The Younger Brother

A NOVEL, IN THREE VOLUMES

BY

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VOL. II.

1.1. CHAPTER I.

WHICH WILL SHEW THAT THE SNAKE WAS SCOTCHED—NOT KILLED.

As I intimated at the end of the first volume, that the pranks of the mad musician, extraneous as at first sight they must appear, had relation, and very strongly too, to the main and most material part of my design, so I shall now proceed to shew in what way.

The reader will allow me that, according to the letter of my description, which really did not outgo the fact, the bustle at the inn must, to strangers, and particularly ladies, have been alarming to a [Page 6] great degree; and when it is considered that Lady Hazard was seven months gone with child, it will not appear very extraordinary that, terrified in so unexpected and particular a manner, it should have such an effect upon her tender and delicate frame, as to throw her into labour, which it actually did.

Mr. Standfast, upon this news, undertook to produce a gentleman of the faculty from London, whither he went as fast as a chaise and four horses could convey him, accompanied by Charles, whose anxiety for his mother was strongly manifested in his heartening and encouraging the postillions. My Lord however was not idle. There were several towns near at hand, and each of them boasted its man-midwife; so fashionable was it even then, to adopt a custom which the landlord swore—as he stirred the kitchen fire to prepare for the necessary potations upon this occasion—was a disgrace to the English nation; a custom to which our ancestors, who had nerves that, like their bows, twanged with strength, were utter strangers. He said it was a custom originating from sloth and effiminacy; that it was one of those blessed improvements towards the annihilation of manliness and becoming decency that our natural enemies did us the favour to introduce every day; that it was unmanly and [Page 7] scandalous as well as ignorant and ridiculous, for that the most experienced practitioner could not possibly, from the nature of the circumstance, arrive to any thing comparable to the knowledge of a woman upon such an occasion, to whom every possible symptom must be

practically known, and who—which with our landlord was nine-tenths of his argument—could alone conduct such a particular business with proper decorum.

In this temper he sent for a good old lady, who, he said, had been obstetric gentlewoman usher to half the town, and never had met with an accident, unless from such a combination of natural causes as would have baffled the utmost perfection of art.

The old lady, who resided in the neighbourhood, arrived first, and Lord Hazard, extremely anxious to procure assistance, made no scruple of introducing her to his wife.

"Ay, ay,' cried the landlord, as he poured her out a glass of usquebaugh, 'this is as it should be; here, my lord, is an operator, and please you, worth a thousand of your men-midwives; fellows that I believe would rather have the reputation of getting children than of bringing them into the world. I once asked a chap of this stamp what [Page 8] made all the children he produced so cursed rickety?—and he answered me, with great archness, that a man had a right to mar what he made."

Notwithstanding the landlord's rhetoric, he was obliged to pull in his horns when he understood that Lady Hazard's case was of so particular a kind that the good old gentlewoman, his friend, could not venture to proceed in it upon her single judgment. Being asked what he said to this, he replied he was still right:—it happened to be one of those difficult cases which required assistance; but yet the gentleman, whoever he was, would reap great benefit from the old woman, who would be able to explain to him all he had to do, and from a conviction, being a woman, that he could not have the smallest conception of.

Before morning, arrived three gentlemen, who had been sent for from different towns, and presently afterwards Standfast, Charles, and an eminent man-midwife from London, who, upon all such occasions, attended her ladyship. A number of corks were heard to report their liberty, and hot wine, possets, and other comfortable drinks smoked all over the house; yet, though the landlord was greatly pleased at what went

forward, when he cast his eyes upon the medical tribe, he could not help remarking that [Page 9] he did not believe there was half so much fuss when king ARTHUR was born.

To the last gentleman who arrived, the rest of course gave way. He immediately visited Lady Hazard, and shortly afterwards found it necessary to have a private conversation with his lordship:—nor will the reader be greatly astonished, though very much shocked, to hear that, in the course of this conference, it came out that the peculiarity of Lady Hazard's case originated with Miss Snaffle!

Lord Hazard's feeling on this occasion was not simply wretchedness, it was horror. Standfast was called in, that the whole might be explained to him; in doing which, my lord used such forcible language, so execrated himself, and so extolled the high, the transcendent friendship of the tutor, that the surgeon, who was both a sensible man and a valuable member of society, declared he was charmed at the circumstance, and should be very happy to cultivate Mr. Standfast's friendship.

The surgeon being now particularly informed of the case, declared that a very disagreeable operation must be performed; but he hoped the life of Lady Hazard was not in danger. He said he could easily give the matter a turn to the other physical gentlemen, [Page 10] who, he could plainly see, were ignorant pretenders to a profession in which they had neither right nor ability to practice; and this, he said, he conceived materially necessary for the sake of Lady Hazard's peace of mind, which it would be impossible to preserve if the matter were known to any but himself:—it being a practice with these gentry, at which indeed they are very expert, to injure the domestic, as well as the corporeal, constitution.

Lord Hazard, finding that every thing might be managed without confiding to his lady the real cause of her present danger, declared he would wait the event with patience and resignation, which turned out as the surgeon had predicted, the child was destroyed, but the lady survived the operation. As to the old woman, she was sent home as soon as possible, for the surgeon agreed so far with the landlord, that he feared much more a discovery through her, than through his brother professors.

It was nearly six weeks before Lady Hazard could be with safety removed; during which time, her kind friend Lady Roebuck scarcely stirred from her. Nor was the baronet less attentive to my lord. He had set his heart upon stimulating that nobleman to an emulation of his own conduct, when they should arrive in Warwickshire, and doubted not, as [Page 11] he knew Lady Hazard longed for the accomplishment of so desirable an end, when he should explain to his friend how practicable such a task was, and how sure and immense the reward, he would readily join him in so meritorious an exercise of that liberality which Lord Hazard, whatever were his foibles, certainly possessed.

Pleased with these ideas, the time rolled insensibly on; for as soon as Lady Hazard could be removed, she was, for the present, conveyed to a house in the neighbourhood, which her lord had hired for that purpose; and as the company Sir Sidney expected for the summer called, of necessity, at the John of Gaunt's Head, in a few days the poet, painter, and musician made their appearance, as well as Sir Sidney's attorney, and a clergyman, all of whom, by invitation, were to pass the summer at Roebuck hall.

The assembly having now so largely increased, parties of pleasure were planned; and as Lady Hazard's health seemed every day to be more confirmed, the general tranquillity was restored.

As to my lord, his resolution was made, and certainly irrevocably. Therefore, as no worse consequences had happened from his former conduct, he [Page 12] rejoiced at the present moment in the same degree as a patient who, by a trifling and immaterial mutilation, is restored to health and vigour from the morbid effects of a gangrene.

The great difficulty with Sir Sidney and Lady Roebuck was how to proceed as to Standfast. It was impossible to begin their attack on Lady Hazard, as it would ruffle her mind in her present weak condition; and as to my lord, he was so wrapped up in his amiable friend, that it would be impracticable, as well as highly absurd, to attempt at undeceiving him.

In this state were matters situated when the clergyman lately mentioned arrived at the inn. This gentleman, whose name was Friend, had been known to Sir Sidney for many years, and was not the less esteemed by him for having incurred the displeasure of a bishop, because he would not vote against his conscience. He was a very learned, and, what is a great deal better, a very sensible man; for though he had little of that understanding by which men rise in the world, and which, according to nine-tenths of mankind, is the only mental coin that ought to pass current, yet he had a number of old fashioned virtues, of no great use but to the owner; but to him valuable indeed:—such as piety, [Page 13] an unsullied conscience, a benevolent heart, with the addition of a clear judgment, an inventive genius, and a critical and accurate knowledge of ancient and modern literature.

As Sir Sidney's was a kind of house of call to good characters out of employ, no wonder this gentleman was sometimes with him. His visit at present, however, was on another account; for the baronet, to tell the reader the truth, was not without hopes of seeing him rector of Little Hockley. He had been some time nominated curate; and, at the death of the present incumbent, the living would be in the gift of Lord Hazard. That this circumstance, which has not been mentioned before, may not appear extraordinary, I shall now explain how it came about.

When Sir Sidney wrote to Lord Hazard, as we have seen, relative to Little Hockley, he little dreamt that his application would have produced all the cordiality that now subsisted between them.—On the contrary, there was more of delicacy than hopes of success in consulting him at all.

To Mr. Standfast, however, he did not conceive he owed any such delicacy; and therefore, as the right of nominating a curate reverted to the rector, [Page 14] at the death of Major Malplaquet, disliking the bargain and sale manner in which it had been transacted before, he applied, in the strongest possible way, to the good pastor, for the appointment of Mr. Friend to that situation: namely, by making an offer to commute with him for the entire profits of the living, at a very handsome price, and to pay the curate's salary out of his own pocket.

The rector, who could calculate much better than he could preach, entered into the whole spirit of the argument, and Mr. Friend became to Sir Sidney, what Mr. Standfast had been formerly to Major Malplaquet. This was the reason why Mr. Figgins removed to his vicarage, who, officiating for some short time at Little Hockley, while the negociation was pending between Sir Sidney and the rector, became known to the baronet and Mr. Friend, both of whom believed him to be a very valuable young man, and Sir Sidney, in particular, assured him that if he could in future be of any service to him, it would give him pleasure.

In a few days after the arrival of Mr. Friend, Standfast had so ingratiated himself into his good opinion, that the worthy man was charmed with him. Indeed Standfast saw plainly that this was a good medium of recommendation to Sir Sidney, [Page 15] whose friendship, for some reason or other, he was strenuously desirous to cultivate. Perhaps, as providence appeared to have rescued Lord Hazard from his immediate gripe, he had some similar favour in contemplation for the baronet.

Certain it is that the damning proof which Sir Sidney and his lady imagined they had against Mr. Standfast, which was only presumptive, began to sink before those positive proofs which seemed every day to announce his reformation from a number of crimes which he made no scruple to say he had formerly committed; and this, added to the transport he apparently felt at the restoration of that happiness which now began to gild the moments of Lord and Lady Hazard, gave this fortunate gentleman such a favourable place in the hearts of all about him, that really an accusation to his prejudice, though ever so plausibly urged, would probably have gained but little faith, unless backed by very weighty, and indeed undeniable proof against him.

These Sir Sidney really had not. The utmost he could alledge was that dissipation and those irregularities which Standfast confessed and disclaimed, except indeed a strong suspicion of his being concerned in all the business of Miss Snaffle, which, if this recent behaviour was not hypocrisy, amounted [Page 14] [...] [Page 15] [...] [Page 16] to nothing,

and which was corroborated only by an intercepted letter, and even that—the rest not proved—would also fall to the ground.

The proof alluded to was the very letter which Standfast fancied had not been sent, but, upon further enquiry he found himself mistaken; yet, as it had made no alteration in Lady Hazard, he was convinced it had not been properly delivered, and was afterwards confirmed in that opinion, when he found it had been given to Lady Roebuck's footman.

In fact, Lady Roebuck's servant, on that very fatal afternoon, delivered her a letter at Lady Hazard's, where she happened to be waiting for Sir Sidney, who promised to meet her there at tea time. Lady Hazard was luckily writing letters in her own room, and her friend had just taken up a favourite author, from which employ being interrupted by "a letter for your ladyship," she, without further ceremony, opened it, and read these words:

MADAM,

I cannot refrain from acquainting you that your husband has an intrigue with an infamous woman, and you will be assured that I tell [Page 17] you truth, when my intelligence is proved to you by his staying out the greatest part of this night. Probably you may guess the quarter from whence you receive this, and as revenge is completely in your power, why not obey its dictates in favour of one who will not be ungrateful to your incomparable charms?

Sir Sidney, who came in while she was yet reading it, cried out, "So, so, I have caught you in the fact, have I? What tender epistle have you there?" "Only a discovery of your tricks, my love,' said she.' "Read that; but, before you see a word, remember I tell you it originates with Mr. Standfast."

As this conduct was no less handsome than usual in Lady Roebuck, her husband was neither surprised at that nor at the contents of the letter. Indeed they laughed so heartily at it, that their mirth served only to double their concern when, upon looking at the direction, which neither of them had noticed before, they saw it was addressed to Lady Hazard.

They were now indeed strongly confirmed it came through Mr. Standfast, and after having insinuated [Page 18] away Lady Hazard's time till the lateness of the evening convinced them there was too much truth in the letter, they retired, and, when alone, formed that determination which we have seen so resolutely made at the end of the first volume, and now almost abandoned at the very beginning of the second.

The latter end of the letter Lady Roebuck thought could allude to no other than Standfast; for though she had heard of the business of Dogbolt, yet she could not avoid looking upon that to be overstrained, and that the tutor at the bottom was the object who wanted to recommend himself; and indeed Lady Hazard, who wished to disguise nothing from her friend, did not scruple to say there were times when she had similar suspicions, though always, upon reflection, she was convinced she did him wrong.

Mr. Standfast, being as conseious of all these matters as if he had known their thoughts, combatted the effects of those resolutions they had taken in the manner we have seen; and thus, though continually on the brink of a discovry, he traversed the verge of the precipice on which he was placed as securely, though not so harmlessly, [Page 19] as SHAKESPEARE's peasant upon Dover cliff; for the peasant is described as gathering a purifier of the blood, while the parson was searching for whatever could inflame and corrupt it.

1.2. CHAPTER II.

A KIND OF WHITE CROW—THREE OTHER CURIOSITIES, AND A SAFE ARRIVAL IN WARWICKSHIRE.

As we shall have something to do with all those characters which I have lately introduced to the reader's notice, it may not be amiss if I mention a word or two of each in this place.

The attorney, whose name was Balance, had long been a great favourite of Sir Sidney; not because he had a remarkable number of enemies—though that was very often a sufficient reason for the baronet to espouse a man's interest—but because he had great professional integrity and private worth. I shall in a moment explain how this gentleman conjured up such a host of foes, by saying that he mortally hated roguery, though a lawyer. Indeed it had been doubted, by many of his brother professors, whether his odd notions and strange practice did not so decidedly operate against that strongest of all laws, custom, to the detriment of the general interest, that a point might be made to strike him off the rolls. [Page 21] For, said they, very learnedly, "as usage has, time out of mind, regulated laws; as usage has established that it shall be lawful for attornies to appropriate to themselves not only the money, goods, and chattles, lands and tenements, wives and children, consciences, peace of mind, nay even the liberty and lives of their clients; and as this said lawyer Balance absolutely rejects in toto, all such general power over his clients, shamefully contenting himself with moderate and reasonable recompence from those in whose behalf he has succeeded, and scandalously declining to prosecute and pursue to their ruin, such as he plainly sees have been already plucked and pillaged, till they totter under the weight of their accumulated misfortunes:—quere, whether, by trampling upon custom, which is paramount to law, and explaining justice and equity to be the same thing, which, for the better promotion of cavils and arguments, have been considered, time immemorial, to have distinct and different meanings, and looked upon as things that ought to be for ever kept separate and apart, the said lawyer Balance ought not to undergo a heavy censure of the court for the first offence, to be suspended during pleasure for the second, and if, upon returning to

practice, he should be found infringing this custom, this usage, this law, this justice, this equity, a third time, then, [Page 22] and in that case, to be considered as incorrigible, and rendered incapable to practise in his majesty's courts of justice!"

No one of these gentlemen, however, being patriot enough to rise up and rescue the laws from the gripe of so bold an innovator, he went on with this illicit practice to the great terror of the pettifogging tribe—many of whom he had caused to be struck off the rolls—and to the admiration of all good men, and, among the foremost, his particular friend Sir Sidney.

We come now to the artists. These were the same who had visited Roebuck hall for the last three years; for though the baronet had formerly made a point of having a new set every season, he at last gave up that plan, finding, upon taking them indiscriminately, that he brought home with him little more than a cargo of vanity, ignorance, and affectation. Having searched, therefore, with great care, and met with three a little more to his mind, though they certainly were strange kind of oddities, he stuck to them, and being now accustomed to their singularities, and finding nothing in them that exceeded folly, they really furnished him with a fund of amusement, independant of their professional abilities.

[Page 23] The poet, Mr. Ego by name, was, at least in his own opinion, as much any thing else as a writer. He knew every thing, and, what is very extraordinary, better than any body.

The painter was a professed satirist; his talent lay in caricature; and he blended the ideas which were conveyed by his pencil with his conversation.

The musician was a striking contrast to the painter; for he was as remarkably civil, if not servile, as the other was severe.

I cannot do better than introduce the reader to them as they are sitting over a bottle at the John of Gaunt.

"You are a devilish severe fellow, Mr. Musquito,' said the poet to the painter.' "I?' said Musquito; 'not at all:—only a sort of a HORACE upon

canvass, that's all:—a bit of a teazer, or so:—to be sure I can bite as hard as JUVENAL:—but why should one torture flies?" "And why not?' cried the poet. 'I would not give three-pence for a satirist who could not make any body miserable." "I'll try my hand upon him," said the painter, speaking low to the musician. Then turning to the poet, he went on. "Well said Ego! Well said ipse dixit! [Page 24] Well said I b' itself I! Well said proof positive! Well said infallibility!! Upon my soul Ego you would have made an admirable pope. Sir, he possesses every personal and mental qualification in the same proportion of excellence compared to others—" "as you do shameless effrontery,' retorted the poet; 'so you see I excel you at your own trade; for I have said as severe a thing as ever you did in your life, which has the advantage, unlike yours, of being truth. I will appeal to Mr. Toogood?" "To him!" said the painter; 'a credulous, easy, foolish, good natured—" "Ay, ay,' cried the musician, 'abuse my credulity as much as you please, but give me credit for my good intentions at least." "I do, I do,' said Musquito:—' "You intend very well, I dare say, when you praise a man's wisdom, and so you do when you praise his folly. In short, in you human nature has such an advocate, that there is scarcely a vice or a virtue that you have not a commendation for!"

"Poor Musquito,' cried Toogood, 'now upon my soul thy shafts must be terribly blunt when thou canst find nothing better to aim them at than me. I own my services are devoted to all who think proper to make use of them." "If they are rich,' answered Musquito drily; 'for you know Toogood why should the poor be flattered?'—' [Page 25] "Plague take you,' said the musician, 'I was going to say that I wish to be civil to all mankind, and if I have, in a few trifling instances, been mistaken, blame nature, who thought fit to sow in the garden of life, among a plentiful crop of valuable plants, a slight sprinkling of rascals and scoundrels. In short, Mr. Musquito, I would not give up the luxury of thinking well of mankind, to have Mexico for my real estate, Peru for my personal, and the mines of Golconda for my menu plaisirs. What the devil would you have me think, as you do, that every eye is divine into my heart, and every hand into my pocket?" "Neither would be worth while, Master Toogood'—cried Musquito.' "Come, come,' said Ego, 'I will finish the

dispute. This is the fact: you, Mr. Musquito, are over suspicious; and you, Mr. Toogood, are over credulous. I am the man for this world: I steer the middle course."

This company, upon Lady Hazard's recovery, separated into two parties; one of which set off for the seat of my lord, and the other for that of the baronet; till at length, by the ringing of bells and the acclamations of all the inhabitants, they were welcomed to Little Hockley and Castlewick.

Sir Sidney threw his eyes complacently around [Page 26] him, which sparkled with the satisfaction of beholding so many sincere adherents; and he did not at that moment a little plume himself upon the hope of seeing his friend in possession of the same solid enjoyment.

The meeting between Sir Sidney's friends and Annette was tender beyond expression. My lord declared he never saw so sweet a creature. Charles thought her handsome, but babyish. His mind indeed ran upon riper charms, for he had so little of the delicacy of love in his composition, that he conceived himself a perfect Caesar, and having made so many first sight conquests, he was yet to learn the pleasure of solicitation.

It is a shame to talk thus of a boy of eighteen, but really Mr. Standfast had so well remembered the conversation that passed between him and Viney, previous to his introduction to Lord Hazard, that the young gentleman had already experienced the secresy of the very same surgeon whose cautious conduct we were witnesses of in the last chapter. This gentleman, to say the truth, was a perfect HIPPOCRATES. As well as the medical skill of that ancient, he possessed his prudence; for he seemed to adhere to the famous oath of his predecessor, in which he enjoined himself to make his patient's [Page 27] good his principal aim, and that whatever he saw or heard in the course of his practice, or otherwise, relative to the affairs of life, nobody should ever know, if it ought to remain a secret.

The country and its amusements had infused such pleasure and satisfaction into every member of this society, that nothing was seen but

cheerfulness.—They mustered up a tolerable concert at Sir Sidney's, a thousand good humoured sallies circulated in the way of impromptues and epigrams, and sketches of each others singularities were handed about, to the no small diversion of all but those immediately caricatured. Charles was pretty adroit in each way, and having a greater licence, his strokes were bolder, and, in every other respect, at least a match for the rest. In short, there was no part of their time unfilled by some pleasure to every person's taste; for it was a maxim with Sir Sidney that all was fair in which there was no premeditated mischief. As for the rest, Mr. Friend began to experience very agreeable effects from his efforts at Little Hockley, especially as they were seconded by the exhortations of Standfast, who they knew had been a great sinner, and who now assured them that he was become a great penitent.

Thus, possessed of every pleasure a smiling country, [Page 28] profuse liberality, joyful hearts, and ingenious heads could produce, their happiness would have been complete had it not been damped by the indisposition of Lady Hazard, who, a short time after their arrival in the country, evidently fell into a gradual decline.

This, in a great measure, prevented Lord Hazard from a participation in the general happiness, and gave occasionally no little uneasiness to Sir Sidney and Lady Roebuck. My lord, however, in proportion as he shunned the general hilarity, courted the charms which he found in private meditation, and the exercise of that benevolence to which he was so forcibly stimulated by Sir Sidney.

1.3. CHAPTER III.

THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW GUEST—AND THE DEPARTURE OF AN OLD ONE.

MATTERS wore this face when Charles, who had been in continual anxiety relative to the situation of Miss Figgins, saw her brother one morning ride into the park. It was about the time when the young gentleman flattered himself he should become a father, and having accosted Mr. Figgins, who returned his salutation with bare civility, he was convinced this manly achievement of his had been crowned with the expected success. Relying however on the friendship of Mr. Standfast, he felt rather satisfied than otherwise on the subject, and immediately appeared as coldly civil as the young clergyman.

Mr. Figgins was shewn to Mr. Standfast, with whom he held a long conference, the result of which our hero waited for with impatience; and he was not a little astonished when the two gentlemen came towards him in terms of very high altercation.

[Page 30] Charles could distinctly hear Standfast say "Come come, this is a little too rascally." "Rascally!" cried the other.' "Yes,' replied Standfast, 'for it is impossible that you can be ignorant of her character:"—and then, seeing Charles, said "Here is the young gentleman, and I confess his conduct was imprudent enough, but sir, I tell you once again it was a trap for him, and if it had not been for my positive injunction, so honourable are his sentiments, he would have disgraced his family for ever by marrying your sister, whom I can prove to be a woman void of reputation. To tell you the truth sir, this was the cause of my silence, and as I am convinced you must have been privy to the whole business, you need not expect any further countenance from my lord, the bishop, or any other of my friends."

Mr. Figgins declared that if Mr. Standfast could in the smallest degree prove what he asserted, he should abandon his sister as a wretch unworthy his protection. He protested his total ignorance of her character, and solemnly assured Mr. Standfast he knew nothing of the intrigue between her and our hero, till—seeing her palpably in a condition that would shortly bring disgrace on him, particularly because of his profession

and connections—he taxed her with the fact, and she, with great unwillingness, [Page 31] discovered to him what had passed. He uttered a very florid speech on the subject of ingratitude, and declared he should detest himself if he could be capable, even was his benefactor—meaning Mr. Standfast—to withdraw his countenance and protection for ever from him, to meditate any return that could militate against those honourable sentiments of pure and grateful acknowledgment which were eminently his due.

Mr. Standfast confessed, till this business, he had always considered him as a very thankful, proper, decent, grateful young man:—nay he might recollect he had given hints that there would be no objection to count upon his future favour; and really, if he could acquit himself— "Will you suffer me to speak?' said Charles.' "As to Mr. Figgins, I most sincerely beg his pardon for the irregularity I was guilty of in his house. That he should know any thing of it is morally impossible; because his sister told me that she sincerely believed he would be the death of her, if he found it out; and, I assure you, this has at times given me so much anxiety, that if I had not promised you, Mr. Standfast, upon my honour—which I hope will ever be a sacred pledge with me—to leave the whole to your discretion, I certainly should, long ago, have written to Mr. Figgins, and laid all the blame on [Page 32] myself, where it certainly ought to fall: I am very happy to have this opportunity of coming to so proper an explanation, and will readily abide by the determination of Mr. Standfast in relation to my future conduct."

"My dear Charles,' said Standfast, 'your conduct in this, as in every thing else, is perfectly handsome. Perhaps my zeal for your honour and that of your noble father has hurried me too far, and induced me to treat Mr. Figgins with more harshness than he merited. I will take his word for what he asserts, because really, as I said before, there has always been something about him like ingenuousness, gratitude, and a proper sense of obligation."—Here Figgins bowed— "If therefore matters go in the old train as to him, I beg that it may extend to his sister."

"This is the point I wanted to come to,' said Charles. 'I assure you we were both betrayed into what we did, for neither of us originally meant more than a very harmless gratification."

"Oh yes,' said Standfast. 'Come, come, Charles, you might be a Lubin, but she was no Annette I assure you. No, no, Figgins,' added Standfast, taking Charles by the hand, 'my pupil here, whom [Page 33] I hope to see a duke, is no match for your sister, even were there not that bar which I will hereafter convince you subsists. In the mean time, let the bantling come forth, and be brought up:—we will find a provision for it."

Mr. Figgins was now invited to spend a few days in the family, to which he consented. Indeed the time passed so agreeably, that a fortnight had elapsed before he ever dreamt of taking his leave. Charles, during this interval, became very intimate with him, and Mr. Friend and the good Mildman—which last declared he began to have hopes of Little Hockley the moment the young gentleman had appeared among them—were charmed with his society.

Nor must the reader, who knows his origin, too hastily credit that I am advancing any thing unnatural or unlikely. Art does not require brilliant talents, and no people in the world are so easily imposed upon as good men. Pay but a modest deference to your own opinion, that you may not seem too servile; struggle a little with conviction before you appear to yield to it; and, though you give up points with reluctance, never fail in the end to crown your adversary with the palm of victory:— [Page 34] and be assured of friends wherever you choose to make them.

Standfast knew mankind surely. This young man was bred up under him; and as he had strong intellects, rather an engaging figure, a retentive memory, a wonderful natural penetration, a collected and shrewd sagacity, with a fortunate knack of chequering his conversation with bits and scraps of philosophy and morality, which he had studied, it is not at all astonishing that he should be mistaken for a sensible and good man by such as, could they have discovered any defects in him, would rather have excused than exposed them.

Mr. Standfast, one day, having received some letters from London, came to my lord, and informed him that his uncle was at the point of death. Of this uncle Lord Hazard had heard him speak, and always understood he had great expectations from him. He therefore begged that no time might be lost, but that the tutor should instantly set out to see his relation. This was the more readily agreed to because Mr. Figgins could stay to superintend his pupil's studies, which indeed now consisted of nothing more than reading and comparing different authors, a part of which exercise [Page 35] he pleasures of the country took off; not to reckon nis attention to painting and music, in both of which he was a great proficient.

These preliminaries adjusted, Mr. Standfast took his leave of his good friends in Warwickshire, and repaired to London; from whence, in a short time afterwards, he informed Lord Hazard that, his uncle being dead, he was left independant; but that he should still consider him as his benefactor, and would, as soon as he should have settled his affairs, wait on him. He anxiously enquired after Lady Hazard, whom he had left in a very declining state of health; hoped his pupil was pleased with Figgins, whom he took the liberty to recommend as his tutor, while he should need a person in that capacity, and offered to relinquish in his favour that annuity which his lordship had settled on him for life.

My lord replied in a suitable manner to this letter. He wished his friend joy of his good fortune; drew a melancholy picture of Lady Hazard's situation; enlarged most pathetically on his own treatment of her; solemnly declared if he should lose her all his happiness would be at an end; consented with pleasure to his proposal concerning Figgins, but positively refused—though he was determined to take care of the young man—to suffer the smallest restitution [Page 36] of that which he, Standfast, had infinitely more than deserved:—winding up the whole with a strong contrast between the great and exalted merit of his friend, and his own unworthiness.

In the mean time the summer was gliding away, during which scarcely a day passed that did not bring with it some new pleasure; but yet Lady Hazard's indisposition was a cloud that dimmed this serene sky. As most

of these amusements however were calculated for the alleviation of her pain, especially those which Charles conducted—for he doated on his mother—their enjoyments suffered but little diminution on her account. In the mean time our hero's sentiments changed insensibly every day in favour of Annette, though really his heart was yet a perfect stranger to the delicious sensations of delicate love; and those he did feel, young as he was, upon so proper an occasion he well knew how to suppress. He had some warm thoughts certainly as to Emma, and knowing as much of books as herself, he very archly conceived a design of conquering her with her own weapons; but, finding her virtue too well fortified to yield to his solicitations, he made an honourable retreat, greatly to her satisfaction, who was not in the least angry; for virtue, with her, was slender indeed that could not withstand every trial. On the contrary, she ventured [Page 37] to predict that Annette was his destined wife, but foresaw his imprudence would cost many a mutual heart ach before the accomplishment of their destiny.

