, in these saltations, he ascended a stool near the curtain behind which Monsieur and Madame Giraud were ensconced. Somewhat agitated by a slight flutter behind the folds, which made him fancy, on the sudden panic, that Rosalie was creeping that way, the *epicier* made an abrupt pirouette, and the hook on which the curtains were suspended caught his left coat-tail,

"The fatal vesture left the unguarded side;"

just as he turned to extricate the garment from that dilemma, Rosalie sprang upon him, and naturally lifting her hands to that height where she fancied the human face divine, took another extremity of Monsieur Goupille's graceful frame thus exposed, by surprise.

"I don't know who this is. *Quelle drole de visage!*" muttered Rosalie.

"*Mais*, madame," faltered Monsieur Goupille, looking greatly disconcerted.

The gentle Adele, who did not seem to relish this adventure, came to the relief of her wooer, and pinched Rosalie very sharply in the arm.

"That's not fair. But I will know who this is," cried Rosalie, angrily; "you sha'n't escape!"

A sudden and universal burst of laughter roused her suspicions--she drew back--and exclaiming, "*Mais quelle mauvaise plaisanterie; c'est trop fort!*" applied her fair hand to the place in dispute, with so hearty a good-will, that Monsieur Goupille uttered a dolorous cry, and sprang from the chair leaving the coat-tail (the cause of all his woe) suspended upon the hook.

It was just at this moment, and in the midst of the excitement caused by Monsieur Goupille's misfortune, that the door opened, and the attendant reappeared, followed by a young man in a large cloak.

The new-comer paused at the threshold, and gazed around him in evident surprise.

"Diable!" said Mr. Love, approaching, and gazing hard at the stranger.
"Is it possible?--You are come at last? Welcome!"

"But," said the stranger, apparently still bewildered, "there is some mistake; you are not--"

"Yes, I am Mr. Love!--Love all the world over. How is our friend Gregg?
--told you to address yourself to Mr. Love,--eh?--Mum!--Ladies and gentlemen, an acquisition to our party. Fine fellow, eh?--Five feet eleven without his shoes,--and young enough to hope to be thrice married before he dies. When did you arrive?"

"To-day."

And thus, Philip Morton and Mr. William Gawtrety met once more.

CHAPTER II.

"Happy the man who, void of care and strife,
In silken or in leathern purse retains
A splendid shilling!"--The Splendid Shilling.

"And wherefore should they take or care for thought,
The unreasoning vulgar willingly obey,
And leaving toil and poverty behind.
Run forth by different ways, the blissful boon to find."
WEST'S _Education_.

"Poor, boy! your story interests me. The events are romantic, but the moral is practical, old, everlasting--life, boy, life. Poverty by itself is no such great curse; that is, if it stops short of starving. And passion by itself is a noble thing, sir; but poverty and passion together--poverty and feeling--poverty and pride--the poverty one is not born to,--but falls into;--and the man who ousts you out of your easy-chair, kicking you with every turn he takes, as he settles himself more comfortably--why there's no romance in that--hard every-day life, sir! Well, well:--so after your brother's letter you resigned yourself

to that fellow Smith."

"No; I gave him my money, not my soul. I turned from his door, with a few shillings that he himself thrust into my hand, and walked on--I cared not whither--out of the town, into the fields--till night came; and then, just as I suddenly entered on the high-road, many miles away, the moon rose; and I saw, by the hedge-side, something that seemed like a corpse; it was an old beggar, in the last state of raggedness, disease, and famine. He had laid himself down to die. I shared with him what I had, and helped him to a little inn. As he crossed the threshold, he turned round and blessed me. Do you know, the moment I heard that blessing a stone seemed rolled away from my heart? I said to myself, 'What then! even I can be of use to some one; and I am better off than that old man, for I have youth and health.' As these thoughts stirred in me, my limbs, before heavy with fatigue, grew light; a strange kind of excitement seized me. I ran on gaily beneath the moonlight that smiled over the crisp, broad road. I felt as if no house, not even a palace, were large enough for me that night. And when, at last, wearied out, I crept into a wood, and laid myself down to sleep, I still murmured to myself, 'I have youth and health.' But, in the morning, when I rose, I stretched out my arms, and missed my brother! . . . In two or three days I found employment with a farmer; but we quarrelled after a few weeks; for once he wished to strike me; and somehow or other I could work, but not serve. Winter had begun when we parted.--Oh, such a winter!--Then--then I knew what it was to be houseless. How I lived for some months--if to live it can be called--it would pain you to hear, and humble me to tell. At last, I found myself again in London; and one evening, not many days since, I resolved at last--for nothing else seemed left, and I had not touched food for two days--to come to you."

"And why did that never occur to you before?"!

"Because," said Philip, with a deep blush,--"because I trembled at the power over my actions and my future life that I was to give to one, whom I was to bless as a benefactor, yet distrust as a guide."

"Well," said Love, or Gawtre, with a singular mixture of irony and compassion in his voice; "and it was hunger, then, that terrified you at last even more than I?"

"Perhaps hunger--or perhaps rather the reasoning that comes from hunger. I had not, I say, touched food for two days; and I was standing on that bridge, from which on one side you see the palace of a head of the Church, on the other the towers of the Abbey, within which the men I have

read of in history lie buried. It was a cold, frosty evening, and the river below looked bright with the lamps and stars. I leaned, weak and sickening, against the wall of the bridge; and in one of the arched recesses beside me a cripple held out his hat for pence. I envied him!-- he had a livelihood; he was inured to it, perhaps bred to it; he had no shame. By a sudden impulse, I, too, turned abruptly round--held out my hand to the first passenger, and started at the shrillness of my own voice, as it cried 'Charity.'"

Gawtrey threw another log on the fire, looked complacently round the comfortable room, and rubbed his hands. The young man continued,--

"'You should be ashamed of yourself--I've a great mind to give you to the police,' was the answer, in a pert and sharp tone. I looked up, and saw the livery my father's menials had worn. I had been begging my bread from Robert Beaufort's lackey! I said nothing; the man went on his business on tiptoe, that the mud might not splash above the soles of his shoes. Then, thoughts so black that they seemed to blot out every star from the sky--thoughts I had often wrestled against, but to which I now gave myself up with a sort of mad joy--seized me: and I remembered you. I had still preserved the address you gave me; I went straight to the house. Your friend, on naming you, received me kindly, and without question placed food before me--pressed on me clothing and money--procured me a passport--gave me your address--and now I am beneath your roof. Gawtrey, I know nothing yet of the world but the dark side of it. I know not what to deem you--but as you alone have been kind to me, so it is to your kindness rather than your aid, that I now cling--your kind words and kind looks--yet--" he stopped short, and breathed hard.

"Yet you would know more of me. Faith, my boy, I cannot tell you more at this moment. I believe, to speak fairly, I don't live exactly within the pale of the law. But I'm not a villain! I never plundered my friend and called it play!--I never murdered my friend and called it honour!--I never seduced my friend's wife and called it gallantry!" As Gawtrey said this, he drew the words out, one by one, through his grinded teeth, paused and resumed more gaily: "I struggle with Fortune; _voila tout_! I am not what you seem to suppose--not exactly a swindler, certainly not a robber! But, as I before told you, I am a charlatan, so is every man who strives to be richer or greater than he is.

"I, too, want kindness as much as you do. My bread and my cup are at your service. I will try and keep you unsullied, even by the clean dirt that now and then sticks to me. On the other hand, youth, my young friend, has no right to play the censor; and you must take me as you take the

world, without being over-scrupulous and dainty. My present vocation pays well; in fact, I am beginning to lay by. My real name and past life are thoroughly unknown, and as yet unsuspected, in this quartier; for though I have seen much of Paris, my career hitherto has passed in other parts of the city;--and for the rest, own that I am well disguised! What a benevolent air this bald forehead gives me--eh? True," added Gawtrety, somewhat more seriously, "if I saw how you could support yourself in a broader path of life than that in which I pick out my own way, I might say to you, as a gay man of fashion might say to some sober stripling--nay, as many a dissolute father says (or ought to say) to his son, 'It is no reason you should be a sinner, because I am not a saint.' In a word, if you were well off in a respectable profession, you might have safer acquaintances than myself. But, as it is, upon my word as a plain man, I don't see what you can do better." Gawtrety made this speech with so much frankness and ease, that it seemed greatly to relieve the listener, and when he wound up with, "What say you? In fine, my life is that of a great schoolboy, getting into scrapes for the fun of it, and fighting his way out as he best can!--Will you see how you like it?" Philip, with a confiding and grateful impulse, put his hand into Gawtrety's. The host shook it cordially, and, without saying another word, showed his guest into a little cabinet where there was a sofa-bed, and they parted for the night. The new life upon which Philip Morton entered was so odd, so grotesque, and so amusing, that at his age it was, perhaps, natural that he should not be clear-sighted as to its danger.

William Gawtrety was one of those men who are born to exert a certain influence and ascendancy wherever they may be thrown; his vast strength, his redundant health, had a power of themselves--a moral as well as physical power. He naturally possessed high animal spirits, beneath the surface of which, however, at times, there was visible a certain undercurrent of malignity and scorn. He had evidently received a superior education, and could command at will the manner of a man not unfamiliar with a politer class of society. From the first hour that Philip had seen him on the top of the coach on the R---- road, this man had attracted his curiosity and interest; the conversation he had heard in the churchyard, the obligations he owed to Gawtrety in his escape from the officers of justice, the time afterwards passed in his society till they separated at the little inn, the rough and hearty kindliness Gawtrety had shown him at that period, and the hospitality extended to him now,--all contributed to excite his fancy, and in much, indeed very much, entitled this singular person to his gratitude. Morton, in a word, was fascinated; this man was the only friend he had made. I have not thought it necessary to detail to the reader the conversations that had taken place between them, during that passage of Morton's life when he was

before for some days Gawtreys companion; yet those conversations had sunk deep in his mind. He was struck, and almost awed, by the profound gloom which lurked under Gawtreys broad humour--a gloom, not of temperament, but of knowledge. His views of life, of human justice and human virtue, were (as, to be sure, is commonly the case with men who have had reason to quarrel with the world) dreary and despairing; and Morton's own experience had been so sad, that these opinions were more influential than they could ever have been with the happy. However in this, their second reunion, there was a greater gaiety than in their first; and under his host's roof Morton insensibly, but rapidly, recovered something of the early and natural tone of his impetuous and ardent spirits. Gawtreys himself was generally a boon companion; their society, if not select, was merry. When their evenings were disengaged, Gawtreys was fond of haunting cafes and theatres, and Morton was his companion; Birnie (Mr. Gawtreys partner) never accompanied them. Refreshed by this change of life, the very person of this young man regained its bloom and vigour, as a plant, removed from some choked atmosphere and unwholesome soil, where it had struggled for light and air, expands on transplanting; the graceful leaves burst from the long-drooping boughs, and the elastic crest springs upward to the sun in the glory of its young prime. If there was still a certain fiery sternness in his aspect, it had ceased, at least, to be haggard and savage, it even suited the character of his dark and expressive features. He might not have lost the something of the tiger in his fierce temper, but in the sleek hues and the sinewy symmetry of the frame he began to put forth also something of the tigers beauty.

Mr. Birnie did not sleep in the house, he went home nightly to a lodging at some little distance. We have said but little about this man, for, to all appearance, there was little enough to say; he rarely opened his own mouth except to Gawtreys, with whom Philip often observed him engaged in whispered conferences, to which he was not admitted. His eye, however, was less idle than his lips; it was not a bright eye: on the contrary, it was dull, and, to the unobservant, lifeless, of a pale blue, with a dim film over it--the eye of a vulture; but it had in it a calm, heavy, stealthy watchfulness, which inspired Morton with great distrust and aversion. Mr. Birnie not only spoke French like a native, but all his habits, his gestures, his tricks of manner, were, French; not the French of good society, but more idiomatic, as it were, and popular. He was not exactly a vulgar person, he was too silent for that, but he was evidently of low extraction and coarse breeding; his accomplishments were of a mechanical nature; he was an extraordinary arithmetician, he was a very skilful chemist, and kept a laboratory at his lodgings--he mended his own clothes and linen with incomparable neatness. Philip suspected him of

blackening his own shoes, but that was prejudice. Once he found Morton sketching horses' heads--_pour se desennuyer_; and he made some short criticisms on the drawings, which showed him well acquainted with the art. Philip, surprised, sought to draw him into conversation; but Birnie eluded the attempt, and observed that he had once been an engraver.

Gawtreys himself did not seem to know much of the early life of this person, or at least he did not seem to like much to talk of him. The footstep of Mr. Birnie was gliding, noiseless, and catlike; he had no sociality in him--enjoyed nothing--drank hard--but was never drunk. Somehow or other, he had evidently over Gawtreys an influence little less than that which Gawtreys had over Morton, but it was of a different nature: Morton had conceived an extraordinary affection for his friend, while Gawtreys seemed secretly to dislike Birnie, and to be glad whenever he quitted his presence. It was, in truth, Gawtreys's custom when Birnie retired for the night, to rub his hands, bring out the punchbowl, squeeze the lemons, and while Philip, stretched on the sofa, listened to him, between sleep and waking, to talk on for the hour together, often till daybreak, with that bizarre mixture of knavery and feeling, drollery and sentiment, which made the dangerous charm of his society.

One evening as they thus sat together, Morton, after listening for some time to his companion's comments on men and things, said abruptly,--

"Gawtreys! there is so much in you that puzzles me, so much which I find it difficult to reconcile with your present pursuits, that, if I ask no indiscreet confidence, I should like greatly to hear some account of your early life. It would please me to compare it with my own; when I am your age, I will then look back and see what I owed to your example."

"My early life! well--you shall hear it. It will put you on your guard, I hope, betimes against the two rocks of youth--love and friendship." Then, while squeezing the lemon into his favourite beverage, which Morton observed he made stronger than usual, Gawtreys thus commenced:

THE HISTORY OF A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING.

CHAPTER III.

"All his success must on himself depend,

He had no money, counsel, guide, or friend;
With spirit high John learned the world to brave,
And in both senses was a ready knave."--CRABBE.

"My grandfather sold walking-sticks and umbrellas in the little passage by Exeter 'Change; he was a man of genius and speculation. As soon as he had scraped together a little money, he lent it to some poor devil with a hard landlord, at twenty per cent., and made him take half the loan in umbrellas or bamboos. By these means he got his foot into the ladder, and climbed upward and upward, till, at the age of forty, he had amassed L5,000. He then looked about for a wife. An honest trader in the Strand, who dealt largely in cotton prints, possessed an only daughter; this young lady had a legacy, from a great-aunt, of L3,220., with a small street in St. Giles's, where the tenants paid weekly (all thieves or rogues--all, so their rents were sure). Now my grandfather conceived a great friendship for the father of this young lady; gave him a hint as to a new pattern in spotted cottons; enticed him to take out a patent, and lent him L700. for the speculation; applied for the money at the very moment cottons were at their worst, and got the daughter instead of the money,--by which exchange, you see, he won L2,520., to say nothing of the young lady. My grandfather then entered into partnership with the worthy trader, carried on the patent with spirit, and begat two sons. As he grew older, ambition seized him; his sons should be gentlemen--one was sent to College, the other put into a marching regiment. My grandfather meant to die worth a plum; but a fever he caught in visiting his tenants in St. Giles's prevented him, and he only left L20,000. equally divided between the sons. My father, the College man" (here Gawtrety paused a moment, took a large draught of the punch, and resumed with a visible effort)--"my father, the College man, was a person of rigid principles--bore an excellent character--had a great regard for the world. He married early and respectably. I am the sole fruit of that union; he lived soberly, his temper was harsh and morose, his home gloomy; he was a very severe father, and my mother died before I was ten years old. When I was fourteen, a little old Frenchman came to lodge with us; he had been persecuted under the old _regime_ for being a philosopher; he filled my head with odd crotchets which, more or less, have stuck there ever since. At eighteen I was sent to St. John's College, Cambridge. My father was rich enough to have let me go up in the higher rank of a pensioner, but he had lately grown avaricious; he thought that I was extravagant; he made me a sizar, perhaps to spite me. Then, for the first time, those inequalities in life which the Frenchman had dinned into my ears met me practically. A sizar! another name for a dog! I had such strength, health, and spirits, that I had more life in my little finger than half the fellow-commoners--genteel, spindle-shanked striplings, who might have

passed for a collection of my grandfather's walking-canes--bad in their whole bodies. And I often think," continued Gawtreys, "that health and spirits have a great deal to answer for! When we are young we so far resemble savages who are Nature's young people--that we attach prodigious value to physical advantages. My feats of strength and activity--the clods I thrashed--and the railings I leaped--and the boat-races I won--are they not written in the chronicle of St. Johns? These achievements inspired me with an extravagant sense of my own superiority; I could not but despise the rich fellows whom I could have blown down with a sneeze. Nevertheless, there was an impassable barrier between me and them--a sizar was not a proper associate for the favourites of fortune! But there was one young man, a year younger myself, of high birth, and the heir to considerable wealth, who did not regard me with the same supercilious insolence as the rest; his very rank, perhaps, made him indifferent to the little conventional formalities which influence persons who cannot play at football with this round world; he was the wildest youngster in the university--lamp-breaker--tandem-driver--mob-fighter--a very devil in short--clever, but not in the reading line--small and slight, but brave as a lion. Congenial habits made us intimate, and I loved him like a brother--better than a brother--as a dog loves his master. In all our rows I covered him with my body. He had but to say to me, 'Leap into the water,' and I would not have stopped to pull off my coat. In short, I loved him as a proud man loves one who stands betwixt him and contempt,--as an affectionate man loves one who stands between him and solitude. To cut short a long story: my friend, one dark night, committed an outrage against discipline, of the most unpardonable character. There was a sanctimonious, grave old fellow of the College, crawling home from a tea-party; my friend and another of his set seized, blindfolded, and handcuffed this poor wretch, carried him, *vi et armis*, back to the house of an old maid whom he had been courting for the last ten years, fastened his pigtail (he wore a long one) to the knocker, and so left him. You may imagine the infernal hubbub which his attempts to extricate himself caused in the whole street; the old maid's old maidservant, after emptying on his head all the vessels of wrath she could lay her hand to, screamed, 'Rape and murder!' The proctor and his bull-dogs came up, released the prisoner, and gave chase to the delinquents, who had incautiously remained near to enjoy the sport. The night was dark and they reached the College in safety, but they had been tracked to the gates. For this offence I was expelled."

"Why, you were not concerned in it?" said Philip.

"No; but I was suspected and accused. I could have got off by betraying the true culprits, but my friend's father was in public life--a stern,

haughty old statesman; my friend was mortally afraid of him--the only person he was afraid of. If I had too much insisted on my innocence, I might have set inquiry on the right track. In fine, I was happy to prove my friendship for him. He shook me most tenderly by the hand on parting, and promised never to forget my generous devotion. I went home in disgrace: I need not tell you what my father said to me: I do not think he ever loved me from that hour. Shortly after this my uncle, George Gawtre, the captain, returned from abroad; he took a great fancy to me, and I left my father's house (which had grown insufferable) to live with him. He had been a very handsome man--a gay spendthrift; he had got through his fortune, and now lived on his wits--he was a professed gambler. His easy temper, his lively humour, fascinated me; he knew the world well; and, like all gamblers, was generous when the dice were lucky,--which, to tell you the truth, they generally were, with a man who had no scruples. Though his practices were a little suspected, they had never been discovered. We lived in an elegant apartment, mixed familiarly with men of various ranks, and enjoyed life extremely. I brushed off my college rust, and conceived a taste for expense: I knew not why it was, but in my new existence every one was kind to me; and I had spirits that made me welcome everywhere. I was a scamp--but a frolicsome scamp--and that is always a popular character. As yet I was not dishonest, but saw dishonesty round me, and it seemed a very pleasant, jolly mode of making money; and now I again fell into contact with the young heir. My college friend was as wild in London as he had been at Cambridge; but the boy-ruffian, though not then twenty years of age, had grown into the man-villain."

Here Gawtre paused, and frowned darkly.

"He had great natural parts, this young man--much wit, readiness, and cunning, and he became very intimate with my uncle. He learned of him how to play the dice, and a pack the cards--he paid him L1,000. for the knowledge!"

"How! a cheat? You said he was rich."

"His father was very rich, and he had a liberal allowance, but he was very extravagant; and rich men love gain as well as poor men do! He had no excuse but the grand excuse of all vice--SELFISHNESS. Young as he was he became the fashion, and he fattened upon the plunder of his equals, who desired the honour of his acquaintance. Now, I had seen my uncle cheat, but I had never imitated his example; when the man of fashion cheated, and made a jest of his earnings and my scruples--when I saw him courted, flattered, honoured, and his acts unsuspected, because his

connections embraced half the peerage, the temptation grew strong, but I still resisted it. However, my father always said I was born to be a good-for-nothing, and I could not escape my destiny. And now I suddenly fell in love--you don't know what that is yet--so much the better for you. The girl was beautiful, and I thought she loved me--perhaps she did--but I was too poor, so her friends said, for marriage. We courted, as the saying is, in the meanwhile. It was my love for her, my wish to deserve her, that made me iron against my friend's example. I was fool enough to speak to him of Mary--to present him to her--this ended in her seduction." (Again Gawtrety paused, and breathed hard.) "I discovered the treachery--I called out the seducer--he sneered, and refused to fight the low-born adventurer. I struck him to the earth--and then we fought. I was satisfied by a ball through my side! but he," added Gawtrety, rubbing his hands, and with a vindictive chuckle,--"He was a cripple for life! When I recovered I found that my foe, whose sick-chamber was crowded with friends and comforters, had taken advantage of my illness to ruin my reputation. He, the swindler, accused me of his own crime: the equivocal character of my uncle confirmed the charge. Him, his own high-born pupil was enabled to unmask, and his disgrace was visited on me. I left my bed to find my uncle (all disguise over) an avowed partner in a hell, and myself blasted alike in name, love, past, and future. And then, Philip--then I commenced that career which I have trodden since--the prince of good-fellows and good-for-nothings, with ten thousand aliases, and as many strings to my bow. Society cast me off when I was innocent. Egad, I have had my revenge on society since!--Ho! ho! ho!"

The laugh of this man had in it a moral infection. There was a sort of glorying in its deep tone; it was not the hollow hysteric of shame and despair--it spoke a sanguine joyousness! William Gawtrety was a man whose animal constitution had led him to take animal pleasure in all things: he had enjoyed the poisons he had lived on.