Charles certainly had not the smallest objection to consider Annette in the light of an intended wife, nor was he by any means, as I have already said, insensible to either her beauty or accomplishments; and therefore—especially as he had the sanction of both his and her parents—he paid her the exactest attention, and lost no method nor opportunity of inspiring her with sentiments highly to his advantage. But he had ever set his heart on seeing the world, and that not superficially, before he should sink into a domestic character, which he always conceived would be a clog to the exertions of a volatile mind, like his; unless he could be assured, by repeated experience, that his partner for life was possessed of those many and scarce attractions which would so bind his inclinations as to make him prefer bondage to liberty.

The attention he paid Annette had, however, a different effect on that young lady. Their little pleasures were, it is true, not more than the sports of children; but there was such an unaffected ease, such sweetness of temper, such an engaging and so [Page 38] insinuating an address in our hero, without the smallest tincture of art, or illiberality, that, without her own knowledge, she imbibed the seeds of that poison which, according to Emma's prediction, was destined to give her many a bitter pang.

Little Hockley was now improving very fast.—Mr. Balance had routed the two attornies I formerly spoke of, who, upon examination, were found to have practised without the smallest qualification. The painter had completed a picture of the return of the prodigal son, which was placed in a conspicuous part of the church, and the musician had opened a fine organ, the gift of Sir Sidney, under which the poet affixed a very elegant latin inscription, which Emma said ought to have been in English.

It had been an invariable custom to celebrate the baronet's birth-day by throwing open the doors of the mansion house, and feasting all comers. In the afternoon several sports were performed on the green, and, in the evening, the company retired to a very large rustic assembly-room, where Sir Sidney always opened the ball; and after he had seen that his tenants and neighbours had every thing they could wish for, to give their pleasure free scope, he [Page 39] retired with their warm and unfeigned good wishes for a continuance of his health and happiness.

Since Sir Sidney's marriage, however, this festival had been kept on his wedding day, and this was called the grand feast:—for there were three others to celebrate, the birth-day of himself, that of Lady Sidney, and that of Annette. But these happening near each other, and Sir Sidney not choosing to fill his tenants heads with too profuse an inclination for pleasure, he held these festivals on the four quarter days, when he never failed to lighten the hearts of those who, from unavoidable necessity, could not be punctual with their rent.

There was something so remarkable in the conduct of the day which united the two villages, that I shall take a fresh chapter to describe it: flattering myself that no one will blame me for dwelling upon a subject the fittest that can be to produce benevolent ideas.

1.4. CHAPTER IV.

A JUBILEE OF HEARTS.

CARDS of invitation, containing the following words, were in due time circulated at the houses of the neighbouring gentry.

Sir Sidney Roebuck's grand feast will be celebrated on Monday next, the 21st of June, at which the presence of [...] is cordially requested.

Stewards

- Rt. Hon. Lord Hazard,
- Charles Hazard, Esq.
- Rev. Mr. Friend.

The company is expected to arrive on Sunday evening, and not to depart till Tuesday morning.

The combined assistance of all who could be useful was solicited upon this occasion. The poet, painter, and musician produced a masque in conjunction, and Charles wrote and set an ode, as [Page 41] well as painted the decorations for it; and it was allowed—though that might be the company's partiality—to be the completest performance of the day.

Lord Hazard's department was to receive the company, and accommodate such as could not find room at Sir Sidney's. Charles had the management of the amusements, and Mr. Friend, assisted by Mildman and Figgins, undertook to preserve decency and decorum. The company which arrived on the Sunday evening were served in the apartments provided for them, and permitted to sup and retire at their own time.

At six o'clock on the Monday morning, the two villages were awoke by ringing of bells, a discharge of cannon, and other demonstrations of joy. This done, several messengers were dispatched to request their attendance at a rural amphitheatre fitted up for the purpose, in the front of the rookery. There, by eight o'clock, the company assembled; and, after a short but pathetic hymn to the deity, had breakfast served up to them

by children, in white and flesh-colour dresses, ornamented with flowers, who drew the most delicious beverages from a variety of urns, distributed about in niches.

[Page 42] Coffee, tea, and chocolate, were relieved by capilaire, orgeat, lemonade, and sherbet; while the most odoriferous perfumes mingled their artificial sweets with the roses and jessamine, that shed their emanations as they interlaced the surrounding treillage. Cakes, comfits, and liqueurs, were seen in great variety and abundance; and after the company had amply refreshed themselves, during a performance of the most touching and melting airs, each Ganemede and Hebe moved a spring, and instantly played in the centre of every alcove a fountain of rose water, for the use of ablution; which ceremony was succeeded by a proclamation, that every one was at liberty to take separate diversion till eleven o'clock, when they were expected on the lawn, in order to go to church in procession.

This procession, though simple, was striking. It was preceded by twenty-four wool-combers, each of whom carried some ornament of their profession. Twelve others followed, with banners, on which were displayed a variety of ingenious devices.—Twenty-five inhabitants of Castlewick, and as many of Little Hockley, succeeded, one of each place linked arm in arm, in token of brotherly love. To these succeeded a band of music:—then came the stewards with golden wands, who were followed by [Page 43] their assistants with silver ones. Lady Roebuck, Lady Hazard, and Annette came next, in an open carriage: these were succeeded by a large number of other carriages, and these again by about two thousand spectators.

Being orderly seated at church, the service was performed, and an excellent sermon preached by Mr. Mildman, from the text "There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons, who need no repentance."

The service over, they returned in the same order—with this difference:—twelve morrice dancers met them on their way, and conducted them in a mazy round to the lawn, where all dispersed, and,

after promiscuous ambulations about the garden, retired to dress for dinner, which, at three o'clock, smoaked in the grand saloon, for the company within doors, and on the lawn for all who chose to partake of it.

In the saloon Lady Roebuck held her state, and Sir Sidney played the humble host. Annette, on one side, sat with all the blooming freshness of a new blown rose; and, on the other, poor Lady Hazard, pallid as a drooping lily. On the table [Page 44] was elegantly distributed a most sumptuous feast, admirably contrasted, and delicately served up. Nor did their pleasure receive a small addition from the hearty vacant mirth that assailed them from the lawn—which the saloon overlooked—where sat as many happy guests as could surround an ox, two bucks, and four sheep, all roasted whole; at which Emma sat in imitation of Lady Roebuck, and the butler—who was the very servant so faithful to Sir Sidney in France—attended, like his master, to supply the wants of the company.

Many loyal toasts were proclaimed by a discharge of cannon, and pledged by the company without. At length the lawn was cleared, coffee introduced into the saloon, and, in a short time after, notice given that the ode written by our hero was going to be performed in the rustic amphitheatre, where the company had breakfasted.

The saloon was now prepared for the masque, to which the company were desired to repair in fancy dresses, but without vizors. Previous however to the performance, as soon as it became sufficiently dark, they were led by the morrice dancers through a serpentine walk to the canal, where, on the opposite bank, was discharged a most superb firework, in which the painter had exerted himself in ornamental [Page 45] transparencies, and the poet in apt devices.

The masque over, it is impossible to express the universal astonishment when, upon returning to the lawn, they found it converted into beautiful alcoves, tents, booths, and other receptacles for different parties, where boys and girls, in the most picturesque fancy dresses, ran before them, ready to anticipate their very wishes. Nothing could exceed the beauty proportion, and disposition of this city of the pleasures, reared as it were by enchantment. Those who were not disposed, however, to resort to it for

refreshment, were attended and served in a manner equally desirable in a suite of rooms in the house; and as to Emma's company, in addition to a review of all these pleasures at a becoming distance, they had their own rural assembly room for their supper and ball, where I am well informed not one, within some hours, guessed what it was o'clock, till the sun sent forth those streaks of crimson which put an end to their harmless merriment on the Tuesday morning.

Nor did their superiors separate one whit sooner, and not then without regretting that their pleasures were at an end, and declaring that they never witnessed such taste, nor experienced such hospitality.

[Page] It may not be improper to notice some of the principal remarks made on this occasion.

Annette remarked that Charles looked, spoke, and did every thing divinely. He remarked that she was a lovely little creature; and all the company remarked that they seemed born for each other.—Emma remarked she had made a conquest of the poet, the musician, and the butler; and well knowing the fidelity of this last to his master, and affection to his young mistress, declared, as she undressed Annette, that she should have no objection, at a proper season, to be the author of his happiness.

The poet remarked Emma was a smart wench, and should be his; for he was the man in the world for her purpose. The musician agreed to the first remark, but thought they neither of them stood any chance; and the painter, overhearing them, swore she was a caricature of mother Shipton, and they were damned fools for talking such nonsense.

Lord Hazard remarked that he had now but one wish in the world; and Sir Sidney remarked—but not to my lord, that this was the first time their grand feast had been graced with the presence of Lady Hazard, and he greatly feared it would be the last. Indeed that amiable and charming lady, [Page 47] lest she should diminish the general hilarity, exerted herself on that day beyond her strength, and though probably the utmost human care—for she had every assistance that money or

influence could procure—could not have wholly restored her, yet, certainly, her now rapid decline was accelerated by the various shocks, though of temporary pleasure, which she received in assisting to promote the happiness of her friends.

1.5. CHAPTER V.

A DISPUTE BETWEEN EMMA AND THE POET.

As this is the only entire summer the reader and I are to pass in Warwickshire, I shall explain pretty fully how the time jogged on. So far it is pretty evident every man's leisure had been taken up to prepare for the festival, which some may think I have a little too particularly described. It has, however, brought about something, according to my usual custom; for it made Lady Hazard worse, which, but for the sake of moral truth, I sincerely wish had not happened; it lost Emma's heart; and it did two or three other things, which will be divulged in proper time.

This grand affair being over, the spare time was filled up with lighter and less regular pleasures; among which Charles, in particular, found the contrary dispositions of Sir Sidney's scientific triumvirate excellent food for his frolicksome temper, which, though it had not the smallest tincture of [Page 49] mischief in it, loved to indulge itself with exposing absurdity. To this Master Figgins egged him on with all his persuasion, with no view, however, as he said, but to oblige the young gentleman; nor, to say the truth, did Sir Sidney want a relish for such fun, when every thing was kept within proper decorum.

It did not signify what the joke was, their argument upon it produced all the amusement. Charles very often set the poet down to a literary contention with Emma, who, being skilled in authorities, generally conquered him; for really dates and facts are very good materials for criticism, and method will very often be too hard for genius. Upon these occasions the poet was thrust further into a corner by the satiric painter, and consoled by the accommodating musician. One afternoon, however, she gained so complete a triumph, that he was obliged, for a long time, to own himself conquered.

The reader remembers that Emma had a very great predelection for Dr. JOHNSON, and Charles entreated the poet to attack the lexicographer. This he did not fail to do, but kept, for a long time, to general

accusations. Emma desired he would give her some opportunity of answering him. "Any [Page 50] man,' said she, 'may be made to look contemptible. ARISTOPHANES contrived this of SOCRATES, who, because he was a man of inoffensive manners, and therefore naturally decried the licentious writings and conduct of the comic poets, provoked the fury of this satirist:—but even though this is true, and though Madame DACIER was so charmed with this author that she translated—and, not content with that, read two hundred times, and every time with fresh pleasure, the very piece that was written to render this great philosopher ridiculous—yet it proved nothing, because general assertion is a blunt arrow that falls without inflicting a wound."

"Well, what do you say to this?' cried Figgins, who stood by.' "Say!" cried the poet, 'If she wants proofs of what I have asserted, she shall have them; I am the man for adducing proofs. And first of all, has he not written a severe satire on himself, when he says of SWIFT "'that on all common occasions he habitually affects a style of arrogance, and dictates rather than persuades?"' In another place, "'he predominated over his companions with a very high ascendency, and probably would bear none over whom he could not so predominate."' Now does not Mrs. THRALE, after a confession that she had surfeited herself with an [Page 51] abject and indefatigable attention to him for a number of years, such as no man who did not in a most insolent degree predominate over his companions could exact, does she not declare she could no longer bear him, and that she went to Bath because she knew he would not follow her? Is not Mr. BOSWELL every moment frightened to death lest there should be a total breach between them? Does not the Doctor meditate an entire separation only because Mr. BOSWELL had the imprudence to leave him for a few minutes, with truly the shameful intention of contributing to his ease and convenience? What do you say to all this? Does not this convince you that my assertions are truth?"

"No, no, sir,' answered Emma, 'we were to talk of a poet, you are speaking of a man."

"A good evasion,' said Ego, 'and in the Doctor's own way. I am the man for seeing what people are about:—but come, you shall have him as a

poet. And pray, does he not wish to destroy the very being of poetry, by insisting on annihilating mythology? Does he not find it very reprehensible in Mr. GAY to introduce Cloacina and the nightman in his Trivia? and does he not abuse poor PRIOR most unmercifully for fabling that [Page 52] Chloe was mistaken one day by Cupid for Venus, and another for Diana? In short, mythology is, with him, puerility. He says of Collins that he loved faries, genii, giants, and monsters! and that while he pursued these objects, he did not sufficiently cultivate sentiment: when all the world knows that there is an end of poetry if sentiment is no longer to be conveyed through so rich and beautiful a vehicle. What do you say to this abuse of the gods and goddesses? Is not it shameful?"

"No sir,' said Emma, 'not at all, for a man may abuse such imaginary beings without injuring any body's moral feelings."

"Another evasion,' cried the poet, 'I will be judged by any body. But I will go a plainer way to work. Here is a criticism of his that is stark nonsense. In speaking of Mr. GRAY's lines on the death of a cat that was drowned as she attempted to catch a gold fish, the last line says, that all that glitters is not gold; nor if it were, says the doctor, would the cat have been the better for it, for a cat does not know the value of gold. Now I say she does, in the sense it is here meant, which is nothing more than that we are not to trust to appearances; and a cat knows that, as far as her [Page 55] understanding goes, as well as a man. Can you controvert this, Mrs. Emma? No, no, I am the man for close reasoning. All that glitters is not gold sure enough. What do you say to my argument?" "That it is not sterling, sir,' said Emma.' "Your learned principal would have given the same vague answer,' said the poet.' "Come, come, why does he take no more notice of COLLINS's ode than if no such poem had ever been written? Can you answer me that?" "Easily, sir,' said Emma; 'it was written for music, which he did not understand." "It is a pity then,' said the poet, 'that he did not understand it; for he cannot shew such harmony in his own poetry, which is the heaviest—" "Sir,' said Emma, 'he was profound." "Verbose,' said the poet.' "He compiled a dictionary of the English language," answered Emma. "Zounds,' cried the poet, 'you would make a man mad; I am a man that is never in a passion, but damme madam—"

Here every body interfered, and it was universally allowed that Emma had gained a complete victory. "Yes,' said Emma, still imitating Dr. JOHNSON, 'my triumph is complete; for if Mr Ego has nothing to say for himself, the logical conclusion is, that all he can say of himself must be against himself, for these are the three distinctions of egotism."

[Page 54] This witty warfare stuck hard with the poet for a good while: he got off, however, as well as he could; for when the painter, with his usual acrimony, told him that he ought to hide his head for ever, after being conquered by a woman, and the musician, in his old accommodating manner, said he plainly saw Mr. Ego had yielded the palm from the abundance of his natural complaisance, Ego cried out, you are right, my dear friend Toogood, I am the man that knows how to behave polite to a lady.

1.6. CHAPTER VI.

CONSISTING OF SHAM GHOSTS, AND A VALIANT TAYLOR.

NOTWITHSTANDING this repulse which the poet sustained from Emma, he had really a penchant for her, and as she loved reading, he flattered himself he should succeed by acknowledging her victory over him in the dispute already mentioned, and submitting tacitly to her opinion in all literary matters.

This amorous intercourse, at least that which appeared so to the musician, began to make him a little uneasy, for he flattered himself with pretty near the same hopes as the poet. Seeing this, Charles and his associates hit upon a plan which they thought would afford them some amusement.

Charles very archly intimated to Toogood that Emma, in her own mind, gave him the preference, but, added he, you will lose her owing to your absurd diffidence. In short, after proper preparatio [...] he proposed to him a scheme which he said would [Page 54] [...] [Page] [...] [Page 56] evince his love for Emma, even without wounding his modesty by declaring it, would bring out her real sentiments towards him, and would finally frighten Ego into a relinquishment of his pretensions to her.

The kind Mr. Toogood agreed to the proposal with but little hesitation. It was this: the associates were to report that the musician had hanged himself for love, and, to give it a colour, while he hid himself in a garret—where, by the way, they almost starved him, under a pretence that nobody could come to him for fear of a discovery—his fiannel powdering gown was put upon a stuffed figure, and hung as it were artfully by the neck to a staple in his bed chamber; and this was shewn to the poet, in the dusk of the evening, in a way so well managed, that he really took it for the musician.

The poet, willingly enough, ran, as he was desired, for help, and, in the interim, the powdering gown was shifted from the figure to Toogood himself, whose face had previously been smeared by the painter with a composition of a cadaverous hue; therefore, when he returned, and found Toogood stretched upon the bed, he had not the smallest doubt but that he

had made his final exit. Presently afterwards Emma came into the room, and [Page 57] being properly instructed for the purpose, began to lament her hard fate, and to utter so many tender things in favour of the musician—calling him her Orpheus, her Amphion!—In short she flew into such apparent rapture, that Charles and Figgins feared the crotchet-monger would have jumped up, and appeased her upon the spot. She said this country was now deprived of a second PURCEL, but where could they find another DRYDEN to record his praise?

Ego answered briskly, that DRYDEN to be sure was a very pretty poet, but there was one yet in the world, he flattered himself, as capable of singing the virtues of a deceased friend as most people.

Emma took him at his word, saying she feared she should never be able to bring herself to love him—though she would try what she could do—yet her friendship he might always command, if he would, as a last tribute to his friend's memory, write his epitaph.

This settled, the company dispersed. Charles lifted up his hands, Figgins blessed himself, the poet in profound meditation, Musquito swearing it served the fool right, and Emma quite in a tragedy rant: The poet desired he might have a slight supper [Page 58] in his apartment, and pen, ink, and paper.—The musician, who had acted his part very well, was locked up, and every body retired.

Ego was heard for some time to walk about his room in great agitation, and afterwards to draw his chair and sit down very still to work. In short, he had finished the task just at that moment

'When church yards yawn,
'And hell itself breaths forth contagion to the world!"

Being charmed with his production, he began to read it aloud, and afterwards was heard to exclaim, "I never was so successful in my life! Once more—"and then reading—

'Here Toogood lies, by desp'rate passion drove,
'Who, great musician, hanged himself for love!"

He scarcely had uttered these words, when open flew the door, and the musician appeared in his powdering gown, with a halter round his neck, exclaiming in a hollow voice "And so I did, perfidious poet." The bard, like Pierrot—though the musician looked that character more than he did—now began to stare, to tremble, and, without quiting either the paper or the candle, blundered to the further side of the bed, where the ghost, with a most [Page 59] ghastly grin, glided after him. Seeing himself followed, he sprang across the bed at the expence of his shins, and out of the door, the ghost hard at his heels, when hurrying down the stairs—which were strewed with peas, unknown to either of them, they rolled over each other till they lighted on a feather bed, purposely laid at the landing place, where all the company in the house burst in at once, and found them cuffing one another almost as unmercifully as Mr. POPE makes the two eagles in HOMER.

The musician began now to perceive that he had been duped as well as the poet. Sir Sidney said he was sorry to find the musician had played upon so ridiculous a chord; to which Charles answered, his performance was perfectly in the amoroso style.—Emma said that to be sure he had given a dying proof of his love, but not knowing that he would recover, she, out of despair, had chosen another.—The painter said it was not the first time Mr. Too-good had made himself ridiculous. The poor musician, getting up, laughed the matter off as well as he could. He said his known character was to accommodate himself, as much as possible, to the pleasure of the company; and as to the poet, he said he suspected it was a trick from the beginning, for he was the man at discoveries! He swore he would [Page 60] have acted a dead man ten times better; and as for a ghost! "Damme,' said he, 'if I had personated a ghost, I would have scared you all out of your wits!"

After a hearty laugh, Emma finished the business by a few serious words, saying, that they had both hung themselves up as marks of ingratitude, in return for Sir Sidney's hospitality; yet, if the ghost of remorse did but haunt them a little, for entertaining a wish to injure a poor girl, who had nothing to depend upon but her character, she should, for her own part, think them sufficiently punished.

A truce was struck, and good humour restored, or rather prolonged; for none of the parties entertained the least rancour: on the contrary, the musician was the first to confess he had been justly reproved for his error, and Ego said he was an admirer of poetical justice, which he flattered himself he had exemplified pretty strongly in his writings.

About this time a matter happened which had very nearly undone some of Sir Sidney's pious work at Little Hockley. One John Swash, a miller, who was at the head of a large family, and one of the first who repented of his former idle tricks, had been set up by Sir Sidney, and had lived for some [Page 61] time in comfort and credit. This man, at the instigation of some litigious persons, who envied his present good fortune, had been taken up for sheep-stealing: a crime which he certainly had committed some years before. He was to be tried at Warwick, at the summer assizes, and Sir Sidney greatly feared the fact would be fully proved; in which case, it would be difficult to save the man.

But this was not the worst, for a number of the Hockleyites, having been guilty of crimes equally enormous, might, on his conviction, emigrate from the village, where they began to live peaceable and decent lives; and thus he should lose the fruits of that benevolent harvest which he had been so long and so carefully bringing to perfection.

There was but one man who could swear to his identity; except indeed a companion, who having been formerly discharged by a magistrate, on account of this fact, now appeared as king's evidence, to curry favour with the farmer, whose sheep had been lost, as well as to screen himself from future prosecutions.

This man, who, as I said, could swear to him, was a taylor, and lived, at this time, in pretty good credit at Wellingborough, but had formerly worked [Page 62] as journeyman at a small town not far from Little Hockley, and when business was not very stiring there, was glad enough to job about at other places, and return to his wife and family with the earnings.

He had been three days getting ready some mourning for a family in the neighbourhood, when, being upon the point of returning on a very dark night, he was reminded, by some officious friend, that he must go seven miles about, for that over the common, which was but little more than three, he would certainly meet with the ghost.

It must be understood that on this common was erected a gibbet, where were hung in chains two smugglers, who had murdered an exciseman; and under this gibbet every evening were seen—for a great number of the inhabitants within some distance round were ready to swear it—two men in white marching with much deliberation, and carrying a coffin.

The taylor had frequently heard all this, but as it rained a little, and the way over the common lay so much nearer than the other, he could not think or going round:—besides he was perfectly, at this [Page 63] time, pot valiant, and one more glass put the finishing stroke to his resolution.

Away went the taylor with his wages in his pocket, and his goose suspended on a stick, which he held over his shoulder. When he came near the gibbet, sure enough he saw two men carrying a coffin. His sensations may be easily guessed at. He was seized with so strong a fit of horror, that his teeth chattered, his legs shook, he trembled from head to foot, and sweat at every pore. He made an effort to run away, but his limbs refused their office. At length, as the spectre approached, with one frantic struggle, between fear and desperation, his well-poised goose flew from the staff that supported it like lightning, and hitting the head of the ghost that was nearest to him, brought him to the ground—when lo! open flew the coffin, and out jumped two sheep!

The other spirit, unconscious that he had only one-ninth of an adversary to encounter, took to his heels, and soon disappeared. The first, however, stunned by the blow he had received, could not so easily get out of the taylor's clutches, who being convinced of the fact by the information of the two sheep, pursued his victory, and actually tied the [Page 64] culprits hands with a large piece of list, in order to carry him before a magistrate.

The sheepstealer pleaded very hard for his liberty as soon as he came to himself, when the taylor, knowing his voice, presently recognized him for the very same John Swash, who now, at the distance of almost three years, was confined in Warwick jail for this individual offence.

The general opinion was that the taylor had compassionated the situation of John for a valuable consideration, which was, in the nature of a fine, to be paid by installments, but had not been regularly discharged. Finding however that the offender began to be pretty well off in the world, the subject was revived, and the matter carried by the farmer, at the instigation of the taylor, to the length we have seen.

These were the circumstances which made Sir Sidney uneasy. He plainly saw that Swash was picked out not with a view to offer a public sacrifice at the shrine of offended justice, but merely to be used as an instrument by way of experiment, to see how much money could, upon similar occasions, be extorted in future:—for knowing the baronet to [Page 65] be very warm in whatever he espoused, the two pettifoggers who were driven from Little Hockley, and a few others who accompanied them, counted upon a comfortable subsistence, which they had no doubt they could procure by raising contributions, in like manner, upon the generosity of Sir Sidney.

1.7. CHAPTER VII.

THE SEQUEL OF SWASH AND THE TAYLOR.

The difficulty seemed to be how to suppress the evidence of the taylor without Sir Sidney's apparent concurrence; for it was not enough that he should not seem to take any active part in the business, but it was necessary to regard it as a matter of perfect indifference to him.

On this account, it was necessary to be very wary in their measures. Charles and Figgins, however, undertook, after a very little reflection, to remove all difficulties.

The plan was explained, and greatly approved; and now came the time to put it in execution.

A house was taken about three miles from Warwick, whither Charles, Figgins, and the body of arts repaired; which last were informed that the [Page 67] removal was only temporary, to take views, and attend the assemblies at the assizes.

About a month before the assizes, Charles and Figgins rode to Wellingborough. The latter having previously rolled his coat in the road, and splashed his horse on one side, they went to the first inn they saw, where they enquired if there was a clever taylor in town, who could make a coat at a short warning. The landlord recommended one, but not the man they wanted; but, rather than make objections, they determined to see him, and when he came found fault with every thing he produced: which indeed they were determined to do with fifty, till they should see the object of their present business. At length he came, and there never was such a taylor! They were struck with his taste, his manner, his price:—In short, the poor devil was in raptures, though a man must have been very ingenious to find language for this lavish praise in favour of a card of buttons, and some snips of cloth. So it was however, that the taylor never found out half so much merit in himself as at that moment. He made his men sit up all night, and a very awkward coat was produced in the morning for Figgins, which, nevertheless, was the pink of taste, and the extreme of the new fashion; and Charles pretended to be so much in love with it, that he ordered [Page 68] a frock for himself,

with the addition of a new Birmingham button, with which he declared himself enchanted. This frock however he could not stay for. It was therefore ordered to be sent to the house of the Rev. Mr. Figgins, near Warwick, where it would be paid for on delivery.

The taylor said he should be at Warwick at the assizes, for he was subpoened there upon a trial, and he would then, if the gentleman pleased, take the liberty of calling, to see if he was satisfied with his coat.

Figgins said he should be very glad to see him, for that he knew no character so respectable as a tradesman. This was said as they took horse, and the taylor, making a very low bow, retired. The circumstance was however so singular, that the landlord, as well as the taylor's wife, set down Charles and Figgins for two cheats, and cautioned the taylor not to be taken in.

The taylor had himself some suspicions akin to theirs, though the flattery that had been lavished on him almost overcame his wariness. However, to make all sure, as he had some business at Warwick,—indeed no other than to con his lesson as to his evidence [Page 69] against Swash—he took that opportunity of carrying home the coat himself.

Being arrived at Mr. Figgins's, he was very kindly welcomed, detained all night, paid his bill, and informed that more clothes would be sent for, to be got ready against the assize ball; to which our hero added, "I wish we could prevail on you, sir, to settle here, for there is not one of your profession within twenty miles who knows even how to set on a button with taste."

The taylor acceeded to the fact, took a comfortable portion of merit to himself, and went home in high spirits.

Swash was to be tried on the last day of the assizes, on the motion of the counsel, and three days previous to the trial an order was sent to the taylor from our hero for some clothes for the assize ball. The taylor could not refuse to execute the order, but, nevertheless, very anxious to be in

time for the trial, was determined he would be at Warwick the night before.

A servant being dispatched to suggest alterations and delays, till he should be detained very late that evening, he at length arrived, clothes and all, at [Page 70] Mr. Figgins's, about half an hour past eleven o'clock, most exceedingly fatigued.

Figgins took him very cordially by the hand, and led him into a parlour, where, at near one—the clocks being put back almost an hour—supper appeared. The taylor protesting he never was so disposed to make a good meal in his life, fell to very heartily. Thus the time passed on till within a quarter of an hour of day light, though by the clocks—being once more put back—the taylor did not believe it so late by two hours. At length he was led to bed completely drunk. Having slept till two o'clock in the afternoon—which will not appear extraordinary if we consider his drunkenness and fatigue—he awoke, without recollecting for some moments where he was. When he felt, however, a fine, soft, stately bed, he began to have some faint idea how he came there; but, as every thing appeared as dark as pitch, he concluded it was in the middle of the night, and turned to go to sleep again; this, after tumbling and tossing for half an hour, he effected, and taking another pretty good nap, waked about half an hour past six.

Feeling a violent head-ach, and finding himself intolerably hungry, he could not help thinking the night remarkably long. He got out of the bed, and [Page 71] groped about for the windows, and having drawn one of the curtains, opened the shutters, but it was all the same. He could not throw up the sash indeed, owing, as he supposed, to a mode of fastening it, which he did not understand. He was yet convinced, however, that it was not near day light, and therefore determined to go to bed again.

In groping out his way, he caught hold of the tossel of a bell, which immediately tingled very forcibly. This frightened him out of his wits.—How could he apologize in a gentleman's house for making such a disturbance? After he had been in bed about a quarter of an hour, in anxious hope that nobody had heard the bell, a servant came into his

room, with a candle, yawning, stretching, and rubbing his eyes, who asked him what he would be pleased to have.

The taylor begged his pardon a hundred times, for disturbing him, though it was nearly seven in the evening, and asked what o'clock it was, and how long it would be till day light?

"O'clock, sir!" said the servant, why we han't a been in bed above a quarter of an hour; I believe there will be a good three hours yet before the cock crows."

[Page 72] "Three hours!" cried the taylor, 'why I never passed such a night in my life! Three hours!—why I seem as if I had lain twenty; and then I am so cursed hungry." "Ay, that is your long journey, sir,' said John.' "I don't know what the devil it is,' said the taylor, 'but could not you, my dear Mr. John, get me a bit of something for the tooth?" "Lord love you, no such thing,' said John; 'you must e'en stay till morning." "Morning!" cried the taylor, 'why I shall be famished in three hours; I never had such a craving in my life." "Well, well,' said John, 'then I will see what I can do; but I must get the keys of old Mother Search, the house-keeper, and she is a devil of a crusty toad, I can tell you."

The taylor implored him to see what he could do, and John said he would return directly. He did not, however, make his appearance for another half hour, when he brought word that there was nothing to be had.

This news the taylor was obliged to swallow instead of the repast he had expected, and wishing John a good night, endeavoured once more to get to sleep. This however was impossible; he kicked about, turned, twisted, got up, lay down, and between whiles, fell into a kind of dose, till night [Page 73] actually came. His patience was now entirely exhausted, and, for the first time, he suspected that some trick had been played him. The whole conduct of this family had been so extraordinary, that he began now to reflect on his neighbours' suspicions; but then, how could that apply to him?—he had nothing to be robbed of. They might murder him, however, but what harm had he done to any body? Perhaps it was all a drunken frolic:—perhaps it was day-light all this time. Whatever it was,

he might be sure no servant would set him right; he was therefore determined to sally forth, and know the truth of every thing.

So resolved, he immediately put on his clothes, and groping out the door, met with no impediment all the way to the garden, where, by feeling about, he soon found himself. Here he gave that credit to the stars which he denied to John, and being now convinced his brain was affected, he thought he could not do better than return, without giving any further disturbance to the family. This, however, was not so easily practicable as he imagined. The door had shut after him in such a manner, that he found it out of his power to open it.

His situation was now truly deplorable. He durst not knock, for fear of making more disturbance in [Page 74] the house. In the mean time he was devoured with hunger, and being in a strange place, in the night, his fancy transformed every bush, not into an officer, but a ghost.

These apprehensions were not a little heightened by a variety of noises, which now assailed his ears. Clanking of chains, groans, and howls fixed him petrified to the spot, while strange lights, which came and disappeared, added not a little to the horrid workings of his teeming fancy. At length something tapped him upon the shoulder, when turning round in an agony of fear, he saw, as plain as ever he did any thing in his life, John Swash staring him in the face. What at this moment were the poor taylor's sensations! He squeaked, kicked, plunged, without being able to take his eyes from this dreadful object, till presently his sight failed him, his muscles were all relaxed, and he measured his length on the ground.

A few tweaks by the nose and some cold water brought him a little to himself, when he found John and another servant lifting him up. This circumstance did not a little facilitate his recovery. The moment he got the use of his speech, he cried out, "For the love of God, dear christian gentlemen, speak to me! Oh Lord, is he gone? Did you [Page 75] see him? Oh dear, dear, dear, dear—there he comes again! Hold me fast!—don't let him fly away with me!"

John and his fellow servant had some difficulty to comply with his request, he struggled so hard, for fear gave him the strength of a giant.

The spectre approaching, the taylor's fear, or rather horror, was beyond description "There,' cried he, 'Don't you see it?" "See what?' said John, 'I see nothing but the trees and the stars, do you Thomas?" "Not I,' said Thomas.' "Come come, sir, doo ey goo to bed—yow han not a slept to night. When the woine a be got out of your head, yowl be in your right wits, like a sober parson."

The ghost now began to speak. "Hush, hush,' cried the taylor.' "Oh Lord have mercy upon me, save and deliver me. It speaks! Oh John Swash, John Swash, how have I offended thee?"

"Oh miserable taylor, listen to me,' said the ghost.' "I will John indeed,' said the poor terror-struck wretch,' and now the ghost went on.

"For the lucre of gain thou didst try to hang me. [Page 76] though well thou knowest I never did thee harm; but I have escaped thy malice, for rather than bring disgrace upon my poor wife and family, I made away with myself. Now if thou wishest to sleep peaceably in thy bed, make a full confession of thy wickedness to Sir Sidney Roebuck, and through him restore to my unhappy family that money which thou hast at different times frightened me out of. Remember, and let not my angry spirit visit thee a second time." So saying, the ghost disappeared.

"Lord have mercy, save, deliver, and forgive my sins,' said the taylor.' "What d'ye toak about?' said Thomas.' "Pardon a poor, wretched, miserable sinner,' exclaimed the taylor.' "Come come,' said John, 'it will be time enough to say your prayers when you are up in your room." "How can you be so blasphemous?' said the taylor, 'did not you hear what he said?" "Who? Who?' cried John.' "Why the man's out of his wits.'—' "Who!" exclaimed Snip, 'why poor John Swash; I have killed, I have murdered him, and his blood will be on my hands." "Odds wounds,' cried Thomas, 'these be odd sort of speeches; I do not wonder yow be troubled in mind, if yow a done such wicked things as these:—but coom, yow be only a sleep, and a dreaming."

[Page 77] In short, the trembling taylor was at last conveyed to his room, where he lay sweating and shivering, and almost suffocated under the clothes, till day-light.

He now got up, and saying his prayers longer and louder than ever he had done in his life, he began, though still in bodily fear, to consider how he should prevent a second visit from the ghost. As however the family was not yet stirring, and he thought he had made pretty sufficient disturbance in it already, he returned once more to bed, where, having undergone so much mental and corporeal fatigue, he fell into a sound sleep, which probably saved him from a severe fit of sickness.

The reader has seen that the windows had been purposely blocked up, on the first night, on the out side, to cheat the taylor, through the whole of that day, into a belief that it was not yet light; by which means the trial of Swash came on, and he was acquitted for want of evidence; for as to the confederate, Figgins had seen, and so completely intimidated him, with threatening to lay a detainer against him on another score, that he purposely prevaricated on the trial, and the whole business was dismissed as frivolous and vexatious. The noise which the taylor heard when he was in the garden, and which [Page 78] his fears had so greatly magnified, was nothing more than the taking down the blinds, which, as I have said, on the outside were affixed to the windows.—But the ghost was no other than the individual John Swash, who had been released in the afternoon, and properly tutored for the purpose.

The taylor, at the proper time, was summoned to breakfast in the parlour, where he was kindly received by Mr. Figgins and Charles, as well as the poet and the musician:—the painter being gone to take a walk. They informed him they were extremely sorry to hear he had been so ill in the night, and the poet, pretending to know something of physic, felt his pulse, which having done very gravely, he declared that the gentleman was not so ill in body as that he was troubled with thick-coming fancies that disturbed his rest.

"That's very true, sir,' said the taylor, 'you have found out my disorder at once." "Well but can't you cure him of that?' said Figgins.' "No,'

answered the poet gravely, 'in that case the patient must administer unto himself.'' "Thank you sir,' said the taylor; 'it is very true—he must indeed—and so I will, if it shall please God, before I am many hours older.''

[Page 79] "You see, you see,' said the poet, 'I know all the symptoms of this disorder. You are very hungry sir, are you not?" "Yes sir,' said the taylor, 'I dare say I could eat a shoulder of mutton, and look round me.'' "A bad symptom, sir,' said the poet.' "Pooh, pooh,' cried Charles, 'I will never believe that a hungry sick man is in much danger. Come John, let us have the breakfast, the gentleman will be too late for the trial.'' Then addressing himself to the taylor: "When do you expect it to come on sir? I hope you will convict the rascal; for really times are come to such a pass that an honest man cannot keep his property in safety.''

The taylor's countenance underwent several alterations, and he faultered out, "why sir I don't think it will come on at all.'' Here John came in with a smoaking plate of toast. "Zounds, let us fall to,'' said Charles. "Come sir, help yourself.''

The taylor began to put a piece to his mouth, when in came the painter. "Your servant,' said Figgins, 'where have you been this morning?'—' "Faith,' said Musquito, 'I have been to see a very unpleasant spectacle, I assure you. A poor fellow, one Swash, who was to have been tried this morning [Page 80] for sheep-stealing, poisoned himself last night in his cell, and, through the interest of Sir Sidney Roebuck, the coroner's verdict was returned lunacy, and they are now carrying the body to his wife and children.''

Here the tea and toast dropt out of the taylor's hand, and he entreated, for the love of God, that he might be conducted to that very Sir Sidney Roebuck, for he could not eat nor sleep before he disburthened his conscience of something that lay very heavy on it.

Every one affected extraordinary surprise at this declaration; after which, Mr. Figgins said "Sir, I am a clergyman, and if I can do you any service by hearing your confession, and giving you salutary advice, I will do it

with pleasure." To which the terrified taylor—looking about him—said, "No sir, that won't do; I am afraid he will appear again if I tell it to any body but Sir Sidney.'—' "Appear!" said Charles, 'Who? Who will appear?" "The ghost sir, the ghost!' said the taylor; 'John Swash's ghost!"

A gentleman now desired to speak with Mr. Figgins, who being ushered in, proved to be Sir Sidney.

[Page 81] The moment the taylor saw him, he fell upon his knees, and cried out "Oh dear sir forgive me.'—' "Forgive you!" said Sir Sidney, 'why who are you?" "Sir,' said he, 'I am the taylor, the wicked taylor that tried to hang John Swash."

The baronet was then informed of all the ghost enjoined Snip, and at length, on his earnest entreaty, went apart with him to make an ample confession. This indeed amounted to nothing criminal in the taylor, except the extortion of the money; but it laid up such a body of evidence against the emigrants from Little Hockley, as the baronet had no doubt would put a stop to their nefarious attempts for the future.

The taylor's confession being signed and sworn to, he was permitted to eat a voracious breakfast with John, for nothing after this could prevail on him to come into the parlour.

A large cavalcade now appeared in the road, which poor Snip, as well as every body else, knew to be the judges, who were leaving Warwick to open the assizes at Worcester.

The taylor, though no great conjuror, saw plainly he had been tricked. He now neither wondered [Page 82] at his restlessness nor his hunger, and lest he should any longer remain in doubt, John Swash himself—who softly entered the kitchen—tapped him upon the shoulder once more, saying, "Master Cabbage, you have twice taken me for a ghost, beware of the third time."

The taylor received a very wholesome admonition from Sir Sidney, who explained to him in very pathetic terms, the cruelty and wanton maliciousness of disturbing the quiet of a man and his family, who, he

said, were objects of great compassion, as well as praise; for there were very few instances of those who had so given themselves up to bad example, as to have been guilty of every wickedness and depravity, and afterwards desirous of returning from their vicious courses. He said there was no encouragement to which such objects were not entitled. How reprehensible then was it in those who waited for the moment when such should return to virtue, and, in consequence of their honest industry, become in tolerable circumstances, to seek for opportunities to distress and harrass them, and so prevent the happy effects of their laudable and honest endeavours.

As for the taylor, he told him he was well convinced he had been set on by others, and as he had [Page 83] now made a candid and fair confession relative to all those dark conspiracies which he plainly saw were levelled against these poor repentant sinners, if he would go on a little further, and join with him in detecting this knot of villains, he might rely upon his favour; and he would enjoy a much higher satisfaction—that of discharging his duty as an honest man.

The taylor was suffered to depart, after faithfully promising all that had been enjoined him, and Sir Sidney was, for the first time, let into the whole of the mystery by which the taylor had been prevented from appearing at the trial; for it must be understood that Sir Sidney knew the taylor was to be kept away, but he did not know in what manner.

1.8. CHAPTER VIII.

A NEW CURE FOR AN AMOROUS FEVER.

THE housekeeping of Mr. Figgins, near Warwick, being now broken up, Charles and his friend returned to Hazard house, and Musquito, Ego, and Toogood to Roebuck hall.

Charles had noticed that Musquito, in consequence of his satiric vein, had conceived himself a kind of superior to his two companions; for whenever it came up in conversation that they had been ridiculed in the business of the ghost, he took care sagaciously to hint that no one dared play him such a trick.

Our hero was therefore determined to leave him no room for exultation, especially as by the mode through which he intended to shew him off, as well as the rest, he should do even a more meritorious act than he had done in saving Emma from the persecutions of the poet and the musician. This method of studying mischief, only by way of inflicting [Page 85] merited punishment, was a species of amusement in which it has been seen our hero delighted. It certainly was highly praiseworthy in one sense, for it turned every thing off with a laugh only against the offender, whereas, had it been shaped into a complaint, and preferred against him to Sir Sidney, it might have endangered the hopes which he built on his patronage.

John Swash had a daughter, who must have had an uncommon mind for her situation in life; for, from her earliest infancy, she was remarked to have had a detestation to that vice which surrounded her. She profitted by avoiding bad examples as much as others by imitating good ones. In short—which is the strongest proof that can be given of the excellence of her heart, and the incorruptibility of her honour, she, at eighteen, was as spotless a character at Little Hockley, as the most innocent inhabitant of her age and sex could be at Castlewick.

The painter had long laid siege to this young creature, who had all that beauty which regular features, rosy health, and a perfect symmetry of form can give. He drew her likeness, and took care it should be a

flattering one. He took a sketch of the mill, and made it a present to Swash, whose professional pride was thus tickled. He painted a [Page 86] favourite tortoiseshell cat for the mother, and, in a variety of other instances, made his talents subservient to his wishes; but, in particular, he vaunted that he had been the principal instrument in detaining the taylor from appearing at the trial.

I know not if the girl's gratitude on the side of her duty pleaded in his favour, or whether nature began to whisper to her that, good as she was, love—as somebody has expressed it—is the sovereign end of our being; but certainly she began to listen to the painter's conversation with pleasure, and as she had never in her life been controlled, scrupled not to walk with him in an evening. She soon, however, repented of her complaisance, and was almost fatally convinced on what terms these opportunities were requested. She resented his insolence, which was manuel as well as verbal, and without ceremony informed her mother of all that had passed, who, good woman, I am sorry to say it, did not make such forcible objections to it as the daughter did. To say the truth, she had a large family, and looked upon her daughters as much in the light of traffic, as her barley meal. In short, won by a handsome sum, a promise of painting her picture in the attitude of milking a favourite cow, and a half anker of genuine nantz—with shame I write it—after but little hesitation, she agreed to [Page 87] this method of providing for her girl as she called it.

This good woman, in her youth, had been tolerably handsome herself. Master Flush had been heard to intimate that he fancied the governor—meaning Standfast—had taken care to provide a birth in heaven for Master Swash, in the month of April; but I am afraid nobody had so strong a claim to that favour as Lord Hazard.

Charles had eyed this girl with pleasure, but would not for the universe have given way to the shadow of an impulse to her dishonour. And here it may not be amiss to beg the reader will stop with me, and admire how greatly to our own advantage we take resolutions which are in favour of virtue; for it is within possibility that, had our hero given way to an inclination natural enough for a youth of warm blood to entertain, and I

hope full as natural if there were any thing like honour in his disposition, to conquer—hear it ye seducers of virtue! Ye merciless triumphant despoilers of innocence! who are cruel because you have power!—insolent because victorious!—hear it, and reflect with horror on the miseries that to often result from your vices,—he might have contaminated a sister!!

[Page 88] From so deplorable a crime, however unintentional, did Charles, by his perseverance in his honourable resolutions, very probably escape; for he, by his frequent chat with this girl, had taught her bosom to glow with tenderness, but having put the curb, as we have seen, upon his wishes, and ceased to be particular from the moment he was apprehensive of danger—during which interval the painter stept in—she found some pleasure, which the reader may be assured is not unnatural, in listening to language of the same kind from another, even though it was not so eloquently worded, or so gracefully delivered.

As Charles withdrew his attention from this girl upon a ground for which she loved him still more—for he made no scruple of confessing the truth—the poor girl having been repulsed by her mother, as we have seen, or rather encouraged to make her fortune, according to the old gentlewoman, by that which, according to any body else, would have been her ruin, was walking solitary and unhappy by the side of her father's mill-stream, when Figgins and our hero passed by. Charles saw the pearly tear standing on her cheek, and very good naturedly enquired the cause. After a little reluctance she informed him, and concluded her artlessly pathetic [Page 89] story with saying "Indeed it is a sad thing when a poor girl's mother bids her to be wicked; but I won't be wicked, if I am ever so undutiful I won't."

Both Charles and Figgins commended her laudable resolution, and now occurred an admirable opportunity of punishing the painter in his own way. He immediately told the girl of his intention; to forward which, she was desired to acquaint her mother that she would be a good girl, and behave civil to the gentleman, and, when he came, she should make him an appointment in the dusk of the evening in the bed chamber; that he would let her father privately into the secret, who should, in concert with

them, so revenge himself upon her audacious lover, as to leave him very little relish for such amusement in future.

The girl was charmed to find her cause taken up so warmly by our hero, for she knew, let what would happen, the painter must not dare to complain.

The assignation was made, and Swash apprized of the whole business. The painter, as may naturally be supposed, attended punctually, and the husband being, as it was imagined, safe at the ale house, the [Page 90] amorous Appelles was conducted to the young lady's bed chamber, by her accommodating mamma, and desired to go to bed, where he should be made as happy as he could wish.

He had not lain long in this situation, before he heard a foot upon the stairs, when immediately his heart beat high, his fancy anticipated the expected pleasure, and all his senses were in an alarm; but, however, all these were nothing to the alarm that presently followed. In rushed—at least his fears made him believe so—half a dozen myrmidons; pop half a dozen times went half a dozen pistols; the first of which was a sufficient intimation that the salute had very little of love in it. Indeed he wondered how it came that he was not a dead man, for his fears had wounded him in twenty places.

The very first of these hints he took, and darting out of the foot of the bed, he presently cleared the landing place, and gained the bottom of the stairs; by which time he received a few more compliments of the same kind. These, however, though they were unnecessary to refresh his memory, hastened his departure, which he took without paying the smallest compliment to any of the family, but rushing out at the street door, made his way across a paddock, which led to the road; his pursuers still [Page 91] popping at such a rate, that he verily believed he was flying from a whole platoon.

Being come to a bank, he collected his whole might to jump over the hedge, into the road, but the distance being greater than he imagined, he plunged, with all his force, naked as he was, into a bramble bush, which

clinging in a hundred places to his shirt, and in as many to his flesh, pinned him down so firmly, that he was obliged to make several excruciating efforts to free himself. He did so however at last, but finding himself surrounded with enemies, who were still popping at him, he doubled as artfully as any Jack hare, and was followed as closely, with this difference, that the game opened instead of the pack; for he yelped, howled, swore, ejaculated, cursed, and prayed, in such a strange collection of hysterical tones, that the musician, who was then present, had as much reason to be enraged as Hogarth's, for all the complicated din there described, seemed to be centured in one person.

This discordance however did not last long, for trying to cross the mill stream by a bridge, which to be sure had been laid down an hour before, but was now drawn up, poor Musquito came souse over head and ears into the water, which being in that part pretty deep, would have cooled him for intriguing, [Page 92] and every thing else in this world, had not a large fishing net been previously placed to receive him.

The net was immediately drawn up, which, with all the haste they could make however, was not effected before the poor painter had totally lost his senses.

He was now put into a shell, and the church being near, carried to the bone house, where being held up by the heels, a quantity of water ran out of his mouth, and he presently exhibited signs of life. The moment this event took place, they hurried off with the lanthorn—the only light they had—and the sexton, who, being a friend to the miller, connived at the trick, immediately returned with his mattock and shovel on his shoulder.

"There,' said he, as if to himself, 'that job's done." "Oh d d d d dear,' cried the painter,' "It is odd there should be nobody to own the man,' cried the sexton, putting down his things.' "B b b oh—ah—oh—' cried the painter.' "I have made him a good grave, however,' cried the sexton, 'and as soon as the coroner's quest has sat upon him—"

[Page 93] The painter now mustered strength enough to sit up, and cried, "Oh d d d d dear—f f f f friend.'—' "Lord, what's that!" said the

sexton.' "Oh f f f f for the love of God help me,' cried Musquito.' "Why lookee now,' said the sexton, 'here's my man come to life. Lie down now doey; lie down, I ha been just making your grave." "Oh Lord,' exclaimed the painter, 'my g g g g grave!" "Ay ay, nobody will own you, you see, and so we shall bury you to-morrow morning."

"Bury me!" cried the painter, who had by this time got out of the shell. 'Oh Christ, where am I brought to?'—then looking round him—'Oh, dear friend have pity upon me." "Odds wounds,' cried the sexton, 'don't come nigh me; I never could abide a dead body in my life, unless in the way of business, and when it was screwed up, as a body may say: so don't come nigh me."

The painter told him he was alive, the sexton said he was a damned liar, and took up the lanthorn to be gone: the painter followed: the sexton hollowing out "the devil take the hindmost." At length, turning round a corner of the church, he blew out the candle, slipt away, and the painter found himself alone, sore from head to foot, wet and naked, in the middle of a church yard, above [Page 94] two miles from Sir Sidney's, at half an hour past ten o'clock at night.

In this condition he posted to the alehouse, where he intended to have trumped up a story of his being robbed, but his old friend the sexton being the first man he saw in the room, he only desired the use of some clothes, for which he said he would satisfy them handsomely.

The man of the house agreed to accommodate him, and fetched some things for that purpose, which Musquito put on before the fire; for the landlady was gone to bed. In the mean time the guests were not sparing of their jokes. "Bless me,' said one, 'the gentleman has been sadly mauled with zummet! He looks as if he had tumbled into a hornet's nest." "Icod,' said another, 'I think its more like being scratched with cats." "Very loikely,' said another, 'two legged cats may hap." "Lord love you,' cried the sexton, 'you noas nothing about it. The gentleman was tooked up in the mill-dam. They mistooken for a vish.—Dam maw, I thoughten the biggest Jack I ever sawed. And so as I was a telling you, when the gentleman coomed in, we took un to the boane-house. Adds waunds

measter, you do ought to [Page 95] give maw zummet to drink your health, after making your grave."

The painter did not reply a single word to all this wit; but, having hurried on the landlord's clothes, and said he would return them in the morning, and satisfy him for his trouble, he sneaked to Sir Sidney's, and skulked up stairs to bed.

Charles and Figgins came in the morning to breakfast. Every body was very inquisitive to know how it happened that the painter had not supped at home. One said significantly he was perhaps better engaged; another, that whatever his amusement was, he hoped it was to his liking. In short, the poor painter was handsomely played off. At last it came to Sir Sidney's turn, who said honest Swash had been with him that morning about an affair something in the style of the soldier and the king of France:—the soldier craved pardon for having thrown a man's hat out of window, and, having obtained it, said he had thrown his head out too.

Here Sir Sidney related the whole business of the preceding evening, as indeed he had heard it from Charles, not from Swash. He concealed his knowledge of the gallant, who, he said, was rightly served, and he only wished the next time the gentleman, [Page 96] whoever he was, took it into his head to corrupt innocence and destroy domestic peace, he would never after having done so presume to come into his presence. He concluded with reprobating the conduct of the mother, and heartily recommending the girl to Lady Roebuck's notice, who declared, as Emma was in want of an assistant, she should be immediately placed about the person of Annette.

1.9. CHAPTER IX.

IN WHICH THE READER IS ATTACKED ON THE SIDE OF HIS SENSIBILITY.

IT never, for a single moment, occurred to Charles that he had wrought an event most wonderfully in his own favour by thus punishing the painter; for Jude—so was the miller's daughter called—rang the changes in his praise so continually, that, as her voice was the voice of nature, and her sentiments strong genuine gratitude, his cause could not even in Emma have had half so powerful an advocate: nay with Emma herself:—for though she was well enough pleased that the youth had conceived favourable thoughts of her, though she admired the ready willingness with which he had corrected his error, yet there was, with her, a distinct difference in the two cases. As to herself, she was a host alone; she defied temptation; and, to such a youth as Charles, she was rather pleased than concerned that she had had an opportunity of shewing upon what erroneous ground he began his career, and what certain misery would be the consequence of his persuting in [Page 98] indiscriminate pursuits, in which he might be assured, though he would often dupe others, he would oftener be duped himself.

Emma represented to him that the sensations of a tender and susceptible heart, which had given a single pang to suffering virtue, must be intolerable; and therefore conjured him to cease from a conduct which was foolish as well as wicked, impolitic as well as unworthy; for it was a barter of virtue for infamy, transient pleasure for lasting pain: and however consonant to the boisterous and turbulent passions of youth, would, throughout his life, be overshadowed by a cloud of wretchedness, which the splendour of rank and distinction would vainly struggle to dissipate.

To say the truth, this incident had touched Emma in the right key; for if she gave Charles credit for his delicate and honourable treatment of Jude, how much then was due to her admonitions which produced it?

If Emma had a weak side, certainly this was it. She was perfectly a schemer on the side of virtue, and thought the passions might be bottled up, like the winds of Aeolus; forgetting that there never wants curious and turbulent spirits to let them out, [Page 99] not only to excite fresh dangers, but make the case worse, by leaving no remedy.

Nevertheless, nothing could be purer than poor Emma's intentions, which, though they were not always infallible, hit nine times out of ten as she wished they should. Here it was impossible they should miss. Standfast indeed, had he so far condescended, would have at pleasure changed the form of every one of them; and, spight of Emma's penetration, have shewn them, even to her, so deformed that she should scarcely have known them for her own.

This gentleman, however, seems to be meditating at a distance; and, as the course is left free for youth, sweetness, good nature, and ingenuity to pay their open court to beauty, modesty, and delicate sensibility, no wonder if, sanctioned by parents, strongly supported by irresistible advocates, and their mutual wishes being in their essence eminently congenial, a strong, and, one would think, indissoluble compact must naturally be formed between Charles and Annette.

To speak plain, which I, as well as Emma, think the best way, so many were the desirable ends an union between this amiable couple promised to aecomplish, [Page 100] that, had it not been for their youth—though probably they would not have found that an objection—neither themselves, the fathers and mothers, connections and dependants, the two villages of Castlewick and Little Hockley—for Little Hockley was really now rising into same, in spight of Mrs. Swash and her unworthy propensities, for which, between the reader and I, she got well thrashed by her husband—not one of these I say but would have blessed the day which united this lovely pair, and, what to some of them would not have been an unwelcome object, have produced an extraordinary grand feast.

But whether fortune thought with Emma that virtues and passions are given us to be exercised and controlled, or whether the mind, like the constitution, is soberer in its age for having been taken down in its youth,

I shall not pretend to decide here:—certain it is that the blind and varying goddess did not altogether take part with the friends of our hero and heroine; the reason why, and the manner how, she thought proper to dissent from this otherwise unanimous opinion, will hereafter be gradually developed. In the mean time, I am really concerned that, just when we find Charles and Annette in the full enjoyment of their friends' admiration, and that of one another, I should be under the [Page 101] unpleasant necessity of throwing as complete a damp over all their spirits—such a scene of light and darkness is this life—as I had before presented to them of joy and exultation.

I am sure the very name of poor Lady Hazard will anticipate every word of the sad tale it is my unwilling duty to relate. This amiable lady, this lovely, this fatal sacrifice to complicated villany, whose fall was doomed to tear the heart of him who in early life had departed from the paths of honour: This charming victim, who it should seem by an error of fate received the blow that was meant for her lord:—But it was no error; it is blindness to suppose fate can err; he was to live, that in the expiation of his original guilt, his pangs might torture him with accumulated keenness:—

Sweet Lady Hazard, who had seemed to decline with the summer, had been for some weeks evidently hastening to her dissolution, when at length the solemn sentence of the physicians precluded all hope. Indeed she felt that a few hours would put a period to her sufferings, and desired, with calm resignation, that she might, for the last time, see her friends about her.