"But your father--surely your father--"

"My father," interrupted Gawtrety, "refused me the money (but a small sum) that, once struck with the strong impulse of a sincere penitence, I begged of him, to enable me to get an honest living in a humble trade. His refusal soured the penitence--it gave me an excuse for my career and conscience grapples to an excuse as a drowning wretch to a straw. And yet this hard father--this cautious, moral, money-loving man, three months afterwards, suffered a rogue--almost a stranger--to decoy him into a speculation that promised to bring him fifty per cent. He invested in the traffic of usury what had sufficed to save a hundred such as I am from perdition, and he lost it all. It was nearly his whole fortune; but

he lives and has his luxuries still: he cannot speculate, but he can save: he cared not if I starved, for he finds an hourly happiness in starving himself."

"And your friend," said Philip, after a pause in which his young sympathies went dangerously with the excuses for his benefactor; "what has become of him, and the poor girl?"

"My friend became a great man; he succeeded to his father's peerage--a very ancient one--and to a splendid income. He is living still. Well, you shall hear about the poor girl! We are told of victims of seduction dying in a workhouse or on a dunghill, penitent, broken-hearted, and uncommonly ragged and sentimental. It may be a frequent case, but it is not the worst. It is worse, I think, when the fair, penitent, innocent, credulous dupe becomes in her turn the deceiver--when she catches vice from the breath upon which she has hung--when she ripens, and mellows, and rots away into painted, blazing, staring, wholesale harlotry--when, in her turn, she ruins warm youth with false smiles and long bills--and when worse--worse than all--when she has children, daughters perhaps, brought up to the same trade, cooped, plumper, for some hoary lecher, without a heart in their bosoms, unless a balance for weighing money may be called a heart. Mary became this; and I wish to Heaven she had rather died in an hospital! Her lover polluted her soul as well as her beauty: he found her another lover when he was tired of her. When she was at the age of thirty-six I met her in Paris, with a daughter of sixteen. I was then flush with money, frequenting salons, and playing the part of a fine gentleman. She did not know me at first; and she sought my acquaintance. For you must know, my young friend," said Gawtre, abruptly breaking off the thread of his narrative, "that I am not altogether the low dog you might suppose in seeing me here. At Paris--ah! you don't know Paris--there is a glorious ferment in society in which the dregs are often uppermost! I came here at the Peace, and here have I resided the greater part of each year ever since. The vast masses of energy and life, broken up by the great thaw of the Imperial system, floating along the tide, are terrible icebergs for the vessel of the state. Some think Napoleonism over--its effects are only begun. Society is shattered from one end to the other, and I laugh at the little rivets by which they think to keep it together.

[This passage was written at a period when the dynasty of Louis Philippe seemed the most assured, and Napoleonism was indeed considered extinct.]

"But to return. Paris, I say, is the atmosphere for adventurers--new

faces and new men are so common here that they excite no impertinent inquiry, it is so usual to see fortunes made in a day and spent in a month; except in certain circles, there is no walking round a man's character to spy out where it wants piercing! Some lean Greek poet put lead in his pockets to prevent being blown away;--put gold in your pockets, and at Paris you may defy the sharpest wind in the world,--yea, even the breath of that old AEolus--Scandal! Well, then, I had money--no matter how I came by it--and health, and gaiety; and I was well received in the coteries that exist in all capitals, but mostly in France, where pleasure is the cement that joins many discordant atoms. Here, I say, I met Mary and her daughter, by my old friend--the daughter, still innocent, but, sacra! in what an element of vice! We knew each other's secrets, Mary and I, and kept them: she thought me a greater knave than I was, and she intrusted to me her intention of selling her child to a rich English marquis. On the other hand, the poor girl confided to me her horror of the scenes she witnessed and the snares that surrounded her. What do you think preserved her pure from all danger? Bah! you will never guess! It was partly because, if example corrupts, it as often deters, but principally because she loved. A girl who loves one man purely has about her an amulet which defies the advances of the profligate. There was a handsome young Italian, an artist, who frequented the house--he was the man. I had to choose, then, between mother and daughter: I chose the last."

Philip seized hold of Gawtreys hand, grasped it warmly, and the good-for-nothing continued--

"Do you know, that I loved that girl as well as I had ever loved the mother, though in another way; she was what I fancied the mother to be; still more fair, more graceful, more winning, with a heart as full of love as her mother's had been of vanity. I loved that child as if she had been my own daughter. I induced her to leave her mother's house--I secreted her--I saw her married to the man she loved--I gave her away, and saw no more of her for several months."

"Why?"

"Because I spent them in prison! The young people could not live upon air; I gave them what I had, and in order to do more I did something which displeased the police; I narrowly escaped that time; but I am popular--very popular, and with plenty of witnesses, not over-scrupulous, I got off! When I was released, I would not go to see them, for my clothes were ragged: the police still watched me, and I would not do them harm in the world! Ay, poor wretches! they struggled so hard: he could

got very little by his art, though, I believe, he was a cleverish fellow at it, and the money I had given them could not last for ever. They lived near the Champs Elysees, and at night I used to steal out and look at them through the window. They seemed so happy, and so handsome, and so good; but he looked sickly, and I saw that, like all Italians, he languished for his own warm climate. But man is born to act as well as to contemplate," pursued Gawtrety, changing his tone into the allegro; "and I was soon driven into my old ways, though in a lower line. I went to London, just to give my reputation an airing, and when I returned, pretty flush again, the poor Italian was dead, and Fanny was a widow, with one boy, and enceinte with a second child. So then I sought her again, for her mother had found her out, and was at her with her devilish kindness; but Heaven was merciful, and took her away from both of us: she died in giving birth to a girl, and her last words were uttered to me, imploring me--the adventurer--the charlatan--the good-for-nothing--to keep her child from the clutches of her own mother. Well, sir, I did what I could for both the children; but the boy was consumptive, like his father, and sleeps at Pere-la-Chaise. The girl is here--you shall see her some day. Poor Fanny! if ever the devil will let me, I shall reform for her sake. Meanwhile, for her sake I must get grist for the mill. My story is concluded, for I need not tell you all of my pranks--of all the parts I have played in life. I have never been a murderer, or a burglar, or a highway robber, or what the law calls a thief. I can only say, as I said before, I have lived upon my wits, and they have been a tolerable capital on the whole. I have been an actor, a money-lender, a physician, a professor of animal magnetism (that was lucrative till it went out of fashion, perhaps it will come in again); I have been a lawyer, a house-agent, a dealer in curiosities and china; I have kept a hotel; I have set up a weekly newspaper; I have seen almost every city in Europe, and made acquaintance with some of its gaols; but a man who has plenty of brains generally falls on his legs."

"And your father?" said Philip; and here he spoke to Gawtrety of the conversation he had overheard in the churchyard, but on which a scruple of natural delicacy had hitherto kept him silent.

"Well, now," said his host, while a slight blush rose to his cheeks, "I will tell you, that though to my father's sternness and avarice I attribute many of my faults, I yet always had a sort of love for him; and when in London I accidentally heard that he was growing blind, and living with an artful old jade of a housekeeper, who might send him to rest with a dose of magnesia the night after she had coaxed him to make a will in her favour. I sought him out--and--but you say you heard what passed."

"Yes; and I heard him also call you by name, when it was too late, and I saw the tears on his cheeks."

"Did you? Will you swear to that?" exclaimed Gawtre, with vehemence: then, shading his brow with his hand, he fell into a reverie that lasted some moments.

"If anything happen to me, Philip," he said, abruptly, "perhaps he may yet be a father to poor Fanny; and if he takes to her, she will repay him for whatever pain I may, perhaps, have cost him. Stop! now I think of it, I will write down his address for you--never forget it--there! It is time to go to bed."

Gawtre's tale made a deep impression on Philip. He was too young, too inexperienced, too much borne away by the passion of the narrator, to see that Gawtre had less cause to blame Fate than himself. True, he had been unjustly implicated in the disgrace of an unworthy uncle, but he had lived with that uncle, though he knew him to be a common cheat; true, he had been betrayed by a friend, but he had before known that friend to be a man without principle or honour. But what wonder that an ardent boy saw nothing of this--saw only the good heart that had saved a poor girl from vice, and sighed to relieve a harsh and avaricious parent? Even the hints that Gawtre unawares let fall of practices scarcely covered by the jovial phrase of "a great schoolboy's scrapes," either escaped the notice of Philip, or were charitably construed by him, in the compassion and the ignorance of a young, hasty, and grateful heart.

CHAPTER IV.

"And she's a stranger
Women--beware women."--MIDDLETON.

"As we love our youngest children best,
So the last fruit of our affection,
Wherever we bestow it, is most strong;
Since 'tis indeed our latest harvest-home,
Last merriment 'fore winter!"
WEBSTER, *'Devil's Law Case'*.

"I would fain know what kind of thing a man's heart is?
I will report it to you; 'tis a thing framed

With divers corners!"--ROWLEY.

I have said that Gawtreys tale made a deep impression on Philip;--that impression was increased by subsequent conversations, more frank even than their talk had hitherto been. There was certainly about this man a fatal charm which concealed his vices. It arose, perhaps, from the perfect combinations of his physical frame--from a health which made his spirits buoyant and hearty under all circumstances--and a blood so fresh, so sanguine, that it could not fail to keep the pores of the heart open. But he was not the less--for all his kindly impulses and generous feelings, and despite the manner in which, naturally anxious to make the least unfavourable portrait of himself to Philip, he softened and glossed over the practices of his life--a thorough and complete rogue, a dangerous, desperate, reckless daredevil. It was easy to see when anything crossed him, by the cloud on his shaggy brow, by the swelling of the veins on the forehead, by the dilation of the broad nostril, that he was one to cut his way through every obstacle to an end,--choleric, impetuous, fierce, determined. Such, indeed, were the qualities that made him respected among his associates, as his more bland and humorous ones made him beloved. He was, in fact, the incarnation of that great spirit which the laws of the world raise up against the world, and by which the world's injustice on a large scale is awfully chastised; on a small scale, merely nibbled at and harassed, as the rat that gnaws the hoof of the elephant:--the spirit which, on a vast theatre, rises up, gigantic and sublime, in the heroes of war and revolution--in Mirabeaus, Marats, Napoleons: on a minor stage, it shows itself in demagogues, fanatical philosophers, and mob-writers; and on the forbidden boards, before whose reeking lamps outcasts sit, at once audience and actors, it never produced a knave more consummate in his part, or carrying it off with more buskined dignity, than William Gawtreys. I call him by his aboriginal name; as for his other appellations, Bacchus himself had not so many!

One day, a lady, richly dressed, was ushered by Mr. Birnie into the bureau of Mr. Love, alias Gawtreys. Philip was seated by the window, reading, for the first time, the *Candide*,--that work, next to *Rasselas*, the most hopeless and gloomy of the sports of genius with mankind. The lady seemed rather embarrassed when she perceived Mr. Love was not alone. She drew back, and, drawing her veil still more closely round her, said, in French:

"Pardon me, I would wish a private conversation." Philip rose to withdraw, when the lady, observing him with eyes whose lustre shone through the veil, said gently: "But perhaps the young gentleman is

discreet."

"He is not discreet, he is discretion!--my adopted son. You may confide in him--upon my honour you may, madam!" and Mr. Love placed his hand on his heart.

"He is very young," said the lady, in a tone of involuntary compassion, as, with a very white hand, she unclasped the buckle of her cloak.

"He can the better understand the curse of celibacy," returned Mr. Love, smiling.

The lady lifted part of her veil, and discovered a handsome mouth, and a set of small, white teeth; for she, too, smiled, though gravely, as she turned to Morton, and said--

"You seem, sir, more fitted to be a votary of the temple than one of its officers. However, Monsieur Love, let there be no mistake between us; I do not come here to form a marriage, but to prevent one. I understand that Monsieur the Vicomte de Vaudemont has called into request your services. I am one of the Vicomte's family; we are all anxious that he should not contract an engagement of the strange and, pardon me, unbecoming character, which must stamp a union formed at a public office."

"I assure you, madam," said Mr. Love, with dignity, "that we have contributed to the very first--"

"_Mon Dieu_!" interrupted the lady, with much impatience, "spare me a eulogy on your establishment: I have no doubt it is very respectable; and for _grisettes_ and _epiciers_ may do extremely well. But the Vicomte is a man of birth and connections. In a word, what he contemplates is preposterous. I know not what fee Monsieur Love expects; but if he contrive to amuse Monsieur de Vaudemont, and to frustrate every connection he proposes to form, that fee, whatever it may be, shall be doubled. Do you understand me?"

"Perfectly, madam; yet it is not your offer that will bias me, but the desire to oblige so charming a lady."

"It is agreed, then?" said the lady, carelessly; and as she spoke she again glanced at Philip.

"If madame will call again, I will inform her of my plans," said Mr.

Love.

"Yes, I will call again. Good morning!" As she rose and passed Philip, she wholly put aside her veil, and looked at him with a gaze entirely free from coquetry, but curious, searching, and perhaps admiring--the look that an artist may give to a picture that seems of more value than the place where he finds it would seem to indicate. The countenance of the lady herself was fair and noble, and Philip felt a strange thrill at his heart as, with a slight inclination of her head, she turned from the room.

"Ah!" said Gawtrety, laughing, "this is not the first time I have been paid by relations to break off the marriages I had formed. Egad! if one could open a bureau to make married people single, one would soon be a Croesus! Well, then, this decides me to complete the union between Monsieur Goupille and Mademoiselle de Courval. I had balanced a little hitherto between the epicier and the Vicomte. Now I will conclude matters. Do you know, Phil, I think you have made a conquest?"

"Pooh!" said Philip, colouring.

In effect, that very evening Mr. Love saw both the epicier and Adele, and fixed the marriage-day. As Monsieur Goupille was a person of great distinction in the Faubourg, this wedding was one upon which Mr. Love congratulated himself greatly; and he cheerfully accepted an invitation for himself and his partners to honour the noces with their presence.

A night or two before the day fixed for the marriage of Monsieur Goupille and the aristocratic Adele, when Mr. Birnie had retired, Gawtrety made his usual preparations for enjoying himself. But this time the cigar and the punch seemed to fail of their effect. Gawtrety remained moody and silent; and Morton was thinking of the bright eyes of the lady who was so much interested against the amours of the Vicomte de Vaudemont.

At last, Gawtrety broke silence:

"My young friend," said he, "I told you of my little protege; I have been buying toys for her this morning; she is a beautiful creature; to-morrow is her birthday--she will then be six years old. But--but--" here Gawtrety sighed--"I fear she is not all right here," and he touched his forehead.

"I should like much to see her," said Philip, not noticing the latter remark.

"And you shall--you shall come with me to-morrow. Heigho! I should not like to die, for her sake!"

"Does her wretched relation attempt to regain her?"

"Her relation! No; she is no more--she died about two years since! Poor Mary! I--well, this is folly. But Fanny is at present in a convent; they are all kind to her, but then I pay well; if I were dead, and the pay stopped,--again I ask, what would become of her, unless, as I before said, my father--"

"But you are making a fortune now?"

"If this lasts--yes; but I live in fear--the police of this cursed city are lynx-eyed; however, that is the bright side of the question."

"Why not have the child with you, since you love her so much? She would be a great comfort to you."

"Is this a place for a child--a girl?" said Gawtre, stamping his foot impatiently. "I should go mad if I saw that villainous deadman's eye bent upon her!"

You speak of Birnie. How can you endure him?"

"When you are my age you will know why we endure what we dread--why we make friends of those who else would be most horrible foes: no, nothing can deliver me of this man but Death. And--and--" added Gawtre, turning pale, "I cannot murder a man who eats my bread. There are stronger ties, my lad, than affection, that bind men, like galley-slaves, together. He who can hang you puts the halter round your neck and leads you by it like a dog."

A shudder came over the young listener. And what dark secrets, known only to those two, had bound, to a man seemingly his subordinate and tool, the strong will and resolute temper of William Gawtre?

"But, begone, dull care!" exclaimed Gawtre, rousing himself. "And, after all, Birnie is a useful fellow, and dare no more turn against me than I against him! Why don't you drink more?"

"Oh! have you e'er heard of the famed Captain Wattle?"

and Gawtrety broke out into a loud Bacchanalian hymn, in which Philip could find no mirth, and from which the songster suddenly paused to exclaim:--

"Mind you say nothing about Fanny to Birnie; my secrets with him are not of that nature. He could not hurt her, poor lamb! it is true--at least, as far as I can foresee. But one can never feel too sure of one's lamb, if one once introduces it to the butcher!"

The next day being Sunday, the bureau was closed, and Philip and Gawtrety repaired to the convent. It was a dismal-looking place as to the exterior; but, within, there was a large garden, well kept, and, notwithstanding the winter, it seemed fair and refreshing, compared with the polluted streets. The window of the room into which they were shown looked upon the green sward, with walls covered with ivy at the farther end. And Philip's own childhood came back to him as he gazed on the quiet of the lonely place.

The door opened--an infant voice was heard, a voice of glee-of rapture; and a child, light and beautiful as a fairy, bounded to Gawtrety's breast.

Nestling there, she kissed his face, his hands, his clothes, with a passion that did not seem to belong to her age, laughing and sobbing almost at a breath.

On his part, Gawtrety appeared equally affected: he stroked down her hair with his huge hand, calling her all manner of pet names, in a tremulous voice that vainly struggled to be gay.

At length he took the toys he had brought with him from his capacious pockets, and strewing them on the floor, fairly stretched his vast bulk along; while the child tumbled over him, sometimes grasping at the toys, and then again returning to his bosom, and laying her head there, looked up quietly into his eyes, as if the joy were too much for her.

Morton, unheeded by both, stood by with folded arms. He thought of his lost and ungrateful brother, and muttered to himself:

"Fool! when she is older, she will forsake him!"

Fanny betrayed in her face the Italian origin of her father. She had that exceeding richness of complexion which, though not common even in Italy, is only to be found in the daughters of that land, and which harmonised well with the purple lustre of her hair, and the full, clear

iris of the dark eyes. Never were parted cherries brighter than her dewy lips; and the colour of the open neck and the rounded arms was of a whiteness still more dazzling, from the darkness of the hair and the carnation of the glowing cheek.

Suddenly Fanny started from Gawtreys arms, and running up to Morton, gazed at him wistfully, and said, in French:

"Who are you? Do you come from the moon? I think you do." Then, stopping abruptly, she broke into a verse of a nursery-song, which she chaunted with a low, listless tone, as if she were not conscious of the sense. As she thus sang, Morton, looking at her, felt a strange and painful doubt seize him. The child's eyes, though soft, were so vacant in their gaze.

"And why do I come from the moon?" said he.

"Because you look sad and cross. I don't like you--I don't like the moon; it gives me a pain here!" and she put her hand to her temples. "Have you got anything for Fanny--poor, poor Fanny?" and, dwelling on the epithet, she shook her head mournfully.

"You are rich, Fanny, with all those toys."

"Am I? Everybody calls me poor Fanny--everybody but papa;" and she ran again to Gawtreys, and laid her head on his shoulder.

"She calls me papa!" said Gawtreys, kissing her; "you hear it? Bless her!"

"And you never kiss any one but Fanny--you have no other little girl?" said the child, earnestly, and with a look less vacant than that which had saddened Morton.

"No other--no--nothing under heaven, and perhaps above it, but you!" and he clasped her in his arms. "But," he added, after a pause--"but mind me, Fanny, you must like this gentleman. He will be always good to you: and he had a little brother whom he was as fond of as I am of you."

"No, I won't like him--I won't like anybody but you and my sister!"

"Sister!--who is your sister?"

The child's face relapsed into an expression almost of idiotcy. "I don't

know--I never saw her. I hear her sometimes, but I don't understand what she says.--Hush! come here!" and she stole to the window on tiptoe. Gawtrety followed and looked out.

"Do you hear her, now?" said Fanny. "What does she say?"

As the girl spoke, some bird among the evergreens uttered a shrill, plaintive cry, rather than song--a sound which the thrush occasionally makes in the winter, and which seems to express something of fear, and pain, and impatience. "What does she say?--can you tell me?" asked the child.

"Pooh! that is a bird; why do you call it your sister?"

"I don't know!--because it is--because it--because--I don't know--is it not in pain?--do something for it, papa!"

Gawtrety glanced at Morton, whose face betokened his deep pity, and creeping up to him, whispered,--

"Do you think she is really touched here? No, no,--she will outgrow it--I am sure she will!"

Morton sighed.

Fanny by this time had again seated herself in the middle of the floor, and arranged her toys, but without seeming to take pleasure in them.

At last Gawtrety was obliged to depart. The lay sister, who had charge of Fanny, was summoned into the parlour; and then the child's manner entirely changed; her face grew purple--she sobbed with as much anger as grief. "She would not leave papa--she would not go--that she would not!"

"It is always so," whispered Gawtrety to Morton, in an abashed and apologetic voice. "It is so difficult to get away from her. Just go and talk with her while I steal out."

Morton went to her, as she struggled with the patient good-natured sister, and began to soothe and caress her, till she turned on him her large humid eyes, and said, mournfully,

"_Tu es mechant, tu_. Poor Fanny!"

"But this pretty doll--" began the sister. The child looked at it

joylessly.

"And papa is going to die!"

"Whenever Monsieur goes," whispered the nun, "she always says that he is dead, and cries herself quietly to sleep; when Monsieur returns, she says he is come to life again. Some one, I suppose, once talked to her about death; and she thinks when she loses sight of any one, that that is death."

"Poor child!" said Morton, with a trembling voice.

The child looked up, smiled, stroked his cheek with her little hand, and said:

"Thank you!--Yes! poor Fanny! Ah, he is going--see!--let me go too--
tu es mechant."

"But," said Morton, detaining her gently, "do you know that you give him pain?--you make him cry by showing pain yourself. Don't make him so sad!"

The child seemed struck, hung down her head for a moment, as if in thought, and then, jumping from Morton's lap, ran to Gawtreys, put up her pouting lips, and said:

"One kiss more!"

Gawtreys kissed her, and turned away his head.

"Fanny is a good girl!" and Fanny, as she spoke, went back to Morton, and put her little fingers into her eyes, as if either to shut out Gawtreys's retreat from her sight, or to press back her tears.

"Give me the doll now, sister Marie."

Morton smiled and sighed, placed the child, who struggled no more, in the nun's arms, and left the room; but as he closed the door he looked back, and saw that Fanny had escaped from the sister, thrown herself on the floor, and was crying, but not loud.

"Is she not a little darling?" said Gawtreys, as they gained the street.

"She is, indeed, a most beautiful child!"

"And you will love her if I leave her penniless," said Gawtre, abruptly.
"It was your love for your mother and your brother that made me like you from the first. Ay," continued Gawtre, in a tone of great earnestness, "ay, and whatever may happen to me, I will strive and keep you, my poor lad, harmless; and what is better, innocent even of such matters as sit light enough on my own well-seasoned conscience. In turn, if ever you have the power, be good to her,--yes, be good to her! and I won't say a harsh word to you if ever you like to turn king's evidence against myself."