This affecting request was soon complied with, [Page 102] for Lady Roebuck had been almost continually with her from the moment she was in actual danger, and though our hero and his companions had, at different opportunities, employed their time as we have seen, yet the most thoughtless of them would at any moment have flown to have contributed in the slightest degree to her ease or comfort. In fact, she was gliding out of the world by such imperceptible degrees, that, as she supported her melancholy situation with wonderful fortitude, there had ever been, till very lately, some slight hope of her recovery.

Lord Hazard had some time, by her own particular desire, been left alone with his lady. Before however I relate what passed at this affecting interview, that I may not improperly interrupt the reader's banquet of grief—which by some is thought to be a very delicious luxury—I shall notice, in order, if possible, to heighten the loveliness of Lady Hazard, and the wretchedness of her Lord, that, owing to some expressions which fell from the surgeon, during the operation at the John of Gaunt—which I have described as particular as was necessary or delicate—she became acquainted with that secret which seems to be set up as a beacon in this history to warn the reader that a very small deviation from prudence may plunge a family into irretrievable misery.

[Page 103] The interview between Lord and Lady Hazard was of that affecting kind that at once excites pity and terror. It was one of those moments when the tongue denies relief to the heart, when nature would sink but for the assistance of madness, and when the pressure of calamity numbs the keenness of its torture.

Lord Hazard, overwhelmed with the recollection of his unworthiness, and loaded with the self-reproaching consciousness of his guilt, lay in a torpid stupor. His angel wife, though every sigh hastened her departure, pitied his pangs, and sorrowed for his sufferings. He, burning to disclose what shame forbid him to utter, and she dreading a horrid tale she had long and silently anticipated!

In this state—that hand of death extended over her brow which he would have given the world to have been directed to his—no merciful tear to relieve his swolen heart, he must have expired with excessive sensibility, had not a few inarticulate sounds, accompanied by a piteous sigh, burst from his tortured bosom.

"Be calm, my sweet love,' cried Lady Hazard:' "Calm!" returned he'—her celestial voice penetrating his torn heart, and the tears gushing in torrents [Page 104] from his eyes— "Yes, calm as the pitiless butcher that kills the innocent lamb! When thy spotless soul shall look down with just horror and kind commiseration on thy polluted husband, and thy cruel murderer, then tell me to be calm! Infuse thy incomparable

innocence into my culpable heart, inspire me with virtue, and teach me to be happy. See! Oh heavenly God!—she hears me with sorrow, but not with astonishment! She knew it!—'tis plain she knew it!—and my foul crimes have, like the influence of a malignant poison, slowly consumed her life! Pity, pardon, immaculate angel!—But my thoughtless frenzy is too much for her tender frame. How are you, my love? She answers wildly!"—And so indeed she did. Lord Hazard's violence had thrown her into a delirium, in which she remained a few minutes, and then expired!

The incoherent expressions she uttered during this melancholy interval, sufficiently confimed Lord Hazard that his lady was but too well acquainted with the fatal secret; and, lest he should not be wretched enough at her loss, he had now the additional reflection that his crime had first sapped the foundation of her peace, and afterwards gradually destroyed her life. Regardless however of any discovery, or its consequences, he summoned every [Page 105] possible assistance to her aid; but no syllable that escaped Lady Hazard reached any ear, except that Charles, who first entered the room, heard his mother fervently exclaim, which were the last words she uttered, "If any blessings were in store for me, of which I have been untimely deprived, shower them, merciful heaven, upon the head of my dear boy."

1.10. CHAPTER X.

NEW MATTER.

Having so completely thrown the two families in the country into the vapours, as to make it impossible they should play any of their whimsical tricks in our absence, the reader and I will take a look at Mr. Standfast and his associates; and, as much as any thing, because it is now high time that we should rescue that gentleman's fame from such an opprobrious stain as that of having compassed the death of Lady Hazard, and brought about that scene of distress described in the last chapter, solely for the purpose of doing mischief.

I am ready to grant that no man upon earth had more satisfaction in contemplating the wretchedness which was produced by any one of his contrivances, but then I do insist that it was not so much for the pleasure of the thing, as the collateral consideration; and I sincerely believe, ill as I think of him, that could he have had the smallest chance of doubling his [Page 107] advantage, be it in profit or pleasure, by sacrificing his whole party, he would not have made a single scruple.

But, to argue this matter fairly. What had Mr. Standfast gained by heaping all this complicated mischief on the head of his friend and benefactor, but an addition to the salary which he had honestly earned by being tutor to Charles? Why nothing literally, to be sure, as to himself. As to whom then? This is an article that remains to be accounted for. Again, if Mr. Standfast, on his own account, received no other satisfaction—which surely was a small reward for such eminent villany—what other motive stimulated him? Revenge.—Revenge! Yes:—and now let me get rid of these two articles. And first, as to whom he seemed to be working for.

Know then reader that Mr. Standfast, the consummately artful Mr. Standfast, whose superior talents in the craft of inflicting unmerited calamity none ever attained, whose truly diabolical spirit never conceived mischief complete unless the shaft with which it wounded struck at

virtue, who could cajole and cozen all the world, and dupe every one else, was himself a dupe to—Mrs. O'Shocknesy!

[Page 108] Here is the collateral consideration, but whence the revenge? From the same quarter. Mr. Standfast, who held all women as his slaves, who treated serious, reasonable, honourable love as a banter; who mocked at the very idea of a solemn and sacred obligation to a woman; this very Mr. Standfast,—pity him, oh pity him, villain as he is—was a slave to Mrs. O'Shocknesy. Hence his revenge. He was her first love; was the friend of him who killed her husband in a duel; she had a child by him before she saw Lord Hazard, and would have married him, but that his lordship stept in and carried her:—nay, let me whisper to the reader, that it was not impossible but Zekiel was his son.

A number of doubts which the reader had before formed, are now dissipated; nor will it be necessary to go again over the minutiae of Mr. Standfast's conduct, which was dictated by her, though carried into effect by him; and, as she dared join ostensible acts to his covert ones, what wonder if the unsuspecting virtue of Lord Hazard was surprised.

Her views and her ambition were obvious.—Lady Hazard was to be put out of the way by a diabolical contrivance, which, had it been avowed, could have fastened nothing on its perpetrators. His lordship [Page 109] would naturally be inconsolable for her loss, and who knew if he would survive it, when he came to consider that it originated in his guilt. Should this imaginary blessing be realized, her son would come into possession of the title and estate; if not, she would at least have the triumphant consolation that she had imbittered his future felicity.

This conduct was natural and common, infamous as it was. But how shall we account for that of her paramour, who could not, fond soul, rest in the country absent from her he loved. Charles, as to Miss Figgins, was a stoic to him. The lady had promised, on the death of Lady Hazard, to honour him with her hand, and instead of going to receive the last benediction of an expiring uncle, his business in town was to keep from expiring the valuable love of the amiable Mrs. O'Shocknesy.

Thus, while friendship, obligation, and all other ties that naturally induce gratitude, only stimulated Mr. Standfast to every atrocious and rascally measure that could sap the foundation, and lay a train for the destruction, of that love and harmony that were exemplary in the family of his patron and benefactor. The mere whim and caprice of a woman, whom he knew to be worthless, and completely the reverse of every thing for which she could [Page 110] expect admiration, made him—expert as he was at every thing artful, proof as he was against every thing but self—undertake the most wicked, as well as the most silly, things in nature. Here is a Hercules, not contented with wielding the club—not quite so worthily, by the bye—he buckles to the distaff.

It will be unnecessary for me to mention that Figgins was sent for and fixed with Charles by Mr. Standfast's participation; nor will it very probably have escaped the reader's sagacity that the whole affair of Miss Figgins, who had not been with child, was nothing more than to hold out a pretended secret over the head of that young gentleman; for both Standfast and Figgins well knew that there is not a stronger hold of a grateful and generous heart than the knowledge of obligation: and this is the sort of credulity I have described as a part of our hero's composition, which, throughout his life, induced him to be thankful to others for lending him imaginary benefits, that they might receive from him real ones.

But why should Charles be devoted to the same ruin with others? He could not possibly hinder any one of their schemes. He had nothing that could give them the smallest uneasiness. Was it [Page 111] then nothing to be the darling child, the hopeful cherished favourite, while Mrs. O'Shocknesy and her son were turned into the world, the sport of malicious tongues, and the vestiges of fallen greatness? Charles—though were the records of the human heart searched for every thing good and great that ever made up an amiable character, the same marks of worth would be found in his:—Charles must be traduced, must be vilified, it was necessary, it was material; he must be sunk that his elder brother might rise. Besides, Mr. Standfast had a husband in his eye for Annette; a better husband; since who can deny but a rich, sensible, thinking youth, as one will appear, answers that description more perfectly than a poor,

vicious, dissipated, inconstant wretch, as will be the character of the other.

Reader, it was not Zekiel that our friend Standfast had found out for Annette. I know not if such an attempt would not have been a touch even above his art; but, however, that young gentleman will probably shew, by and by, that he would chuse to be consulted before any material step should be taken that concerned him.

Master Zekiel had, at the time I am speaking, pretty decided opinions, and one of them was to [Page 112] appear, however he might really be, satisfied with all his mother and Mr. Standfast should determine, unless they should ask him to sign any paper, which he was fully resolved never to do.

As the reader has not yet heard the upshot of the business relative to those letters wherein an application was made for the grant of the estate in Warwickshire, I may as well inform him here that Sir Sidney's application rendered that of Mrs. O'Shocknesy and her son fruitless; therefore, through Standfast's advice, an addition was made to the annual stipend of the son, who immediately left Eaton, and went to France, with Snaffle for his companion, and Flush for his valet; while Dogbolt, who had long ago dropt his title, being a handsome fellow, occasionally comforted Mrs. O'Shocknesy, when Mr. Standfast, who as yet dared not see her, except by stealth, was out of the way.

Mr. Kiddy had taken good care to make himself particularly useful to Zekiel, who swore there was so much fun and gig about the rum dog, that he would rather have him for a companion than all the black-jacket codgers in England.

Whether Kiddy had any latent meaning in the singular pains he took to ingratiate himself with his [Page 113] young master, I will not here enquire; but certainly Standfast one day told him to take care how he came on, to which Kiddy archly replied, "Oh, as for that, master governor, don't you go for to be uneasy: honour you know among thieves."

Thus have I shewn, when all things are considered, that Standfast was the worst actor in his own farce. Nay I know not, upon all great occasions, whether to the subordinate objects the whole praise is not attributable. Trim says, while he is mustering his tattered troop, fifty thousand such ragged rascals as these would make an ALEXANDER, and who can deny but the taylor and the mantua-maker tell truth when they say that the splendour of the birth night is owing to them.

1.11. CHAPTER XI.

A RECEIPT FOR BUILDING, BY BEGINNING AT THE SUPERSTRUCTURE.

FOR want of leisure, or perhaps inclination, or for some other wise reason, no less cogent, I did not mention to the reader that, at the last grand feast, a young stranger appeared, and indeed attracted a great deal of notice. He was then just arrived from Madeira, and brought letters to Sir Sidney from a merchant there, with whom the baronet dealt for wines, and transacted other business. Coming so opportunely, he was invited to the feast, and cut, as I have said, no inconsiderable figure.

Charles took great pleasure in accommodating this gentleman, whose name was Gloss; studying his ease and convenience while he remained in Warwickshire. He requested the pleasure of corresponding with him, and begged his intimate friendship when he should return to England, with a view of settling, which he talked of doing after he should have taken a trip to the Cape of Good Hope, where [Page 115] his father had died immensely rich, on his return from India.

The winter had now began so to perriwig the trees, as somebody has called it—by the way, somebody and nobody are very useful figures in rhetoric—that the semicircle of evergreens before Sir Sidney's saloon, with the clusters near it, looked like a vegetable court of judges and counsellors, in powdered ties and full-bottoms.

This hint, and a call of the house of commons—for Sir Sidney had stayed in the country beyond his usual time, roused the baronet, and made him begin to think of putting on his boots. Yet not even his duty, dearly as he loved it, could induce him to stir a step without Lord Hazard, who was become what SHAKESPEARE says of life, "a walking shadow."

Lord Hazard looked upon himself as the executioner of his wife, and though his grief was inward, yet it did not escape such vigilant friendship as Sir Sidney's. His lordship declared he would devote himself to retirement. His friends, however, at length prevailed; and, to make the

satisfaction complete and universal, Annette was, for the first time, to see London, accompanied by Emma.

[Page 116] It was the continual study of every one to make Lord Hazard's time pass agreeably, in which pleasurable task Mr. Standfast now assisted, whose presence his lordship confessed contributed greatly to relieve his care, though heaven knows he had no such intention; for his visits were for no other purpose than to warn him of certain snares which Mrs. O'Shocknesy was not preparing for him, in order, if possible, to entangle him in others that she was.

About Christmas arrived Charles's friend Gloss, from the Cape of Good Hope, where he had, he said, settled his affairs greatly to his satisfaction.—He brought answers to some letters with which Sir Sidney entrusted him for Madeira.

As Mr. Gloss will hereafter cut no inconsiderable figure in this history, it may not be improper to give some account of him. He was the son of a clergyman, who, probably, knowing that the advancement in the learned professions was a thing that depended less upon merit than interest, had bred him up to trade: not sparing, however, to give him a complete education, which he very properly thought could do him no harm in any situation.

[Page 117] One thing, however, was very romantic in this scheme. All these bricks were to be made without straw; for the old gentleman either could not, or would not, give his son a shilling, towards laying a foundation for that fortune he was nevertheless sure he would one day or other make. But having added the living languages to the dead ones, and procured a recommendation for him to a countinghouse at Lisbon, they parted: the father furnishing him with some excellent rules for the regulation of his future conduct, and forbidding him to draw for any thing but advice.

The young gentleman's temper happened luckily to fall in with his father's. He undertook, if he were eligibly set out, to make his fortune. His maxims were, from early youth, that if a man chose to fix his eye

upon a spot, let it be ever so out of his present reach, or surrounded by ever such difficulties, through perseverance it might be come at. In little, he had proved this doctrine to be founded; for he never in his life possessed, in his own right, a single sixpence, and yet he had cut a figure with the best.

It is curious to remark, that though no man upon earth knew better the value of substance than Mr. Gloss, yet he seem constantly to live upon [Page 118] shadow. The appearance, and not the thing itself, seemed to be what he most delighted in. He so completely turned round all his employers in their own business, that the tide of their fortune soon ran in a larger channel, and they were astonished at the riches which originated from plans of his advising. They however little considered what a yoke they were forming for themselves; for it was not long before the young gentleman stipulated for a participation of their profits, in consequence of which he took the earliest opportunity to involve the affairs of the partnership, and was the only one able to save any thing from the wreck of a bankruptcy, in which the whole concern was soon involved.

After this stroke he went to Madeira, where he drew a picture of the folly of his partners, and shewed very clearly—for it is certainly true that people are to be reasoned into, as well as out of, any thing—how unwisely they had acted, and how foolishly he had thrown away his time.

Being, through a house with which he had been connected, very soon taken in an active partner, for a slight share of the profits, and with liberty to trade privately on his own account, he entered into the spirit of the Madeira trade in such a style as astonished every merchant on the island. He had the address [Page 119] to tie the Dunkirk dealers down to give him and his connections a preference in brandies, provided they dealt to such an amount; in consequence of which he soon had it in his power to stagnate the Dunkirk trade in Madeira, by being able to undersell the brandy merchants themselves, who, eager to catch at the bait he held out for them, had supplied him largely, little suspecting he would hold back what he had bought, with a view of forestalling their next market.

I give this as one among a variety of instances in which he saw further into people's affairs than they did themselves. By this means he had resources for them which they never dreamt of, and of course was able to stipulate for better terms for himself.

In the mean time it was, one would think, this man's pride never to have a shilling he could call his own. Nothing was expensive enough for him, and when it was his turn to treat at Bachelor's-hall,—a place at Madeira built by the unmarried men, and remarkable for hospitality—it was in a style that astonished every body: for his taste was equal to his ingenuity.

At length Madeira became too barren a spot for the fecundity of his genius. He left it after giving [Page 120] it many real advantages, and was universally regretted, as a man wonderfully calculated for business, and yet a most agreeable companion.

He got a considerable sum for his concern in the house he left, which he took care, in a few months, to get rid of in England.

The reader remembers that this gentleman brought letters from his connections in Madeira to Sir Sidney. These were of course greatly in his favour. Indeed the baronet was very well disposed to shew him any kindness; but it was among the maxims of Mr. Gloss never to make use of a friend except to carry a material point, and a man must be very shallow indeed if he could not pretty well guess beforehand whether that point could be carried.

The plan upon which this young gentleman proceeded was very simple, but it required consummate talents. It was nothing more than to administer to every man's foibles, and reprobate his vices. It is imppossible to describe how a man is infallibly taken hold of by a conduct of this kind. Very few are uniformly good, or uniformly wicked; therefore, all who are not have both follies and vices mixed with some good qualities, Our follies are always agreeable [Page 121] to us, but though all vices are the consequence of them, we detest the vice itself, while we hug the folly that may have caused it. Close however as we

may take folly to our hearts, we never fail to be privately ashamed of ourselves for it, nor to attribute, in the face of the world, our actions to any thing else rather than this hidden cause. What power then must that man have over you, who, by encouraging you in your foibles, not only has discovered this pleasurable deformity you are so studious to hide, but, by glossing it over, contrives to make you believe it appears as agreeable to him as to yourself. This man has your heart fully and wholly, and there is nothing you can deny him.

This was Mr. Gloss, who, however he came by it, had this art in the highest perfection, and knew so well how and upon whom to play his game, that he was ever sure of coming off winner.

Nor are the talents which form this character of necessity required to be very brilliant, though various and perspicuous. They are of the minor kind: a quickness of conception, a close observation on men and manners, some shrewdness, and a good memory comprising them all: to which indeed—but that would be a deduction in worthy matters— [Page 122] must be indispensibly added, frontless impudence and a total want of feeling.

Any man with these in his possession, if he employ himself in nothing but this pursuit, will arrive to as great perfection in the noble art of playing upon mankind, as will raise him to that degree of consequence he may think proper.

These qualifications stood with Mr. Gloss in the place of Fortune, and with these he turned that fickle lady's wheel as he thought proper.

Will not the reader begin to feel uncomfortable when, in conformity to that veracity which all historians should critically keep in view, I am obliged to declare that this was the gentleman Mr. Standfast had in his eye as a husband for Annette.

Charles, Figgins, and Mr. Gloss were inseperable. The latter cut a prodigious figure. He had an elegant chariot, half a dozen footmen, and might have been taken for a newly arrived nabob. It was an extraordinary thing, however, that go where they would, though he was

sure to run up a most expensive reckoning, he, by some carelessness or other, constantly left his purse at home, so that [Page 123] he presently became indebted to Charles more than two hundred pounds in odds and ends of this kind.

This passed off as eccentricity, and as he had a most agreeable apparent indolence of mind, which, by the way, was what Kiddy would have called a copy of his countenance, he appeared to our hero the most delightful companion he had ever met with.

It was agreed that Charles, with Figgins as a companion, should, early in the spring, set out to make a tour of Europe, in which he ventured to express a very strong wish that Mr. Gloss would accompany him.

This however could not be. That gentleman was in treaty for a borough, which a member was expected every day to vacate in his favour. Besides, he had requested Sir Sidney to cheapen an estate for him in Warwickshire, and he was cursedly afraid that a certain woman of condition, that he said should be nameless—and so she well might, for she was not in existence—would insist upon a kind of a half promise he had made, and noose him; which matter, he said, were it really serious, he verily believed would drive him abroad; for he did [Page 124] not think the possession of the finest and richest woman in the kingdom a compensation for the loss of any man's liberty of his figure and consequence.

1.12. CHAPTER XII.

CONSISTING OF ADVICE AND AN ADIEU TO ENGLAND.

THE spring put an end to those town enjoyments which had employed the leisure hours of our hero and his connections, and now Charles and his friend Figgins began to prepare for an excursion to those parts of the world where true politeness is thought to be native, so heartily do Englishmen reprobate the manners of their own country, though they so dearly love its principles.

It was settled that our hero should go on to Italy, by the borders of Flanders, and not see Paris till on his return to England, through the heart of France; as it was thought, by that means, he would the better taste the pleasures of that capital.

Charles's heart was fully set on this tour, and, for several days, it was the general topic of all the friends. He received the good wishes and advice of all with great thankfulness. Sir Sidney, with [Page 126] the heartiest friendship, entreated him not to engraft French manners upon an English cion. He begged of him to hear, see, and consider; to approve and adopt whatever mended the heart, but to reject with contempt all that merely went to decorate the person. He said a flattering exterior was a dangerous thing, and there were sometimes more art and design under a feather, than any graver decoration of the head. He said the whole character of the French was comprehended in minutiae; that this rendered them at first sight agreeable, afterwards necessary, and at length, to credulous men, endearing, but to the penetrating trifling and tiresome.

Sir Sidney said he would not wish for a better authority for pronouncing a man weak and ignorant than his having a strong attachment, upon repeated trials, to the French in general. They were, he said, polite without good manners; acquainted with every thing, though perfect in nothing; praying one moment and cheating the next; holding you in their arms, and laughing over your shoulder; gay with design; accommodating with arrogance; apparently open, but really hypocritical; assuming with

meanness. In short, he said their lives were a mixture of pride and servility; self-consequence and adulation; stateliness and cringing; protestation [Page 127] and insincerity; and though their sports were the sports of children, their mischief was the mischief of monkies.

"Happy the man then, sir,' said Charles, 'who, like you, can sensibly discriminate between the extremes of this motley character, and retain so much of it for his own use as shall make him wary in his dealings with the world, without being dishonourable."

"I know not,' said Sir Sidney, 'whether I deserve your compliment, but this is the very effect I would wish the French manners to have upon you, who, however cautioned, will, I fear, from the openness of your heart, and your strong desire to find men what they ought to be, take, without examination, that dross which the French so very easily contrive to pass for sterling. As to Italy, see every valuable picture, statue, and structure; hear all that is excellent in music, admire the country, and come away, lest, exclusive of the danger to your own morals, you are obliged to confess that the most beautiful, and once the most glorious, place in the world, is now the most infamous."

Lady Roebuck, who truly regarded Charles as her son, as much from inclination as from a promise [Page 128] made to Lady Hazard on her death bed, gave him only general advice as to his youth and inexperience, relying however on his strong good sense, and that rectitude of heart which, as we have already noticed, was remarkable in so young a man. She promised to keep Annette firmly to her sentiments of esteem for him, and doubted not but his conduct would warrant all her exertions in the promotion of his happiness; and finally, that Annette improved at home, and he abroad, there could be no doubt of their making one of the most happy, as well as elegant couples in the world.

Emma warned him against the jays of France and the nightingales of Italy. She said she foresaw that, if his heart was not steel and adamant, he would be ruined; that she had read his mind thoroughly, and plainly saw that the only vice he had in the world was want of deceit. It was, to be sure, a strange declaration, but it was very true. That she should not

wonder at any thing he became in the hands of the French and Italians; for he was such pliable wax that any man, with a plausible story, the argument of which could be deduced from a good motive, might shape him into any form. She begged of him, in particular, to beware of holy hypocrites. What she had read, she told him, of their cruelty and dissoluteness, was yet worse, if possible, than all [Page 129] the gambols with which the forms of their facetious religion seemed to burlesque its author: or rather, the author of that which they daringly ventured to innovate, and which involved a system of morality mild as mercy, and benignant as his holy name who established it. Above all she cautioned him against convents, and an intercourse with those drones of society the inmates of them, who, from leisure to plan, and inclination to execute, were the perpetrators of every species of profligacy and mischief. Her reading, she said, had induced her to believe that there were more than three hundred thousand cloystered clergy in France, and a proportionable number of females; that the wickedness, the attrocious wickedness carried on within those walls, which were supposed to immure saints, was shockto humanity.

Emma further observed that it could not be supposed that any thing like the licentious infamy of France and Italy could ever have been practised here, because England had, properly speaking, never been the seat of that dangerous religion; but let it be recollected, in the reign of Henry the Eighth, what barbarous, what detestable vestiges of popish profligacy were discovered at the demolishing Netley abbey, and many other convents.— Subterraneous communications for nightly visits [Page 130] from friars to nuns, and nuns to friars. Hidden infants apparently murdered. If then the plant, which was here an exotic, grew to such perfection, how must it flourish in its native soil. It was horrible to think of it!

"But,' added Emma, if I may credit what I have read, this most unholy, irreverent, indecent, ridiculous religion, is clearly where it exists a jest with all but the superstitious ignorant. What is the mode of choosing a pope but a blasphemous imposition, in which, one would think, to punish them for presumptuously daring to give out that their election is from heaven, they once, by inspiration no doubt, as well as upon all other occasions, chose a woman, who betrayed her sex, their shame, and opened

the eyes of every one who chose to see. But vive la bagatelle in that, as in every thing else, soon got the better of good sense and sound reason, and they went on electing popes, the choice of heaven; not however without taking a precaution, lest heaven should have again deceived them."

Emma's precautions were applauded by a burst of laughter, and Charles entreated her to make herself perfectly easy, giving her his word that he would take particular care that his small plantation [Page 131] of understanding should not be eaten up by these black locusts.

Annette took an innocent but tender leave of her lover; for Emma had ever encouraged her not to be ashamed of a truly virtuous passion. Our hero felt himself greatly charmed at the distinction, and exulted not a little at reflecting that after time and experience should have prepared him with manly and proper resolutions, and given him riper qualities of mind and person, the possession of so charming an object would be within his reach. Many were their mutual protestations: ardent, yet innocent; heartfelt, yet reasonable. At length they separated, with a promise to write to each other, and with vows of inviolable fidelity.

One audience now only stood with Lord Hazard, before the time when our hero was to depart. This interview was without witness. My lord took his son tenderly by the hand, saying, "My dear Charles, lowered as I am by my grief, wretched by calamity, and disordered by both, my merits are more than rewarded by having you for my son. I never made you a stranger to my youthful excesses; indeed it would perhaps be policy to paint them to you even in their strongest colours, that you might shun the certain ruin that awaits [Page 132] such profligacy. Your incomparable mother, now no more, was—I cannot think of it but my soul is in arms—given me to bless my repentant heart with comfort more than such a wretch deserved; yet did I, after the enjoyment of such bliss, such unexampled delight, dash the cup of happiness from my lips, in the very moment that it held for me all the blessings of life in one delicious draught.'

"Wonder not at my words, Charles, it is very true; your mother owes her death to me!—to your father!—to your wretched culpable father! He who should from duty, from gratitude, from a sense of his own honour, her virtues, her angelic virtues, have avoided like contagion the most distant means that could wound her mind the thousandth part of a moment, much less join with wretches, with infamous detestable wretches, to work the destruction of her peace, and then her life! Oh look with pity,' cried he, in agony, injured, martyred saint, and calm the woes that tear me!—that destroy me!—that feed me with such torturing remorse as would make me think annihilation a blessing! My dear boy thou art astonished.'—'

"I am indeed sir,' said Charles; 'but it cannot [Page 133] be; I know sir it is impossible. The fixed, the solemn melancholy with which my indeed incomparable mother's death has shaded your brow, makes you see every thing through a sadly deceitful medium, and you think the irregularities of your youth sat near her heart. But cheer away this melancloly, my lord and father: let me forego my intention of travelling, and stay to comfort you by my watchful and tender duty. I will swear to have no joy, no employment, but the dear pleasing task of exhausting all my little talents to divert and soften your anxiety."

"My good, my noble boy,' said Lord Hazard, I cannot now enjoy a single glimpse of happiness but that which results from reflecting how great, how illustrious a figure you will one day make. My heart is set on your travelling, and the letters I shall receive from you will be all my comfort. As for the rest, time and reflection, sweeted by the friendship of Sir Sidney, may restore my health—which I will endeavour to preserve for thy sake—but nothing can give me back my peace of mind. This unhappy business, which was not a youthful folly, but a relapse of honour:—Poor boy, I little thought, when I was schooling thee, how much I stood in need of a tutor myself. But my words, like my deeds, want connection. I [Page 134] was going to say I would relate this damned business to you by letter, with reflections; the whole of which together may serve you for an excellent system of advice, for it will have both honest precept and dreadful example in one."

Charles acceded to the terms, and pledged himself before hand, so well he said he knew his father's excellent heart, that in discussing this business, be it what it might, the guilt would vanish, though the cala [...]ity should remain.

My [...] thanking his son for this earnest of his tender [...]ty, proceeded in more tranquillity to tell him the state of his expectations.