"Gawtre!" said Morton, reproachfully, and almost fiercely.

"Bah!--such things are! But tell me honestly, do you think she is very strange--very deficient?"

"I have not seen enough of her to judge," answered Morton, evasively.

"She is so changeful," persisted Gawtre. "Sometimes you would say that she was above her age, she comes out with such thoughtful, clever things; then, the next moment, she throws me into despair. These nuns are very skilful in education--at least they are said to be so. The doctors give me hope, too. You see, her poor mother was very unhappy at the time of her birth--delirious, indeed: that may account for it. I often fancy that it is the constant excitement which her state occasions me that makes me love her so much. You see she is one who can never shift for herself. I must get money for her; I have left a little already with the superior, and I would not touch it to save myself from famine! If she has money people will be kind enough to her. And then," continued Gawtre, "you must perceive that she loves nothing in the world but me--me, whom nobody else loves! Well--well, now to the shop again!"

On returning home the bonne informed them that a lady had called, and asked both for Monsieur Love and the young gentleman, and seemed much chagrined at missing both. By the description, Morton guessed she was the fair incognita, and felt disappointed at having lost the interview.

CHAPTER V.

"The cursed carle was at his wonted trade,
Still tempting heedless men into his snare,

In witching wise, as I before have said;
But when he saw, in goodly gear array'd,
The grave majestic knight approaching nigh,
His countenance fell."--THOMSON, _Castle of Indolence_.

The morning rose that was to unite Monsieur Goupille with Mademoiselle Adele de Courval. The ceremony was performed, and bride and bridegroom went through that trying ordeal with becoming gravity. Only the elegant Adele seemed more unaffectedly agitated than Mr. Love could well account for; she was very nervous in church, and more often turned her eyes to the door than to the altar. Perhaps she wanted to run away; but it was either too late or too early for the proceeding. The rite performed, the happy pair and their friends adjourned to the _Cadran Bleu_, that _restaurant_ so celebrated in the festivities of the good citizens of Paris. Here Mr. Love had ordered, at the _epicier's_ expense, a most tasteful entertainment.

"_Sacre_! but you have not played the economist, Monsieur Lofe," said Monsieur Goupille, rather querulously, as he glanced at the long room adorned with artificial flowers, and the table _a cingitante couverts_.

"Bah!" replied Mr. Love, "you can retrench afterwards. Think of the fortune she brought you."

"It is a pretty sum, certainly," said Monsieur Goupille, "and the notary is perfectly satisfied."

"There is not a marriage in Paris that does me more credit," said Mr. Love; and he marched off to receive the compliments and congratulations that awaited him among such of the guests as were aware of his good offices. The Vicomte de Vaudemont was of course not present. He had not been near Mr. Love since Adele had accepted the _epicier_. But Madame Beavor, in a white bonnet lined with lilac, was hanging, sentimentally, on the arm of the Pole, who looked very grand with his white favour; and Mr. Higgins had been introduced, by Mr. Love, to a little dark Creole, who wore paste diamonds, and had very languishing eyes; so that Mr. Love's heart might well swell with satisfaction at the prospect of the various blisses to come, which might owe their origin to his benevolence. In fact, that archpriest of the Temple of Hymen was never more great than he was that day; never did his establishment seem more solid, his reputation more popular, or his fortune more sure. He was the life of the party.

The banquet over, the revellers prepared for a dance. Monsieur Goupille,

in tights, still tighter than he usually wore, and of a rich nankeen, quite new, with striped silk stockings, opened the ball with the lady of a rich _patissier_ in the same Faubourg; Mr. Love took out the bride. The evening advanced; and after several other dances of ceremony, Monsieur Goupille conceived himself entitled to dedicate one to connubial affection. A country-dance was called, and the _epicier_ claimed the fair hand of the gentle Adele. About this time, two persons not hitherto perceived had quietly entered the room, and, standing near the doorway, seemed examining the dancers, as if in search for some one. They bobbed their heads up and down, to and fro stopped--now stood on tiptoe. The one was a tall, large-whiskered, fair-haired man; the other, a little, thin, neatly-dressed person, who kept his hand on the arm of his companion, and whispered to him from time to time. The whiskered gentleman replied in a guttural tone, which proclaimed his origin to be German. The busy dancers did not perceive the strangers. The bystanders did, and a hum of curiosity circled round; who could they be?--who had invited them?--they were new faces in the Faubourg--perhaps relations to Adele?

In high delight the fair bride was skipping down the middle, while Monsieur Goupille, wiping his forehead with care, admired her agility; when, to and behold! the whiskered gentleman I have described abruptly advanced from his companion, and cried:

"_La voila!--sacre tonnerre!_"

At that voice--at that apparition, the bride halted; so suddenly indeed, that she had not time to put down both feet, but remained with one high in the air, while the other sustained itself on the light fantastic toe. The company naturally imagined this to be an operatic flourish, which called for approbation. Monsieur Love, who was thundering down behind her, cried, "Bravo!" and as the well-grown gentleman had to make a sweep to avoid disturbing her equilibrium, he came full against the whiskered stranger, and sent him off as a bat sends a ball.

"_Mon Dieu!_" cried Monsieur Goupille. "_Ma douce amie_--she has fainted away!" And, indeed, Adele had no sooner recovered her balance, than she resigned it once more into the arms of the startled Pole, who was happily at hand.

In the meantime, the German stranger, who had saved himself from falling by coming with his full force upon the toes of Mr. Higgins, again advanced to the spot, and, rudely seizing the fair bride by the arm, exclaimed,--

"No sham if you please, madame--speak! What the devil have you done with the money?"

"Really, sir," said Monsieur Goupille, drawing tip his cravat, "this is very extraordinary conduct! What have you got to say to this lady's money?--it is my money now, sir!"

"Oho! it is, is it? We'll soon see that. Approchez donc, Monsieur Favart, faites votre devoir."

At these words the small companion of the stranger slowly sauntered to the spot, while at the sound of his name and the tread of his step, the throng gave way to the right and left. For Monsieur Favart was one of the most renowned chiefs of the great Parisian police--a man worthy to be the contemporary of the illustrious Vidocq.

"Calmez vous, messieurs; do not be alarmed, ladies," said this gentleman, in the mildest of all human voices; and certainly no oil dropped on the waters ever produced so tranquillising an effect as that small, feeble, gentle tenor. The Pole, in especial, who was holding the fair bride with both his arms, shook all over, and seemed about to let his burden gradually slide to the floor, when Monsieur Favart, looking at him with a benevolent smile, said--

"Aha, mon brave! c'est toi. Restez donc. Restez, tenant toujours la dame!"

The Pole, thus condemned, in the French idiom, "always to hold the dame," mechanically raised the arms he had previously dejected, and the police officer, with an approving nod of the head, said,--

"Bon,! ne bougez point,--c'est ca!"

Monsieur Goupille, in equal surprise and indignation to see his better half thus consigned, without any care to his own marital feelings, to the arms of another, was about to snatch her from the Pole, when Monsieur Favart, touching him on the breast with his little finger, said, in the suavest manner,--

"Mon bourgeois, meddle not with what does not concern you!"

"With what does not concern me!" repeated Monsieur Goupille, drawing himself up to so great a stretch that he seemed pulling off his tights

the wrong way. "Explain yourself, if you please! This lady is my wife!"

"Say that again,--that's all!" cried the whiskered stranger, in most horrible French, and with a furious grimace, as he shook both his fists just under the nose of the _epicier_.

"Say it again, sir," said Monsieur Goupille, by no means daunted; "and why should not I say it again? That lady is my wife!"

"You lie!--she is mine!" cried the German; and bending down, he caught the fair Adele from the Pole with as little ceremony as if she had never had a great-grandfather a marquis, and giving her a shake that might have roused the dead, thundered out,--

"Speak! Madame Bihl! Are you my wife or not?"

"_Monstre_!" murmured Adele, opening her eyes.

"There--you hear--she owns me!" said the German, appealing to the company with a triumphant air.

"_C'est vrai_!" said the soft voice of the policeman. And now, pray don't let us disturb your amusements any longer. We have a fiacre at the door. Remove your lady, Monsieur Bihl."

"Monsieur Lofe!--Monsieur Lofe!" cried, or rather screeched the _epicier_, darting across the room, and seizing the _chef_ by the tail of his coat, just as he was half way through the door, "come back! _Quelle mauvaise plaisanterie me faites-vous ici_? Did you not tell me that lady was single? Am I married or not: Do I stand on my head or my heels?"

"Hush-hush! _mon bon bourgeois_!" whispered Mr. Love; "all shall be explained to-morrow!"

"Who is this gentleman?" asked Monsieur Favart, approaching Mr. Love, who, seeing himself in for it, suddenly jerked off the _epicier_, thrust his hands down into his breeches' pockets, buried his chin in his cravat, elevated his eyebrows, screwed in his eyes, and puffed out his cheeks, so that the astonished Monsieur Goupille really thought himself bewitched, and literally did not recognise the face of the match-maker.

"Who is this gentleman?" repeated the little officer, standing beside, or rather below, Mr. Love, and looking so diminutive by the contrast that you might have fancied that the Priest of Hymen had only to breathe to

blow him away.

"Who should he be, monsieur?" cried, with great pertness, Madame Rosalie Caumartin, coming to the relief, with the generosity of her sex.--"This is Monsieur Lofe--_Anglais celebre_. What have you to say against him?"

"He has got five hundred francs of mine!" cried the epicier.

The policeman scanned Mr. Love, with great attention. "So you are in Paris again?--_Hein!--vous jouez toujours votre role_!

"_Ma foi_!" said Mr. Love, boldly; "I don't understand what monsieur means; my character is well known--go and inquire it in London--ask the Secretary of Foreign Affairs what is said of me--inquire of my Ambassador--demand of my--"

"_Votre passeport, monsieur_?"

"It is at home. A gentleman does not carry his passport in his pocket when he goes to a ball!"

"I will call and see it--_au revoir_! Take my advice and leave Paris; I think I have seen you somewhere!"

"Yet I have never had the honour to marry monsieur!" said Mr. Love, with a polite bow.

In return for his joke, the policeman gave Mr. Love one look--it was a quiet look, very quiet; but Mr. Love seemed uncommonly affected by it; he did not say another word, but found himself outside the house in a twinkling. Monsieur Favart turned round and saw the Pole making himself as small as possible behind the goodly proportions of Madame Beavor.

"What name does that gentleman go by?"

"So--vo--lofski, the heroic Pole," cried Madame Beavor, with sundry misgivings at the unexpected cowardice of so great a patriot.

"Hein! take care of yourselves, ladies. I have nothing against that person this time. But Monsieur Latour has served his apprenticeship at the galleys, and is no more a Pole than I am a Jew."

"And this lady's fortune!" cried Monsieur Goupille, pathetically; "the settlements are all made--the notaries all paid. I am sure there must be

some mistake."

Monsieur Bihl, who had by this time restored his lost Helen to her senses, stalked up to the *_epicier_*, dragging the lady along with him.

"Sir, there is no mistake! But, when I have got the money, if you like to have the lady you are welcome to her."

"Monstre!" again muttered the fair Adele.

"The long and the short of it," said Monsieur Favart, "is that Monsieur Bihl is a *_brave garçon_*, and has been half over the world as a courier."

"A courier!" exclaimed several voices.

"Madame was nursery-governess to an English *_milord_*. They married, and quarrelled--no harm in that, *_mes amis_*; nothing more common. Monsieur Bihl is a very faithful fellow; nursed his last master in an illness that ended fatally, because he travelled with his doctor. Milord left him a handsome legacy--he retired from service, and fell ill, perhaps from idleness or beer. Is not that the story, Monsieur Bihl?"

"He was always drunk--the wretch!" sobbed Adele. "That was to drown my domestic sorrows," said the German; "and when I was sick in my bed, madame ran off with my money. Thanks to monsieur, I have found both, and I wish you a very good night."

"*_Dansez-vous toujours, mes amis_*," said the officer, bowing. And following Adele and her spouse, the little man left the room--where he had caused, in chests so broad and limbs so doughty, much the same consternation as that which some diminutive ferret occasions in a burrow of rabbits twice his size.

Morton had outstayed Mr. Love. But he thought it unnecessary to linger long after that gentleman's departure; and, in the general hubbub that ensued, he crept out unperceived, and soon arrived at the *_bureau_*. He found Mr. Love and Mr. Birnie already engaged in packing up their effects.

"Why--when did you leave?" said Morton to Mr. Birnie.

"I saw the policeman enter."

"And why the deuce did not you tell us?" said Gawtrety.

"Every man for himself. Besides, Mr. Love was dancing," replied Mr. Birnie, with a dull glance of disdain. "Philosophy," muttered Gawtrety, thrusting his dresscoat into his trunk; then, suddenly changing his voice, "Ha! ha! it was a very good joke after all--own I did it well. Ecod! if he had not given me that look, I think I should have turned the tables on him. But those d---d fellows learn of the mad doctors how to tame us. Faith, my heart went down to my shoes--yet I'm no coward!"

"But, after all, he evidently did not know you," said Morton; "and what has he to say against you? Your trade is a strange one, but not dishonest. Why give up as if--"

"My young friend," interrupted Gawtrety, "whether the officer comes after us or not, our trade is ruined; that infernal Adele, with her fabulous _grandmaman_, has done for us. Goupille will blow the temple about our ears. No help for it--eh, Birnie?"

"None."

"Go to bed, Philip: we'll call thee at daybreak, for we must make clear work before our neighbours open their shutters."

Reclined, but half undressed, on his bed in the little cabinet, Morton revolved the events of the evening. The thought that he should see no more of that white hand and that lovely mouth, which still haunted his recollection as appertaining to the _incognita_, greatly indisposed him towards the abrupt flight intended by Gawtrety, while (so much had his faith in that person depended upon respect for his confident daring, and so thoroughly fearless was Morton's own nature) he felt himself greatly shaken in his allegiance to the chief, by recollecting the effect produced on his valour by a single glance from the instrument of law. He had not yet lived long enough to be aware that men are sometimes the Representatives of Things; that what the scytale was to the Spartan hero, a sheriff's writ often is to a Waterloo medallist: that a Bow Street runner will enter the foulest den where Murder sits with his fellows, and pick out his prey with the beck of his forefinger. That, in short, the thing called LAW, once made tangible and present, rarely fails to palsy the fierce heart of the thing called CRIME. For Law is the symbol of all mankind reared against One Foe--the Man of Crime. Not yet aware of this truth, nor, indeed, in the least suspecting Gawtrety of worse offences than those of a charlatanic and equivocal profession, the young man mused over his protector's cowardice in disdain and wonder: till, wearied with conjectures, distrust, and shame at his own strange position of

obligation to one whom he could not respect, he fell asleep.

When he woke, he saw the grey light of dawn that streamed cheerlessly through his shutterless window, struggling with the faint ray of a candle that Gawtre, shading with his hand, held over the sleeper. He started up, and, in the confusion of waking and the imperfect light by which he beheld the strong features of Gawtre, half imagined it was a foe who stood before him.

"Take care, man," said Gawtre, as Morton, in this belief, grasped his arm. "You have a precious rough gripe of your own. Be quiet, will you? I have a word to say to you." Here Gawtre, placing the candle on a chair, returned to the door and closed it.

"Look you," he said in a whisper, "I have nearly run through my circle of invention, and my wit, fertile as it is, can present to me little encouragement in the future. The eyes of this Favart once on me, every disguise and every double will not long avail. I dare not return to London: I am too well known in Brussels, Berlin, and Vienna--"

"But," interrupted Morton, raising himself on his arm, and fixing his dark eyes upon his host,--"but you have told me again and again that you have committed no crime; why then be so fearful of discovery?"

"Why," repeated Gawtre, with a slight hesitation which he instantly overcame, "why! have not you yourself learned that appearances have the effect of crimes?--were you not chased as a thief when I rescued you from your foe, the law?--are you not, though a boy in years, under an alias, and an exile from your own land? And how can you put these austere questions to me, who am growing grey in the endeavour to extract sunbeams from cucumbers--subsistence from poverty? I repeat that there are reasons why I must avoid, for the present, the great capitals. I must sink in life, and take to the provinces. Birnie is sanguine as ever; but he is a terrible sort of comforter! Enough of that. Now to yourself: our savings are less than you might expect; to be sure, Birnie has been treasurer, and I have laid by a little for Fanny, which I will rather starve than touch. There remain, however, 150 napoleons, and our effects, sold at a fourth their value, will fetch 150 more. Here is your share. I have compassion on you. I told you I would bear you harmless and innocent. Leave us while yet time."

It seemed, then, to Morton that Gawtre had divined his thoughts of shame and escape of the previous night; perhaps Gawtre had: and such is the human heart, that, instead of welcoming the very release he had half

contemplated, now that it was offered him, Philip shrank from it as a base desertion.

"Poor Gawtre!" said he, pushing back the canvas bag of gold held out to him, "you shall not go over the world, and feel that the orphan you fed and fostered left you to starve with your money in his pocket. When you again assure me that you have committed no crime, you again remind me that gratitude has no right to be severe upon the shifts and errors of its benefactor. If you do not conform to society, what has society done for me? No! I will not forsake you in a reverse. Fortune has given you a fall. What, then, courage, and at her again!"

These last words were said so heartily and cheerfully as Morton sprang from the bed, that they inspired Gawtre, who had really desponded of his lot.

"Well," said he, "I cannot reject the only friend left me; and while I live--. But I will make no professions. Quick, then, our luggage is already gone, and I hear Birnie grunting the rogue's march of retreat."

Morton's toilet was soon completed, and the three associates bade adieu to the bureau.

Birnie, who was taciturn and impenetrable as ever, walked a little before as guide. They arrived, at length, at a serrurier's shop, placed in an alley near the Porte St. Denis. The serrurier himself, a tall, begrimed, blackbearded man, was taking the shutters from his shop as they approached. He and Birnie exchanged silent nods; and the former, leaving his work, conducted them up a very filthy flight of stairs to an attic, where a bed, two stools, one table, and an old walnut-tree bureau formed the sole articles of furniture. Gawtre looked rather ruefully round the black, low, damp walls, and said in a crestfallen tone:

"We were better off at the Temple of Hymen. But get us a bottle of wine, some eggs, and a frying-pan. By Jove, I am a capital hand at an omelet!"

The serrurier nodded again, grinned, and withdrew.

"Rest here," said Birnie, in his calm, passionless voice, that seemed to Morton, however, to assume an unwonted tone of command. "I will go and make the best bargain I can for our furniture, buy fresh clothes, and engage our places for Tours."

"For Tours?" repeated Morton.

"Yes, there are some English there; one can live wherever there are English," said Gawtre.

"Hum!" grunted Birnie, drily, and, buttoning up his coat, he walked slowly away.

About noon he returned with a bundle of clothes, which Gawtre, who always regained his elasticity of spirit wherever there was fair play to his talents, examined with great attention, and many exclamations of "_Bon!--c'est va_."

"I have done well with the Jew," said Birnie, drawing from his coat pocket two heavy bags. "One hundred and eighty napoleons. We shall commence with a good capital."

"You are right, my friend," said Gawtre.

The _serrurier_ was then despatched to the best restaurant in the neighbourhood, and the three adventurers made a less Socratic dinner than might have been expected.

CHAPTER VI.

"Then out again he flies to wing his marry round."

THOMPSON'S _Castle of Indolence_.

"Again he gazed, 'It is,' said he, 'the same;

There sits he upright in his seat secure,

As one whose conscience is correct and pure.'"--CRABBE.

The adventurers arrived at Tours, and established themselves there in a lodging, without any incident worth narrating by the way.

At Tours Morton had nothing to do but take his pleasure and enjoy himself. He passed for a young heir; Gawtre for his tutor--a doctor in divinity; Birnie for his valet. The task of maintenance fell on Gawtre, who hit off his character to a hair; larded his grave jokes with university scraps of Latin; looked big and well-fed; wore knee-breeches and a shovel hat; and played whist with the skill of a veteran vicar. By his science in that game he made, at first, enough; at least, to defray

their weekly expenses. But, by degrees, the good people at Tours, who, under pretence of health, were there for economy, grew shy of so excellent a player; and though Gawtrety always swore solemnly that he played with the most scrupulous honour (an asseveration which Morton, at least, implicitly believed), and no proof to the contrary was ever detected, yet a first-rate card-player is always a suspicious character, unless the losing parties know exactly who he is. The market fell off, and Gawtrety at length thought it prudent to extend their travels.

"Ah!" said Mr. Gawtrety, "the world nowadays has grown so ostentatious that one cannot travel advantageously without a post-chariot and four horses." At length they found themselves at Milan, which at that time was one of the El Dorados for gamesters. Here, however, for want of introductions, Mr. Gawtrety found it difficult to get into society. The nobles, proud and rich, played high, but were circumspect in their company; the *_bourgeoisie_*, industrious and energetic, preserved much of the old Lombard shrewdness; there were no *_tables d'hote_* and public reunions. Gawtrety saw his little capital daily diminishing, with the Alps at the rear and Poverty in the van. At length, always on the *_qui vive_*, he contrived to make acquaintance with a Scotch family of great respectability. He effected this by picking up a snuff-box which the Scotchman had dropped in taking out his handkerchief. This politeness paved the way to a conversation in which Gawtrety made himself so agreeable, and talked with such zest of the Modern Athens, and the tricks practised upon travellers, that he was presented to Mrs. Macgregor; cards were interchanged, and, as Mr. Gawtrety lived in tolerable style, the Macgregors pronounced him "a vara genteel mon." Once in the house of a respectable person, Gawtrety contrived to turn himself round and round, till he burrowed a hole into the English circle then settled in Milan. His whist-playing came into requisition, and once more Fortune smiled upon Skill.

To this house the pupil one evening accompanied the tutor. When the whist party, consisting of two tables, was formed, the young man found himself left out with an old gentleman, who seemed loquacious and good-natured, and who put many questions to Morton, which he found it difficult to answer. One of the whist tables was now in a state of revolution, viz., a lady had cut out and a gentleman cut in, when the door opened, and Lord Lilburne was announced.

Mr. Macgregor, rising, advanced with great respect to this personage.

"I scarcely ventured to hope you would coom, Lord Lilburne, the night is so cold."

"You did not allow sufficiently, then, for the dulness of my solitary inn and the attractions of your circle. Aha! whist, I see."

"You play sometimes?"

"Very seldom, now; I have sown all my wild oats, and even the ace of spades can scarcely dig them out again."

"Ha! ha! vara gude."

"I will look on;" and Lord Lilburne drew his chair to the table, exactly opposite to Mr. Gawtreys.

The old gentleman turned to Philip.

"An extraordinary man, Lord Lilburne; you have heard of him, of course?"

"No, indeed; what of him?" asked the young man, rousing himself.