"Heaven knows, my dear, my worthy boy,' said he, 'that it would be the pride of my life could I leave you my her [...]ditary estate and honours, but they are so rigidly tied up, that it is impossible. All you can have therefore is your mother's jointure, amounting to about fifteen hundred a year, and what ready money I may die possessed of, which I hope will realize for you an annuity equal to that amount: and with this fortune I know Sir Sidney will be content to take you for his son in [...]. Your income till you are of age will be a thousand a year: spend this freely; I give you [Page 135] leave; but do not spend a shilling more. If I should die before you return—"

"Far be that unhappy day,' said Charles. 'Come sir, take leave of melancholy reflections; I shall not else have the heart to leave you. Indeed I can hardly bear the thought at any rate. Warm as my youthful imagination paints the various pleasures of different courts and nations, I should be wretched in the midst of them all, and alone though in a throng, if I thought, in my absence, my father indulged a single sigh that my presence could suppress."

"Noble boy,' said Lord Hazard, 'charming youth, adieu: your kind words shall serve me for consolation till I have your first letter; your first letter till I have your second; and thus you see pleasure will accumulate with me—and every post too—for by every post I hope you will write." "I will indeed, my dear father,' said Charles, 'but let me not go while you are thus uneasy. I feel a reluctance, an unspeakable reluctance to leave you. There is an inquietude hangs over me that I cannot describe." "It is nothing, my kind boy,' said his father, 'but the damp I have thrown on your spirits; my letters however will dissipate it. I have ever wanted to open my heart to you, for [Page 136] I wish to think you as much a

friend as a son.—Do then, by the most tender, the most endearing expressions, in both qualities, hearten me to live to be happy, to make thee so; thee, my good boy, my only remaining comfort!" "Doubt not my whole power, my whole devotion,' said Charles. 'Be assured there is no pursuit upon earth that I shall not consider as secondary to my duty to the best of fathers." "And now Charles,' said my lord, 'almost the happiestof fathers, since I see I shall derive so much pleasure from thee."

A servant now informed them the chaise was ready. A few more reciprocal promises of attention passed, after which they joined the company, to every individual of which Charles bid a tender adieu; till at length, having embraced his father with uncommon emotion, he burst into a flood of tears, hurried with Figgins to the chaise, and had got twenty miles before he once opened his mouth.

2. THE YOUNGER BROTHER

BOOK IV.

CONTAINING A STILL LARGER FIELD OF ACTION.

2.1. CHAPTER I.

CONSISTING OF POLITENESS, A TRIP TO CALAIS, AND A CURIOUS DISCOVERY.

EVERY thing Mr. Figgins had done hitherto was rather a partial rehearsal behind the scenes than the actual performance of his part. He now comes forward on the stage, where we dare trust him without a prompter, so well had he perfected himself in those scenes where he was destined to make his appearance: and indeed it were to be wished that other actors, whether on the theatre or in the pulpit, at the bar, at court, or any of those many playhouses in the kingdom, were—though but for the sake of consistency—half so well qualified to sustain their parts, or half so perfect in them.

[Page 138] Charles had not twice changed horses in his way to Dover before he had much welcome cause to be charmed with the solicitude of his friend. Figgins well knew that to treat a disorder in the mind, he must have recourse to a practice the very reverse of that generally adopted with relation to the body; therefore, instead of nauseous, unpalatable draughts, in which one would think its professors imagined consist all the secrets of physic, he studiously went about to prepare all that he conceived would charm the heart and expand the liberal mind of our hero. He drew him from his silence by degrees; extolled in the highest terms of admiration his filial piety; represented the condition of his father as the workings of a truly amiable mind, formerly irregular indeed, but now restored to the exercises of reason and benevolence; he drew a warm picture of both the power and the will of Sir Sidney to sooth all his cares; and finally, painted the extreme satisfaction that would result to him by a contemplation that he had one son who would become so great an honour to him as to make noble amends for the

obloquy cast upon his name by the despicable ignorance and contemptible conduct of the other.

After several similar preparations, he began to enter upon the grand subject, and at length made his young friend perfectly sensible for what purpose [Page 139] they were then in the post chaise. France and all its gaieties began insensibly to blend in their conversation, and Figgins archly remarked that gravity was an exotic which certainly would not flourish in so smiling a climate.

Charles was ever remarkably tenacious of not permitting his private feelings to inconvenience his friends, and the less he conceived himself obliged to restraint by a man's presence, the more forward he was to shew that his attention was voluntary.—He felt Figgins's kindness, and began to unbend. Besides, he had high health, and brilliant spirits; and however sincerely he might grieve at heart when he reflected—which he certainly very often did for his time of life—sorrow caught but little apparent hold on his volatile mind.

Being arrived at Dover, they bespoke a passage boat to themselves for the next morning, and while it was yet day-light took a walk to see that cliff which Emma had convinced herself, by her reading, though now the boundary of the channel, had certainly, in former times, made a part of the continent.

On their return to supper, the landlady informed them that a young lady, attended by a footman and [Page 140] a female servant, had arrived since their departure, and finding that our travellers had engaged the only passage boat on the Dover side, expressed an anxious wish that she might be permitted to go half the expence of the vessel, and sail with that opportunity, for that her affairs called for expedition; and she had been also informed that as the wind blew right into Calais harbour there would be no chance of any arrival from thence.

It will easily be conceived that the request was instantly complied with, though not the terms of it. A genteel compliment was instantly returned to the lady, with an earnest entreaty that she would suffer the gentlemen

to wait on her. The interview was permitted, the lady was complimented with the offer of a passage for her and her servants, which it was delicately hinted to her must be gratis, and, after as much hesitation as was due to good breeding, she accepted the proposal.

What Figgins had so successfully began, this lady completed. She was young, handsome, and lively, and though there appeared now and then a little levity in her manner, yet Charles, upon Figgins's suggestion, was willing to attribute it to her extraction and situation, the first of which they soon [Page 141] learnt from her own mouth was French, and the latter that of a widow.

In the course of their conversation, it came out, to the great satisfaction of our travellers, that this young lady, by name St. Vivier, was born in England, and the daughter of a French refugee; that she married a French gentleman, who was proscribed for some overt acts in which he stood up for the liberty of the subject, but he now being dead, she was going to see what she could collect in France of the scattered remains of his fortune; that her journey was to Lyons, and being obliged to make some stay at Sedan, for intelligence among her late husband's relations, she should pursue her rout by the borders of Flanders.

As this was step for step the way that had been marked out for Charles, what could be so fortunate as the above intelligence. This fact was communicated, and a proposal suggested that they should make that tour together. It was not however mentioned but with the most suitable propriety as to preparation and manner. The lady found great difficulty to believe that her route was really that which our travellers had intended to take, but saw, she said, that they were so polite as to alter their intention in compliment to her.

[Page 142] Both Charles and Figgins vehemently protested the truth of their assertion, and indeed used so many arguments to convince her that it would have been an infringment of that politeness which she seemed to possess in a natural and elegant degree to have [...]urther doubted their veracity. The next difficulty was that it would appear very odd if she should travel in the company of strangers. Charles said she had her own

servants with her, and Figgins noticed that they were all alike strangers in France, where indeed no explanations were ever required when people paid their way. This she said she should make a point of doing to the utmost farthing, if she consented at all, but at any rate she must entreat till the morning to consider of the propriety of their proposal, "for,' added she, 'a woman of honour cannot be too cautious, especially in such a licentious country as France has been described to me."

In this remark both our hero and his friend acquiesced, and now supper being announced, the lady, after some little difficulty, was prevailed on to partake of it; not however without remarking that matters must be put upon a different footing when they should arrive on the other side of the water. To which our hero replied, with a very penetrating glance, that he sincerely hoped it would [Page 143] be so, and, upon the lady's looking grave, added, since it appeared to be her wish.

A smart breeze the next day conducted them safely to Calais in something more than three hours, where, after the customary ceremonies of entering their names, paying a visit to the custom-house, giving something in charity, and satisfying a few clamorous porters, they were glad to get hold of some soup gras at Desseins, which, as well as the rest of their dinner, they found excellent.

In the evening they went to the play, which was also performed in the same inn, where there is a remarkable neat theatre, and by no means small. During the performance Charles was greatly pleased with the remarks of Madame St. Vivire, who spoke French admirably well, and perfectly tasted the neat nothingness of the French little operas, two of which were that night given. Our hero, who knew also that language as well as reading could teach it him, begged to be this lady's scholar for the practical part of it. She readily agreed, by which means, as he feigned, whenever he found it convenient, to know less than he did, he had a thousand opportunities of indulging himself in a thousand witty sallies, by way of trying how a declaration of love would be taken, which he the less hesitated [Page 144] to do, as a widow at her own disposal was fairly out of his agreement.

He first tried his French eloquence to persuade her that the pleasure of her charming company and the advantage of the rapid improvement he should make under her tuition would amply overbalance the expences of their journey. At first however she could not think of consenting to this, but Charles being strongly seconded by Figgins, she at length agreed.

This matter set Charles more at ease, for he was pretty well assured she could not be a woman of very nice honour who would, in this instance, yield to the solicitation of two strangers. He therefore determined to ply her with the whole force of his amorous eloquence. At night he took notice she sipped the burgundy pretty freely, which opportunity he seized to insinuate some bold hints which were not ill received. Maintaining this ground, he had soon reason to think the lady would, after a very short siege, surrender in form, which hopes were confirmed the next morning by Figgins, who had already won the lady's woman—both a handsome and genteel girl—and reaped the fruits of his victory.

[Page 145] Charles redoubled his assiduity, and Madam St. Vivier, after holding out with great apparent modesty, at length reluctantly promised to make him happy on their arrival at Lisle, to which place, having seen every thing at Calais, not forgetting the picture where the citizens are kneeling to King Edward, with halters about their necks, which curiosity was recommended to his attention by Emma, they now prepared to set out.

About an hour before the horses were to be ready, Mr. Dessein begged the favour of an audience with Charles, which being granted him, after a proper apology and preparation, he said he had a matter of great delicacy to communicate, which concerned him nearly.

Charles expressed some surprise at this declaration, and having previously promised at Dessein's entreaty, that he would in no wise take the matter ill, he was informed that, some months before, a gentleman came to him one morning, saying, "Mr. Dessein I have been robbed of those eighty louis d'ors which I yesterday received from you in a bag." He replied it was impossible; that his money might probably be mislaid, or found by the servants, but that in that house nobody could be [Page

146] robbed. He would make enquiry, he said, and the money would be restored to him.

The gentleman went out, and at his return Dessein had eighty louis d'ors ready for him in a bag similar to the other, for money being in France often paid in three livre and six livre pieces, the bankers have all bags on purpose.

The excuse made to the gentleman was, that, as the house was very full the evening before, the servant, after he was asleep, seeing the bag lie on the ground, had brought it to one of the clerks, who had put it in the counting house; for it should be known that Dessein is a banker as well as an innkeeper. The gentleman, not in the least suspecting the truth of what he heard, put the money in his pocket, and went away.

The fact, however, which had been so artfully suppressed, was this: Dessein said he saw in a moment that the gentleman had been really robbed, and upon making his enquiries, as to the situation of the lodgers, he found to a certainty by whom. In short, he said, this crime was committed by a young English gentleman, heir to a high title, and a large estate; that it could not be for want of money, [Page 147] as, no doubt, he might have had what he pleased of his father; but finding himself in an immediate necessity, instead of applying to him, in which case he might have been supplied, he took this sum without considering the consequences.

Mr. Dessein said the resolution he took upon it was to say nothing upon the subject to any person till he should see the young gentleman himself, for that out of gratitude to the English, to whom he owed his all, he would rather lose ten times that sum than make a stir about such a trifle, but that having seen that young gentleman since, and been treated by him in a very en cavalier style, though he was determined not to expose him, except to his own family, he should now certainly make no scruple of applying for the money.

In short, he informed our hero, who began now to smell a rat, that Zekiel was the thief.

What an opportunity is here to put an end to this history! Charles had nothing to do but get his brother hanged, to be heir to the family, title, and estate, his marriage with Annette would have followed of course, and when they had produced half [Page 148] a dozen children, for Lord Hazard to dandle on his knee, and comfort himself in his old age, he would have sunk peaceably to rest, and have left his darling son and daughter in possession of his honours.

Whether Charles foresaw an uniform tranquillity in such a life, and was determined to experience what sort of pleasures are generally produced by variety, or whether—which is full as probable—he felt a strong wish to hide his unnatural brother's frailty, we will not enquire. Certain it is, he, without hesitation, repaid Mr. Dessein upon the spot, thanked him for his prudence, and represented that he was sorry to see his brother possessed so insolent a spirit, but begged he would consider the whole as an extravagant tour de jeunesse, which had more of false wit in it than premeditated vice. He desired that the whole might sink into oblivion, and in particular that it might never come to his father's ears.

Mr. Dessein promised literally to follow the directions of our hero, with whose manner and generosity he was very much struck; and could not help remarking that he plainly saw, though [Page 149] the honour was vested in the elder brother, the younger possessed the virtues which could alone enoble a family.

2.2. CHAPTER II.

[Page]

STRANGE ADVENTURES AT AN INN—BEING THE HALF-WAY HOUSE THROUGH THIS LITERARY JOURNEY.

CHARLES having finished this business greatly to his satisfaction, determined that no hint should escape him concerning it, not even to Figgins; but, lest future instances of his brother's nefarious conduct should multiply in a strange country, where it would cost him dearly to extricate himself from such difficulties, he lengthened a letter he had already written to his father, by first very delicately apologizing for touching on such a subject, and then entreating that his brother's allowance might be augmented, even though his own should be curtailed; for that it was impossible for a man in any style to cut a figure in France—particularly a young and inexperienced man—with a slender income. He gave some general reasons for this request, and, though with great deference, strongly submitted the matter to his father's consideration.

[Page 151] After entreating Mr. Dessein to send any letters forward for him to Lisle, he took leave of Calais.

At Lisle they purposed staying a few days, and as Charles promised himself the possession of Madame St. Vivier, he was determined to sport as grand a figure as his circumstances would allow.—He therefore hired a carriage, made parties, and gave petits soupees at his inn, which were of course frequented by as many guests, particularly officers and abbes, as could beg, borrow, or steal cards of invitation.

One evening, about half an hour before supper, arrived un My Lor Anglois, with a gentleman and lady, two footmen and a maid servant, who could not get so elegant a repast as they wished, all the delicacies being taken up by our hero, who had invited a large party by way of adieu to Lisle.—Charles, when he came to understand the inconvenience of the strangers, of which he had been innocently the cause, upon consulting Figgins, sent his compliments and requested as a favour that they would add sans facons to the number of those he had invited.

The invitation was as freely accepted as given, the two gentlemen and the lady presently appeared, [Page 152] and were received with all that freedom so common in France. The lady was immediately surrounded by the officers, and the gentlemen, who appeared to be true English sportsmen, were hunting out for any body who could speak a word of English. Figgins and our hero relieved their distress as much as possible. At length supper appeared, and presently one of our bucks said to the other, "I say, you Tadpole, if I can think how so many people jabber so curse confoundedly with their jaws full." "Oh, my lord,' said his friend, 'a Frenchman's jaws are like the tools of a trunk maker, they always make more noise than work."

Figgins gave them a hint that they had better be on their guard, lest any of the company should understand English.

"Oh dam'me,' said my lord, 'the queer lantern jawed bitches of fellows know no more about English than they do about roast beef: only see if they do. Mounseer!" "Monsieur,' answered a very polite abbe.' "I say,' said my lord, 'Mounseer, how much soup meeger and frogs do you hide away, when you can get it, in your leather bags of cheeks, that look for all the world like the jaw bags of a monkey?"

[Page 153] The abbe, after paying him the utmost attention, replied, "Monsieur, je ne comprend pas un mot.'—' "Now what the devil,' faid my lord, 'is paws umo?" "He fays he does not understand what you say,' answered Figgins; 'but you see how open you are yourself, for what he said might have been abuse for ought you knew to the contrary."

"Come sir,' said my lord, 'no offence to you, but I will bet you five hundred, and I say done first, that if any French rascal in company dares for to offer an affront to me, I twigs him a lick of the jaws."

At this moment Madam St. Vivier said "My Lord Hazard I have the pleasure of drinking your health." To which Charles answered, "My dear Madam I thank you; give me leave to drink with you, that our wishes may be mutual."

The stranger, who was disputing with Figgins, here cried out, "Hey! what's this! Here you Tadpole, how is this? Here is a gentleman does me the honour to take up my title before I am dead, ay and before my old put of a father is dead too!"

[Page 154] Charles, penetrating in a moment the whole force of these few words, blushed with indignation, which Zekiel perceiving—for the reader sees it was he—followed the blow he had given, by saying "Ay, dam'me, fine work; fine times, when every little whipper snapper can set up for a lord!" "True,' said Figgins, who had a mind to give our hero time for recollection, 'and one may see by your own appearance how contemptible it is,'—' "Nay,' said Mr. Tadpole, 'you must now suffer me to speak sir. This gentleman is certainly the eldest son of Lord Hazard, who has ridiculously discarded him under pretence of libertine conduct, when there is scarcely such an old libertine as himself in existence."

"Sir,' said Charles, 'your assertion is a falsity. I see this whole business. I am by accident in the company of my elder brother, who shall not, nor shall you sir, traduce the character of the most amiable father that ever had existence." "Come, come,' said Figgins, 'let the matter, now it is explained, be, as it ought, forgotton; or at least defer it all the company is gone, or till to-morrow morning."

"I defer it!" said the young lord;' "no such thing I assure you:—who's afraid of these grinning baboons [Page 155] here?" for the Frenchmen had by this time began to shrug up their shoulders, and demonstrate other tokens of admiration. "My brother Charles here, for that is the go I see, thinks, because he has got a parcel of starve-gutted rips of mounseers about him, that a man of my condition, dam'me, is to be grinned out of his title."

"When the title comes to be yours,' retorted Charles, 'there will be more likelihood of grinning than at present; but the matter, as Mr. Figgins has very properly said, should drop, which you had better agree to yourself, at least for the present, if it were only in consideration of your being my guest."

"Your guest!" said Zekiel, 'why do you think as I would have come for to eat any of your supper if I had been up to such fine gig as this?'—' "As much,' said Charles, as I would have invited you, had I known who you were:—as the invitation therefore was sent as from stranger to stranger, I am willing to give it another turn to all those who have not understood the dispute, and I am sure the whole company will join in laughing it off."

"Yes, and a fine laugh it would be against me, [Page 156] hey Tadpole. No, no, dam'me, I will tell them all about it. I say, Mounseer, no my lord he—I my lord." "Ah ha!' said an officer, without understanding him.' "Dam'me if I ever saw such a set of fools in my life,' said Zekiel.' "That man no my lord at all; I am one great, grand my lord myself!"

"Very great and very grand indeed,' said Charles; 'it is pity that nobody knows it."

"You are a puppy, Mr. Charles,' said Zekiel: why the devil don't you help me out, Tadpole? you can jabber a little of their damned gibberish."

Tadpole undertook to inform the company how the matter stood, in which account he certainly behaved very scandalously, by representing Zekiel as a lord, and Charles as an impostor, without explaining how innocently the matter had been fallen into. Here Charles interfered with all the warmth he could. It was however to no purpose. Cest affreux! Jesu Maria! Cest honteux! and half a dozen other expressions of astonishment, were all uttered together, and the whole company agreed that they had all along feared our hero was a low born fellow by his prodigality. In short, a thousand marks of [Page 157] attention were immediately lavished upon Zekiel, which being interpreted to him through the medium of Tadpole, he swore he never liked French people so well in his life, while Charles, fortified by indignation against the apostacy of his guests, did not now think it worth his while to undeceive them, but contented himself with taking this as a caution how he should summon together a promiscuous company in France at his own expence for the future.

Figgins however was determined it should not go off so. He observed that not one of the company, while they bestowed pretty liberally the most humiliating epithets on Charles, grudged to eat or drink any thing they could lay their hands on, he therefore moved that either nothing should be touched, or that they would accompany every word, in the manner they had before this discovery, with some well-turned compliment to him at whose expence they sat down; for as nothing was expected for so sumptuous an entertainment but words—a coin in which they were very rich and very prodigal—he must beg, in the name of his friend, that they would fulfil the conditions of the feast, otherwise it would induce him to wish for a bill, that every man might pay his reckoning in another coin, with [Page 158] which he did not believe they were so well provided.

This sarcasm gave very high offence, notwithstanding which they eat and drank on without offering to comply with either of Mr. Figgins's conditions, till at last Zekiel, to whom they were explained through Tadpole, offered to pay his share, and invited his new friends to follow his example.

His adherents began now to forsake him; no one came into his proposal, and all eyes were immediately fixed again upon Charles, who seeing what sort of turn matters were likely to take, got up, and said, "Come gentlemen, I will end the dispute:—Is it not fair that he should be considered as the true Lord Hazard who pays the bill?"

A general affirmative was instantly given, and Zekiel being asked if he would pay the whole expence of the evening out of his pocket, answered he would see such a set of mounseers and madames at the devil first. Charles then called the waiter, who said there was nothing to pay, for that his honour had satisfied every thing, as well for the supper as the dance and little opera that would enter in a few minutes.

[Page 159] Zekiel now under went a thousand mortifications, which he contented himself with returning by abuse, in a language the Frenchmen could not understand. At length he sneaked off to bed, vowing revenge against his brother, which Mr. Flush, who, as we have said, was a

follower of his fortunes, assured him, as he ascended the gallery, was easily practicable.

I have already said Charles had reason to believe that Madame St. Vivier would at Lisle recompense his attention, by consenting to make him happy upon his own terms. That very night shew was to comply with his wishes, and this secret, by a means I shall take an opportunity one time or other to explain, Mr. Flush had discovered, and now imparted it to Zekiel, who getting instructions as to the situation of all the different bed-chambers, determined to supplant his brother.

In pursuance of this determination, when all was silent in the inn, he went to the room where he had been directed, and finding it invitingly open, fastened the door on the inside, and groped about till he found the bed. Being accosted by a female voice, in a whisper, he replied in the same manner. He then undrest himself, and was welcomed into bed as warmly as he could wish. In about [Page 160] half an hour after, another person knocked softly at the door, whom he of course guessed to be his brother Charles; but, advising the lady not to take the smallest notice of this intrusion, after a short time the importunate visitant gave over knocking, and went away.

He began now to glory in his success, and had a great mind to stay and brazen the whole matter out, but was so earnestly entreated by the lady to spare her delicacy, and to leave her before the day dawned, that he at length complied.

Elated with this revenge, Zekiel, as he occasionally passed our hero in the morning, could not help looking big, and half insulting him. Charles bore every thing very patiently, till, being obliged to answer an impertinent question or two, a very provoking altercation ensued, and Zekiel ventured a most invidious and wanton invective against the memory of Charles's mother. Scarcely were the words out of his mouth, when our hero fairly knocked him down, and indeed was so transported with passion, that he swore he would not rest a moment till he had sacrificed so infamous a rascal to the offended laws.

Zekiel being again upon his legs, came up and [Page 161] demanded what he meant by that. Charles bid him ask Monsieur Dessein. At these words Zekiel was in a cold sweat, and trembled from head to foot, and was actually upon the point of confessing the robbery when Figgins and Mr. Tadpole came up-Seeing this, Charles, in the language of Tamerlane, bade him keep his own wicked secret, and be safe; and asking Mr. Tadpole which way they intended to go to England, and being answered by the way of Ostend, he advised him, for the sake of his friend, to keep that resolution.

Figgins plainly saw there was some hidden meaning in this expression, and had indeed, though he had not betrayed it, thought a little mysteriously of the tete a tete interview between Charles and Monsieur Dessein; to which another circumstance that occurred at Lisle being added, he thought it necessary to tax Charles with want of confidence, and pushing the matter while it was warm, he obtained from our hero, who was the worst qualified in the world for a hypocrite, the whole truth.

Figgins thanked him for his frankness, and said that in return he would give him some intelligence relative to Master Zekiel that would not a little surprise him.

[Page 162] He said, that being all well flushed the night before, every one seemed to have his different appointment. For his part, he had made an assignation with Kitty, Madame St. Vivier's maid, which he went to keep, but, by some accident or other, mistaking the chamber, he had certainly introduced himself to Miss Tadpole, who, it was plain, expected somebody; for, upon finding it impossible to answer many of her questions, she was at first in manifest confusion, but soon recovering herself, gave a turn to the unintelligible part of her conversation, and, in direct terms, made him understand that she took him for Zekiel, though what she said was so worded that he plainly saw this was the first interview of that nature which had passed, and which she was evidently surprised into, owing to her expectation of some other person.

Taking the hint, therefore, he passed himself on her for my lord, which indeed spoilt all his scheme of pleasure for the remainder of the night,

except so much as gratified his curiosity; for having yielded to his embraces before matters came to be explained, she took on strangely, and complained of being ruined in her sleep, and all the old cant of those ladies who are well versed in such arts as pass off their stale ware to inexperienced young gentlemen.

[Page 163] "I topped my part,' said Figgins, 'for learning from her all those vows and promises which your precious brother has made her, I confirmed them with a number of his quaint oaths, and at length left her apparently satisfied.'

"I should not forget to mention that after I had been sometime in bed, a knocking and a voice was heard at the chamber door, on which, in her fright, she said "'that is my brother, I know his voice"'—'and so, by the way, did I. She would have let him in, to have witnessed the protestations I had made her. This however I overruled, and after a time the brother—for I dare say it was he—went away; but, upon putting all considerations together, I am convinced this Mr. Tadpole is the lady's gallant, and they are trying together to noose your brother, which, upon my soul, I think, for the sake of the family, ought to be prevented."

Charles agreed to this, and said if Mr. Figgins would confront the lady on their return—for they were now on the ramparts—he would, in spight of his inward indignation for his brother, try to undeceive him, and so save him from this infamy, that seemed to await him.

[Page 164] Figgins said he was an excellent young man, and he would second so laudable an endeavour with all his heart. "But,' said Figgins, 'now we are on the subject of last night, you, I find, kept my appointment; for Kitty tells me this morning that some person stole into her room, whom she mistook for me, but, finding her error—but not till she had yielded—made the best of it, and humoured the mistake."

"This is singular enough,' said Charles, 'I assure you it was not I; I was much better employed." "Are you sure of it?" said Figgins.—' "Oh certain,' said Charles. 'My assignation was no mysterious one; I had no occasion to shroud my designs in darkness, for the joys I reaped were

heightened by the blushes of my mistress, which were revealed to my view by a wax taper, which I dare say was bought for a very different ceremony." "Then by God,' said Figgins, 'it was your brother, who dubbed me with my harlot, while I was dubbing him by anticipation with his wife, and I am damnably mistaken if he has not had such anticipaters in the lady's favours for any time this four years."

This conversation brought them back to the inn, where they found their whole benevolent design [Page 165] rendered abortive, for Zekiel and his company had in their absence set out, and were now several miles on their journey towards Ostend.

"Let them go,' said Figgins, 'and since the fellow will run his nose into the matrimonial gin, let him squeak for it; but I hope, while I reprobate his folly, I am not glancing at any in you. Madame St. Vivier and you are evidently upon very kind terms; I need not hint to your good sense that she is a mere adventurer.." "Oh,' said Charles, 'that one may plainly see: I should like however to know her real story." "That, for your sake, I have discovered,' said Figgins.'

"Madame St. Vivier and her maid are neither more nor less than Aimwell and Archer in the Beaux Stratagem. They are travelling to the south of France, by the way of Lyons, which route I believe they take simply because it is ours. On their return, by the way of Paris, Mrs. Kitty is to be the mistress, and Madame St. Vivier the maid, and whatever they pick up in their journey they are to go snacks in. The girl acknowledges to me that the first idea was to trap you into a marriage, but finding we were too knowing for them, and in facts better calculated to administer to their pleasure than their convenience, like a [Page 166] couple of generous girls as they are, every thing it seems is to be left to ourselves."

"Which generosity they must not repent,' said Charles.' "By no means,' said Figgins; 'and if in our way we meet with any English booby, not your brother, let them in God's name profit of their good fortune."

This introduced some general remarks on English travellers, which Madame St. Vivier interrupted. Figgins acquainted her with the discovery as to her scheme, and both the gentlemen assured her they would assist it as far as they could, without injuring their characters as men of honour.

Post horses were ordered to be ready the next morning. While they were harnessing, Charles having occasion to pay the civility of an adieu to a person in power, who had done him some kindness as to his business at the custom-house, and other matters, had the curiosity to call himself at the post office, for he had not yet received a single letter from his father, though he had written several.—He was there informed that there had been letters, but they were fetched away by a footman, in a livery exactly like his own, the day before. Charmed with these tidings, he flew back to the inn, think-that [Page 167] the footman must have been John, who had forgot to give them to him; but how great was his surprise when John assured him he had received no letters, and offered to go back to the post-office to rectify the mistake, whither they immediately set out, Figgins begging them to be expeditious, for the horses were put to. "But stay Charles,' added Figgins, 'I will tell you, as sure as you are alive, how the case is. Your brother's livery is the same as yours; he has intercepted your letters, and is now gone the devil knows where; and so the unnatural wretch, while you were saving his reputation, and perhaps his life, by your unparalleled liberality, in the affair of Dessein—owing I dare say to the cunning of the fellow who travels with him, for he has not head enough himself—has hit upon this treacherous plan to make a breach between you and your father."