"What of him?" said the old gentleman, with a smile; "why the newspapers, if you ever read them, will tell you enough of the elegant, the witty Lord Lilburne; a man of eminent talent, though indolent. He was wild in his youth, as clever men often are; but, on attaining his title and fortune, and marrying into the family of the then premier, he became more sedate. They say he might make a great figure in politics if he would. He has a very high reputation--very. People do say that he is still fond of pleasure; but that is a common failing amongst the aristocracy. Morality is only found in the middle classes, young gentleman. It is a lucky family, that of Lilburne; his sister, Mrs. Beaufort--"

"Beaufort!" exclaimed Morton, and then muttered to himself, "Ah, true--true; I have heard the name of Lilburne before."

"Do you know the Beauforts? Well, you remember how luckily Robert, Lilburne's brother-in-law, came into that fine property just as his predecessor was about to marry a--"

Morton scowled at his garrulous acquaintance, and stalked abruptly to the card table.

Ever since Lord Lilburne had seated himself opposite to Mr. Gawtreys, that gentleman had evinced a perturbation of manner that became obvious to the company. He grew deadly pale, his hands trembled, he moved uneasily in

his seat, he missed deal, he trumped his partner's best diamond; finally he revoked, threw down his money, and said, with a forced smile, "that the heat of the room overcame him." As he rose Lord Lilburne rose also, and the eyes of both met. Those of Lilburne were calm, but penetrating and inquisitive in their gaze; those of Gawtreys were like balls of fire. He seemed gradually to dilate in his height, his broad chest expanded, he breathed hard.

"Ah, Doctor," said Mr. Macgregor, "let me introduce you to Lord Lilburne."

The peer bowed haughtily; Mr. Gawtreys did not return the salutation, but with a sort of gulp, as if he were swallowing some burst of passion, strode to the fire, and then, turning round, again fixed his gaze upon the new guest.

Lilburne, however, who had never lost his self-composure at this strange rudeness, was now quietly talking with their host.

"Your Doctor seems an eccentric man--a little absent--learned, I suppose. Have you been to Como, yet?"

Mr. Gawtreys remained by the fire beating the devils tattoo upon the chimney-piece, and ever and anon turning his glance towards Lilburne, who seemed to have forgotten his existence.

Both these guests stayed till the party broke up; Mr. Gawtreys apparently wishing to outstay Lord Lilburne; for, when the last went down-stairs, Mr. Gawtreys, nodding to his comrade and giving a hurried bow to the host, descended also. As they passed the porters lodge, they found Lilburne on the step of his carriage; he turned his head abruptly, and again met Mr. Gawtreys's eye; paused a moment, and whispered over his shoulder:

"So we remember each other, sir? Let us not meet again; and, on that condition, bygones are bygones."

"Scoundrel!" muttered Gawtreys, clenching his fists; but the peer had sprung into his carriage with a lightness scarcely to be expected from his lameness, and the wheels whirled within an inch of the soi-disant doctors right pump.

Gawtreys walked on for some moments in great excitement; at length he turned to his companion,--

"Do you guess who Lord Lilburne is? I will tell you my first foe and Fanny's grandfather! Now, note the justice of Fate: here is this man-- mark well--this man who commenced life by putting his faults on my own shoulders! From that little boss has fungused out a terrible hump. This man who seduced my affianced bride, and then left her whole soul, once fair and blooming--I swear it--with its leaves fresh from the dews of heaven, one rank leprosy, this man who, rolling in riches, learned to cheat and pilfer as a boy learns to dance and play the fiddle, and (to damn me, whose happiness he had blasted) accused me to the world of his own crime!--here is this man who has not left off one vice, but added to those of his youth the bloodless craft of the veteran knave;--here is this man, flattered, courted, great, marching through lanes of bowing parasites to an illustrious epitaph and a marble tomb, and I, a rogue too, if you will, but rogue for my bread, dating from him my errors and my ruin! I--vagabond--outcast--skulking through tricks to avoid crime-- why the difference? Because one is born rich and the other poor--because he has no excuse for crime, and therefore no one suspects him!"

The wretched man (for at that moment he was wretched) paused breathless from his passionate and rapid burst, and before him rose in its marble majesty, with the moon full upon its shining spires--the wonder of Gothic Italy--the Cathedral Church of Milan.

"Chafe not yourself at the universal fate," said the young man, with a bitter smile on his lips and pointing to the cathedral; "I have not lived long, but I have learned already enough to know this? he who could raise a pile like that, dedicated to Heaven, would be honoured as a saint; he who knelt to God by the roadside under a hedge would be sent to the house of correction as a vagabond. The difference between man and man is money, and will be, when you, the despised charlatan, and Lilburne, the honoured cheat, have not left as much dust behind you as will fill a snuff-box. Comfort yourself, you are in the majority."

CHAPTER VII.

"A desert wild
Before them stretched bare, comfortless, and vast,
With gibbets, bones, and carcasses defiled."

THOMPSON'S *_Castle of Indolence_*.

Mr. Gawtreys did not wish to give his foe the triumph of thinking he had

driven him from Milan; he resolved to stay and brave it out; but when he appeared in public, he found the acquaintances he had formed bow politely, but cross to the other side of the way. No more invitations to tea and cards showered in upon the jolly parson. He was puzzled, for people, while they shunned him, did not appear uncivil. He found out at last that a report was circulated that he was deranged; though he could not trace this rumour to Lord Lilburne, he was at no loss to guess from whom it had emanated. His own eccentricities, especially his recent manner at Mr. Macgregor's, gave confirmation to the charge. Again the funds began to sink low in the canvas bags, and at length, in despair, Mr. Gawtrety was obliged to quit the field. They returned to France through Switzerland--a country too poor for gamesters; and ever since the interview with Lilburne, a great change had come over Gawtrety's gay spirit: he grew moody and thoughtful, he took no pains to replenish the common stock, he talked much and seriously to his young friend of poor Fanny, and owned that he yearned to see her again. The desire to return to Paris haunted him like a fatality; he saw the danger that awaited him there, but it only allured him the more, as the candle does the moth whose wings it has singed. Birnie, who, in all their vicissitudes and wanderings, their ups and downs, retained the same tacit, immovable demeanour, received with a sneer the orders at last to march back upon the French capital. "You would never have left it, if you had taken my advice," he said, and quitted the room.

Mr. Gawtrety gazed after him and muttered, "Is the die then cast?"

"What does he mean?" said Morton.

"You will know soon," replied Gawtrety, and he followed Birnie; and from that time the whispered conferences with that person, which had seemed suspended during their travels, were renewed.

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One morning, three men were seen entering Paris on foot through the Porte St. Denis. It was a fine day in spring, and the old city looked gay with its loitering passengers and gaudy shops, and under that clear blue exhilarating sky so peculiar to France.

Two of these men walked abreast, the other preceded them a few steps. The one who went first--thin, pale, and threadbare--yet seemed to suffer the least from fatigue; he walked with a long, swinging, noiseless stride, looking to the right and left from the corners of his eyes. Of the two who followed, one was handsome and finely formed, but of swarthy

complexion, young, yet with a look of care; the other, of sturdy frame, leaned on a thick stick, and his eyes were gloomily cast down.

"Philip," said the last, "in coming back to Paris--I feel that I am coming back to my grave!"

"Pooh--you were equally despondent in our excursions elsewhere."

"Because I was always thinking of poor Fanny, and because--because--Birnie was ever at me with his horrible temptations!"

"Birnie! I loathe the man! Will you never get rid of him?"

"I cannot! Hush! he will hear us. How unlucky we have been! and now without a son in our pockets--here the dunghill--there the gaol! We are in his power at last!"

"His power! what mean you?"

"What ho! Birnie!" cried Gawtre, unheeding Morton's question. "Let us halt and breakfast: I am tired."

"You forget!--we have no money till we make it," returned Birnie, coldly.--"Come to the _serrurier's_ he will trust us."

CHAPTER VIII.

"Gaunt Beggary and Scorn with many bell-hounds more."
THOMSON'S _Castle of Indolence_.

"The other was a fell, spiteful fiend."--Ibid.

"Your happiness behold! then straight a wand
He waved, an anti-magic power that hath
Truth from illusive falsehood to command."--Ibid.

"But what for us, the children of despair,
Brought to the brink of hell--what hope remains?
RESOLVE, RESOLVE!"--Ibid.

It may be observed that there are certain years in which in a civilised

country some particular crime comes into vogue. It flares its season, and then burns out. Thus at one time we have Burking--at another, Swingism--now, suicide is in vogue--now, poisoning tradespeople in apple-dumplings--now, little boys stab each other with penknives--now, common soldiers shoot at their sergeants. Almost every year there is one crime peculiar to it; a sort of annual which overruns the country but does not bloom again. Unquestionably the Press has a great deal to do with these epidemics. Let a newspaper once give an account of some out-of-the-way atrocity that has the charm of being novel, and certain depraved minds fasten to it like leeches. They brood over and revolve it--the idea grows up, a horrid phantasmalian monomania; and all of a sudden, in a hundred different places, the one seed sown by the leaden types springs up into foul flowering.

[An old Spanish writer, treating of the Inquisition, has some very striking remarks on the kind of madness which, whenever some terrible notoriety is given to a particular offence, leads persons of distempered fancy to accuse themselves of it. He observes that when the cruelties of the Inquisition against the imaginary crime of sorcery were the most barbarous, this singular frenzy led numbers to accuse themselves of sorcery. The publication and celebrity of the crime begat the desire of the crime.]

But if the first reported aboriginal crime has been attended with impunity, how much more does the imitative faculty cling to it. Ill-judged mercy falls, not like dew, but like a great heap of manure, on the rank deed.

Now it happened that at the time I write of, or rather a little before, there had been detected and tried in Paris a most redoubted coiner. He had carried on the business with a dexterity that won admiration even for the offence; and, moreover, he had served previously with some distinction at Austerlitz and Marengo. The consequence was that the public went with instead of against him, and his sentence was transmuted to three years' imprisonment by the government. For all governments in free countries aspire rather to be popular than just.

No sooner was this case reported in the journals--and even the gravest took notice, of it (which is not common with the scholastic journals of France)--no sooner did it make a stir and a sensation, and cover the criminal with celebrity, than the result became noticeable in a very large issue of false money.

Coining in the year I now write of was the fashionable crime. The police

were roused into full vigour: it became known to them that there was one gang in especial who cultivated this art with singular success. Their coinage was, indeed, so good, so superior to all their rivals, that it was often unconsciously preferred by the public to the real mintage. At the same time they carried on their calling with such secrecy that they utterly baffled discovery.

An immense reward was offered by the _bureau_ to any one who would betray his accomplices, and Monsieur Favart was placed at the head of a commission of inquiry. This person had himself been a _faux monnoyer_, and was an adept in the art, and it was he who had discovered the redoubted coiner who had brought the crime into such notoriety. Monsieur Favart was a man of the most vigilant acuteness, the most indefatigable research, and of a courage which; perhaps, is more common than we suppose. It is a popular error to suppose that courage means courage in everything. Put a hero on board ship at a five-barred gate, and, if he is not used to hunting, he will turn pale; put a fox-hunter on one of the Swiss chasms, over which the mountaineer springs like a roe, and his knees will knock under him. People are brave in the dangers to which they accustom themselves, either in imagination or practice.

Monsieur Favart, then, was a man of the most daring bravery in facing rogues and cut-throats. He awed them with his very eye; yet he had been known to have been kicked down-stairs by his wife, and when he was drawn into the grand army, he deserted the eve of his first battle. Such, as moralists say, is the inconsistency of man!

But Monsieur Favart was sworn to trace the coiners, and he had never failed yet in any enterprise he undertook. One day he presented himself to his chief with a countenance so elated that that penetrating functionary said to him at once--

"You have heard of our messieurs!"

"I have: I am to visit them to-night."

"Bravo! How many men will you take?"

"From twelve to twenty to leave without on guard. But I must enter alone. Such is the condition: an accomplice who fears his own throat too much to be openly a betrayer will introduce me to the house--nay, to the very room. By his description it is necessary I should know the exact locale in order to cut off retreat; so to-morrow night I shall surround the beehive and take the honey."

"They are desperate fellows, these coiners, always; better be cautious."

"You forget I was one of them, and know the masonry." About the same time this conversation was going on at the bureau of the police, in another part of the town Morton and Gawtre were seated alone. It is some weeks since they entered Paris, and spring has mellowed into summer.

The house in which they lodged was in the lordly quartier of the Faubourg St. Germain; the neighbouring streets were venerable with the ancient edifices of a fallen noblesse; but their tenement was in a narrow, dingy lane, and the building itself seemed beggarly and ruinous. The apartment was in an attic on the sixth story, and the window, placed at the back of the lane, looked upon another row of houses of a better description, that communicated with one of the great streets of the quartier. The space between their abode and their opposite neighbours was so narrow that the sun could scarcely pierce between. In the height of summer might be found there a perpetual shade.

The pair were seated by the window. Gawtre, well-dressed, smooth-shaven, as in his palmy time; Morton, in the same garments with which he had entered Paris, weather-stained and ragged. Looking towards the casements of the attic in the opposite house, Gawtre said, mutteringly, "I wonder where Birnie has been, and why he has not returned. I grow suspicious of that man."

"Suspicious of what?" asked Morton. "Of his honesty? Would he rob you?"

"Rob me! Humph--perhaps! but you see I am in Paris, in spite of the hints of the police; he may denounce me."

"Why, then, suffer him to lodge away from you?"

"Why? because, by having separate houses there are two channels of escape. A dark night, and a ladder thrown across from window to window, he is with us, or we with him."

"But wherefore such precautions? You blind--you deceive me; what have you done?--what is your employment now? You are, mute. Hark you, Gawtre. I have pinned my fate to you--I am fallen from hope itself! At times it almost makes me mad to look back--and yet you do not trust me. Since your return to Paris you are absent whole nights--often days; you are moody and thoughtful--yet, whatever your business, it seems to bring

you ample returns."

"You think that," said Gawtrety, mildly, and with a sort of pity in his voice; "yet you refuse to take even the money to change those rags."

"Because I know not how the money was gained. Ah, Gawtrety, I am not too proud for charity, but I am for--" He checked the word uppermost in his thoughts, and resumed--

"Yes; your occupations seem lucrative. It was but yesterday Birnie gave me fifty napoleons, for which he said you wished change in silver."

"Did he? The ras-- Well! and you got change for them?"

"I know not why, but I refused."

"That was right, Philip. Do nothing that man tells you."

"Will you, then, trust me? You are engaged in some horrible traffic! it may be blood! I am no longer a boy--I have a will of my own--I will not be silently and blindly entrapped to perdition. If I march thither, it shall be with my own consent. Trust me, and this day, or we part to-morrow."

"Be ruled. Some secrets it is better not to know."

"It matters not. I have come to my decision--I ask yours."

Gawtrety paused for some moments in deep thought. At last he lifted his eyes to Philip, and replied:

"Well, then, if it must be. Sooner or later it must have been so; and I want a confidant. You are bold, and will not shrink. You desire to know my occupation--will you witness it to-night?"

"I am prepared: to-night!"

Here a step was heard on the stairs--a knock at the door--and Birnie entered.

He drew aside Gawtrety, and whispered him, as usual, for some moments.

Gawtrety nodded his head, and then said aloud--

"To-morrow we shall talk without reserve before my young friend.
To-night he joins us."

"To-night!--very well," said Birnie, with his cold sneer. He must take the oath; and you, with your life, will be responsible for his honesty?"

"Ay! it is the rule."

"Good-bye, then, till we meet," said Birnie, and withdrew.

"I wonder," said Gawtrety, musingly, and between his grinded teeth, "whether I shall ever have a good fair shot at that fellow? Ho! ho!" and his laugh shook the walls.

Morton looked hard at Gawtrety, as the latter now sank down in his chair, and gazed with a vacant stare, that seemed almost to partake of imbecility, upon the opposite wall. The careless, reckless, jovial expression, which usually characterised the features of the man, had for some weeks given place to a restless, anxious, and at times ferocious aspect, like the beast that first finds a sport while the hounds are yet afar, and his limbs are yet strong, in the chase which marks him for his victim, but grows desperate with rage and fear as the day nears its close, and the death-dogs pant hard upon his track. But at that moment the strong features, with their gnarled muscle and iron sinews, seemed to have lost every sign both of passion and the will, and to be locked in a stolid and dull repose. At last he looked up at Morton, and said, with a smile like that of an old man in his dotage--

"I'm thinking that my life has been one mistake! I had talents--you would not fancy it--but once I was neither a fool nor a villain! Odd, isn't it? Just reach me the brandy."

But Morton, with a slight shudder, turned and left the room.

He walked on mechanically, and gained, at last, the superb Quai that borders the Seine; there, the passengers became more frequent; gay equipages rolled along; the white and lofty mansions looked fair and stately in the clear blue sky of early summer; beside him flowed the sparkling river, animated with the painted baths that floated on its surface: earth was merry and heaven serene his heart was dark through all: Night within--Morning beautiful without! At last he paused by that bridge, stately with the statues of those whom the caprice of time honours with a name; for though Zeus and his gods be overthrown, while earth exists will live the worship of Dead Men;--the bridge by which you

pass from the royal Tuileries, or the luxurious streets beyond the Rue de Rivoli, to the Senate of the emancipated People, and the gloomy and desolate grandeur of the Faubourg St. Germain, in whose venerable haunts the impoverished descendants of the old feudal tyrants, whom the birth of the Senate overthrew, yet congregate;--the ghosts of departed powers proud of the shadows of great names. As the English outcast paused midway on the bridge, and for the first time lifting his head from his bosom, gazed around, there broke at once on his remembrance that terrible and fatal evening, when, hopeless, friendless, desperate, he had begged for charity of his uncle's hireling, with all the feelings that then (so imperfectly and lightly touched on in his brief narrative to Gawtreys) had raged and blackened in his breast, urging to the resolution he had adopted, casting him on the ominous friendship of the man whose guidance he even then had suspected and distrusted. The spot in either city had a certain similitude and correspondence each with each: at the first he had consummated his despair of human destinies--he had dared to forget the Providence of God--he had arrogated his fate to himself: by the first bridge he had taken his resolve; by the last he stood in awe at the result--stood no less poor--no less abject--equally in rags and squalor; but was his crest as haughty and his eye as fearless, for was his conscience as free and his honour as unstained? Those arches of stone--those rivers that rolled between, seemed to him then to take a more mystic and typical sense than belongs to the outer world--they were the bridges to the Rivers of his Life. Plunged in thoughts so confused and dim that he could scarcely distinguish, through the chaos, the one streak of light which, perhaps, heralded the reconstruction or regeneration of the elements of his soul;--two passengers halted, also by his side.

"You will be late for the debate," said one of them to the other. "Why do you stop?"

"My friend," said the other, "I never pass this spot without recalling the time when I stood here without a son, or, as I thought, a chance of one, and impiously meditated self-destruction."

"You!--now so rich--so fortunate in repute and station--is it possible? How was it? A lucky chance?--a sudden legacy?"

"No: Time, Faith, and Energy--the three Friends God has given to the Poor!"

The men moved on; but Morton, who had turned his face towards them, fancied that the last speaker fixed on him his bright, cheerful eye, with a meaning look; and when the man was gone, he repeated those words, and

hailed them in his heart of hearts as an augury from above.

Quickly, then, and as if by magic, the former confusion of his mind seemed to settle into distinct shapes of courage and resolve. "Yes," he muttered; "I will keep this night's appointment--I will learn the secret of these men's life. In my inexperience and destitution, I have suffered myself to be led hitherto into a partnership, if not with vice and crime, at least with subterfuge and trick. I awake from my reckless boyhood--my unworthy palterings with my better self. If Gawtreys be as I dread to find him--if he be linked in some guilty and hateful traffic; with that loathsome accomplice--I will--" He paused, for his heart whispered, "Well, and even so,--the guilty man clothed and fed thee!" "I will," resumed his thought, in answer to his heart--"I will go on my knees to him to fly while there is yet time, to work--beg--starve--perish even--rather than lose the right to look man in the face without a blush, and kneel to his God without remorse!"

And as he thus ended, he felt suddenly as if he himself were restored to the perception and the joy of the Nature and the World around him; the NIGHT had vanished from his soul--he inhaled the balm and freshness of the air--he comprehended the delight which the liberal June was scattering over the earth--he looked above, and his eyes were suffused with pleasure, at the smile of the soft blue skies. The MORNING became, as it were, a part of his own being; and he felt that as the world in spite of the storms is fair, so in spite of evil God is good. He walked on--he passed the bridge, but his step was no more the same,--he forgot his rags. Why should he be ashamed? And thus, in the very flush of this new and strange elation and elasticity of spirit, he came unawares upon a group of young men, lounging before the porch of one of the chief hotels in that splendid Rue de Rivoli, wherein Wealth and the English have made their homes. A groom, mounted, was leading another horse up and down the road, and the young men were making their comments of approbation upon both the horses, especially the one led, which was, indeed, of uncommon beauty and great value. Even Morton, in whom the boyish passion of his earlier life yet existed, paused to turn his experienced and admiring eye upon the stately shape and pace of the noble animal, and as he did so, a name too well remembered came upon his ear.

"Certainly, Arthur Beaufort is the most enviable fellow in Europe."

"Why, yes," said another of the young men; "he has plenty of money--is good-looking, devilish good-natured, clever, and spends like a prince."

"Has the best horses!"

"The best luck at roulette!"

"The prettiest girls in love with him!"

"And no one enjoys life more. Ah! here he is!"

The group parted as a light, graceful figure came out of a jeweller's shop that adjoined the hotel, and halted gaily amongst the loungers. Morton's first impulse was to hurry from the spot; his second impulse arrested his step, and, a little apart, and half-hid beneath one of the arches of the colonnade which adorns the street, the Outcast gazed upon the Heir. There was no comparison in the natural personal advantages of the two young men; for Philip Morton, despite all the hardships of his rough career, had now grown up and ripened into a rare perfection of form and feature. His broad chest, his erect air, his lithe and symmetrical length of limb, united, happily, the attributes of activity and strength; and though there was no delicacy of youthful bloom upon his dark cheek, and though lines which should have come later marred its smoothness with the signs of care and thought, yet an expression of intelligence and daring, equally beyond his years, and the evidence of hardy, abstemious, vigorous health, served to show to the full advantage the outline of features which, noble and regular, though stern and masculine, the artist might have borrowed for his ideal of a young Spartan arming for his first battle. Arthur, slight to feebleness, and with the paleness, partly of constitution, partly of gay excess, on his fair and clear complexion, had features far less symmetrical and impressive than his cousin: but what then? All that are bestowed by elegance of dress, the refinements of luxurious habit, the nameless grace that comes from a mind and a manner polished, the one by literary culture, the other by social intercourse, invested the person of the heir with a fascination that rude Nature alone ever fails to give. And about him there was a gaiety, an airiness of spirit, an atmosphere of enjoyment which bespoke one who is in love with life.

"Why, this is lucky! I'm so glad to see you all!" said Arthur Beaufort, with that silver-ringing tone and charming smile which are to the happy spring of man what its music and its sunshine are to the spring of earth. "You must dine with me at Verrey's. I want something to rouse me to-day; for I did not get home from the Salon* till four this morning."

*[The most celebrated gaming-house in Paris in the day before gaming-houses were suppressed by the well-directed energy of the government.]

"But you won?"

"Yes, Marsden. Hang it! I always win: I who could so well afford to lose: I'm quite ashamed of my luck!"

"It is easy to spend what one wins," observed Mr. Marsden, sententiously; "and I see you have been at the jeweller's! A present for Cecile? Well, don't blush, my dear fellow. What is life without women?"

"And wine?" said a second. "And play?" said a third. "And wealth?" said a fourth.

"And you enjoy them all! Happy fellow!" said a fifth. The Outcast pulled his hat over his brows, and walked away.

"This dear Paris," said Beaufort, as his eye carelessly and unconsciously followed the dark form retreating through the arches;--"this dear Paris! I must make the most of it while I stay! I have only been here a few weeks, and next week I must go."

"Pooh--your health is better: you don't look like the same man."

"You think so really? Still I don't know: the doctors say that I must either go to the German waters--the season is begun--or--"

"Or what?"

"Live less with such pleasant companions, my dear fellow! But as you say, what is life without--"

"Women!"

"Wine!"

"Play!"

"Wealth!"

"Ha! ha. 'Throw physic to the dogs: I'll none of it!'"

And Arthur leaped lightly on his saddle, and as he rode gaily on, humming the favourite air of the last opera, the hoofs of his horse splashed the mud over a foot-passenger halting at the crossing. Morton checked the

fiery exclamation rising to his lips; and gazing after the brilliant form that hurried on towards the Champs Elysees, his eye caught the statues on the bridge, and a voice, as of a cheering angel, whispered again to his heart, "TIME, FAITH, ENERGY!"

The expression of his countenance grew calm at once, and as he continued his rambles it was with a mind that, casting off the burdens of the past, looked serenely and steadily on the obstacles and hardships of the future. We have seen that a scruple of conscience or of pride, not without its nobleness, had made him refuse the importunities of Gawtrety for less sordid raiment; the same feeling made it his custom to avoid sharing the luxurious and dainty food with which Gawtrety was wont to regale himself. For that strange man, whose wonderful felicity of temperament and constitution rendered him, in all circumstances, keenly alive to the hearty and animal enjoyments of life, would still emerge, as the day declined, from their wretched apartment, and, trusting to his disguises, in which indeed he possessed a masterly art, repair to one of the better description of restaurants, and feast away his cares for the moment. William Gawtrety would not have cared three straws for the curse of Damocles. The sword over his head would never have spoiled his appetite! He had lately, too, taken to drinking much more deeply than he had been used to do--the fine intellect of the man was growing thickened and dulled; and this was a spectacle that Morton could not bear to contemplate. Yet so great was Gawtrety's vigour of health, that, after draining wine and spirits enough to have despatched a company of fox-hunters, and after betraying, sometimes in uproarious glee, sometimes in maudlin self-bewailings, that he himself was not quite invulnerable to the thyrsus of the god, he would--on any call on his energies, or especially before departing on those mysterious expeditions which kept him from home half, and sometimes all, the night--plunge his head into cold water--drink as much of the lymph as a groom would have shuddered to bestow on a horse--close his eyes in a doze for half an hour, and wake, cool, sober, and collected, as if he had lived according to the precepts of Socrates or Cornaro!

But to return to Morton. It was his habit to avoid as much as possible sharing the good cheer of his companion; and now, as he entered the, Champs Elysees, he saw a little family, consisting of a young mechanic, his wife, and two children, who, with that love of harmless recreation which yet characterises the French, had taken advantage of a holiday in the craft, and were enjoying their simple meal under the shadow of the trees. Whether in hunger or in envy, Morton paused and contemplated the happy group. Along the road rolled the equipages and trampled the steeds of those to whom all life is a holiday. There, was Pleasure--under those

trees was Happiness. One of the children, a little boy of about six years old, observing the attitude and gaze of the pausing wayfarer, ran to him, and holding up a fragment of a coarse kind of cake, said to him, willingly, "Take it--I have had enough!" The child reminded Morton of his brother--his heart melted within him--he lifted the young Samaritan in his arms, and as he kissed him, wept.

The mother observed and rose also. She laid her hand on his own: "Poor boy! why do you weep?--can we relieve you?"

Now that bright gleam of human nature, suddenly darting across the sombre recollections and associations of his past life, seemed to Morton as if it came from Heaven, in approval and in blessing of this attempt at reconciliation to his fate.

"I thank you," said he, placing the child on the ground, and passing his hand over his eyes,--"I thank you--yes! Let me sit down amongst you." And he sat down, the child by his side, and partook of their fare, and was merry with them,--the proud Philip!--had he not begun to discover the "precious jewel" in the "ugly and venomous" Adversity?

The mechanic, though a gay fellow on the whole, was not without some of that discontent of his station which is common with his class; he vented it, however, not in murmurs, but in jests. He was satirical on the carriages and the horsemen that passed; and, lolling on the grass, ridiculed his betters at his ease.

"Hush!" said his wife, suddenly; "here comes Madame de Merville;" and rising as she spoke, she made a respectful inclination of her head towards an open carriage that was passing very slowly towards the town.

"Madame de Merville!" repeated the husband, rising also, and lifting his cap from his head. "Ah! I have nothing to say against her!"

Morton looked instinctively towards the carriage, and saw a fair countenance turned graciously to answer the silent salutations of the mechanic and his wife--a countenance that had long haunted his dreams, though of late it had faded away beneath harsher thoughts--the countenance of the stranger whom he had seen at the bureau of Gawtreys, when that worthy personage had borne a more mellifluous name. He started and changed colour: the lady herself now seemed suddenly to recognise him; for their eyes met, and she bent forward eagerly. She pulled the check-string--the carriage halted--she beckoned to the mechanic's wife, who went up to the roadside.

"I worked once for that lady," said the man with a tone of feeling; "and when my wife fell ill last winter she paid the doctors. Ah, she is an angel of charity and kindness!"

Morton scarcely heard this eulogium, for he observed, by something eager and inquisitive in the face of Madame de Merville, and by the sudden manner in which the mechanic's helpmate turned her head to the spot in which he stood, that he was the object of their conversation. Once more he became suddenly aware of his ragged dress, and with a natural shame--a fear that charity might be extended to him from her--he muttered an abrupt farewell to the operative, and without another glance at the carriage, walked away.

Before he had got many paces, the wife however came up to him, breathless. "Madame de Merville would speak to you, sir!" she said, with more respect than she had hitherto thrown into her manner. Philip paused an instant, and again strode on--

"It must be some mistake," he said, hurriedly: "I have no right to expect such an honour."

He struck across the road, gained the opposite side, and had vanished from Madame de Merville's eyes, before the woman regained the carriage. But still that calm, pale, and somewhat melancholy face, presented itself before him; and as he walked again through the town, sweet and gentle fancies crowded confusedly on his heart. On that soft summer day, memorable for so many silent but mighty events in that inner life which prepares the catastrophes of the outer one; as in the region, of which Virgil has sung, the images of men to be born hereafter repose or glide-- on that soft summer day, he felt he had reached the age when Youth begins to clothe in some human shape its first vague ideal of desire and love.

In such thoughts, and still wandering, the day wore away, till he found himself in one of the lanes that surround that glittering Microcosm of the vices, the frivolities, the hollow show, and the real beggary of the gay City--the gardens and the galleries of the Palais Royal. Surprised at the lateness of the hour, it was then on the stroke of seven, he was about to return homewards, when the loud voice of Gawtreysounded behind, and that personage, tapping him on the back, said,--

"Hollo, my young friend, well met! This will be a night of trial to you. Empty stomachs produce weak nerves. Come along! you must dine with me. A good dinner and a bottle of old wine--come! nonsense, I say you shall

come! _Vive la joie_!"

While speaking, he had linked his arm in Morton's, and hurried him on several paces in spite of his struggles; but just as the words _Vive la joie_ left his lips, he stood still and mute, as if a thunderbolt had fallen at his feet; and Morton felt that heavy arm shiver and tremble like a leaf. He looked up, and just at the entrance of that part of the Palais Royal in which are situated the restaurants of Verey and Vefour, he saw two men standing but a few paces before them, and gazing full on Gawtrety and himself.

"It is my evil genius," muttered Gawtrety, grinding his teeth.

"And mine!" said Morton.

The younger of the two men thus apostrophised made a step towards Philip, when his companion drew him back and whispered,--"What are you about--do you know that young man?"

"He is my cousin; Philip Beaufort's natural son!"

"Is he? then discard him for ever. He is with the most dangerous knave in Europe!"

As Lord Lilburne--for it was he--thus whispered his nephew, Gawtrety strode up to him; and, glaring full in his face, said in a deep and hollow tone,--"There is a hell, my lord,--I go to drink to our meeting!" Thus saying, he took off his hat with a ceremonious mockery, and disappeared within the adjoining restaurant, kept by Vefour.

"A hell!" said Lilburne, with his frigid smile; "the rogue's head runs upon gambling-houses!"

"And I have suffered Philip again to escape me," said Arthur, in self-reproach: for while Gawtrety had addressed Lord Lilburne, Morton had plunged back amidst the labyrinth of alleys. "How have I kept my oath?"

"Come! your guests must have arrived by this time. As for that wretched young man, depend upon it that he is corrupted body and soul."

"But he is my own cousin."

"Pooh! there is no relationship in natural children: besides, he will find you out fast enough. Ragged claimants are not long too proud to beg."

"You speak in earnest?" said Arthur, irresolutely. "Ay! trust my experience of the world--Allons!"

And in a _cabinet_ of the very _restaurant_, adjoining that in which the solitary Gawtrety gorged his conscience, Lilburne, Arthur, and their gay friends, soon forgetful of all but the roses of the moment, bathed their airy spirits in the dews of the mirthful wine. Oh, extremes of life! Oh, Night! Oh, Morning!

CHAPTER IX.

"Meantime a moving scene was open laid,
That lazar house."--THOMSON'S _Castle of Indolence_.

It was near midnight. At the mouth of the lane in which Gawtrety resided there stood four men. Not far distant, in the broad street at angles with the lane, were heard the wheels of carriages and the sound of music. A lady, fair in form, tender of heart, stainless in repute, was receiving her friends!

"Monsieur Favart," said one of the men to the smallest of the four; "you understand the conditions--20,000 francs and a free pardon?"

"Nothing more reasonable--it is understood. Still I confess that I should like to have my men close at hand. I am not given to fear; but this is a dangerous experiment."

"You knew the danger beforehand and subscribed to it: you must enter alone with me, or not at all. Mark you, the men are sworn to murder him who betrays them. Not for twenty times 20,000 francs would I have them know me as the informer. My life were not worth a day's purchase. Now, if you feel secure in your disguise, all is safe. You will have seen them at their work--you will recognise their persons--you can depose against them at the trial--I shall have time to quit France."

"Well, well! as you please."

"Mind, you must wait in the vault with them till they separate. We have so planted your men that whatever street each of the gang takes in going home, he can be seized quietly and at once. The bravest and craftiest of all, who, though he has but just joined, is already their captain;--him, the man I told you of, who lives in the house, you must take after his return, in his bed. It is the sixth story to the right, remember: here is the key to his door. He is a giant in strength; and will never be taken alive if up and armed."

"Ah, I comprehend!--Gilbert" (and Favart turned to one of his companions who had not yet spoken) "take three men besides yourself, according to the directions I gave you,--the porter will admit you, that's arranged. Make no noise. If I don't return by four o'clock, don't wait for me, but proceed at once. Look well to your primings. Take him alive, if possible--at the worst, dead. And now--anon ami--lead on!"

The traitor nodded, and walked slowly down the street. Favart, pausing, whispered hastily to the man whom he had called Gilbert,--

"Follow me close--get to the door of the cellar--place eight men within hearing of my whistle--recollect the picklocks, the axes. If you hear the whistle, break in; if not, I'm safe, and the first orders to seize the captain in his room stand good."

So saying, Favart strode after his guide. The door of a large, but ill-favoured-looking house stood ajar--they entered--passed unmolested through a court-yard--descended some stairs; the guide unlocked the door of a cellar, and took a dark lantern from under his cloak. As he drew up the slide, the dim light gleamed on barrels and wine-casks, which appeared to fill up the space. Rolling aside one of these, the guide lifted a trap-door, and lowered his lantern. "Enter," said he; and the two men disappeared.

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The coiners were at their work. A man, seated on a stool before a desk, was entering accounts in a large book. That man was William Gawtreay. While, with the rapid precision of honest mechanics, the machinery of the Dark Trade went on in its several departments. Apart--alone--at the foot of a long table, sat Philip Morton. The truth had exceeded his darkest suspicions. He had consented to take the oath not to divulge what was to be given to his survey; and when, led into that vault, the bandage was taken from his eyes, it was some minutes before he could fully comprehend the desperate and criminal occupations of the wild forms amidst which

towered the burly stature of his benefactor. As the truth slowly grew upon him, he shrank from the side of Gawtrety; but, deep compassion for his friend's degradation swallowing up the horror of the trade, he flung himself on one of the rude seats, and felt that the bond between them was indeed broken, and that the next morning he should be again alone in the world. Still, as the obscene jests, the fearful oaths, that from time to time rang through the vault, came on his ear, he cast his haughty eye in such disdain over the groups, that Gawtrety, observing him, trembled for his safety; and nothing but Philip's sense of his own impotence, and the brave, not timorous, desire not to perish by such hands, kept silent the fiery denunciations of a nature still proud and honest, that quivered on his lips. All present were armed with pistols and cutlasses except Morton, who suffered the weapons presented to him to lie unheeded on the table.

"_Courage, mes amis_!" said Gawtrety, closing his book,--"_Courage_!"--a few months more, and we shall have made enough to retire upon, and enjoy ourselves for the rest of the days. Where is Birnie?"

"Did he not tell you?" said one of the artisans, looking up. "He has found out the cleverest hand in France, the very fellow who helped Bouchard in all his five-franc pieces. He has promised to bring him to-night."

"Ay, I remember," returned Gawtrety, "he told me this morning,--he is a famous decoy!"

"I think so, indeed!" quoth a coiner; "for he caught you, the best head to our hands that ever _les industriels_ were blessed with--_sacre fichtre_!"

"Flatterer!" said Gawtrety, coming from the desk to the table, and pouring out wine from one of the bottles into a huge flagon--"To your healths!"

Here the door slid back, and Birnie glided in.

"Where is your booty, _mon brave_?" said Gawtrety. "We only coin money; you coin men, stamp with your own seal, and send them current to the devil!"

The coiners, who liked Birnie's ability (for the ci-devant engraver was of admirable skill in their craft), but who hated his joyless manners, laughed at this taunt, which Birnie did not seem to heed, except by a

malignant gleam of his dead eye.

"If you mean the celebrated coiner, Jacques Giraumont, he waits without. You know our rules. I cannot admit him without leave."

"_Bon_! we give it,--eh, messieurs?" said Gawtre. "Ay-ay," cried several voices. "He knows the oath, and will hear the penalty."

"Yes, he knows the oath," replied Birnie, and glided back.

In a moment more he returned with a small man in a mechanic's blouse. The new comer wore the republican beard and moustache--of a sandy grey--his hair was the same colour; and a black patch over one eye increased the ill-favoured appearance of his features.

"_Diable_! Monsieur Giraumont! but you are more like Vulcan than Adonis!" said Gawtre.

"I don't know anything about Vulcan, but I know how to make five-franc pieces," said Monsieur Giraumont, doggedly.

"Are you poor?"

"As a church mouse! The only thing belonging to a church, since the Bourbons came back, that is poor!"

At this sally, the coiners, who had gathered round the table, uttered the shout with which, in all circumstances, Frenchmen receive a _bon mot_.

"Humph!" said Gawtre. "Who responds with his own life for your fidelity?"

"I," said Birnie.

"Administer the oath to him."

Suddenly four men advanced, seized the visitor, and bore him from the vault into another one within. After a few moments they returned.

"He has taken the oath and heard the penalty."

"Death to yourself, your wife, your son, and your grandson, if you betray us!"

"I have neither son nor grandson; as for my wife, Monsieur le Capitaine, you offer a bribe instead of a threat when you talk of her death."

"Sacre! but you will be an addition to our circle, _mon brave_!" said Gawtrety, laughing; while again the grim circle shouted applause.

"But I suppose you care for your own life."

"Otherwise I should have preferred starving to coming here," answered the laconic neophyte.

"I have done with you. Your health!"

On this the coiners gathered round Monsieur Giraumont, shook him by the hand, and commenced many questions with a view to ascertain his skill.

"Show me your coinage first; I see you use both the die and the furnace. Hem! this piece is not bad--you have struck it from an iron die?--right --it makes the impression sharper than plaster of Paris. But you take the poorest and the most dangerous part of the trade in taking the home market. I can put you in a way to make ten times as much--and with safety. Look at this!"--and Monsieur Giraumont took a forged Spanish dollar from his pocket, so skilfully manufactured that the connoisseurs were lost in admiration--"you may pass thousands of these all over Europe, except France, and who is ever to detect you? But it will require better machinery than you have here."

Thus conversing, Monsieur Giraumont did not perceive that Mr. Gawtrety had been examining him very curiously and minutely. But Birnie had noted their chief's attention, and once attempted to join his new ally, when Gawtrety laid his hand on his shoulder, and stopped him.

"Do not speak to your friend till I bid you, or--" he stopped short, and touched his pistols.

Birnie grew a shade more pale, but replied with his usual sneer:

"Suspicious!--well, so much the better!" and seating himself carelessly at the table, lighted his pipe.

"And now, Monsieur Giraumont," said Gawtrety, as he took the head of the table, "come to my right hand. A half-holiday in your honour. Clear these infernal instruments; and more wine, mes amis!"

The party arranged themselves at the table. Among the desperate there is almost invariably a tendency to mirth. A solitary ruffian, indeed, is moody, but a gang of ruffians are jovial. The coiners talked and laughed loud. Mr. Birnie, from his dogged silence, seemed apart from the rest, though in the centre. For in a noisy circle a silent tongue builds a wall round its owner. But that respectable personage kept his furtive watch upon Giraumont and Gawtre, who appeared talking together, very amicably. The younger novice of that night, equally silent, seated towards the bottom of the table, was not less watchful than Birnie. An uneasy, undefinable foreboding had come over him since the entrance of Monsieur Giraumont; this had been increased by the manner of Mr. Gawtre. His faculty of observation, which was very acute, had detected something false in the chief's blandness to their guest--something dangerous in the glittering eye that Gawtre ever, as he spoke to Giraumont, bent on that person's lips as he listened to his reply. For, whenever William Gawtre suspected a man, he watched not his eyes, but his lips.

Waked from his scornful reverie, a strange spell chained Morton's attention to the chief and the guest, and he bent forward, with parted mouth and straining ear, to catch their conversation.

"It seems to me a little strange," said Mr. Gawtre, raising his voice so as to be heard by the party, "that a coiner so dexterous as Monsieur Giraumont should not be known to any of us except our friend Birnie."

"Not at all," replied Giraumont; "I worked only with Bouchard and two others since sent to the galleys. We were but a small fraternity--everything has its commencement."

"_C'est juste: buvez, donc, cher ami_!"

The wine circulated. Gawtre began again:

"You have had a bad accident, seemingly, Monsieur Giraumont. How did you lose your eye?"

"In a scuffle with the gens d'armes the night Bouchard was taken and I escaped. Such misfortunes are on the cards."

"C'est juste: buvez, donc, Monsieur Giraumont!"

Again there was a pause, and again Gawtre's deep voice was heard.

"You wear a wig, I think, Monsieur Giraumont? To judge by your eyelashes

your own hair has been a handsomer colour."

"We seek disguise, not beauty, my host; and the police have sharp eyes."

"_C'est juste: buvez, donc-vieux Renard_! When did we two meet last?"

"Never, that I know of."

"_Ce n'est pas vrai! buvez, donc, MONSIEUR FAVART_!"

At the sound of that name the company started in dismay and confusion, and the police officer, forgetting himself for the moment, sprang from his seat, and put his right hand into his blouse.

"Ho, there!--treason!" cried Gawtrety, in a voice of thunder; and he caught the unhappy man by the throat. It was the work of a moment. Morton, where he sat, beheld a struggle--he heard a death-cry. He saw the huge form of the master-coiner rising above all the rest, as cutlasses gleamed and eyes sparkled round. He saw the quivering and powerless frame of the unhappy guest raised aloft in those mighty arms, and presently it was hurled along the table--bottles crashing--the board shaking beneath its weight--and lay before the very eyes of Morton, a distorted and lifeless mass. At the same instant Gawtrety sprang upon the table, his black frown singling out from the group the ashen, cadaverous face of the shrinking traitor. Birnie had darted from the table--he was half-way towards the sliding door--his face, turned over his shoulder, met the eyes of the chief.

"Devil!" shouted Gawtrety, in his terrible voice, which the echoes of the vault gave back from side to side. "Did I not give thee up my soul that thou mightest not compass my death? Hark ye! thus die my slavery and all our secrets!" The explosion of his pistol half swallowed up the last word, and with a single groan the traitor fell on the floor, pierced through the brain--then there was a dead and grim hush as the smoke rolled slowly along the roof of the dreary vault.

Morton sank back on his seat, and covered his face with his hands. The last seal on the fate of THE MAN OF CRIME was set; the last wave in the terrible and mysterious tide of his destiny had dashed on his soul to the shore whence there is no return. Vain, now and henceforth, the humour, the sentiment, the kindly impulse, the social instincts which had invested that stalwart shape with dangerous fascination, which had implied the hope of ultimate repentance, of redemption even in this world. The HOUR and the CIRCUMSTANCE had seized their prey; and the

self-defence, which a lawless career rendered a necessity, left the eternal die of blood upon his doom!

"Friends, I have saved you," said Gawtre, slowly gazing on the corpse of his second victim, while he turned the pistol to his belt. "I have not quailed before this man's eye" (and he spurned the clay of the officer as he spoke with a revengeful scorn) "without treasuring up its aspect in my heart of hearts. I knew him when he entered--knew him through his disguise--yet, faith, it was a clever one! Turn up his face and gaze on him now; he will never terrify us again, unless there be truth in ghosts!"