"It must be so,' said Charles, 'but that we may be sure I will write to Dessein, to know if he has sent any letters, and his answer shall be addressed to Brussels." "Well thought,' said Figgins, 'we can do that from the next post." "But stay sir,' said John, 'I wish I might go to the post-office, though I don't believe his honour thinks me guilty." "Guilty of what, you foolish fellow?' said Figgins, 'your master knows your fidelity:'—' [Page 168] Nor will the reader be at a loss how much to lay to the account of it, when he is told that this was the very John who,

upon a former occasion, rescued Lady Hazard, and refused Dogbolt's half-guinea.

The last is not the only hint contained in this chapter to which I would have the reader minutely attend. It may be necessary probably to revert to it in the course of the work; but if it tend to any material circumstances that will more powerfully display themselves by being developed in their place, I shall adhere to that rule I have in general set down for myself, and only excite present curiosity, to strengthen future gratification.

2.3. CHAPTER III.

ONE THEFT ACTUALLY COMMITTED, AND A PLAN FORMED FOR ANOTHER.

ALL these circumstances together having confirmed Charles in his opinion that Figgins was a sincere friend, John a faithful servant, and Zekiel a great rogue, our travellers took the road to Brussels, and at the first stage our hero wrote to Mr. Dessein, as he had resolved.

As I am writing the history of Charles Hazard, and not a tour on the continent, I shall trouble my readers with no more than such circumstances as immediately concern that young gentleman, or lead to his affairs, together with such minutiae as naturally produced them, and such remarks as may serve for their elucidation.

In conformity to these rules, I shall only say that at Brussels nothing happened of consequence enough [Page 170] for me to record except that Charles and Figgins became intimate with a young Frenchman, named Combrie, who had stollen a nun, and married her. This couple were glad enough to have escaped from France with safety, without staying to accomplish a design which they had formed of getting the lady's fortune out of the hands of a trustee, in which the church had placed it. They were therefore little better off than in the possession of an unbounded stock of love, and what money Mr. Combrie, who was the cadet of an honourable family, had been able to procure from the fondness of a doating mother.

Having however violated one of the most sacred laws of France, by carrying a nun out of that kingdom, the mettled Frenchman conceived he could incur but little more blame if he pushed his point so far as to take her fortune forcibly out of the hands of a litigeous procureur,who had made use of the money to his own advantage for two years, and eluded every attempt, even of the clergy, to get it from him.

The man of the law was however too vigilant and circumspect for Combrie, who being a novice in a matter which required so much wary caution and prudent resolution, and besides too much [Page 171]

transported with his expected happiness, he managed his plan so bunglingly, that so far from succeeding with the procureur, he had very nearly been defeated in his views concerning the lady.

Though this couple loved each other with perhaps more tenderness for being without fortune, yet most people agree, and they could not but yield to the general opinion, that money is a security for love, especially after reflection takes place. Indeed, being in a strange country, from whence they must shortly, for the sake of safety, recede further, they were not so blinded by their affection, but they saw that their future prospects would be in a very doubtful way, if some scheme was not hit upon to rescue the money before it could be confiscated for the use of the church.

Combrie, who had been at Brussels but a short time, yet who was looked upon, in consequence of his shyness, as a very equivocal character, saw plainly the danger of making a confident in that place, and as an attempt at the recovery of his wife's fortune would be impracticable, without a confederate or two, taking a hint from the strong congeniality that appeared between the sentiments of our travellers and his own, he fancied he should be safe at-least in their confidence, even if they did [Page 172] not lend him assistance. Besides, his affairs were very pressing, and he doubted, if his resolutions were not suddenly and effectually taken, whether the all-grasping power of the church would not deprive him of every possible hope.

Having no time to deliberate, and being emboldened by the engaging freedom and true breeding of Charles and his friend, he ventured, without reserve, to entrust them with his affairs, into which our friends gave so freely, that Figgins, who the reader knows was no mean hand at a plot, concerted one that it was agreed would infallibly succeed, even without rendering either him or his friend liable to the smallest suspicion of being concerned in it.

Full of their project, the three friends set out, leaving Madame Combrie in her apartments at Brussels, but first sending Madame St. Vivier before them to Sedan, where she actually had business; for as to themselves, out of safety to Combrie, they travelled to Nancy in Lorraine,

where lay the scene of action, by the way of Luxembourg, and, in fact, as much in Austria as possible till they should come to Metz, where they were to hold their grand counsel of war. Madame St. Vivier, however, was not at all apprized of their business, but only instructed, [Page 173] after she had accomplished hers, to meet them at Nancy, to which Sedan lies in the direct road.

Without stopping to look at a single prospect, building, or even crucifix, in the way, I shall set down my travellers at Metz, where, by agreement, they separated, Charles and Figgins taking post horses for Nancy, and Combrie jogging after them at his leisure, upon his own horse: not however till they had agreed whereabout they should find him in the suburbs, near which place Combrie had a trusty friend, who he was sure would give him every necessary assistance.

Being arrived at Nancy, they went to the convent of Chartreux, where strangers, especially of condition, are for a short time treated gratis. The members of this convent being all men of fortune, and, in general, such as have retired from the world through disappointments at court, are always charmed at the arrival of new guests, whether their visits be owing to curiosity or necessity, but they are particularly pleased with the English. No wonder then that the superior, when he understood that Charles was a young English nobleman, and Figgins his governor; that they had unexpectedly been deceived as to remittances from England, and [Page 174] therefore from actual necessity had intruded on their generous institution, both for immediate succour and advice, instantly signified—especially as their pretensions were corroborated by the testimony of letters of credit and recommendation, and many other authentic documents—his warmest wishes to enter heartily into their interest. They paid him a number of acknowledgments for his great civility to strangers, and said they piqued themselves on their own sagacity, which had pointed out the propriety of applying to a man of his piety, as well as consequence, upon such an occasion, rather than run the risk of being imposed upon by an indiscriminate choice of a person to supply their present wants, without an eligible recommendation.

After this preface our travellers acquainted the superior that they wished his reference to some money negociator, for a present supply, who assuring them that it would give him particular pleasure to recommend them to some person who should treat them conscientiously, mentioned his near relation Monsieur Goufre, le procureur: not however till he had expatiated on the wickedness of those usurious wretches who take advantage of the necessitous, and oppress their fellow creatures under the idea of relieving them.

[Page 175] Figgins said he had heard of one Monsieur Bancsec, but the superior assured them they could not get into worse hands. Charles said certainly it would be their interest to rely upon the superior's advice, and begged the favour of a note to Monsieur Goufre. This request was immediately complied with, and our friends went their ways to the gentleman's house in question, after thanking the kind recluse in terms of the warmest gratitude.

Before however we introduce the reader to Monsieur Goufre, it will not be inexpedient to say how Charles and his friend happened to get recommended to the very man who retained Madame Combrie's fortune.

The reader has seen that he was a near relation to the superior of the Chartreux, which was well known to Combrie, and it will not appear extraordinary that this connection with the clergy should be the means of Monsieur Goufre's being often employed in matters which concerned the church. In fact, the frequent litigations by friends of the deceased to recover monies conditionally left for charitable uses, on one side, and the assertion of the church's right on the other, had, upon many occasions, produced such a see-saw of interested altercation between the procureur and the superieur, that matters [Page 176] perfectly plain and clear in themselves, often wore an air of such mysterious embarrassment under such delusion as frittered large legacies into bills of expences, which were cunningly snacked by the lawyer and the monk.

One of these lucrative bones, at which they had been a long time nibbling, was Madame Combrie's fortune, the perfect situation of which, nay even the drawer in which it was deposited, Figgins undertook to

procure intelligence of; to do which, properly, they had recourse to the superior, and through him were resolved to attack the heart of his relation in that part where he was most vulnerable—for it was not true that they actually wanted money—and to give a colour to this it was no bad plan to seize an opportunity of taking the Chartreux by the outward symbol of his profession, and make his charity, which was counterfeit, the instrument of his real confusion.

Combrie being arrived in the Fauxbourg, and informed of their resolves, the moment came to put their design in execution. Charles and Figgins waited on the procureur; who, after all the necessary difficulties, which, upon motion, was to be removed by Monsieur Dessein, agreed to accommodate them with what they should think necessary; [Page 177] for they had represented that they should change their route so often, and probably from momentary inducements, that it would be better to take up in specie as much as would serve for some months, and leave in the hands of Monsieur Goufre travelling bills of Sir James Herries, and other English bankers, to the amount of the sum and the discount.

Nothing retarded the payment of the money but waiting for a letter from Monsieur Dessein, which at length arrived greatly to the satisfaction of all parties. It spoke very handsomely of Charles and his friend, and it is proper to mention that, over and above the business of assuring Monsieur Goufre, it mentioned that letters had been sent to Charles at Lisle, on account of which he had written to Brussels, and this confirmed Charles in his opinion of Zekiel's treachery. Figgins however made a different use of this circumstance, greatly turning it to their present account, for he proved very clearly that if those letters sent to Lisle had been received, the application to Monsieur Goufre would have been unnecessary.

During the interval between writing to Calais and receiving an answer, Charles and Figgins had twice dined with the procureur, and the latter had so [Page 178] insinuated himself into his good graces, that under pretence of enquiring into the practice of the French laws, he wormed out of him almost all his affairs. The endowments of the monasteries naturally came up in their conversation, in which business he owned he was very much employed, and one morning, when they were talking in

the counting-house upon this subject, the procureur said, as he was locking up his bureau, "here now is a pretty large fortune which has been lessened almost one-fourth by litigation. It belonged to a nun, who has been lately stolen from a neighbouring monastry—there it is labelled and sealed up, in notes upon the Caisse d'accompte, payable au porteur—and I have now a supreme order, which I shall yield to next week,—after I have made out my bill against it—to surrenderit to the Lady Abbess."

Naturally guessing that nuns were not so frequently stolen but that her he had heard of must be Madame Combrie, Figgins found his point so far gained, and now the letter being arrived from Calais, nothing remained but to receive their money.

On the evening appointed for this business, theprocureur was invited by our travellers to a sumptuous entertainment at the Hotel D'Angleterre.—Before supper the ceremony of signing and sealing [Page 179] was performed, and after supper all was hilarity. Figgins made the procureur harrangue, Charles prevailed on him to squall several chansons a boire,and Madame St. Vivier, who arrived at Nancy that very afternoon, took him out to walk a minuet with her. In short, the votary of chicane having made a good bargain, a good supper, and fallen violently in love with Madame St. Vivier, did not notice how the hours wore, and was at length, after a good finishing dose, carried to bed, in a condition that laid him by the heels till ten o'clock the next morning.

2.4. CHAPTER IV.

IN WHICH THE LAITY PROVE TWO CUNNING FOR BOTH LAW AND GOSPEL.

IT was three hours after Monsieur Goutre went home before he discovered that any trick had been played him, for I hope the reader does not suppose the supper was given for nothing. He asked one of the clerks if any body had called while he was engaged the evening before, and was answered nobody of any consequence but Father Benedick.— "What Father Benedick?' said Goutre.' "Him,' said the clerk, 'we sent to you at the Hotel D'Angleterre, and by whom you sent your keys, with written orders to deliver the fortune belonging to the convent of our lady of the ascension." "Written orders! Keys!" cried the astonished procureur.' "But it is impossible; here are my keys." "Well sir, these are the keys he brought,' said the clerk, 'and here is the order: surely we know your hand writing."

Upon this Monsieur Goupe read, in a faultering [Page 181] accent, and in a hand so like his own that he could himself find no difference: "Let Father Benedick have the packet in the bureau labelled Money belonging to the convent of our lady of the ascension."

As all the French dance well, it is not wonderful that Monsieur Goutre had scarcely read these words when he took a chassee to the bureau, where he discovered the nest without the bird, capricled back to the parlour for his hat and cane, rigadooned to the door, briseed out of it, and in a new fashioned pas courant presently made an entre at the house of the general of the police. There being joined by a proper number of figurants, under the characters of sergeants du ville, archets, and pouse culs, the procureur paraded at their head to the Hotel D'Angleterre, where, to enrich the procession back again, he entreated our hero, Figgins, and Madame St. Vivier to perform a pas de trois.

In plain English, he fairly believed his pocked had been picked while he was asleep, and that our travellers, who were thieves, had taken this

method to rob him; and having imparted these suspicions to the general of the police, he obtained an order to bring the delinquents before him.

[Page 182] A few words however served to convince that officer, and even the procureur himself, that his suspicions were groundless. The clerk deposed that about seven o'clock in the evening, a person in the garb of a friar, calling himself Father Benedick, came to their house, and said he had particular business with Monsieur Goufre, relative to a certain fortune belonging to the convent of our lady of the ascension. He represented that upon various pretences it had been so long kept out of the church's hands, that it was in agitation to procure a suspension of the procureur'semployments, if he should refuse immediately to deliver it. He said it was pity Monsieur Goufre was not within, for his authority was so powerful and decisive, that if he returned it would be with force, which he would willingly avoid. The clerk said, in consequence of these menaces, he made no scruple of sending the supposed friar to his master, who, about a quarter before eight, returned with Monsieur Goufre's keys, and a written order to deliver the fortune which was locked up in the bureau, and which had a label similar to that described in the said written order. The clerk swore he believed it to be the hand writing of his master, and he was sure the keys were those his master then held in his hand.

[Page 183] Mr. Figgins here entreated that he might have permission to ask the procureur a few questions, which request being complied with, he said "Pray sir in whose company were you from half past six o'clock till nine, during which time this fraud is said to have been committed?"

Monsieur Goufre answered in his company.— "Were you not,' said Figgins, 'during that whole time, in your sober senses?" "Perfectly,' answered the man of law.' "And now let me rouse your best recollection while I ask if in that very interval of time, you were not talking of your extensive business, of your property, and indeed of this very fortune you now say you have lost, but which you then bragged you had safely locked up; as a proof of which you shewed us those very keys, and at the very time as it should seem, that your clerk was using them—which is a very likely story—to deliver that fortune up to a person he had never before seen."

The poor procureur felt this unanswerable mode of reasoning most severely, and the general of the police—whether other cases had induced him to doubt the veracity of Monsieur Goufre, or whether he was conscious that Englishmen are constantly upon these occasions not those who dupe, but those who [Page 184] are duped—seemed to pay great attention to Figgins's harrangue, who seeing his advantage, thought he could not do better than follow it up: which he did in these words.

"Upon the whole, it appears to me, and so it shall to the English embassador, that Monsieur Goufre having found in us a pretty free-milch cow, as to some money transactions we have had together, has fancied, notwithstanding the documents we have produced, that we could not make good our pretensions to rank and independency, and therefore imagined we might be awed, by the accusation of a sham robbery, into a composition: and this appears from many circumstances.—What had we to do with this fortune? Why were we to know in what place it lay? Why have we been repeatedly shewn the key that locked it up? Besides, the matter has been so bunglingly managed, that the clerk deposes that very key was sent at the individual time he himself confesses to have had it in his pocket. Then he does not pretend to say that the hand writing is not like his, but, on the contrary, so like that he should have taken it for his own. But it was necessary this should be said, because if the hand writing had not been exactly like his, the clerk would have had no pretence whatever to have delivered the [Page 185] fortune. Again, what was this same Father Benedick?—and how had he got all this intelligence? How insinuated himself into his pocket invisibly, and conveyed away the keys, during an interval of perhaps the only five minutes in an hour and a half that they had been trusted there without his hand upon them for their security; but, at any rate, to make the story in the smallest degree colourable, what connection had this supposed Father Benedick with them, to lend the smallest probability to their being concerned in a transaction so very derogatory to their honour as gentlemen, so totally unnecessary to their circumstances, which Monsieur Goufre had taken care, with the most scrupulous exactness, to make himself master of—and so disgraceful to the name of Englishmen? How had it been proved that they, so far from knowing the friar in question,

had a single associate, even of their own country?—for both the clerks gave very clear testimony that Father Benedick spoke with an accent so pure and vernacular, that they were sure he was a Frenchman: and indeed so he was. All these circumstances considered, it was impossible this affair should be otherwise than a gross attempt—an event which occurred too frequently—to impose upon English credulity; which, however others [Page 186] might pass over, would not, in the present instance, be regarded in any light either trifling or pardonable; on the contrary, it would be found that men of character had been tampered with, who were both able and willing to right themselves. He therefore insisted, for the sake of general justice and the honour of the English nation, that the matter should be fully and publicly investigated: to which and they would be content to submit to a temporary imprisonment, provided Monsieur Goufre should be laid under the same restriction."

The general of the police, whou could not probably see that all this intelligence had been, by the most subtle train of artful insinuation, deliberately drawn from Goufre, by Figgins, with a view to forward the designs of Combrie—who the reader sees was father Benedick—had no manner of doubt but that every word he had heard was truth.

His own private opinion indeed was, that being in a short time to deliver up the fortune, the procureur had conjured up the whole accusation to cover his embezzlement of the money. As to the friar, he had not the least doubt but that he was a real character, procured probably by his relation, the superior of the Chartreux, who, as we have said [Page 187] was occasionally concerned with Mr. Goufre in his law practices.

In short, he so well knew, as he thought, the trim of the business, that he would not have hesitated to comply with the terms of Mr. Figgins, had he not had some very material objections to get rid of.

In the first place, he well knew that their knowledge of each others illicit conduct was mutual; they had trod together the paths of oppression; and it was their constant custom when either was likely to get into a scrape, to call the other to his assistance. In the present case, however, the procureur had previously sworn to the general of the police that he had

actually been robbed, and this was indeed the truth; but matters—thanks to Figgins's address—wore now so different an aspect, that this seeming want of confidence quite exasperated him, and nothing but his own actual safety made him hesitate a moment to take part against the procureur.

Balancing thus between his conviction and his interest, he thought proper to pursue a middle course. He said, as there had actually been nothing proved which had been alledged, he could not answer sending to prison three persons, one of [Page 188] them a lady, who had made so handsome a defence. Monsieur Goufre had certainly, in the first transports of his resentment, done what he thought very justifiable, but what, upon reflection, had neither certainty, nor even probability, to support it; that it was plain he had been some way or other tricked, how would very likely hereafter appear; and, if he had been too warm, stung as he was at being deprived of a large deposite, which it would cut deep into his fortune to make good, those very traits of liberality on which that gentleman—meaning Figgins—had dwelt, would, he hoped, induce him and his friend to overlook surely a very pardonable error.

Charles said, Monsieur Goufre's mad manner of rectifying a mistake, he thought, deserved no lenity at their hands. For his part he should detest the idea of patching up a matter that struck so hard in him at the honour of every young nobleman on his travels. He should think, if he passed by such a glaring impertinence, every one of his English acquaintance ought to resent it. He should therefore acquaint the English embassador, who was his father's particular friend, of the whole business, without the smallest reserve; and if he must endure to have a hated liberty forced upon him, he would at least, let his inconvenience be what it might, stay [Page 189] in that town till not only himself and his friend should be handsomely cleared, but till he who had the audacity to scandalize their characters should meet with his merited punishment. So saying, he gave the lady his hand, and said if their forms would admit it he should chuse to go from that place, but that he should be found at the Hotel D'Angleterre till the matter was finally decided.

They were followed out by the general of the police, who whispered Figgins, in the hall, that he plainly saw Monsieur Goufre had done a

rash thing, but that it need not hinder them from pursuing their tour, for if they would leave twenty guineas in his hands, he would take care as much justice should be done to their honour as if they were present.

In this I verily believe he spoke truth, but Figgins cut him short with this reply:

"Sir, If the law has any power over us, use it now you have us in your custody; if not, the best of you shall have reason to repent this outrage: and as to leaving twenty guineas in your hands, I would do it with great pleasure, were I not unluckily bound by a vow not to trust any Frenchman further than I can see him."

[Page 190] The general of the police said it was a great pity so good an opportunity should be lost, and added that perhaps the young gentleman was not bound by the vow.

Charles said he was always bound by the determinations of his governor, especially when they went to a prevention of his being duped.

The general of the police not thinking fit to urge the matter any farther, after many reverences, retired to the procureur; after which our travellers departed, first giving the officers of justice something to drink.

Monsieur Goufre was found by his friend in a state of distraction. The latter however believed it all put on, and began very severely to upbraid him with his duplicity, and to blame him for having made such a fool of himself.

The procureur swore that he had been robbed, and was ruined, and confirmed the oath with a hundred others. He was unfortunate enough however to gain no manner of credit; on the contrary, the general of the police told him, in so many words, that since he was above placing confidence in his [Page 191] friends, he sincerely wished the Englishmen might trounce him.

This introduced a warm bout at alternate recrimination, till at length both became cool, and they determined, in conjunction with the superior of

the Chartreux, to take an early opportunity of deliberating on the most expedient means to get out of such a disagreeable scrape.

2.5. CHAPTER V.

AN EXPLANATORY LETTER—A LITTLE VEXATION—AND A JOURNEY TO LYONS.

MADAME St. Vivier had not the smallest idea that her companions really knew any thing of the fraud. She had acted her part to perfection the night before, as to making Monsieur Goufre drunk and ridiculous, but was ignorant that the trick went any further than getting good terms from him as to the money that was borrowed; neither had a syllable of the situation of Madame Combrie been explained to her; for it is natural to suppose our travellers did not so sin against good breeding as to introduce such a character into that lady's company. She might be sent purposely to Dover, and probably was intended to be played off as a corps de reserve upon our hero, but when no direct outrage on propriety was necessary, Mr. Figgins was too great a general to call in assistance, when every thing went on even beyond his wishes. But how beyond his wishes? Patience, dear reader: I would not have you know [Page 193] what is brewing, just at present, for any consideration. Attend then, and let the fruit of your curiosity ripen by degrees; nor—that it may have the better relish—wish to gather it till it shall be ready to drop into your hand.

Four or five days after the affair of the general of the police, the procureur waited on our travellers, with great deference and respect, and informed them that he had received a letter which had satisfied him in every point relative to the fraud. He therefore acquitted them so heartily of any concern in that matter, that he appeared extremely shocked at his conduct, and said he would publish their innocence coupled with any acknowledgment of his own, by way of concession, that they should think proper to dictate. As to himself, he had the pleasure to inform them that as it was now known he had not been to blame, at the mediation of his relation the superior of the Chartreux, and his friend the general of the police, the chapter of the convent to which the money was due had remitted the payment of it till his death, provided he would then add the interest of it, and an additional bequest of ten thousand crowns.

The letter to Monsieur Goufre was as follows:— [Page 194]

TO MONSIEUR GOUFRE.

SIR,

Lest your clerks, or any other innocent persons, should suffer under the suspicion of having taken from your bureau that fortune which in justice and equity is mine, in right of my wife, I write this to acquaint you that, on Friday evening last, about seven o'clock, I called at your house, habited like a friar, and, under the name of Father Benedick, demanded the fortune in your hands belonging to the convent of our lady of the ascension; intimating that if I did not see you, be where you might, I should return prepared to compel you to resign it. Your clerks referred me to you at the Hotel D'Angleterre, from whence I feigned to return at about a quarter before eight, bringing with me a written order, as if from you—a duplicate of which I have enclosed, to shew you how well I counterfeited your hand writing—and a bunch of keys, one of which opened your bureau. One of your clerks, so completely imposed upon, naturally gave me what I wanted. I immediately departed, derobed myself of my holy accoutrements, mounted my horse, and rode through bye-ways till I arrived at Rouen [Page 195] —first taking care to touch the 'Argent Comptant, which, as you know, I was easily enable to do, as the whole fortune was in notes on the Caisse d'accompte at Paris, payable au porteur—from whence, when I shall have put this letter in the post, a vessel will carry me to Guernsey, and, before it can reach you, I shall be in England.

It may not be amiss to tell you that the key which opened your bureau I caused to be made from your own, for which purpose I took care to be very much about you, before I stole my dear Araminta from her hypocritical directress. I knew it always accompanied four others, the size of which did not escape my notice: two of them open chests, one a small cabinet, and the least a casket.

All these matters lent such strong probability to my story, with which my holy garb so well agreed—a garb which was never used to a worthier purpose—that it was impossible for me not to succeed.

If this confession will do you any good with the church, you are welcome to make what use of it you think proper. As to myself, I shall glory in its publication, for I am sure the money [Page 196] that serves to maintain an honest pair, whose views are honourable and their actions exemplary—but more especially as that money is their right—is more worthily, nay more religiously applied than in fattening and encouraging in licentiousness those slothful drones who, as you and I know, shut themselves up from the world not to cherish holiness, but to hide profligacy.

From Yours, &c. COMBRIE.

This letter, which speaks so plain, completes the account of Figgins's scheme, which I have thus piece-meal explained to the reader. The circumstance of the keys, which was a fact, together with the knack which Combrie had of imitating Goufre's hand writing,—which indeed is not difficult, for almost all Frenchmen write alike—gave a hint of it, and the idea of an application to the superior of the Chartreux, and all those concurrent circumstances which we have seen so well managed, could not fail to crown it with success.

This history then has so far acted in its customary province as to make one couple happy already. How long they are to continue so, it is not impossible [Page 197] but we may hereafter have occasion to notice.

It will easily be seen that this affair ended greatly to the honour of our travellers, who, in consequence, attracted the notice of all the English who then resided at Nancy. Among the rest they were visited by a gentleman, whose company, as a plain straight-forward, well-meaning man, was very agreeable to them. He served admirably well to make one at a party of whist, and for a cursory acquaintance really was not without his merit.

A very short time however let them into the character of this new acquaintance, whose name was Ireland; for one night, being at whist, with Mr. Figgins for his partner, Charles was so tantalized into betting, and confused off his guard, that he got up from the table an hundred and

fifty pounds loser, in spight of all the hints and expostulations of Figgins, who only played for crowns.

The next day he heard, from undoubted authority, that Mr. Ireland was an errant sharper, and had escaped from England after killing a gentleman in a duel, who had dared to tax him publicly with a palpable fraud.

[Page 198] This loss however had one good effect upon our hero, for he made a most solemn vow never again to lose five pounds at one sitting, which resolution he inviolably kept to the day of his death.

I have said very little of Charles's continual disappointments, at not receiving letters from his father, or indeed any body else, since his departure from England. The truth is that it gave him inexpressible concern, and occasioned from him many and various remonstrances, which were apparently very little heeded.

Figgins testified as much uneasiness as our hero, but upon this, as well as every other subject, he comforted him by a variety of arguments. He said it very often occurred that people on a tour missed of their letters, though at length they came safely to hand; that at Nancy, for example, it was sometimes three weeks before a man could write a letter and receive an answer to it; and this inconvenience would encrease in proportion as they went farther. There was no doubt, he said, but every thing would fall upon its legs, and the letters would all come together in a lump, and he cheerfully agreed to wait at Lyons till every proper explanation could be mutually exchanged, not only as to Charles and his father, but every other correspondent.

[Page 199] This kind accommodation in Figgins gave our hero great pleasure. He had really, at times, felt very unpleasantly on this subject, and though he could account for his disappointment at Lisle, yet more than two months had elapsed since that time, during which interval he had repeatedly written in such a full and satisfactory manner, that he could not bear to reflect on the parting between him and his father, and, at the same time, hold in mind that all his attempts to learn the state of

that amiable parent's mind were continually baffled. He knew not what might have happened in his absence: he had dreaded to leave him: nay he would not think on the subject, it was dreadful to him! yet he could not give a reason for it. Who knew but the letters received at Lisle, since he had heard nothing afterwards, might give an account of an unfavourable alteration in his father's health: perhaps they contained a tender injunction to come and close the dying eyes of an indulgent parent: perhaps he was then dead, and the letters were from friends who gave him the melancholy news, which his perfidious brother had received with a triumphant and cruel joy.

Reflections like these greatly embittered the enjoyments of our hero, and though I have not thought it necessary to present the reader with any [Page 200] thing but the agreeable side of the picture, yet it is certainly true that Charles had his moments when he felt very severe and bitter unhappiness; nay he had once very nearly determined to return to Calais, the better to investigate this unpleasant business, though the natural gaiety, and I will say honesty, of his disposition, prevented his particular griefs from interfering with pleasures in which others were concerned. What wonder then if the kind consoling advice of Figgins kept his mind in that tranquillity which made it impossible for an unconcerned person to penetrate his chagrin.

I have conceived it necessary to say thus much, lest the reader should think our hero had, in imitation of some other heroes, left his feeling in his own country, and that his foreign freaks—every one of which I undertake to contend had a defensible motive—were merely the common effect of that fashionable conceit and supercilious levity which are the qualities the French have, in general, a right to take as a sample of English manners.

All affairs at Nancy being properly settled, Charles began to be very impatient for their departure to Lyons. Before they set out, however, he drew up a recapitulation of all his other letters, to which he added many earnest entreaties; and, [Page 201] that it might be sure to go safe, entrusted it to the care of Figgins himself, who insisted upon putting it in the post office, swearing he began to suspect every body; and, when he

returned, said that Master John should not be so confidently trusted for the future. "Why so?" said Charles.' "Nay no great matter,' answered Figgins.' "I begin to have my suspicions of him: but perhaps these devils of women have corrupted him."