Murmuring and tremulous the coiners scrambled on the table and examined the dead man. From this task Gawtre interrupted them, for his quick eye detected, with the pistols under the policeman's blouse, a whistle of metal of curious construction, and he conjectured at once that danger was at hand.

"I have saved you, I say, but only for the hour. This deed cannot sleep. See, he had help within call! The police knew where to look for their comrade--we are dispersed. Each for himself. Quick, divide the spoils! _Sauve qui peut_!"

Then Morton heard where he sat, his hands still clasped before his face, a confused hubbub of voices, the jingle of money, the scrambling of feet, the creaking of doors. All was silent!

A strong grasp drew his hands from his eyes.

"Your first scene of life against life," said Gawtre's voice, which seemed fearfully changed to the ear that heard it. "Bah! what would you think of a battle? Come to our eyrie: the carcasses are gone."

Morton looked fearfully round the vault. He and Gawtre were alone. His eyes sought the places where the dead had lain--they were removed--no vestige of the deeds, not even a drop of blood.

"Come, take up your cutlass, come!" repeated the voice of the chief, as with his dim lantern--now the sole light of the vault--he stood in the shadow of the doorway.

Morton rose, took up the weapon mechanically, and followed that terrible guide, mute and unconscious, as a Soul follows a Dream through the House of Sleep!

CHAPTER X.

"Sleep no more!"--_Macbeth_

After winding through gloomy and labyrinthine passages, which conducted to a different range of cellars from those entered by the unfortunate Favart, Gawtrety emerged at the foot of a flight of stairs, which, dark, narrow, and in many places broken, had been probably appropriated to servants of the house in its days of palmier glory. By these steps the pair regained their attic. Gawtrety placed the lantern on the table and seated himself in silence. Morton, who had recovered his self-possession and formed his resolution, gazed on him for some moments, equally taciturn. At length he spoke:

"Gawtrety!"

"I bade you not call me by that name," said the coiner; for we need scarcely say that in his new trade he had assumed a new appellation.

"It is the least guilty one by which I have known you," returned Morton, firmly. "It is for the last time I call you by it! I demanded to see by what means one to whom I had entrusted my fate supported himself. I have seen," continued the young man, still firmly, but with a livid cheek and lip, "and the tie between us is rent for ever. Interrupt me not! it is not for me to blame you. I have eaten of your bread and drunk of your cup. Confiding in you too blindly, and believing that you were at least free from those dark and terrible crimes for which there is no expiation--at least in this life--my conscience seared by distress, my very soul made dormant by despair, I surrendered myself to one leading a career equivocal, suspicious, dishonourable perhaps, but still not, as I believed, of atrocity and bloodshed. I wake at the brink of the abyss--my mother's hand beckons to me from the grave; I think I hear her voice while I address you--I recede while it is yet time--we part, and for ever!"

Gawtrety, whose stormy passion was still deep upon his soul, had listened hitherto in sullen and dogged silence, with a gloomy frown on his knitted brow; he now rose with an oath--

"Part! that I may let loose on the world a new traitor! Part! when you have seen me fresh from an act that, once whispered, gives me to the

guillotine! Part--never! at least alive!"

"I have said it," said Morton, folding his arms calmly; I say it to your face, though I might part from you in secret. Frown not on me, man of blood! I am fearless as yourself! In another minute I am gone."

"Ah! is it so?" said Gawtrety; and glancing round the room, which contained two doors, the one concealed by the draperies of a bed, communicating with the stairs by which they had entered, the other with the landing of the principal and common flight: he turned to the former, within his reach, which he locked, and put the key into his pocket, and then, throwing across the latter a heavy swing bar, which fell into its socket with a harsh noise,--before the threshold he placed his vast bulk, and burst into his loud, fierce laugh: "Ho! ho! Slave and fool, once mine, you were mine body and soul for ever!"

"Tempter, I defy you! stand back!" And, firm and dauntless, Morton laid his hand on the giant's vest.

Gawtrety seemed more astonished than enraged. He looked hard at his daring associate, on whose lip the down was yet scarcely dark.

"Boy," said he, "off! do not rouse the devil in me again! I could crush you with a hug."

"My soul supports my body, and I am armed," said Morton, laying hand on his cutlass. "But you dare not harm me, nor I you; bloodstained as you are, you gave me shelter and bread; but accuse me not that I will save my soul while it is yet time!--Shall my mother have blessed me in vain upon her death-bed?"

Gawtrety drew back, and Morton, by a sudden impulse, grasped his hand.

"Oh! hear me--hear me!" he cried, with great emotion. "Abandon this horrible career; you have been decoyed and betrayed to it by one who can deceive or terrify you no more! Abandon it, and I will never desert you. For her sake--for your Fanny's sake--pause, like me, before the gulf swallow us. Let us fly!--far to the New World--to any land where our thews and sinews, our stout hands and hearts, can find an honest mart. Men, desperate as we are, have yet risen by honest means. Take her, your orphan, with us. We will work for her, both of us. Gawtrety! hear me. It is not my voice that speaks to you--it is your good angel's!"

Gawtrety fell back against the wall, and his chest heaved.

"Morton," he said, with choked and tremulous accent, "go now; leave me to my fate! I have sinned against you--shamefully sinned. It seemed to me so sweet to have a friend; in your youth and character of mind there was so much about which the tough strings of my heart wound themselves, that I could not bear to lose you--to suffer you to know me for what I was. I blinded--I deceived you as to my past deeds; that was base in me: but I swore to my own heart to keep you unexposed to every danger, and free from every vice that darkened my own path. I kept that oath till this night, when, seeing that you began to recoil from me, and dreading that you should desert me, I thought to bind you to me for ever by implicating you in this fellowship of crime. I am punished, and justly. Go, I repeat--leave me to the fate that strides nearer and nearer to me day by day. You are a boy still--I am no longer young. Habit is a second nature. Still--still I could repent--I could begin life again. But repose!--to look back--to remember--to be haunted night and day with deeds that shall meet me bodily and face to face on the last day--"

"Add not to the spectres! Come--fly this night--this hour!"

Gawtrety paused, irresolute and wavering, when at that moment he heard steps on the stairs below. He started--as starts the boar caught in his lair--and listened, pale and breathless.

"Hush!--they are on us!--they come!" as he whispered, the key from without turned in the wards--the door shook. "Soft! the bar preserves us both--this way." And the coiner crept to the door of the private stairs. He unlocked and opened it cautiously. A man sprang through the aperture:

"Yield!--you are my prisoner!"

"Never!" cried Gawtrety, hurling back the intruder, and clapping to the door, though other and stout men were pressing against it with all their power.

"Ho! ho! Who shall open the tiger's cage?"

At both doors now were heard the sound of voices. "Open in the king's name, or expect no mercy!"

"Hist!" said Gawtrety. "One way yet--the window--the rope."

Morton opened the casement--Gawtrety uncoiled the rope. The dawn was breaking; it was light in the streets, but all seemed quiet without. The

doors reeled and shook beneath the pressure of the pursuers. Gawtreys flung the rope across the street to the opposite parapet; after two or three efforts, the grappling-hook caught firm hold--the perilous path was made.

"On!--quick!--loiter not!" whispered Gawtreys; "you are active--it seems more dangerous than it is--cling with both hands--shut your eyes. When on the other side--you see the window of Birnie's room,--enter it--descend the stairs--let yourself out, and you are safe."

"Go first," said Morton, in the same tone: "I will not leave you now: you will be longer getting across than I shall. I will keep guard till you are over."

"Hark! hark!--are you mad? You keep guard! what is your strength to mine? Twenty men shall not move that door, while my weight is against it. Quick, or you destroy us both! Besides, you will hold the rope for me, it may not be strong enough for my bulk in itself. Stay!--stay one moment. If you escape, and I fall--Fanny--my father, he will take care of her,--you remember--thanks! Forgive me all! Go; that's right!"

With a firm impulse, Morton threw himself on the dreadful bridge; it swung and crackled at his weight. Shifting his grasp rapidly--holding his breath--with set teeth--with closed eyes--he moved on--he gained the parapet--he stood safe on the opposite side. And now, straining his eyes across, he saw through the open casement into the chamber he had just quitted. Gawtreys was still standing against the door to the principal staircase, for that of the two was the weaker and the more assailed. Presently the explosion of a fire-arm was heard; they had shot through the panel. Gawtreys seemed wounded, for he staggered forward, and uttered a fierce cry; a moment more, and he gained the window--he seized the rope--he hung over the tremendous depth! Morton knelt by the parapet, holding the grappling-hook in its place, with convulsive grasp, and fixing his eyes, bloodshot with fear and suspense, on the huge bulk that clung for life to that slender cord!

"Le voiles! Le voiles!" cried a voice from the opposite side. Morton raised his gaze from Gawtreys; the casement was darkened by the forms of his pursuers--they had burst into the room--an officer sprang upon the parapet, and Gawtreys, now aware of his danger, opened his eyes, and as he moved on, glared upon the foe. The policeman deliberately raised his pistol--Gawtreys arrested himself--from a wound in his side the blood trickled slowly and darkly down, drop by drop, upon the stones below; even the officers of law shuddered as they eyed him--his hair bristling

--his cheek white--his lips drawn convulsively from his teeth, and his eyes glaring from beneath the frown of agony and menace in which yet spoke the indomitable power and fierceness of the man. His look, so fixed--so intense--so stern, awed the policeman; his hand trembled as he fired, and the ball struck the parapet an inch below the spot where Morton knelt. An indistinct, wild, gurgling sound--half-laugh, half-yell of scorn and glee, broke from Gawtreys lips. He swung himself on--near--near--nearer--a yard from the parapet.

"You are saved!" cried Morton; when at the moment a volley burst from the fatal casement--the smoke rolled over both the fugitives--a groan, or rather howl, of rage, and despair, and agony, appalled even the hardest on whose ear it came. Morton sprang to his feet and looked below. He saw on the rugged stones far down, a dark, formless, motionless mass--the strong man of passion and levity--the giant who had played with life and soul, as an infant with the baubles that it prizes and breaks--was what the Caesar and the leper alike are, when the clay is without Gods breath--what glory, genius, power, and beauty, would be for ever and for ever, if there were no God!

"There is another!" cried the voice of one of the pursuers. "Fire!"

"Poor Gawtreys!" muttered Philip. "I will fulfil your last wish;" and scarcely conscious of the bullet that whistled by him, he disappeared behind the parapet.

CHAPTER XI.

"Gently moved
By the soft wind of whispering silks."--DECKER.

The reader may remember that while Monsieur Favart and Mr. Birnie were holding commune in the lane, the sounds of festivity were heard from a house in the adjoining street. To that house we are now summoned.

At Paris, the gaities of balls, or soirees, are, I believe, very rare in that period of the year in which they are most frequent in London. The entertainment now given was in honour of a christening; the lady who gave it, a relation of the new-born.

Madame de Merville was a young widow; even before her marriage she had

been distinguished in literature; she had written poems of more than common excellence; and being handsome, of good family, and large fortune, her talents made her an object of more interest than they might otherwise have done. Her poetry showed great sensibility and tenderness. If poetry be any index to the heart, you would have thought her one to love truly and deeply. Nevertheless, since she married--as girls in France do--not to please herself, but her parents, she made a *mariage de convenance*. Monsieur de Merville was a sober, sensible man, past middle age. Not being fond of poetry, and by no means coveting a professional author for his wife, he had during their union, which lasted four years, discouraged his wife's liaison with Apollo. But her mind, active and ardent, did not the less prey upon itself. At the age of four-and-twenty she became a widow, with an income large even in England for a single woman, and at Paris constituting no ordinary fortune. Madame de Merville, however, though a person of elegant taste, was neither ostentatious nor selfish; she had no children, and she lived quietly in apartments, handsome, indeed, but not more than adequate to the small establishment which--where, as on the Continent, the costly convenience of an entire house is not usually incurred--sufficed for her retinue. She devoted at least half her income, which was entirely at her own disposal, partly to the aid of her own relations, who were not rich, and partly to the encouragement of the literature she cultivated. Although she shrank from the ordeal of publication, her poems and sketches of romance were read to her own friends, and possessed an eloquence seldom accompanied with so much modesty. Thus, her reputation, though not blown about the winds, was high in her own circle, and her position in fashion and in fortune made her looked up to by her relations as the head of her family; they regarded her as *femme superieure*, and her advice with them was equivalent to a command. Eugenie de Merville was a strange mixture of qualities at once feminine and masculine. On the one hand, she had a strong will, independent views, some contempt for the world, and followed her own inclinations without servility to the opinion of others; on the other hand, she was susceptible, romantic, of a sweet, affectionate, kind disposition. Her visit to M. Love, however indiscreet, was not less in accordance with her character than her charity to the mechanic's wife; masculine and careless where an eccentric thing was to be done--curiosity satisfied, or some object in female diplomacy achieved--womanly, delicate, and gentle, the instant her benevolence was appealed to or her heart touched. She had now been three years a widow, and was consequently at the age of twenty-seven. Despite the tenderness of her poetry and her character, her reputation was unblemished. She had never been in love. People who are much occupied do not fall in love easily; besides, Madame de Merville was refining, exacting, and wished to find heroes where she only met handsome dandies or ugly authors. Moreover,

Eugenie was both a vain and a proud person--vain of her celebrity and proud of her birth. She was one whose goodness of heart made her always active in promoting the happiness of others. She was not only generous and charitable, but willing to serve people by good offices as well as money. Everybody loved her. The new-born infant, to whose addition to the Christian community the fete of this night was dedicated, was the pledge of a union which Madame de Merville had managed to effect between two young persons, first cousins to each other, and related to herself. There had been scruples of parents to remove--money matters to adjust--Eugenie had smoothed all. The husband and wife, still lovers, looked up to her as the author, under Heaven, of their happiness.

The gala of that night had been, therefore, of a nature more than usually pleasurable, and the mirth did not sound hollow, but wrung from the heart. Yet, as Eugenie from time to time contemplated the young people, whose eyes ever sought each other--so fair, so tender, and so joyous as they seemed--a melancholy shadow darkened her brow, and she sighed involuntarily. Once the young wife, Madame d'Anville, approaching her timidly, said:

"Ah! my sweet cousin, when shall we see you as happy as ourselves? There is such happiness," she added, innocently, and with a blush, "in being a mother!--that little life all one's own--it is something to think of every hour!"

"Perhaps," said Eugenie, smiling, and seeking to turn the conversation from a subject that touched too nearly upon feelings and thoughts her pride did not wish to reveal--"perhaps it is you, then, who have made our cousin, poor Monsieur de Vaudemont, so determined to marry? Pray, be more cautious with him. How difficult I have found it to prevent his bringing into our family some one to make us all ridiculous!"

"True," said Madame d'Anville, laughing. "But then, the Vicomte is so poor, and in debt. He would fall in love, not with the demoiselle, but the dower. A propos of that, how cleverly you took advantage of his boastful confession to break off his liaisons with that bureau de mariage."

"Yes; I congratulate myself on that manoeuvre. Unpleasant as it was to go to such a place (for, of course, I could not send for Monsieur Love here), it would have been still more unpleasant to have received such a Madame de Vaudemont as our cousin would have presented to us. Only think--he was the rival of an epicier! I heard that there was some curious denouement to the farce of that establishment; but I could

never get from Vaudemont the particulars. He was ashamed of them, I fancy."

"What droll professions there are in Paris!" said Madame d'Anville. "As if people could not marry without going to an office for a spouse as we go for a servant! And so the establishment is broken up? And you never again saw that dark, wild-looking boy who so struck your fancy that you have taken him as the original for the Murillo sketch of the youth in that charming tale you read to us the other evening? Ah! cousin, I think you were a little taken with him. The *_bureau de mariage_* had its allurements for you as well as for our poor cousin!" The young mother said this laughingly and carelessly.

"Pooh!" returned Madame de Merville, laughing also; but a slight blush broke over her natural paleness. "But a propos of the Vicomte. You know how cruelly he has behaved to that poor boy of his by his English wife-- never seen him since he was an infant--kept him at some school in England; and all because his vanity does not like the world to know that he has a son of nineteen! Well, I have induced him to recall this poor youth."

"Indeed! and how?"

"Why," said Eugenie, with a smile, "he wanted a loan, poor man, and I could therefore impose conditions by way of interest. But I also managed to conciliate him to the proposition, by representing that, if the young man were good-looking, he might, himself, with our connections, &c., form an advantageous marriage; and that in such a case, if the father treated him now justly and kindly, he would naturally partake with the father whatever benefits the marriage might confer."

"Ah! you are an excellent diplomatist, Eugenie; and you turn people's heads by always acting from your heart. Hush! here comes the Vicomte"

"A delightful ball," said Monsieur de Vaudemont, approaching the hostess.

"Pray, has that young lady yonder, in the pink dress, any fortune? She is pretty--eh? You observe she is looking at me--I mean at us!"

"My dear cousin, what a compliment you pay to marriage! You have had two wives, and you are ever on the *_qui vive_* for a third!"

"What would you have me do?--we cannot resist the overtures of your bewitching sex. Hum--what fortune has she?"

"Not a sou; besides, she is engaged."

"Oh! now I look at her, she is not pretty--not at all. I made a mistake. I did not mean her; I meant the young lady in blue."

"Worse and worse--she is married already. Shall I present you?"

"Ah, Monsieur de Vaudemont," said Madame d'Anville; "have you found out a new bureau de mariage?"

The Vicomte pretended not to hear that question. But, turning to Eugenie, took her aside, and said, with an air in which he endeavoured to throw a great deal of sorrow, "You know, my dear cousin, that, to oblige you, I consented to send for my son, though, as I always said, it is very unpleasant for a man like me, in the prime of life, to hawk about a great boy of nineteen or twenty. People soon say, 'Old Vaudemont and young Vaudemont.' However, a father's feelings are never appealed to in vain." (Here the Vicomte put his handkerchief to his eyes, and after a pause, continued,)--"I sent for him--I even went to your old bonne, Madame Dufour, to make a bargain for her lodgings, and this day--guess my grief --I received a letter sealed with black. My son is dead!--a sudden fever--it is shocking!"

"Horrible! dead!--your own son, whom you hardly ever saw--never since he was an infant!"

"Yes, that softens the blow very much. And now you see I must marry. If the boy had been good-looking, and like me, and so forth, why, as you observed, he might have made a good match, and allowed me a certain sum, or we could have all lived together."

"And your son is dead, and you come to a ball!"

"Je suis philosophe," said the Vicomte, shrugging his shoulders. "And, as you say, I never saw him. It saves me seven hundred francs a-year. Don't say a word to any one--I sha'n't give out that he is dead, poor fellow! Pray be discreet: you see there are some ill-natured people who might think it odd I do not shut myself up. I can wait till Paris is quite empty. It would be a pity to lose any opportunity at present, for now, you see, I must marry!" And the philosophe sauntered away.

CHAPTER XII.

GUIOMAR.

"Those devotions I am to pay
Are written in my heart, not in this book."

Enter RUTILIO.

"I am pursued--all the ports are stopped too,
Not any hope to escape--behind, before me,
On either side, I am beset."

BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER, *The Custom of the Country*

The party were just gone--it was already the peep of day--the wheels of the last carriage had died in the distance.

Madame de Merville had dismissed her woman, and was seated in her own room, leaning her head musingly on her hand.

Beside her was the table that held her MSS. and a few books, amidst which were scattered vases of flowers. On a pedestal beneath the window was placed a marble bust of Dante. Through the open door were seen in perspective two rooms just deserted by her guests; the lights still burned in the chandeliers and girandoles, contending with the daylight that came through the half-closed curtains. The person of the inmate was in harmony with the apartment. It was characterised by a certain grace which, for want of a better epithet, writers are prone to call classical or antique. Her complexion, seeming paler than usual by that light, was yet soft and delicate--the features well cut, but small and womanly. About the face there was that rarest of all charms, the combination of intellect with sweetness; the eyes, of a dark blue, were thoughtful, perhaps melancholy, in their expression; but the long dark lashes, and the shape of the eyes, themselves more long than full, gave to their intelligence a softness approaching to languor, increased, perhaps, by that slight shadow round and below the orbs which is common with those who have tasked too much either the mind or the heart. The contour of the face, without being sharp or angular, had yet lost a little of the roundness of earlier youth; and the hand on which she leaned was, perhaps, even too white, too delicate, for the beauty which belongs to health; but the throat and bust were of exquisite symmetry.

"I am not happy," murmured Eugenie to herself; "yet I scarce know why. Is it really, as we women of romance have said till the saying is worn threadbare, that the destiny of women is not fame but love. Strange, then, that while I have so often pictured what love should be, I have

never felt it. And now,--and now," she continued, half rising, and with a natural pang--"now I am no longer in my first youth. If I loved, should I be loved again? How happy the young pair seemed--they are never alone!"

At this moment, at a distance, was heard the report of fire-arms--again! Eugenie started, and called to her servant, who, with one of the waiters hired for the night, was engaged in removing, and nibbling as he removed, the remains of the feast. "What is that, at this hour?--open the window and look out!"

"I can see nothing, madame."

"Again--that is the third time. Go into the street and look--some one must be in danger."

The servant and the waiter, both curious, and not willing to part company, ran down the stairs, and thence into the street.

Meanwhile, Morton, after vainly attempting Birnie's window, which the traitor had previously locked and barred against the escape of his intended victim, crept rapidly along the roof, screened by the parapet not only from the shot but the sight of the foe. But just as he gained the point at which the lane made an angle with the broad street it adjoined, he cast his eyes over the parapet, and perceived that one of the officers had ventured himself to the fearful bridge; he was pursued--detection and capture seemed inevitable. He paused, and breathed hard. He, once the heir to such fortunes, the darling of such affections!--he, the hunted accomplice of a gang of miscreants! That was the thought that paralysed--the disgrace, not the danger. But he was in advance of the pursuer--he hastened on--he turned the angle--he heard a shout behind from the opposite side--the officer had passed the bridge: "it is but one man as yet," thought he, and his nostrils dilated and his hands clenched as he glided on, glancing at each casement as he passed.

Now as youth and vigour thus struggled against Law for life, near at hand Death was busy with toil and disease. In a miserable *_grabat_*, or garret, a mechanic, yet young, and stricken by a lingering malady contracted by the labour of his occupation, was slowly passing from that world which had frowned on his cradle, and relaxed not the gloom of its aspect to comfort his bed of Death. Now this man had married for love, and his wife had loved him; and it was the cares of that early marriage which had consumed him to the bone. But extreme want, if long continued, eats up love when it has nothing else to eat. And when people are very

long dying, the people they fret and trouble begin to think of that too often hypocritical prettiness of phrase called "a happy release." So the worn-out and half-famished wife did not care three straws for the dying husband, whom a year or two ago she had vowed to love and cherish in sickness and in health. But still she seemed to care, for she moaned, and pined, and wept, as the man's breath grew fainter and fainter.

"Ah, Jean!" said she, sobbing, "what will become of me, a poor lone widow, with nobody to work for my bread?" And with that thought she took on worse than before.

"I am stifling," said the dying man, rolling round his ghastly eyes. "How hot it is! Open the window; I should like to see the light-daylight once again."

"Mon Dieu! what whims he has, poor man!" muttered the woman, without stirring.

The poor wretch put out his skeleton hand and clutched his wife's arm.

"I sha'n't trouble you long, Marie! Air--air!"

"Jean, you will make yourself worse--besides, I shall catch my death of cold. I have scarce a rag on, but I will just open the door."

"Pardon me," groaned the sufferer; "leave me, then." Poor fellow! perhaps at that moment the thought of unkindness was sharper than the sharp cough which brought blood at every paroxysm. He did not like her so near him, but he did not blame her. Again, I say,--poor fellow! The woman opened the door, went to the other side of the room, and sat down on an old box and began darning an old neck-handkerchief. The silence was soon broken by the moans of the fast-dying man, and again he muttered, as he tossed to and fro, with baked white lips:

"_Je m'etoufee_!--Air!"

There was no resisting that prayer, it seemed so like the last. The wife laid down the needle, put the handkerchief round her throat, and opened the window.

"Do you feel easier now?"

"Bless you, Marie--yes; that's good--good. It puts me in mind of old days, that breath of air, before we came to Paris. I wish I could work

for you now, Marie."

"Jean! my poor Jean!" said the woman, and the words and the voice took back her hardening heart to the fresh fields and tender thoughts of the past time. And she walked up to the bed, and he leaned his temples, damp with livid dews, upon her breast.

"I have been a sad burden to you, Marie; we should not have married so soon; but I thought I was stronger. Don't cry; we have no little ones, thank God. It will be much better for you when I am gone."

And so, word after word gasped out--he stopped suddenly, and seemed to fall asleep.

The wife then attempted gently to lay him once more on his pillow--the head fell back heavily--the jaw had dropped--the teeth were set--the eyes were open and like the stone--the truth broke on her!

"Jean--Jean! My God, he is dead! and I was unkind to him at the last!" With these words she fell upon the corpse, happily herself insensible.

Just at that moment a human face peered in at the window. Through that aperture, after a moment's pause, a young man leaped lightly into the room. He looked round with a hurried glance, but scarcely noticed the forms stretched on the pallet. It was enough for him that they seemed to sleep, and saw him not. He stole across the room, the door of which Marie had left open, and descended the stairs. He had almost gained the courtyard into which the stairs had conducted, when he heard voices below by the porter's lodge.

"The police have discovered a gang of coiners!"

"Coiners!"

"Yes, one has been shot dead! I have seen his body in the kennel; another has fled along the roofs--a desperate fellow! We were to watch for him. Let us go up-stairs and get on the roof and look out."

By the hum of approval that followed this proposition, Morton judged rightly that it had been addressed to several persons whom curiosity and the explosion of the pistols had drawn from their beds, and who were grouped round the porter's lodge. What was to be done?--to advance was impossible: and was there yet time to retreat?--it was at least the only course left him; he sprang back up the stairs; he had just gained the

first flight when he heard steps descending; then, suddenly, it flashed across him that he had left open the window above--that, doubtless, by that imprudent oversight the officer in pursuit had detected a clue to the path he had taken. What was to be done?--die as Gawtreys had done!--death rather than the galleys. As he thus resolved, he saw to the right the open door of an apartment in which lights still glimmered in their sockets. It seemed deserted--he entered boldly and at once, closing the door after him. Wines and viands still left on the table; gilded mirrors, reflecting the stern face of the solitary intruder; here and there an artificial flower, a knot of riband on the floor, all betokening the gaieties and graces of luxurious life--the dance, the revel, the feast--all this in one apartment!--above, in the same house, the pallet--the corpse--the widow--famine and woe! Such is a great city! such, above all, is Paris! where, under the same roof, are gathered such antagonist varieties of the social state! Nothing strange in this; it is strange and sad that so little do people thus neighbours know of each other, that the owner of those rooms had a heart soft to every distress, but she did not know the distress so close at hand. The music that had charmed her guests had mounted gaily to the vexed ears of agony and hunger. Morton passed the first room--a second--he came to a third, and Eugenie de Merville, looking up at that instant, saw before her an apparition that might well have alarmed the boldest. His head was uncovered--his dark hair shadowed in wild and disorderly profusion the pale face and features, beautiful indeed, but at that moment of the beauty which an artist would impart to a young gladiator--stamped with defiance, menace, and despair. The disordered garb--the fierce aspect--the dark eyes, that literally shone through the shadows of the room--all conspired to increase the terror of so abrupt a presence.

"What are you?--What do you seek here?" said she, falteringly, placing her hand on the bell as she spoke. Upon that soft hand Morton laid his own.

"I seek my life! I am pursued! I am at your mercy! I am innocent! Can you save me?"

As he spoke, the door of the outer room beyond was heard to open, and steps and voices were at hand.

"Ah!" he exclaimed, recoiling as he recognised her face. "And is it to you that I have fled?"

Eugenie also recognised the stranger; and there was something in their relative positions--the suppliant, the protectress--that excited both her

imagination and her pity. A slight colour mantled to her cheeks--her look was gentle and compassionate.

"Poor boy! so young!" she said. "Hush!"

She withdrew her hand from his, retired a few steps, lifted a curtain drawn across a recess--and pointing to an alcove that contained one of those sofa-beds common in French houses, added in a whisper,--

"Enter--you are saved."

Morton obeyed, and Eugenie replaced the curtain.

CHAPTER XIII.

GUIOMAR.

"Speak! What are you?"

RUTILIO.

"Gracious woman, hear me. I am a stranger:
And in that I answer all your demands."

Custom of the Country.

Eugenie replaced the curtain. And scarcely had she done so ere the steps in the outer room entered the chamber where she stood. Her servant was accompanied by two officers of the police.

"Pardon, madame," said one of the latter; "but we are in pursuit of a criminal. We think he must have entered this house through a window above while your servant was in the street. Permit us to search?"

"Without doubt," answered Eugenie, seating herself. "If he has entered, look in the other apartments. I have not quitted this room."

"You are right. Accept our apologies."

And the officers turned back to examine every corner where the fugitive was not. For in that, the scouts of Justice resembled their mistress: when does man's justice look to the right place?

The servant lingered to repeat the tale he had heard--the sight he had

seen. When, at that instant, he saw the curtain of the alcove slightly stirred. He uttered an exclamation--sprung to the bed--his hand touched the curtain--Eugenie seized his arm. She did not speak; but as he turned his eyes to her, astonished, he saw that she trembled, and that her cheek was as white as marble.

"Madame," he said, hesitating, "there is some one hid in the recess."

"There is! Be silent!"

A suspicion flashed across the servant's mind. The pure, the proud, the immaculate Eugenie!

"There is!--and in madame's chamber!" he faltered unconsciously.

Eugenie's quick apprehensions seized the foul thought. Her eyes flashed --her cheek crimsoned. But her lofty and generous nature conquered even the indignant and scornful burst that rushed to her lips. The truth!-- could she trust the man? A doubt--and the charge of the human life rendered to her might be betrayed. Her colour fell--tears gushed to her eyes.

"I have been kind to you, Francois. Not a word." "Madame confides in me--it is enough," said the Frenchman, bowing, with a slight smile on his lips; and he drew back respectfully.

One of the police officers re-entered.

"We have done, madame; he is not here. Aha! that curtain!"

"It is madame's bed," said Francois. "But I have looked behind."

"I am most sorry to have disarranged you," said the policeman, satisfied with the answer; "but we shall have him yet." And he retired.

The last footsteps died away, the last door of the apartments closed behind the officers, and Eugenie and her servant stood alone gazing on each other.

"You may retire," said she at last; and taking her purse from the table, she placed it in his hands.

The man took it, with a significant look. "Madame may depend on my discretion."

Eugenie was alone again. Those words rang in her ear,--Eugenie de Merville dependent on the discretion of her lackey! She sunk into her chair, and, her excitement succeeded by exhaustion, leaned her face on her hands, and burst into tears. She was aroused by a low voice; she looked up, and the young man was kneeling at her feet.

"Go--go!" she said: "I have done for you all I can."

"You heard--you heard--my own hireling, too! At the hazard of my own good name you are saved. Go!"

"Of your good name!"--for Eugenie forgot that it was looks, not words, that had so wrung her pride--"Your good name," he repeated: and glancing round the room--the toilette, the curtain, the recess he had quitted--all that bespoke that chastest sanctuary of a chaste woman, which for a stranger to enter is, as it were, to profane--her meaning broke on him. "Your good name--your hireling! No, madame,--no!" And as he spoke, he rose to his feet. "Not for me, that sacrifice! Your humanity shall not cost you so dear. Ho, there! I am the man you seek." And he strode to the door.

Eugenie was penetrated with the answer. She sprung to him--she grasped his garments.

"Hush! hush!--for mercy's sake! What would you do? Think you I could ever be happy again, if the confidence you placed in me were betrayed? Be calm--be still. I knew not what I said. It will be easy to undeceive the man--later--when you are saved. And you are innocent,--are you not?"

"Oh, madame," said Morton, "from my soul I say it, I am innocent--not of poverty--wretchedness--error--shame; I am innocent of crime. May Heaven bless you!"

And as he reverently kissed the hand laid on his arm, there was something in his voice so touching, in his manner something so above his fortunes, that Eugenie was lost in her feelings of compassion, surprise, and something, it might be, of admiration in her wonder.

"And, oh!" he said, passionately, gazing on her with his dark, brilliant eyes, liquid with emotion, "you have made my life sweet in saving it. You--you--of whom, ever since the first time, almost the sole time, I beheld you--I have so often mused and dreamed. Henceforth, whatever befall me, there will be some recollections that will--that--"

He stopped short, for his heart was too full for words; and the silence said more to Eugenie than if all the eloquence of Rousseau had glowed upon his tongue.

"And who, and what are you?" she asked, after a pause.

"An exile--an orphan--an outcast! I have no name! Farewell!"

"No--stay yet--the danger is not past. Wait till my servant is gone to rest; I hear him yet. Sit down--sit down. And whither would you go?"

"I know not."

"Have you no friends?"

"Gone."

"No home?"

"None."

"And the police of Paris so vigilant!" cried Eugenie, wringing her hands. "What is to be done? I shall have saved you in vain--you will be discovered! Of what do they charge you? Not robbery--not--"

And she, too, stopped short, for she did not dare to breathe the black word, "Murder!"

"I know not," said Morton, putting his hand to his forehead, "except of being friends with the only man who befriended me--and they have killed him!"

"Another time you shall tell me all."

"Another time!" he exclaimed, eagerly--"shall I see you again?"

Eugenie blushed beneath the gaze and the voice of joy. "Yes," she said; "yes. But I must reflect. Be calm be silent. Ah!--a happy thought!"

She sat down, wrote a hasty line, sealed, and gave it to Morton.

"Take this note, as addressed, to Madame Dufour; it will provide you with a safe lodging. She is a person I can depend on--an old servant who

lived with my mother, and to whom I have given a small pension. She has a lodging--it is lately vacant--I promised to procure her a tenant--go--say nothing of what has passed. I will see her, and arrange all. Wait!--hark!--all is still. I will go first, and see that no one watches you. Stop," (and she threw open the window, and looked into the court.) "The porter's door is open--that is fortunate! Hurry on, and God be with you!"

In a few minutes Morton was in the streets. It was still early--the thoroughfares deserted--none of the shops yet open. The address on the note was to a street at some distance, on the other side of the Seine. He passed along the same Quai which he had trodden but a few hours since--he passed the same splendid bridge on which he had stood despairing, to quit it revived--he gained the Rue Faubourg St. Honore. A young man in a cabriolet, on whose fair cheek burned the hectic of late vigils and lavish dissipation, was rolling leisurely home from the gaming-house, at which he had been more than usually fortunate--his pockets were laden with notes and gold. He bent forwards as Morton passed him. Philip, absorbed in his reverie, perceived him not, and continued his way. The gentleman turned down one of the streets to the left, stopped, and called to the servant dozing behind his cabriolet.

"Follow that passenger! quietly--see where he lodges; be sure to find out and let me know. I shall go home with out you." With that he drove on.

Philip, unconscious of the espionage, arrived at a small house in a quiet but respectable street, and rang the bell several times before at last he was admitted by Madame Dufour herself, in her nightcap. The old woman looked askant and alarmed at the unexpected apparition. But the note seemed at once to satisfy her. She conducted him to an apartment on the first floor, small, but neatly and even elegantly furnished, consisting of a sitting-room and a bedchamber, and said, quietly,--

"Will they suit monsieur?"

To monsieur they seemed a palace. Morton nodded assent.

"And will monsieur sleep for a short time?"

"Yes."

"The bed is well aired. The rooms have only been vacant three days since. Can I get you anything till your luggage arrives?"

"No."

The woman left him. He threw off his clothes--flung himself on the bed--and did not wake till noon.

When his eyes unclosed--when they rested on that calm chamber, with its air of health, and cleanliness, and comfort, it was long before he could convince himself that he was yet awake. He missed the loud, deep voice of Gawtre--the smoke of the dead man's meerschaum--the gloomy garret--the distained walls--the stealthy whisper of the loathed Birnie; slowly the life led and the life gone within the last twelve hours grew upon his struggling memory. He groaned, and turned uneasily round, when the door slightly opened, and he sprung up fiercely,--

"Who is there?"

"It is only I, sir," answered Madame Dufour. "I have been in three times to see if you were stirring. There is a letter I believe for you, sir; though there is no name to it," and she laid the letter on the chair beside him. Did it come from her--the saving angel? He seized it. The cover was blank; it was sealed with a small device, as of a ring seal. He tore it open, and found four billets de banque for 1,000 francs each, --a sum equivalent in our money to about L160.

"Who sent this, the--the lady from whom I brought the note?"

"Madame de Merville? certainly not, sir," said Madame Dufour, who, with the privilege of age, was now unscrupulously filling the water-jugs and settling the toilette-table. "A young man called about two hours after you had gone to bed; and, describing you, inquired if you lodged here, and what your name was. I said you had just arrived, and that I did not yet know your name. So he went away, and came again half an hour afterwards with this letter, which he charged me to deliver to you safely."

A young man--a gentleman?"

"No, sir; he seemed a smart but common sort of lad." For the unsophisticated Madame Dufour did not discover in the plain black frock and drab gaiters of the bearer of that letter the simple livery of an English gentleman's groom.

Whom could it come from, if not from Madame de Merville? Perhaps one of Gawtre's late friends. A suspicion of Arthur Beaufort crossed him, but

he indignantly dismissed it. Men are seldom credulous of what they are unwilling to believe. What kindness had the Beauforts hitherto shown him?--Left his mother to perish broken-hearted--stolen from him his brother, and steeled, in that brother, the only heart wherein he had a right to look for gratitude and love! No, it must be Madame de Merville. He dismissed Madame Dufour for pen and paper--rose--wrote a letter to Eugenie--grateful, but proud, and inclosed the notes. He then summoned Madame Dufour, and sent her with his despatch.

"Ah, madame," said the *ci-devant bonne*, when she found herself in Eugenie's presence. "The poor lad! how handsome he is, and how shameful in the Vicomte to let him wear such clothes!"

"The Vicomte!"

"Oh, my dear mistress, you must not deny it. You told me, in your note, to ask him no questions, but I guessed at once. The Vicomte told me himself that he should have the young gentleman over in a few days. You need not be ashamed of him. You will see what a difference clothes will make in his appearance; and I have taken it on myself to order a tailor to go to him. The Vicomte--must pay me."

"Not a word to the Vicomte as yet. We will surprise him," said Eugenie, laughing.

Madame de Merville had been all that morning trying to invent some story to account for her interest in the lodger, and now how Fortune favoured her!

"But is that a letter for me?"

"And I had almost forgot it," said Madame Dufour, as she extended the letter.

Whatever there had hitherto been in the circumstances connected with Morton, that had roused the interest and excited the romance of Eugenie de Merville, her fancy was yet more attracted by the tone of the letter she now read. For though Morton, more accustomed to speak than to write French, expressed himself with less precision, and a less euphuistic selection of phrase, than the authors and *elegans* who formed her usual correspondents; there was an innate and rough nobleness--a strong and profound feeling in every line of his letter, which increased her surprise and admiration.

"All that surrounds him--all that belongs to him, is strangeness and mystery!" murmured she; and she sat down to reply.

When Madame Dufour departed with that letter, Eugenie remained silent and thoughtful for more than an hour, Morton's letter before her; and sweet, in their indistinctness, were the recollections and the images that crowded on her mind.

Morton, satisfied by the earnest and solemn assurances of Eugenie that she was not the unknown donor of the sum she reinclosed, after puzzling himself in vain to form any new conjectures as to the quarter whence it came, felt that under his present circumstances it would be an absurd Quixotism to refuse to apply what the very Providence to whom he had anew consigned himself seemed to have sent to his aid. And it placed him, too, beyond the offer of all pecuniary assistance from one from whom he could least have brooked to receive it. He consented, therefore, to all that the loquacious tailor proposed to him. And it would have been difficult to have recognised the wild and frenzied fugitive in the stately form, with its young beauty and air of well-born pride, which the next day sat by the side of Eugenie. And that day he told his sad and troubled story, and Eugenie wept: and from that day he came daily; and two weeks--happy, dreamlike, intoxicating to both--passed by; and as their last sun set, he was kneeling at her feet, and breathing to one to whom the homage of wit, and genius, and complacent wealth had hitherto been vainly proffered, the impetuous, agitated, delicious secrets of the First Love. He spoke, and rose to depart for ever--when the look and sigh detained him.

The next day, after a sleepless night, Eugenie de Merville sent for the Vicomte de Vaudemont.

CHAPTER XIV.

"A silver river small
In sweet accents
Its music vents;
The warbling virginal
To which the merry birds do sing,
Timed with stops of gold the silver string."
Sir Richard Fanshawe.

One evening, several weeks after the events just commemorated, a stranger, leading in his hand, a young child, entered the churchyard of H----. The sun had not long set, and the short twilight of deepening summer reigned in the tranquil skies; you might still hear from the trees above the graves the chirp of some joyous bird;--what cared he, the denizen of the skies, for the dead that slept below?--what did he value save the greenness and repose of the spot,--to him alike the garden or the grave! As the man and the child passed, the robin, scarcely scared by their tread from the long grass beside one of the mounds, looked at them with its bright, blithe eye. It was a famous plot for the robin--the old churchyard! That domestic bird--"the friend of man," as it has been called by the poets--found a jolly supper among the worms!

The stranger, on reaching the middle of the sacred ground, paused and looked round him wistfully. He then approached, slowly and hesitatingly, an oblong tablet, on which were graven, in letters yet fresh and new, these words:--

TO THE
MEMORY OF ONE CALUMNIATED AND WRONGED
THIS BURIAL-STONE IS DEDICATED
BY HER SON.

Such, with the addition of the dates of birth and death, was the tablet which Philip Morton had directed to be placed over his mother's bones; and around it was set a simple palisade, which defended it from the tread of the children, who sometimes, in defiance of the beadle, played over the dust of the former race.

"Thy son!" muttered the stranger, while the child stood quietly by his side, pleased by the trees, the grass, the song of the birds, and reeking not of grief or death,--"thy son!--but not thy favoured son--thy darling--thy youngest born; on what spot of earth do thine eyes look down on him? Surely in heaven thy love has preserved the one whom on earth thou didst most cherish, from the sufferings and the trials that have visited the less-favoured outcast. Oh, mother--mother!--it was not his crime--not Philip's--that he did not fulfil to the last the trust bequeathed to him! Happier, perhaps, as it is! And, oh, if thy memory be graven as deeply in my brother's heart as my own, how often will it warn and save him! That memory!--it has been to me the angel of my life! To thee--to thee, even in death, I owe it, if, though erring, I am not criminal,--if I have lived with the lepers, and am still undefiled!" His lips then were silent--not his heart!

After a few minutes thus consumed he turned to the child, and said, gently and in a tremulous voice, "Fanny, you have been taught to pray-- you will live near this spot,--will you come sometimes here and pray that you may grow up good and innocent, and become a blessing to those who love you?"

"Will papa ever come to hear me pray?"

That sad and unconscious question went to the heart of Morton. The child could not comprehend death. He had sought to explain it, but she had been accustomed to consider her protector dead when he was absent from her, and she still insisted that he must come again to life. And that man of turbulence and crime, who had passed unrepentant, unabsolved, from sin to judgment: it was an awful question, "If he should hear her pray?"

"Yes!" said he, after a pause,--"yes, Fanny, there is a Father who will hear you pray; and pray to Him to be merciful to those who have been kind to you. Fanny, you and I may never meet again!"

"Are you going to die too? _Mechant_, every one dies to Fanny!" and, clinging to him endearingly, she put up her lips to kiss him. He took her in his arms: and, as a tear fell upon her rosy cheek, she said, "Don't cry, brother, for I love you."

"Do you, dear Fanny? Then, for my sake, when you come to this place, if any one will give you a few flowers, scatter them on that stone. And now we will go to one whom you must love also, and to whom, as I have told you, _he_ sends you; he who--Come!"

As he thus spoke, and placed Fanny again on the ground, he was startled to see: precisely on the spot where he had seen before the like apparition--on the same spot where the father had cursed the son, the motionless form of an old man. Morton recognised, as if by an instinct rather than by an effort of the memory, the person to whom he was bound.

He walked slowly towards him; but Fanny abruptly left his side, lured by a moth that flitted duskily over the graves.

"Your name, sir, I think, is Simon Gawtre?" said Morton. "I have come to England in quest of you."

"Of me?" said the old man, half rising, and his eyes, now completely blind, rolled vacantly over Morton's person--"Of me?--for what?--Who are you?--I don't know your voice!"

"I come to you from your son!"

"My son!" exclaimed the old man, with great vehemence,--"the reprobate!--the dishonoured!--the infamous!--the accursed--"

"Hush! you revile the dead!"

"Dead!" muttered the wretched father, tottering back to the seat he had quitted,--"dead!" and the sound of his voice was so full of anguish, that the dog at his feet, which Morton had not hitherto perceived, echoed it with a dismal cry, that recalled to Philip the awful day in which he had seen the son quit the father for the last time on earth.

The sound brought Fanny to the spot; and, with a laugh of delight, which made to it a strange contrast, she threw herself on the grass beside the dog and sought to entice it to play. So there, in that place of death, were knit together the four links in the Great Chain;--lusty and blooming life--desolate and doting age--infancy, yet scarce conscious of a soul--and the dumb brute, that has no warrant of a Hereafter!