Charles asked his friend what induced his suspicions. Figgins said, "I caught the rascal in a lie, that is all: which I cannot bear. Dam'me if there is so pimping a thing upon earth as an unnecessary lie." "From a person in whom you place confidence,' said Charles, 'there cannot be a crime of such magnitude. As death is better than torture, so open enmity is better than hidden deceit. Even a trifling lie, in such circumstances, may conceal the most tremendous consequences. For my part, I look upon plain integrity to be so positively essential in the composition of a friend, that though I were one mass of imperfections, I would forgive the continual reiteration of them, both to myself and the world, rather than they should be hyperbolically glossed over. On the contrary, if I thought the man I [Page 202] trusted could even meditate a wish to deceive me, let my partiality be what it might, I would tear him from my heart, even though it should burst in making the effort."

Figgins, who had eyed our hero with extraordinary tokens of amazement, while he animatedly pronounced these words, first looked pale, then red, but recovered however in time to put in for his share of this honest opinion; and, after an eulogium on Charles's way of thinking, and reflecting on John, who alone he chose to understand as the person all this warmth was levelled at, he finished his remark with "Damn the fellow, I should be sorry to find him a rascal, for I have a regard for him."

Charles certainly had no particular meaning in the words he had uttered, but his disappointment at not hearing from his father gave him occasionally a kind of peevish discontent, as if he found somebody had deceived him, though he knew not who. As a proof that he had not the smallest mistrust of Figgins, he entrusted him, as we have just seen, with his letter to put in the post office; yet he was scarcely gone but he wished he had taken it himself: though he sincerely believed this wish a tacit, though an involuntary, injustice to his friend.

[Page 203] The contents of his letter next were gone over in his mind, in which he found nothing but a repetition of disappointments, that, for ought he knew, would be rewarded with new ones; especially as he was confident, in his own mind, they originated in some secret cause which he had not been, nor should ever be perhaps, able to penetrate. In this trim of thinking, when Figgins returned and dropt those hints concerning John, out came the very soul of our hero, and so it would have done had his own ruin been the consequence.

Figgins—for what reason perhaps the reader may conceive—verily believed this thrust was at him, and though he not only saw he had well parried it, but, as he firmly believed, disarmed his young friend of all suspicion, yet he feared, that should he take in his head to arm himself frequently with these impatient doubts, as he did not want for skill in these sort of conflicts, he, Figgins, might one day or other receive such a hit as might prove a mortal stab to all his hopes of bringing those schemes to bear which he certainly, for some reason or other, was concerting; for though I have constantly allowed that Charles was credulous, he could not be grossly imposed upon; and no man knew this better than Figgins, who, with all his management, would not have been able easily to gain his ends, which [Page 204] were now—though the reader, as I have said, must wait with patience to know how—nearly accomplished, had not a series of unexpected events concurred to give him a helping hand.

2.6. CHAPTER VI.

FULL OF INTERESTING MATTER—AND, AMONG THE REST, TWO DEATHS.

OUR travellers arrived at Lyons after a safe and pleasant journey. They visited every thing curious, were frequently at the play, made acquaintance with men of condition and taste, and, in short, here, as in other places, availed themselves of every opportunity of improvement: thus fulfilling the real purposes of travelling.

These matters however I have even less time to particularize here than I had heretofore, and therefore shall leave to the readers imagination what was the employment of a young man and his governor who were really ambitious of returning home with as much knowledge as they could pick up, but which acquisition Charles in particular—as the reader shall hear—became possessed of more than he wished.

Our hero, walking one day in a field beyond the ramparts, was meditating on a small book, in the [Page 206] midst of a grove, when he heard behind him a rustling. Directing his eyes to the place from whence the noise issued, he saw two men very warmly attacking each other with drawn swords. In the impetuosity of his first sensations, he bounded like a fawn to the place, and drawing to part the combatants, one of them, like Mercutio, was hurt under our hero's arm. He faultered out "Oh Jesu Je suis mort!" and fell down.

Charles was so dreadfully shocked at this accident, that he thought of nothing but endeavouring to succour the wounded person, on which charitable employ he was so intent, that he did not pay the smallest regard to the other, who, upon seeing his antagonist drop, fled with the fwiftest precipitation.

A moment's recollection convinced our hero that he was in a most singularly perilous situation. The poor wounded wretch seemed to be dying, and every circumstance would serve to make it believed that he was the murderer. Nevertheless, his strong humanity so prevailed over his prudence, that he ran without the wood, and holloed to the centinel upon the ramparts for help, telling him there was a man dangerously wounded.

[Page 207] Several gentlemen who were walking on the ramparts presently came up, to whom Charles related, but not without much confusion—for he was most exceedingly affected—the whole matter as it had passed. Unfortunately his relation gained very little credit. They all knew the nature of duelling, and naturally imagined a prudent person would, upon such an occasion, go another way rather than interfere with two men who were agreed upon fairly deciding a quarrel by the law of arms.

Charles was astonished when he understood their suspicions, and could not help asking, with some disdain, whether the French always requited the good offices of strangers in the same manner. One or two of the gentlemen took heat at this, and said he should answer every thing at large before the general of the police.

Charles treated their menaces with perfect indifference, relying upon the testimony of the dying man, who however left his protector in the lurch; for after an ineffectual attempt to speak, he pointed to Charles, and falling backward, expired.

This action was universally allowed to have been intended as a sign to distinguish the murderer, and what strongly corroborated the general opinion was [Page 208] our hero's sword, which was very much stained with blood. It was in vain that he accounted very naturally for this circumstance, by saying that when he first saw the dead man fall, he abandoned his sword, the better to lend him assistance, and that of course, as it lay, the blood, which ran in a stream, had fallen upon it.

This was construed into cunning and art. In short, the guard arrived, and he was conducted to the house of the general of the police, comforted however with "Courage! on pardon en France un coup de vivacite." In spight however of these comfortable tidings, Figgins, who had been waiting for our hero to breakfast at their inn, was very soon summoned to breakfast with him in prison.

Figgins insisted upon it, in the strongest terms, that it was impossible his friend could be concerned in this business otherwise than as an accidental

mediator. The gentleman who had fallen was a man of some consideration, resident in that place, where Charles was an absolute stranger, and had not the smallest acquaintance. He offered to swear that, till this unhappy morning, he had never been a single ten minutes out of his company since his arrival in Lyons, and how could so serious a quarrel have engendered without previous malice?—without [Page 209] the smallest acquaintance with the unfortunate person, or even knowledge that any such man had existence? He maintained there was not upon earth a less turbulent spirit than his friend; that his disposition was the sweetest, mildest, most benignant, in the world; that there could not be in nature a more benevolent heart. He would answer with his life that, was the fact as they suspected, his young friend had not the soul to be guilty of such low, such treacherous baseness as to disown it. On the contrary, as no laws were so lenient, as to accidental rencounters, as those of France, so far from denying what had happened, he would feel enough at having been the destruction of a fellow creature, however unintentionally, without adding guilt to misfortune, by excusing himself at the expence of a wilful lie.

Besides these arguments, Figgins insisted that they had not consulted even common probability in this business. His friend had averred that the murderer fled. Who was he then? No people were so remarkably provident as to who went and came as the French. Let the book of the general of the police be consulted, and see who had retired from the town. If he was a settler, it would easily be known; if a stranger, intelligence of him might be gathered at the place where he lodged. As to the [Page 210] action of the dying man, he was assured it had been intended to point out his friend as one who had endeavoured to preserve him. In short, he said let the matter but have time, and be maturely investigated, and he would resign himself as an accomplice, and willingly await the same fate: staking his own life upon the issue of his friend's innocence.

This manly and noble speech, which was made in presence of some of the most considerable people of Lyons, had its effect. It was warmly agreed, even by the relations of the deceased—who, by the bye, got a fortune by his death—that every thing ought to be well considered. Accordingly, the

term of six weeks was fixed to make all the necessary enquiries, at which time it was intended, if nothing happened to exculpate our hero, that he should be brought to trial.

It was now the business of Figgins to alleviate, as much as possible, the distresses of his friend.—he had however very little comfort for him. It had been found that a stranger had actually absconded on the very morning this sad affair happened, but as the inland towns in France are not so particular as to mere strangers as the sea-ports, he could not learn his name. He asked Charles if he [Page 211] had no idea who the murderer was. Charles said he had scarcely given him a single look, so instantaneously was the mischief done; and that from that moment he had not seen him at all, his whole care having been directed towards the dying man: but, notwithstanding all these disadvantages, he was sure he had somewhere seen him, though it was then utterly out of his power to recollect when or where.

In a few days after the imprisonment of our hero, Figgins came to him and said he was greatly afraid there was some damned plot in the business, for that the women were gone off, and had taken John with them.

"What plot can there be?' said Charles.' "In this situation they are tired of us, and resolved to shift for themselves: a very common resolution for creatures of their stamp." "True,' said Figgins, 'but how will you reconcile the conduct of Mr. John? I will tell you what has lately struck me." "What?' said Charles.' "Why,' answered Figgins, 'that this same Madame St. Vivier is known to Mrs. O'Shocknesy, and, if so, there is no mischief, however detestable, but you may apprehend. That woman has the hypocrisy of [...] crocodile, the heart of a tygress, and the malic [...] [Page 212] of the devil. She delights in mischief; it seems to be as requisite to her existence as food; there is not such an infernal succubus in human nature; and may I be damned'—for our friend Figgins would sometimes swear—'if it were my fate to chuse whether to encounter the anger of a hungry lion, or groan under the influence of a plot against me, prepared and inflicted by that she fiend, if I would not trust the claws of old Leo rather than the diabolical fangs of Mother O'Shocknesy.'

"Now you may remember,' continued Figgins, 'I caught Master John in a lie. It was this:—Kitty had told me she had seen this gentleman of ours very busily employed in a familiar conversation at Lisle with that fellow of your brother's, Flush, whom, by the way, I never liked—indeed I know Mr. Standfast turned him off on account of his attachment to Mrs. O'Devil. Why Mrs. Kitty told me this I remember I thought very odd at the time, but catching from it, at the moment, an idea concerning the embezzlement of the letters, I, with more bluntness than wit, taxed the gentleman with his intimate acquaintance with Mr. Flush, which he denied, and which Kitty confirmed to his face. It was this determined me to take your letters myself, and this has kept me ever since upon my guard, as to this fellow; [Page 213] and finding now which way he inclines, it is more than possible he has been a rascal all along, and that even the half-guinea he refused from Sir Daniel Dogbolt was a feint, through which he acted according to his instructions."

Charles said he had never correctly understood that business, or what it alluded to; nor had he known more than that some difference had happened between his father and mother, which had been happily adjusted through the mediation of Mr. Standfast.

Figgins said when his mind could bear the relation he would acquaint him with all the particulars, exactly as it had been related by my lord to the surgeon, at the John of Gaunt's Head, and who he said had, spight of all Standfast's care, not preserved the secret so sacredly as a man of his profession ought. This however did not happen to be the truth, for it was through Mr. Standfast, and no other person, that Mr. Figgins came by his intelligence. "But,' said Figgins, 'to finish with this dear harmless lady, whom I so dearly love, if she has any hand in your affairs, you may be assured it will be productive of mischief to you both in England and here."

[Page 214] Charles said he had no doubt of the gentlewoman's kind offices, but yet he saw no harm that could come of them, for his father was pretty well upon his guard against her; and as to his own conduct, it was, he flattered himself, at least in material points, not such as to merit reproach. "All I wish,' said he, 'is to hear from my dear father; if he

remain safe from the malice of our enemies, I will forgive every thing they can do to me."

This subject however was never out of Figgins's mouth, and indeed, though nothing could be managed with more cautious delicacy, one would think he had an inclination to sink his friends spirits till he should be inclined to save the trouble of a public trial, by hanging himself in his prison.

All this however was not sufficient to damp the spirits of our hero, though I must own his situation seemed a good deal to tire his patience. He had so invariably adhered to those principles which, at his outset in life, he had so invariably laid down for himself, that, conscious of his own innocent intentions, he did not believe it possible that he could sink under the weight of injustice. He therefore entreated his friend—who, as the trial approached, put on looks more and more rueful—to make himself easy. "How can I?' said Figgins. 'All the [Page 215] devils in hell, one would think, conspire against you. I declare to God to see virtue like yours so oppressed is enough to make one curse one's being, and wish rather to be the vilest reptile than a human creature." And then would he enumerate the damned things, as he called them, that had fallen out to thwart the good intentions of our hero; and these would he follow up with his apprehensions for his safety; then cut a little out of the way to take a wipe at that fury in petticoats, Mrs. O'Shocknesy; then curse, then hope, then shudder, then admire again the fortitude of his friend, and then exclaim that in such an infernal world as this, it was not worth while to be virtuous, for that none but rascals were happy.

It was about two days before the trial, when he had one morning wound up, or rather let down, our hero, by similar remarks to these, that he undertook to go through the whole business of Miss Snaffle, with all its consequences, which really shocked Charles to such a degree that his spirits were scarcely able to bear it. Seeing this, Figgins cursed himself for his inconsiderate rashness. Said he, "My unconquerable friendship makes me a fool; and, in proportion as you are oppressed, you so creep into my heart, that, out of complaisance to your curiosity, I do the very things which unman [Page 216] you, when—if like other men I had

more art than honesty—I should try to render you callous to your fate, rather than melt you into almost a desire to meet it. But come Charles,' added he, embracing him, 'I will stand by you nobly, and if you must fall, you shall not want a friend to revenge you.''

In this delightful mood did this kind friend permit Charles to remain for that day. On the next he entered his friend's apartment with a most cheerful countenance, saying there was long-looked-for come at last, and with these words presented a packet of letters, which he said were just arrived by the post; but that was not all, another parcel had been left at their bankers, which he supposed contained the whole of his father's letters, ever since he left England.

Charles, who had hastily catched at the first letter that came to his hand, opened it, and found it from Sir Sidney. He wondered to see it begin with Sir, but getting to the second line, while Figgins was uttering those last words, which he did not hear, he exclaimed "Merciful God!"—and fainted away.

Assistance was summoned, and he recovered; when, having raved himself almost into another [Page 217] swoon, he became stupid with horror. At length he grew more calm, and being entreated by his friend to bear his fortunes like a man, he gathered composure enough to read the following words.

TO CHARLES HAZARD ESQ.

SIR,

It is my duty to inform you—though I scarcely think it will give you any pain—that your father is no more! He died suddenly:—Rumour will too soon tell you how: but shudder to think that your excesses have shortened his life!

Those excesses, which are, at your age, and for the short time in which you have committed them, the most shocking that ever were heard of, have been but too well authenticated to us; therefore, upon no account will I either see you, or hear from you.

You are willed by your exasperated and unhappy father—who had not the heart to alter his first intentions—your mother's jointure, which is thirteen hundred a year, and the interest of nine [Page 218] thousand pounds: both for your life. I am sole executor, but as I am firmly resolved to have no sort of communication with you, Mr. Balance will honourably negociate this business.

My determinations are unalterable, therefore all attempts to deter me from them will be useless.

SIDNEY WALTER ROEBUCK.

"Do I live? Am I awake?' cried Charles, staring wildly.' "My excesses shortened my father's life! What have I done? Heavenly God I shall go distracted." "Mrs. O'Shocknesy,' said Figgins.' "Did I not tell you so? She saw the father's life hung on his son, and, like a merciless damned harpy as she is, slandered away the reputation of one, to destroy the existence of the other. I am sure of it: I would stake my soul that it is a fact."

"Alas, my poor father!" said Charles, 'how properly is this a sequel to the wretched business of yesterday! But I to be the cause of his death! I, who would have given a thousand lives—infamous as I am—to save his. Oh my forboding heart, why did I part from him? But he could [Page 219] not believe it. What are my villanies? Is it my crime or my virtue that has brought me here? Surely, surely, thus attacked, Innocence may defend itself."

"Yours is immaculate,' said Figgins, 'and I will maintain it; nor indeed will any body doubt it when we come to England. The villany has reached its consummation: all its purposes are effected. It will be easily found a mistake; it will be palliated, glossed over; but how will it bring your father from the grave? But come, we have need of all our senses at this moment; let us collect them manfully; we have no guilt to sink us, whatever our accusers may. Come Charles, resolution man: I have been the partner of your guilt, I will be the partner of your revenge. Let us

see what comes next: this is from Mr. Standfast. Shall I read it?' Charles assented by a nod, and Figgins read thus:

TO CHARLES HAZARD ESQ.

SIR,

As you have made yourself the public talk of this kingdom, as your father, through [Page 220] you, has

'—'What!" said Figgins—'

destroyed himself!

'—'Great God!" said Charles;' and after a pause, in which both lifted up their eyes and hands to heaven, he went on,

you will not wonder, for the sake of my character, that I have done with you. Yet, in consideration of my pains and care in your youth—which indeed I little thought would be so required—I will take this last opportunity to wring your heart, for lenitives I find have spoilt you, that you may, if yet there remain in it a single spark of sensibility, awake to a sense of your wickedness, though, complicated and atrocious as it is, no hopes can be entertained of your repentance.

"Damnation!" said Figgins, 'I have not common patience; the people are all mad. A man would swear we had began, the moment we left London, by robbing upon the high way, and that as soon as we arrived in France, we enrolled ourselves members of a banditti."

Charles looked vacantly wretched, and Figgins continued.

But what will the task avail of setting the black catalogue—

"Horrid black indeed,' said Figgins—'

of your crimes before you, I shall only feast your eyes on what has given you so much pleasure; and thus the contemplation [Page 221] of those seducing facts may stimulate you to acommission of others, if possible,

still more daring, to shew that you know how to attain perfection in villany. Nevertheless, as your father's bounty has so largely reached me, in return for the unwearied pains I took to render you an accomplished and worthy member of society, I will make this one effort towards your conversion.

"Charitable creature!" said Figgins. 'Where has Mr. Standfast picked up so much scrupulosity? I thought his maxims were to allow a broad liberty of conscience. Zounds, one would think he had fallen in love with Mrs. O'Shocknesy. But let us come to the catalogue."

First then, would not one think that you determined to set honesty, honour, and even decency at defiance, to debase yourself, whose character was really high in the world's estimation, and raise your brother, who had so foolishly borne himself as to be indifferently thought of, by that wanton unnecessary theft at Calais, which your brother, shocked at such conduct, so handsomely repaired?

"Well, this is master stroke the first,' said Figgins. [Page 222] 'Why at this rate Charles your fortune, to be understood, must, like a witches spell, be read backwards. Poor Standfast!' I thought he knew mankind better."

Next, who will believe but the unmanly attack upon your brother's life, at Lisle, after introducing him into company to ridicule and exasperate him, was concerted that you might become heir to your father's title and fortune. Indeed nothing can be so clear, for in France the murder would have been considered as a rencounter, and in England it would not have been punishable.

"Well argued, Master Standfast,' said Figgins; 'Why he is an altered man. I am cursedly mistaken if he did not practise in his youth very nearly as bad actions as those of which he only accuses you; and yet I believe this is the first time he ever preached upon such a subject." '— 'This is deep laid villany indeed,' said Charles; 'but go on Mr. Figgins."

As to your next material crime—for I shall pass over what may with propriety be pardonable on the score of youth and inexperience

'—'very civil, upon my soul,' said Figgins—'

what could [Page 223] induce you to do the very thing of all others, which was most likely to incense Sir Sidney Roebuck,

'—'Ay,' said Figgins, 'what could that be?'—'

to assist in stealing a nun from a convent

'—'Whew!" said Figgins. 'What is our civility to honest Combrie so construed? And yet dam'me if this same Mr. Standfast did not steal a nun upon his own account, in his youth; and, if report says true, she broke her heart through his ill usage. But against himself he would have you believe report tells lies. Why then is it to be believed against his friend? But one man may steal a horse:—Never mind it Charles:—you have been rascally treated indeed."

To assist in stealing a nun from a convent, must of course prove an immoveable bar to his farther favour. Had not his own virtue resisted the same action in his youth, the mother of Annette might have been now his wife; for then perhaps she would not have pined herself to death for love of him in her retirement.

"Here I believe,' said Charles, 'he speaks truth, and had I been guilty of this crime, Sir Sidney would never have pardoned it." "But mark,' said Figgins, 'what a curious gentleman Mr. Stand fast is. He takes a lie, establishes it as a fact, [Page 224] and then argues upon it as if it were truth. But let us proceed. Oh how a man might preach upon the folly and credulity of mankind, and take his text from this letter!"

As to your stealing this lady's fortune, it is certainly no more than a compound of the last crime; but that does not lessen its magnitude.—Thoughtless boy! how could you have the bold audacity to set yourself against the jealous laws both civil and religious, of such a kingdom as France. In this business I find Mr. Figgins chose to cut a great figure,

'—'Oh I am glad to find I am brought in at last. Indeed I cut as great a figure at one place as another, except indeed the robbery at Calais, which

this villanous Charles Hazard chose to conceal even from me, to preserve a false delicacy to a rascally brother, who, in return for saving him from the gallows, has connived with his infernal mother to load him with unmerited infamy.'—'

But I shall write to him upon the subject.

"And he will answer you Mr. Standfast,' said Figgins.'

In the mean time I shall only say that your conduct was madness, and your motive infamous: for though what you did could not be wholly excused, it might in some degree have admitted of palliation, had [Page 225] you been actuated only by a disinterested generosity to your principal; but stipulating for terms with him, and receiving a part of the money, as the price of your iniquity, confirms the principles of villany in you so fully, that volumes of the best precepts and ages of the best examples I fear could not reclaim you.

"Why no Mr. Standfast,' cried Figgins, 'I do not think they could; for what signifies washing any thing white that is pure already? Damned, damned mischievious cat,' added Figgins, and then went on.'

I hope you felt your loss of five hundred pounds at cards, as a judgment on you.

"Well said!" exclaimed Figgins; 'truly parsonic. Mr. Standfast's belief is like his barn; it swallows any thing."

The reflection that the man who plundered you is a proscribed character, and murder his crime, perhaps first induced your acquaintance, and afterwards how could hearts so congenial avoid a society with each other.—

[Page 226] "This is saucily impudent indeed,' said Charles.' "Damnably so,' said Figgins, and went on.'

—But let it mortify you to reflect that you were not to enjoy the fruits of your wickedness, but that it was to be wrested from you by your superior

in subtilty, though not in crime, for the purpose of squandering it upon your own harlot, who nows revels with him, and laughs at you, and who, such is the certain dependance of one bad character upon another, robbed and deserted you at Lyons, upon finding you committed to prison for murder.

"Why then,' said Figgins, 'by Mr. Standfast's confession I am a good character, for I will never desert you. But how did he discover this last business of Madame St. Vivier, for even I had not the heart to tell it you. In short my friend she has lain her hands on every thing, which is the more unlucky, as these French counsellors will not—nor indeed will any others—plead without fees. But let us finish this letter, and talk of these matters afterwards."

May you escape the punishment due to that crime, and every other, and live to merit, by [Page 227] your contrition, if not the praise, yet the pity, of all good men.

"The date of which charitable epoch I suppose Mr. Standfast is to appoint' said Figgins.'

Be assured that nothing but a confession of your crimes, and a sincere repentance of them, can restore you to the countenance, though I am afraid nothing can to the hearts, of your friends.—But do not be so mistaken as to attempt a defence of your actions; there are too many witnesses against you; even your own servant, whose whole life, upon proof, has been blameless, shocked at so many repetitions of your unprincipled conduct, has left you, even without demanding his due, lest he should be thought to have received, though not guiltily, the wages of iniquity.

"There is a precious rascal for you,' said Figgins. 'I can only say for a man that pretends to know the world, I never saw such a dupe as Mr. Standfast in the whole course of my life."

In short, this is the sum of all: Your father is dead; you are—though he fell by his own hand—virtually his executioner; your brother has take [Page 228] possession of the title and estate; your mistress is promised to

another; and, thanks to your own villany, you have not a friend in the world. May God turn your heart, and make you more worthy the regard of others, as well as

STEPHEN STANDFAST.'

2.7. CHAPTER VII.

MORE LETTERS, AND SOME HEROISM.

"WELL by heaven,' said Figgins, as he folded up Mr. Standfast's letter, 'this is the most consummate piece of cruel treachery that surely ever was concerted. I could gnaw my flesh. And then this last business! To

practise on the inexperience of your mistress! Damned mixture of stupid credulous folly, and ignorant obstinate pride. I suppose they intend to marry her to your brother."

"I believe they do not know themselves what they intend' said Charles. 'This I know, that they have given me a very grounded, though a very early, conviction that there is not upon the face of nature so contemptible a being as a human creature; and I am strongly convinced that, should the event as to my present situation turn out favourably—which I am perfectly careless about—though I hope I shall love benevolence as much as ever, I shall hereafter look with an eye [Page 230] of distrust on every man whom I have not proved yet not superficially, but from that sort of thorough conviction which you have given me—to be my friend."

"I thank you sir,' said Figgins, 'for a compliment which I hope I shall deserve. But you will give me leave to say that I am astonished at the tranquillity with which you receive all these unmerited affronts. I expected—though I rejoice to find it otherwise—that such a complication of invidious calumny would have almost turned your brain"—and in this Mr. Figgins spoke truth, for he did so expect— "and especially this last blow concerning your mistress."

"The very number and weight of these slanders,' said Charles, 'are what makes me sit down perfectly easy under them. I was in a flattering dream as to the world, and fondly fancied myself in the midst of generous friends, who, till I left my native country, were willing to give me credit for any little merit I possessed, and anxiously studious to find a venial motive for any indiscretion. But this present moment convinces me I was mistaken; their discernment, as to my real character, was so shallow, that it is plain they laid up every little trait of youthful folly to ground [Page 231] a falacious argument upon, which they now believe to be solid reason. This, co-operating with the most unworthy and unheard of treachery, they have given me up as a profligate and an abandoned character, impossible to be reclaimed; and this calumny from a quarter they all detest—which common reflection must call impossible and a lie—is cherished warmly, zealously: cherished to the utter reprobation of him for whom they pretend a friendship. To whom then does the

reprobation really belong? Does it not recoil on themselves? And what compliment should I pay myself by calling that man my friend who is so ready blindly, ignorantly, unfeelingly to think me the worst villain that ever infested the earth? Perhaps they did not know that I do possess one quality in as strong, but I hope as honest, a degree at least as any of them. If I do not flatter myself, my pride is of the right sort; and it shall not bend to the least explanation till I have received a concession from those who have injured me. No, no, Figgins, an emperor shall not trample upon me; and by all that is sacred I will see contrition in my enemies before I deign to communicate with them."

"My noble friend,' cried Figgins.' "Let me finish,' said Charles. 'As to Annette, she is a [Page 232] beautiful girl, and I love her better than any woman I ever saw; or rather, what I feel for her is more like love than I have felt for any other; but I never could flatter myself we should ever be united: there was always a something about my mind that forbade me to think of it. As matters are I will forget her; for though I am convinced this prohibition—so perverse is human nature—would soon, were I to give way to it, make a fool of me, yet it shall not be; for I will not love her dishonourably, and as to marriage, I do not love the world so well as to bring its cares upon my head."

Figgins expressed more amazement at this calm, easy, resolute good sense, as he was pleased to call it, than at the rest; and then they proceeded to a third letter, which proved to be from Mr. Gloss. It contained these words:

TO CHARLES HAZARD, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR,

I must begin my letter in the true mercantile style, by saying that my first twelve [Page 233] epistles not being honoured, I send this my thirteenth, &c. &c.

Jesting apart, my good friend, you are the strangest model of eccentricity that ever let inconsistency run away with reason.

'"What schooled on all sides!" said Figgins.'

For my own part, I neither see the satisfaction nor the good sense in suffering all your friends to write so repeatedly, without deigning to answer their favours; nor how a man can be so infatuatedly sunk in the delirium of idle pleasures—which are to be sure well enough in their season—as to neglect the much more important duties of friendship and relative affection.

I need not tell you, for you must have received them, that nearly thirty letters from your father and others have been sent you.

'"These are some of them I suppose," said Figgins.'

At present indeed answers would be of little avail, for your father has shot himself,

'—"Delicately announced," said Figgins—'

and all your friends have turned their backs upon you; yet, on the score of the many shining qualities you certainly possess, those engaging manners, those bewitching attractions, and that dawning reason, which [Page 234] was, for your years, so decisive and manly, you may command my friendship as far as one gentleman ought to assist another:—

'"On the score of all these considerations," said Figgins, "you had better, upon my soul, Mr. Gloss, let him command your polite, and therefore unmeaning, friendship on the score that is between you, and then he would receive about three hundred pounds, which you borrowed of him in driblets. But let us see further."'

—Though I greatly fear even my influence with Sir Sidney—for he does me justice—cannot restore you to his good opinion.