"Dead!--dead!" repeated the old man, covering his sightless balls with his withered hands. "Poor William!"

"He remembered you to the last. He bade me seek you out--he bade me replace the guilty son with a thing pure and innocent, as he had been had he died in his cradle--a child to comfort your old age! Kneel, Fanny, I have found you a father who will cherish you--(oh! you will, sir, will you not?)--as he whom you may see no more!"

There was something in Morton's voice so solemn, that it awed and touched both the old man and the infant; and Fanny, creeping to the protector thus assigned to her, and putting her little hands confidingly on his knees, said--

"Fanny will love you if papa wished it. Kiss Fanny."

"Is it his child--his?" said the blind man, sobbing. "Come to my heart; here--here! O God, forgive me!" Morton did not think it right at that moment to undeceive him with regard to the poor child's true connexion with the deceased: and he waited in silence till Simon, after a burst of passionate grief and tenderness, rose, and still clasping the child to his breast, said--

"Sir, forgive me!--I am a very weak old man--I have many thanks to give-- I have much, too, to learn. My poor son! he did not die in want,--did he?"

The particulars of Gawtreys fate, with his real name and the various aliases he had assumed, had appeared in the French journals, had been partially copied into the English; and Morton had expected to have been saved the painful narrative of that fearful death; but the utter seclusion of the old man, his infirmity, and his estranged habits, had shut him out from the intelligence that it now devolved on Philip to communicate. Morton hesitated a little before he answered:

"It is late now; you are not yet prepared to receive this poor infant at your home, nor to hear the details I have to state. I arrived in England but to-day. I shall lodge in the neighbourhood, for it is dear to me. If I may feel sure, then, that you will receive and treasure this sacred and last deposit bequeathed to you by your unhappy son, I will bring my charge to you to-morrow, and we will then, more calmly than we can now, talk over the past."

"You do not answer my question," said Simon, passionately; "answer that, and I will wait for the rest. They call me a miser! Did I send out my only child to starve? Answer that!"

"Be comforted. He did not die in want; and he has even left some little fortune for Fanny, which I was to place in your hands."

"And he thought to bribe the old miser to be human! Well--well--well--I will go home."

"Lean on me!"

The dog leapt playfully on his master as the latter rose, and Fanny slid from Simon's arms to caress and talk to the animal in her own way. As they slowly passed through the churchyard Simon muttered incoherently to himself for several paces, and Morton would not disturb, since he could not comfort, him.

At last he said abruptly, "Did my son repent?"

"I hoped," answered Morton, evasively, "that, had his life been spared, he would have amended!"

"Tush, sir!--I am past seventy; we repent!--we never amend!" And Simon

again sunk into his own dim and disconnected reveries.

At length they arrived at the blind man's house. The door was opened to them by an old woman of disagreeable and sinister aspect, dressed out much too gaily for the station of a servant, though such was her reputed capacity; but the miser's affliction saved her from the chance of his comment on her extravagance. As she stood in the doorway with a candle in her hand, she scanned curiously, and with no welcoming eye, her master's companions.

"Mrs. Boxer, my son is dead!" said Simon, in a hollow voice.

"And a good thing it is, then, sir!"

"For shame, woman!" said Morton, indignantly. "Hey-dey! sir! whom have we got here?"

"One," said Simon, sternly, "whom you will treat with respect. He brings me a blessing to lighten my loss. One harsh word to this child, and you quit my house!"

The woman looked perfectly thunderstruck; but, recovering herself, she said, whiningly--

"! a harsh word to anything my dear, kind master cares for. And, Lord, what a sweet pretty creature it is! Come here, my dear!"

But Fanny shrunk back, and would not let go Philip's hand.

"To-morrow, then," said Morton; and he was turning away, when a sudden thought seemed to cross the old man,--

"Stay, sir--stay! I--I--did my son say I was rich? I am very, very poor--nothing in the house, or I should have been robbed long ago!"

"Your son told me to bring money, not to ask for it!"

"Ask for it! No; but," added the old man, and a gleam of cunning intelligence shot over his face,--"but he had got into a bad set. Ask!--No!--Put up the door-chain, Mrs. Boxer!"

It was with doubt and misgivings that Morton, the next day, consigned the child, who had already nestled herself into the warmest core of his heart, to the care of Simon. Nothing short of that superstitious

respect, which all men owe to the wishes of the dead, would have made him select for her that asylum; for Fate had now, in brightening his own prospects, given him an alternative in the benevolence of Madame de Merville. But Gawtrety had been so earnest on the subject, that he felt as if he had no right to hesitate. And was it not a sort of atonement to any faults the son might have committed against the parent, to place by the old man's hearth so sweet a charge?

The strange and peculiar mind and character of Fanny made him, however, yet more anxious than otherwise he might have been. She certainly deserved not the harsh name of imbecile or idiot, but she was different from all other children; she felt more acutely than most of her age, but she could not be taught to reason. There was something either oblique or deficient in her intellect, which justified the most melancholy apprehensions; yet often, when some disordered, incoherent, inexplicable train of ideas most saddened the listener, it would be followed by fancies so exquisite in their strangeness, or feelings so endearing in their tenderness, that suddenly she seemed as much above, as before she seemed below, the ordinary measure of infant comprehension. She was like a creature to which Nature, in some cruel but bright caprice, has given all that belongs to poetry, but denied all that belongs to the common understanding necessary to mankind; or, as a fairy changeling, not, indeed, according to the vulgar superstition, malignant and deformed, but lovelier than the children of men, and haunted by dim and struggling associations of a gentler and fairer being, yet wholly incapable to learn the dry and hard elements which make up the knowledge of actual life.

Morton, as well as he could, sought to explain to Simon the peculiarities in Fanny's mental constitution. He urged on him the necessity of providing for her careful instruction, and Simon promised to send her to the best school the neighbourhood could afford; but, as the old man spoke, he dwelt so much on the supposed fact that Fanny was William's daughter, and with his remorse, or affection, there ran so interwoven a thread of selfishness and avarice, that Morton thought it would be dangerous to his interest in the child to undeceive his error. He, therefore,--perhaps excusably enough--remained silent on that subject.

Gawtrety had placed with the superior of the convent, together with an order to give up the child to any one who should demand her in his true name, which he confided to the superior, a sum of nearly L300., which he solemnly swore had been honestly obtained, and which, in all his shifts and adversities, he had never allowed himself to touch. This sum, with the trifling deduction made for arrears due to the convent, Morton now placed in Simon's hands. The old man clutched the money, which was for

the most in French gold, with a convulsive gripe: and then, as if ashamed of the impulse, said--

"But you, sir--will any sum--that is, any reasonable sum--be of use to you?"

"No! and if it were, it is neither yours nor mine--it is hers. Save it for her, and add to it what you can."

While this conversation took place, Fanny had been consigned to the care of Mrs. Boxer, and Philip now rose to see and bid her farewell before he departed.

"I may come again to visit you, Mr. Gawtre; and I pray Heaven to find that you and Fanny have been a mutual blessing to each other. Oh, remember how your son loved her!"

"He had a good heart, in spite of all his sins. Poor William!" said Simon.

Philip Morton heard, and his lip curled with a sad and a just disdain.

If when, at the age of nineteen, William Gawtre had quitted his father's roof, the father had then remembered that the son's heart was good,--the son had been alive still, an honest and a happy man. Do ye not laugh, O ye all-listening Fiends! when men praise those dead whose virtues they discovered not when alive? It takes much marble to build the sepulchre--how little of lath and plaster would have repaired the garret!

On turning into a small room adjoining the parlour in which Gawtre sat, Morton found Fanny standing gloomily by a dull, soot-grimed window, which looked out on the dead walls of a small yard. Mrs. Boxer, seated by a table, was employed in trimming a cap, and putting questions to Fanny in that falsetto voice of endearment in which people not used to children are apt to address them.

"And so, my dear, they've never taught you to read or write? You've been sadly neglected, poor thing!"

"We must do our best to supply the deficiency," said Morton, as he entered.

"Bless me, sir, is that you?" and the gouvernante bustled up and dropped a low courtesy; for Morton, dressed then in the garb of a gentleman, was

of a mien and person calculated to strike the gaze of the vulgar.

"Ah, brother!" cried Fanny, for by that name he had taught her to call him; and she flew to his side. "Come away--it's ugly there--it makes me cold."

"My child, I told you you must stay; but I shall hope to see you again some day. Will you not be kind to this poor creature, ma'am? Forgive me, if I offended you last night, and favour me by accepting this, to show that we are friends." As he spoke, he slid his purse into the woman's hand. "I shall feel ever grateful for whatever you can do for Fanny."

"Fanny wants nothing from any one else; Fanny wants her brother."

"Sweet child! I fear she don't take to me. Will you like me, Miss Fanny?"

"No! get along!"

"Fie, Fanny--you remember you did not take to me at first. But she is so affectionate, ma'am; she never forgets a kindness."

"I will do all I can to please her, sir. And so she is really master's grandchild?" The woman fixed her eyes, as she spoke, so intently on Morton, that he felt embarrassed, and busied himself, without answering, in caressing and soothing Fanny, who now seemed to awake to the affliction about to visit her; for though she did not weep--she very rarely wept--her slight frame trembled--her eyes closed--her cheeks, even her lips, were white--and her delicate hands were clasped tightly round the neck of the one about to abandon her to strange breasts.

Morton was greatly moved. "One kiss, Fanny! and do not forget me when we meet again."

The child pressed her lips to his cheek, but the lips were cold. He put her down gently; she stood mute and passive.

"Remember that he wished me to leave you here," whispered Morton, using an argument that never failed. "We must obey him; and so--God bless you, Fanny!"

He rose and retreated to the door; the child unclosed her eyes, and gazed at him with a strained, painful, imploring gaze; her lips moved, but she

did not speak. Morton could not bear that silent woe. He sought to smile on her consolingly; but the smile would not come. He closed the door, and hurried from the house.

From that day Fanny settled into a kind of dreary, inanimate stupor, which resembled that of the somnambulist whom the magnetiser forgets to waken. Hitherto, with all the eccentricities or deficiencies of her mind, had mingled a wild and airy gaiety. That was vanished. She spoke little--she never played--no toys could lure her--even the poor dog failed to win her notice. If she was told to do anything she stared vacantly and stirred not. She evinced, however, a kind of dumb regard to the old blind man; she would creep to his knees and sit there for hours, seldom answering when he addressed her, but uneasy, anxious, and restless, if he left her.

"Will you die too?" she asked once; the old man understood her not, and she did not try to explain. Early one morning, some days after Morton was gone, they missed her: she was not in the house, nor the dull yard where she was sometimes dismissed and told to play--told in vain. In great alarm the old man accused Mrs. Boxer of having spirited her away, and threatened and stormed so loudly that the woman, against her will, went forth to the search. At last she found the child in the churchyard, standing wistfully beside a tomb.

"What do you here, you little plague?" said Mrs. Boxer, rudely seizing her by the arm.

"This is the way they will both come back some day! I dreamt so!"

"If ever I catch you here again!" said the housekeeper, and, wiping her brow with one hand, she struck the child with the other. Fanny had never been struck before. She recoiled in terror and amazement, and, for the first time since her arrival, burst into tears.

"Come--come, no crying! and if you tell master I'll beat you within an inch of your life!" So saying, she caught Fanny in her arms, and, walking about, scolding and menacing, till she had frightened back the child's tears, she returned triumphantly to the house, and bursting into the parlour, exclaimed, "Here's the little darling, sir!"

When old Simon learned where the child had been found he was glad; for it was his constant habit, whenever the evening was fine, to glide out to that churchyard--his dog his guide--and sit on his one favourite spot opposite the setting sun. This, not so much for the sanctity of the

place, or the meditations it might inspire, as because it was the nearest, the safest, and the loneliest spot in the neighbourhood of his home, where the blind man could inhale the air and bask in the light of heaven. Hitherto, thinking it sad for the child, he had never taken her with him; indeed, at the hour of his monotonous excursion she had generally been banished to bed. Now she was permitted to accompany him; and the old man and the infant would sit there side by side, as Age and Infancy rested side by side in the graves below. The first symptom of childlike interest and curiosity that Fanny betrayed was awakened by the affliction of her protector. One evening, as they thus sat, she made him explain what the desolation of blindness is. She seemed to comprehend him, though he did not seek to adapt his complaints to her understanding.

"Fanny knows," said she, touchingly; "for she, too, is blind here;" and she pressed her hands to her temples. Notwithstanding her silence and strange ways, and although he could not see the exquisite loveliness which Nature, as in remorseful pity, had lavished on her outward form, Simon soon learned to love her better than he had ever loved yet: for they most cold to the child are often dotards to the grandchild. For her even his avarice slept. Dainties, never before known at his sparing board, were ordered to tempt her appetite, toy-shops ransacked to amuse her indolence. He was long, however, before he could prevail on himself to fulfil his promise to Morton, and rob himself of her presence. At length, however, wearied with Mrs. Boxer's lamentations at her ignorance, and alarmed himself at some evidences of helplessness, which made him dread to think what her future might be when left alone in life, he placed her at a day-school in the suburb. Here Fanny, for a considerable time, justified the harshest assertions of her stupidity. She could not even keep her eyes two minutes together on the page from which she was to learn the mysteries of reading; months passed before she mastered the alphabet, and, a month after, she had again forgot it, and the labour was renewed. The only thing in which she showed ability, if so it might be called, was in the use of the needle. The sisters of the convent had already taught her many pretty devices in this art; and when she found that at the school they were admired--that she was praised instead of blamed--her vanity was pleased, and she learned so readily all that they could teach in this not unprofitable accomplishment, that Mrs. Boxer slyly and secretly turned her tasks to account and made a weekly perquisite of the poor pupil's industry. Another faculty she possessed, in common with persons usually deficient, and with the lower species--viz., a most accurate and faithful recollection of places. At first Mrs. Boxer had been duly sent, morning, noon, and evening, to take her to, or bring her from, the school; but this was so great a grievance to Simon's solitary superintendent, and Fanny coaxed the old man so endearingly to

allow her to go and return alone, that the attendance, unwelcome to both, was waived. Fanny exulted in this liberty; and she never, in going or in returning, missed passing through the burial-ground, and gazing wistfully at the tomb from which she yet believed Morton would one day reappear. With his memory she cherished also that of her earlier and more guilty protector; but they were separate feelings, which she distinguished in her own way.

"Papa had given her up. She knew that he would not have sent her away, far--far over the great water, if he had meant to see Fanny again; but her brother was forced to leave her--he would come to life one day, and then they should live together!"

One day, towards the end of autumn, as her schoolmistress, a good woman on the whole, but who had not yet had the wit to discover by what chords to tune the instrument, over which so wearily she drew her unskilful hand--one day, we say, the schoolmistress happened to be dressed for a christening party to which she was invited in the suburb; and, accordingly, after the morning lessons, the pupils were to be dismissed to a holiday. As Fanny now came last, with the hopeless spelling-book, she stopped suddenly short, and her eyes rested with avidity upon a large bouquet of exotic flowers, with which the good lady had enlivened the centre of the parted kerchief, whose yellow gauze modestly veiled that tender section of female beauty which poets have likened to hills of snow--a chilling simile! It was then autumn; and field, and even garden flowers were growing rare.

"Will you give me one of those flowers?" said Fanny, dropping her book.

"One of these flowers, child! why?"

Fanny did not answer; but one of the elder and cleverer girls said--

"Oh! she comes from France, you know, ma'am, and the Roman Catholics put flowers, and ribands, and things, over the graves; you recollect, ma'am, we were reading yesterday about Pere-la-Chaise?"

"Well! what then?"

"And Miss Fanny will do any kind of work for us if we will give her flowers."

"My brother told me where to put them;--but these pretty flowers, I never had any like them; they may bring him back again! I'll be so good if

you'll give me one, only one!"

"Will you learn your lesson if I do, Fanny?"

"Oh! yes! Wait a moment!"

And Fanny stole back to her desk, put the hateful book resolutely before her, pressed both hands tightly on her temples,--Eureka! the chord was touched; and Fanny marched in triumph through half a column of hostile double syllables!

From that day the schoolmistress knew how to stimulate her, and Fanny learned to read: her path to knowledge thus literally strewn with flowers! Catherine, thy children were far off, and thy grave looked gay!

It naturally happened that those short and simple rhymes, often sacred, which are repeated in schools as helps to memory, made a part of her studies; and no sooner had the sound of verse struck upon her fancy than it seemed to confuse and agitate anew all her senses. It was like the music of some breeze, to which dance and tremble all the young leaves of a wild plant. Even when at the convent she had been fond of repeating the infant rhymes with which they had sought to lull or to amuse her, but now the taste was more strongly developed. She confounded, however, in meaningless and motley disorder, the various snatches of song that came to her ear, weaving them together in some form which she understood, but which was jargon to all others; and often, as she went alone through the green lanes or the bustling streets, the passenger would turn in pity and fear to hear her half chant--half murmur--ditties that seemed to suit only a wandering and unsettled imagination. And as Mrs. Boxer, in her visits to the various shops in the suburb, took care to bemoan her hard fate in attending to a creature so evidently moon-stricken, it was no wonder that the manner and habits of the child, coupled with that strange predilection to haunt the burial-ground, which is not uncommon with persons of weak and disordered intellect; confirmed the character thus given to her.

So, as she tripped gaily and lightly along the thoroughfares, the children would draw aside from her path, and whisper with superstitious fear mingled with contempt, "It's the idiot girl!"--Idiot--how much more of heaven's light was there in that cloud than in the rushlights that, flickering in sordid chambers, shed on dull things the dull ray--esteeming themselves as stars!

Months-years passed--Fanny was thirteen, when there dawned a new era to

her existence. Mrs. Boxer had never got over her first grudge to Fanny. Her treatment of the poor girl was always harsh, and sometimes cruel. But Fanny did not complain, and as Mrs. Boxer's manner to her before Simon was invariably cringing and caressing, the old man never guessed the hardships his supposed grandchild underwent. There had been scandal some years back in the suburb about the relative connexion of the master and the housekeeper; and the flaunting dress of the latter, something bold in her regard, and certain whispers that her youth had not been vowed to Vesta, confirmed the suspicion. The only reason why we do not feel sure that the rumour was false is this,--Simon Gawtre had been so hard on the early follies of his son! Certainly, at all events, the woman had exercised great influence over the miser before the arrival of Fanny, and she had done much to steel his selfishness against the ill-fated William. And, as certainly, she had fully calculated on succeeding to the savings, whatever they might be, of the miser, whenever Providence should be pleased to terminate his days. She knew that Simon had, many years back, made his will in her favour; she knew that he had not altered that will: she believed, therefore, that in spite of all his love for Fanny, he loved his gold so much more, that he could not accustom himself to the thought of bequeathing it to hands too helpless to guard the treasure. This had in some measure reconciled the housekeeper to the intruder; whom, nevertheless, she hated as a dog hates another dog, not only for taking his bone, but for looking at it.

But suddenly Simon fell ill. His age made it probable he would die. He took to his bed--his breathing grew fainter and fainter--he seemed dead. Fanny, all unconscious, sat by his bedside as usual, holding her breath not to waken him. Mrs. Boxer flew to the bureau--she unlocked it--she could not find the will; but she found three bags of bright gold guineas: the sight charmed her. She tumbled them forth on the distained green cloth of the bureau--she began to count them; and at that moment, the old man, as if there were a secret magnetism between himself and the guineas, woke from his trance. His blindness saved him the pain that might have been fatal, of seeing the unhallowed profanation; but he heard the chink of the metal. The very sound restored his strength. But the infirm are always cunning--he breathed not a suspicion. "Mrs. Boxer," said he, faintly, "I think I could take some broth." Mrs. Boxer rose in great dismay, gently re-closed the bureau, and ran down-stairs for the broth. Simon took the occasion to question Fanny; and no sooner had he learnt the operation of the heir-expectant, than he bade the girl first lock the bureau and bring him the key, and next run to a lawyer (whose address he gave her), and fetch him instantly.

With a malignant smile the old man took the broth from his handmaid,--

"Poor Boxer, you are a disinterested creature," said he, feebly; "I think you will grieve when I go."

Mrs. Boxer sobbed, and before she had recovered, the lawyer entered. That day a new will was made; and the lawyer politely informed Mrs. Boxer that her services would be dispensed with the next morning, when he should bring a nurse to the house. Mrs. Boxer heard, and took her resolution. As soon as Simon again fell asleep, she crept into the room--led away Fanny--locked her up in her own chamber--returned--searched for the key of the bureau, which she found at last under Simon's pillow--possessed herself of all she could lay her hands on--and the next morning she had disappeared forever! Simon's loss was greater than might have been supposed; for, except a trifling sum in the savings bank, he, like many other misers, kept all he had, in notes or specie, under his own lock and key. His whole fortune, indeed, was far less than was supposed: for money does not make money unless it is put out to interest,--and the miser cheated himself. Such portion as was in bank-notes Mrs. Boxer probably had the prudence to destroy; for those numbers which Simon could remember were never traced; the gold, who could swear to? Except the pittance in the savings bank, and whatever might be the paltry worth of the house he rented, the father who had enriched the menial to exile the son was a beggar in his dotage. This news, however, was carefully concealed from him by the advice of the doctor, whom, on his own responsibility, the lawyer introduced, till he had recovered sufficiently to bear the shock without danger; and the delay naturally favoured Mrs. Boxer's escape.

Simon remained for some moments perfectly stunned and speechless when the news was broken to him. Fanny, in alarm at his increasing paleness, sprang to his breast. He pushed her away,--"Go--go--go, child," he said; "I can't feed you now. Leave me to starve."

"To starve!" said Fanny, wonderingly; and she stole away, and sat herself down as if in deep thought. She then crept up to the lawyer as he was about to leave the room, after exhausting his stock of commonplace consolation; and putting her hand in his, whispered, "I want to talk to you--this way."--She led him through the passage into the open air. "Tell me," she said, "when poor people try not to starve, don't they work?"

"My dear, yes."

"For rich people buy poor people's work?"

"Certainly, my dear; to be sure."

"Very well. Mrs. Boxer used to sell my work. Fanny will feed grandpapa! Go and tell him never to say 'starve' again."

The good-natured lawyer was moved. "Can you work, indeed, my poor girl? Well, put on your bonnet, and come and talk to my wife."

And that was the new era in Fanny's existence! Her schooling was stopped. But now life schooled her. Necessity ripened her intellect. And many a hard eye moistened,--as, seeing her glide with her little basket of fancy work along the streets, still murmuring her happy and bird-like snatches of unconnected song--men and children alike said with respect, in which there was now no contempt, "It's the idiot girl who supports her blind grandfather!" They called her idiot still!

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