'"His influence!" said Charles.'

However, as I mean to vote with him in parliament—for you know I told you some time ago, by letter, that I was returned for the borough of Bray—

'"The devil you were!" cried Figgins:'

you may be assured I shall willingly embrace every honourable opportunity of offering you my service. You know my candour, and my consideration for my friends. The first induces me to tell you, without hesitation, that the baronet has promised me his lovely daughter,

'"So so," said Figgins,'

and the latter that I could not be prevailed upon to [Page 235] accede to otherwise so desirable a proposal till he assured me, in so many words, he would never speak to you again.

'"Which," said Figgins, "you very probably requested as a favour."'

Pray write to me; and if there be any thing I can with propriety do to serve you, either with government or privately, you may in all worthy matters command,

My dear Sir,

Your truly devoted servant, GEORGE GLOSS.

"Here is another precious member of the human community,' said Charles.' "Sir,' said Figgins, 'what I have heard and seen to-day baffles my whole experience; and, for the future, I will not believe that because I see a man do a good or a sensible thing, that he will not do a wicked or a stupid one; but, on the contrary, expect to see him turn about, and exhibit that various, pitiable, contemptible figure that the best and the wisest I find are too apt to represent.'

"To be sure there is one thing in their favour. Nobody has, it is plain, received any letters from [Page 236] you." "But good God,' said Charles, 'is it not very plain to be seen how all this has come about? Has not the

very rascal prevented it who has gone over to bear false witness against me?"

"True,' cried Figgins, 'and then which way shall we reconcile to the wisdom of Mr. Standfast, or the goodness of Sir Sidney, so hasty a belief of such slander against one, of whom it has been their pride to have had such a good opinion."

"If their conduct be goodness and wisdom,' said Charles, it is both superficial and supererogate. There is not common sense in it, and I am sure there is not common good manners: for what virtue is that which condemns unheard?—and what modesty that has the presumption to punish without the right? What are my actions, after all, to these people? Am I dependant on them? No, I thank God, I am not; nor will I ever call one of them my friend: nay nor any man upon earth who shall be bold enough to scrutinize my intentions. No, my will, my desires, my conduct, shall be my own; and if I cannot make friendship upon any other terms, I would rather be alone in the world with integrity of heart, than give colour, by my intimacy, to their suspicions who have dared to think me a villain."

[Page 237] "Admirably reasoned, my friend,' said Figgins, 'and I am sorry for their sakes to say too justly.—But let us see this other letter, which bears the same date with the rest."

TO CHARLES HAZARD ESQ.

SIR,

I know not, in this hurry of my spirits, if there be any precedents in books of a woman's writing to a man out of mere friendship; at least of sufficient authenticity to warrant my disregarding decorum in this manner. If there are not, it is a new incident, and I must rely on the purity of my intentions to excuse it.

So extremely like a fairy tale, where the hero's bad genius only makes its appearance, is all that has happened in this family relative to you, that if I did not fancy I had myself sagacity enough to account for the

influence of the foul fiend, and whence it originates, I should think it very hard indeed that people could not be contented with losing their own senses, but they must insist that others lay aside theirs.

[Page 238] That I may hasten through this epistle sir—for I have a good deal to say—I am willing, unfashionable as it may be at our house, to do you poetical justice; not however in the style of your good friends here, who, finding you in danger of your life, think—in imitation of ARISTOTLE, RICHARDSON, and the barber's uncle in Gil Blas—that they cannot excite in you too much terror.

This candour in me does not proceed from any weak compassion, but from a fair revisal of your actions at the time they passed under my observation: and I do not think that charity authorises me to look farther, at least with a severe eye.

Abiding by this mode of decision, common justice obliges me to say that all your mad freaks here, which I would not have given a farthing for you if you had been without, originated from worthy motives. Musquito, Ego, and even Toogood smarted, it is true, but they highly merited their punishment, and the lash was held by the hand of justice; but think ye they forgot it in your absence? Oh no: scurvy fellows as they are. Thank heaven, however, the worst of your enemies cannot give a bad motive to your conduct [Page 239] in a certain instance. Yet there are some who compare you to Lovelace, and call your treatment of Jude "'sparing your rosebud:"'—charming young man as you were, and I will believe are.

Judy daily blesses you, poor girl, and joins with me to pray for the hard hearts that are set against you. Your behaviour as to her began, continued, and ended critically right, and her virtue, as it ought, was rewarded in the catastrophe; nor can a soul capable of such an act indulge a single principle that could dictate such dreadful crimes as we are all commanded to believe against you.

As for my part, I have read so much that human nature is a thing I am pretty well versed in. I must beg leave therefore to use my own proper intellects, rather than those of others; for though I am devoted to Sir

Sidney, yet I am more so to truth and honour: and these wih not let me see why nature should perform a miracle, by turning all those excellent gifts she had afforded you into diabolical ones, merely for the gratification of your enemies, and commiting a breach of promise, which she was never known in any other instance to do.

[Page 240] Your father was certainly greatly shocked at not hearing from you; but if we do not admit all the rest, why should we not charitably believe your letters have been intercepted. For my part, I should think, if you had committed all this wickedness, you would the sooner have written to him, if it had been only for the sake of colouring it. But poor man his behaviour was very strange towards the last; yet you will find he could not bear to curtail you in your circumstances.

As to the state of our family, it is briefly as follows: Sir Sidney will not hear a word in your favour from any body; my dear lady you know is the mirror of duty and goodness, and therefore if she have any sentiments to your advantage she dare not divulge them even to me; charming Annette, who—or our complicated history will be incomplete—must marry you at last, is grown an angel, and I scruple not to tell you will never love any body but yourself: but, dear creature, devoted to her duty, how will she dare to look a stern father in the face, much less disobey him; and, unfortunately, she is not Lady Roebuck's child.

I have not mentioned to you however all our [Page 241] family: Mr. Gloss I can assure you is no very inconsiderable member of it. He has so pushed himself among the great, that he is in parliament, and he has so attached himself to Sir Sidney, that he is become his darling. He has certainly a knowledge of human nature, but it is an artful one; for I can see plainly he has got round the good gentleman by praising his ancestry, which we all know is his foible. They have agreed together on making some motion relative to the antiquities of English baronets: then he has introduced a number of improvements at Castlewick, and put the people in a way of carrying the goods to market upon much better terms than they were used to; which is all very good if his motives were so: he has also been indefatigable in seconding Sir Sidney's designs at Little

Hockley, but how that will be now I do not know, for your brother is beginning to settle grooms and others of his sporting followers there.

Mr. Gloss, finding my partiality to books, thought he knew where to find me vulnerable; but all his erudition was not able to cover his designs, which I could not however come into, for my studies have never been subtilty, but nature. As to my sweet Miss Annette, he was there entirely at a loss, for she has no foible.

[Page 242] Thus you see you have no friend but me, except Mr. Figgins, who, if the current account is to be credited, is almost—for nobody it seems can be quite—as bad as yourself.

Fear not however but some good will work out of this. I shall be upon my guard, and I am very much mistaken if I do not know of whom to be watchful. I only remark at present, that as it was said of ALEXANDER the best trait in his fortune was the choice of his tutor, so I most sincerely believe that you would, at this moment, have been thought immaculate if the same could be said, with the same truth, of yours.

I am, sir, Your very sincere friend, EMMA DISTICH.

P. S. I have this moment heard that your brother is to be married in a few days, and that Mrs. O'Shocknesy, who assumes the title of Lady Dowager Hazard, is coming to live with the happy pair.

"This girl,' said Figgins, 'with her whimsical style, has more good sense than all of them put [Page 243] together. Her reading has been like the progress of a bee; she has selected all the sweets, and left the poison behind: and it proves that her intellects are remarkably strong, for she seems to have gathered as much mundaine knowledge by inference as others from worldly commerce; and this is well exemplified in her being too cunning for Mr. Gloss, who indeed seems to be the director of this plot. I wonder upon what terms he and the Lady Dowager are."

"She is a very good girl,' said Charles, 'and I am afraid her solicitude for me will deprive her of her place."

"I fear so too,' said Figgins, 'for she does not disguise that she dislikes Gloss, who will take advantage of her being upon a false scent to get rid of her; for her suspicions of Mr. Standfast, notwithstanding his scandalous letter, are surely ill grounded. This will be found out, and she will be turned away as a mischief-maker. But for this mistake, the remarks in her letter would have been very shrewd and sensible; but her dislike to Standfast is of ancient date. He made pretty brisk love to her when he was in the family of Major Malplaquet, and, upon her resisting his [Page 244] inclinations, he did not place in her virtue that implicit belief that it merited."

"I should think that would inspire her contempt,' said Charles, 'rather than her revenge. However, I cannot help thinking as you do that Mr. Standfast has given no assistance to this scandal but his belief of its truth, which cannot have failed to lend weight and consequence to the opinions of the rest, both in regard to their conviction that he is a judge of mankind, and that he must know me better than any body. It only turns out that he does not know me at all; nay that I did not know him; for I could not have thought it possible he could so soon, nor with so much indifference, have dropt the mask of the kind friendly adviser, to betray the insolent assuming pedagogue."

"My dear sir,' said Figgins, 'you will please to recollect that Mr. Standfast gets in years, which will not lessen his pride, of which he has possessed a pretty liberal quantity all his life, and you may be assured it is not diminished by a recollection that he has a good five hundred a year settled on him for life; which he ought, by the bye, to have the gratitude to remember belongs in right to you. My two hundred a year comes from the same [Page 245] source, and as we deprive you between us of a large unnual sum, it is but common decency that we should shew a wish, even though we have not ability, to deserve it."

"Well,' said Charles, 'God knows how long I am to live, but that I may not pass my life in an eternal warfare, I will not investigate any thing: Time shall do it for me. There is but one inducement to my giving the matter a single thought, which is the situation of Annette. However, all I can do actively in relation to her will not only operate more to her

disadvantage, but plunge me into real wretchedness, which is a thing, I thank them all, full unpleasant enough when one only possesses it in imagination. When my mind is more at ease I may perhaps answer Emma's letter, but it will be only strenuously to request she will not concern herself in my affairs at all, and to make the poor creature easy, by telling her that I can smile with contempt on all the malice of my enemies."

"And yet,' said Figgins, 'I cannot methinks help wishing you would answer all the letters in the terms they deserve." "Mr. Figgins,' interrupted Charles, 'though, if I know my heart, I should detest myself could I indulge for two minutes [Page 246] together an unjust or an ungenerous resolution, yet I am so well convinced that which I have at present made is founded on reason and propriety, that I would lose my life rather than relinquish it. No; they shall seek me, or they shall lose me. Let them take their choice; and, if they do not care which, it would surely be greatly beneath me not to be as indifferent as they are."

A summons to dinner put an end to this long conversation, after which Figgins left his friend, in his miserable apartment, to go and prepare the awful business of the next day. He was no sooner gone than our hero began to pervade the contents of those letters which Figgins had brought him from the bankers. First he selected those from his father, which were filled with such tenderness, such distress of heart, such sensibility, yet unmixed with a single reproach, that all poor Charles's fortitude was nearly exhausted. He sighed, wrung his hands, and cried like a child, which his gaoler—as he entered his apartment to examine if the rivets of his fetters were fast—mistaking for apprehension on account of his approaching trial, begged he would make himself easy, for he had nothing worse to apprehend than hanging!

[Page 247] If this fate really awaits him, the reader and I may hereafter make some enquiry concerning his behaviour; for, as we have already examined together his life and character, that same behaviour and his last dying speech seems all that is wanting to wind up his story. At present we are going into happier company, and if it be objected against us that in so doing we are deserters to his cause under whose

banner we have inlisted, we must even excuse ourselves by saying that we are not the only friends who have left a hero in prison, to go over to his enemies.

2.8. CHAPTER VIII.

A CLUE TO THE FOREGOING LABYRINTH.

RETROSPECTION is a very good and a very necessary thing. If one's actions appear worthy upon a review, they will be a sort of security for the future; if otherwise, their deformity being an unpleasant object of contemplation, we may perhaps wish to replace it with something of a more lovely appearance: at least this will be the case with good minds. Some men love singularity, others ugliness, and I sincerely believe it is in some men's nature to love wickedness, and even wickedness in which no pleasure can be enjoyed but the mere exercise of it. For my part, however, I shall not here treat of such innate, undeducible affections, but endeavour to give to a positive cause every little freak of fancy that the personages in this history chuse to occupy their attention with.

A very extraordinary conduct has been lately observed to govern all the good people on this side of the water, ever since the reader and I took leave of [Page 249] them, in order to accompany our hero to France. What appears least reconcileable to credibility, is the alteration of Sir Sidney, who, being a man of reason, of the world, of experience, of consideration, and of uncommon benevolence, one would naturally suppose must, in a most extraordinary manner, have been tampered with before he could have been induced to give up a young man in whose dawnings of maturity he had taken abundant pleasure, whose father he had loved and honoured, and of whose happiness he had hoped to have been the guardian.

Indeed when our hero left England Sir Sidney contemplated with great pleasure when he should return, in the bloom of manhood, with all those confirmed accomplishments so consonant to his rank and talents, the reasonable delight with which he should witness an union between him and his daughter, and as no one spoke of Charles but in a style of the most exalted panegyric, no wonder if he was charmed at seeing every thing and every body confirm such honest and legitimate sentiments. But, when a week, then a fortnight, then a month, then two, then four, elapsed without a single line from Charles to either his father, his mistress, or any other friend, what could Sir Sidney [Page 250] think? What judgment could he form of those reports which continually assailed his ears, and which seemed gradually to turn all his friends against him?

It may not be amiss to watch the progress of this business. Zekiel, as the reader was long ago informed, when he left Eaton went to France. There being in very straitened circumstances, and totally under the direction of Mr. Flush, he was obliged to practise many tricks and shifts to get on, especially as Kiddy, who seems as a manooverer—his own word—to be a twin-born with Standfast, very carefully threw certain gentlemen depredators in his way, who are, as every body knows, pretty plentiful in France, and who took care—his own language again—to keep the purse, by sweating it, in good running order.

Being very closely driven at Calais, and not having enough of Kiddy about him to distinguish between what the law calls theft, from that which is so denominated by reason, he did that through inexperience for which he might have been hanged, when, in fact, his mode of policy should have made him do only that for which he ought to have been hanged.

[Page 251] Mr. Dessein, however, who had his policy too, as we have seen, did not chuse to expose him, and, by the advice of his principal, he took care afterwards, however he offended against justice in a religious sense, not to sin against law.

From a variety of sources which Flush contrived to get opened for him, Mr. Zekiel, together with his own income and what he could drain from his mother, and indeed from Mr. Standfast, contrived to cut a very capital dash at Paris. He set very large sums chez les comptesses, and he betted larger upon the course of Fontainebleau. In short, in spight of all he could amass together, honestly or dishonestly, he would have found himself not only aground, but surrounded with some very marked disgrace, if he had not met with a gentleman who was so kind as to administer very largely to his wants; and who, not contented with such liberal instances of kindness to a perfect stranger, gave evident tokens of satisfaction when the young lord in expectation informed him he had a very tender affection for his sister.

This gentleman, the reader sees, was Mr. Tadpole. He had, it seems, in company with the young lady we saw at Lisle, who was, to say truth, not

his sister—which circumstance indeed Mr. Figgins's [Page 252] sagacity taught us to suspect before—determined to make one bold push to render himself independant. He had amassed at the gaming table in England about nine hundred pounds, to which his reputed sister added thirteen hundred, which she had won at a different game. Their plan was to snap up some young man of good expectations, first supplying him with money, and afterwards with a wife.

Tadpole, who was originally a lawyer's clerk, carefully secured every step he took, and, by the time he reached England, had Zekiel so completely in his power, that, being then of age, he scrupled not to make over to his friend the reversion of a part of his father's terra firma.

Coming so unexpectedly to his title and fortune, advantage was taken of this power over him, and a marriage suddenly clapt up; not out of fear of any reluctance in the young lord, but lest an old lady, one Mrs. O'Shocknesy, should not only destroy the hopes of the young lady, by the exercise of her power over him, but also those of the gentleman, by furnishing him with the money to pay off the mortgage.

This marriage, which Emma gave us a hint of, [Page 253] operated as we shall hereafter have occasion to notice, in a most extraordinary manner; but the business at present being to account for the reports against our hero, I shall go back to Lisle, where the reader will recollect I entreated his particular attention to all that passed.

Our hero had never seen Flush, and the two brothers were so grown out of each other's remembrance, that it is not wonderful they should remain in mutual ignorance till an accident unravelled the mystery. After Zekiel had retired, vowing revenge, and left his brother master of the field of battle, Kiddy, as we have seen, told him that revenge was very easily in his power. He then informed him of Madame St. Vivier's intention to complete the happiness of Charles that evening, and shewed him a chamber which he said and believed was hers. Zekiel, following the direction of his trusty valet, was admitted to Kitty's bed room, and, in the full belief that he was deceiving his brother, made as happy as he could wish.

The question here is, how came Flush, who was just arrived, to know so well all these private matters? The answer is, by Mrs. Kitty, who, together with her mistress, had been as well instructed [Page 254] upon this occasion by Mrs. O'Shocknesy, as Miss Snaffle had upon a former one.

Flush, having the honour to know both the ladies, did not scruple, when the squabble began between our hero and his brother, to interrogate the waiting maid as to "how the cat jumped," as he called it, and, having learnt from her the particulars of the assignation, proposed to put Zekiel in the place of Charles, which she promised, without intention to perform; for she knew if it were detected all their other designs on our hero would be at an end; and, at the same time, she feared a discovery from Flush, for indeed he menaced it, if she refused. She therefore directed him to conduct Zekiel to her bed chamber, where he passed the night, and the person who tapped at the door was Mr. Tadpole, who having first knocked at his soidisante sister's, thought he had mistaken the room, and afterwards went to his own bed, for fear of further mistakes.

So completely however were all these cross purposes acted, that Kitty believed the person who knocked at the door to be no other than Mr. Figgins, who, in his turn, as has been shewn, was otherwise employed. Kitty, however, having given [Page 255] Madame St. Vivier a hint of this business, she burnt a light in her chamber, by which means Charles came, as he informed Figgins, at the certainty of his not being mistaken.

The most awkward circumstance in this affair was the scene which passed the next day in the post chaise between Zekiel and his two companions.—Tadpole had taxed the young lady in the morning as to what person was in her bed chamber; she assured him it was the young lord; they were therefore astonished that he himself dropt no hint of it, while, on his side, he trembled for fear any one should have maliciously discovered to them what he thought had really happened.

This doubtful taciturnity gave Tadpole a notion that he was inwardly hugging himself at his success, and that probably having stolen the possession of the young lady, he might, for some reason or other, slacken

in his devoirs for the future. Miss also had suspicions akin to these, and she had once an idea of throwing herself at her brother's feet, and making use of this opportunity, through his authority, of exacting from Zekiel a written promise of marriage. She refrained however, and it was well she did. Tadpole ventured a few hints. He said he believed the devil had been let loose the night before [Page 256] in the inn, for he had heard such running about and knocking at doors, that he could not get a wink of sleep. Zekiel blundered out an awkward remark or two, Miss ventured at a few leading questions, and, in short, they were all three on the verge of a discovery, which would probably have overturned their respective intentions.

It happened however that but one discovery came of it, and that was confined to the knowledge of Tadpole and the young lady. It was, that somebody had been in bed with Miss, which somebody was neither Zekiel nor Tadpole. They therefore, for they had not an idea of Figgins, concluded it to be Charles, and this thought dwelling in their imagination, presented itself as a bar to their scheme. Upon a consultation on this subject afterwards, however, they resolved it should make no difference as to their future measures, and their minds being thus made up—which the reader will allow to be a pretty strong instance of delicacy—all matters went in their former channel.

When they came to England it was agreed, on all hands, that Mrs. O'Shocknesy and Standfast should know no more of Mr. and Miss Tadpole than if there had been no such persons in the world.

[Page 257] And now came, as Figgins called it, masterstroke the first. This gentleman corresponded with Mr. Standfast, as did also Madame St. Vivier, whose real name was Jenny Singleton, with Mrs. O'Shocknesy. From their accounts they had began to frame an accusation, which the arrival of Zekiel greatly improved, and which, with its amendments, stood as in Standfast's letter.

These tidings were conveyed to Mr. Gloss, who insinuated them into Sir Sidney's family as opportunity served; and, as fast as one rumour died

away, he broached another, that the good baronet might not be suffered to cool.

In this worthy business he found three very useful tools in Musquito, Ego, and Toogood; who remembering, as Emma has told us, their old grudge—especially when revived in its worst lights by Gloss—were continually throwing out some hint to Charles's disadvantage. Musquito said the young fellow was mad, and because he had been tolerably educated, and puffed up with false applause, had, like other spoilt children, thought he could carry all the world before him. Toogood said that he could not have believed a young man of such promising parts would so disgrace all his friends, while [Page 258] Ego declared that if he had been a young fellow blest with so many advantages, he would have turned out the best creature in the world. In short, Gloss made them play fast and loose, as he pleased, and when they talked in exaggerating terms of his former pranks, he once ventured in a mild way to reprobate the part Sir Sidney had taken in the business of Swash and the taylor, saying he should not wonder to hear his acquiescence upon that occasion quoted as an excuse for the wretch's enormities.

These measures, together with the interception of Charles's letters, which, by the bye, furnished Standfast, who received them, with a most admirable guide to the execution of his schemes, and now and then some cursory intelligence from genglemen just arrived from France, who saw our hero drunk at an inn, or quarrelling in a coffee-house, where he refused, notwithstanding their earnest solicitation, to send any letter or message to England. All these I say worked his utter ruin in the opinion of his friends; and yet, I must do Sir Sidney the justice to say he hesitated against what appeared to be positive conviction till one morning news was brought that Lord Hazard was found shot through the head, and that the act was certainly committed by himself, for one pistol lay close by him, and [Page 259] another was found loaded in his pocket; and they were the same pair he had bought when he was last in town.

Two days after this melancholy accident John arrived, who wept over his old master's corpse, said he did not wonder at what had happened, afterwards corroborated all that had been reported, did not spare Figgins,

and concluded with an account of Charles's being imprisoned at Lyons for murder, producing, at the same time, a French Gazette, which gave the particulars of the whole transaction. Under these appearances, with Gloss at his elbow, Sir Sidney wrote the letter we have seen.

2.9. CHAPTER IX.

CONTAINING A RECEIPT TO FORM A GREAT MAN—A VERY CURIOUS INSTANCE OF FILIAL PIETY, AND ANOTHER OF MATRIMONIAL COMFORT.

HAVING formerly hinted that Mr. Gloss was selected by Standfast as a husband for Annette, and again in the last chapter shewn that these two gentlemen acted in concert in a fraud of no less consequence than what SHAKESPEARE, who well knew human nature, calls the worst of injuries—the taking away a man's good name—I feel it incumbent on me to account for the close intimacy which certainly did subsist between them.

When Gloss came to England from Madeira, either accident, or necessity, or something—for it is not necessary now to be particular—pointed out Mr. Standfast as a proper person to assist him in his views of settling in this country.

That reverend gentleman, ever ready to help out [Page 261] a genius—for this quality must be allowed to Mr. Gloss—advised him to trump up a story of going to the Cape of Good Hope, and then return, after going only to Madeira, where he actually had yet some little business, and circulate a report that he had touched his father's fortune, which, being in merchandise, he had only to change it into money, to cut a figure.

Being introduced to a number of tradesmen, as a young nabob, he presently sat himself down in a most elegant house, built a vis a vis, and took up large quantities of goods: Standfast supplying him with what ready money he was in absolute necessity of.

Cutting this figure, and having his pretensions backed by Standfast, money was next borrowed, Snaffle and Dogbolt becoming occasionally collateral securities; and this trade went on so swimmingly, that in less than a year and a half they found their names standing out on different engagements for upwards of twenty-seven thousand pounds! twelve at least of which Standfast had converted to his own proper use: for the avarice of Mrs. O'Shocknesy was insatiable, and the poor gentleman doated on her to a degree of infatuation.

[Page 262] Thus situated, their ruin collectively was inevitable, if they could not stem this storm, which now seemed to be bursting over their heads. The difficulty seemed to be how to manage it, but to such geniuses

all dangers were surmountable. Some hundreds were laid out in India goods, to shew by way of sample, which were bought for exportation, to save the drawback, and afterwards clandestinely relanded.

Every possible exertion was made to give responsibility and consequence to the appearance of Mr. Gloss. A large estate was bargained for; nay he even went so far as to wait on the minister, to offer an exclusive treaty for a loan. Thus his name rang in the newspapers, and the whole world, believing him to be in possession of an immense fortune, offered him any assistance he might think proper to command. Large sums were soon pressed upon him, which went to satisfy such as would not shift the responsibility from his confederates shoulders to his. Others did not make any difficulty of doing this; so that after a variety of negociations, Mr. Gloss's name stood alone for the original sum of twenty-seven thousand pounds, and seven added to it!

What was the next step? How was he to go on [Page 263] How skreen himself from his creditors? How indeed, but by borrowing the writings of a friend's estate, and standing for a borough! He had given proofs of his abilities as a negociator; nobody knew the theory of commerce better; who then so proper to fill an office under the state?

He had fixed his eye on the treasury ship of the navy, and I have said he had a knock of getting to any spot that he fixed his attention on. A public acknowledgment that he was determined upon having this post, that is to say, whenever there should be a ministry virtuous enough for him to mix with, gained him his election.

His speech from the hustings was very original, and therefore very taking. In all addresses he had hitherto noticed, there were a number of general promises, which were never performed. He, on the contrary, resolved to promise nothing but what his constituents were sure he would perform if he could.

He began with saying that he had an interest in offering himself for that borough, and so had every man living when he made a similar application; for would any one present, or in the world, exercise [Page

264] his talents for nothing? This, he said, was honest, and, therefore, he had no doubt it would be popular. He went on with saying he had watched with great attention the unhappy situation of this country, and was ready to lend a helping hand to save it from impending ruin. For this however he certainly expected a reward: and it was but just. Would a physician save a life without a fee?—or a parson a soul without his tithes? It was folly, it was nonsense, it was hypocrisy, for men to pretend disinterestedness and mere love of their country. He loved his country as well as any body; was as disinterested as any body; but still, patriotism and self-denial could not imply, in the present instance, more than this: that while loaves and fishes are going forward, a man should eat only to satisfy nature, instead of guttling till he furfeited himself.

He said he would be plain, and fairly lay open all his views. The navy of this nation was its bulwark, its glory. It was that which lent millions to our treasury, magnificence to our appearance, and terror to our name. It was that which made us respected and admired; dreaded and envied. We made but a point on the face of the globe, but yet that point, though small, was resplendant. It was [Page 265] gazed at with wonder by the remotest corners of the earth. We were the true Cynosure of trade; the commercial pole, that, with more than magnetic force, attracted the interests of surrounding nations. All this was owing to our navy: the protection of our commerce. His ambition therefore was to be treasurer of that navy; in the execution of which office, though he expected to be paid for his trouble, yet he would be bold to say his conduct would deserve it: for he was sure he should save immense sums to the nation!

He said he despised professions. They were unmanly, ungenerous, and an insult to those to whom they were made: he had therefore honestly opened his mind. That honesty would, he doubted not, be a sufficient security with Englishmen, whose natural character was honesty, for his future good intentions. If he should have the great honour to be returned for the borough of Bray, and a minister should come in of sufficient ability and integrity for him to act with, he would stipulate for the situation he had set his heart upon, and they would then see how the money would be handled! He would be bold to say, though it would be for his interest, it

should also be for theirs: for the interests of the member and his constituents were inseperable.

[Page 266] He finished his speech with saying he scorned to appeal to their ears, he hoped he had appealed to their hearts; and as their own conviction must teach them that truth, and only truth, had been his guide, he hoped that honesty, plain dealing, and unreserved candor would mark that day as an epoch when a member of parliament was chosen who had no expectations but from honour, no views but from sentiment.

I need not add that Mr. Gloss carried his election; for notwithstanding this florid speech, which was indeed novel enough, he had bought the borough, and the gentleman who contested the election was only a nominal antagonist, set up to save appearances.

This point being carried, the person of Mr. Gloss was sacred, and his creditors might go whoop for their money. Exasperated with this treatment, his vis a vis was stopt in the street, and executions served in his house. But this was as useless as the rest; all his property was made over to Mr. Standfast, for money lent. And now we see Mr. Gloss without an inch of land he could call his own, nearly forty thousand pounds in debt, with a house and an equipage made over for safety to another, a parliament [Page 267] man, a popular speaker, almost the leader of a party, and making large strides, with the principles we have seen, towards a responsible and lucrative place under government: for the treasurership of the navy he was determined to have.

As he really began to boast, and not without reason, of his influence, he thought he could not attack Sir Sidney in a more vulnerable place than his ancient house, which, from a long train of collateral argument, he proved to be older than the baronet himself had suspected.

I shall not go into the minutiae of this arrangement, which must not only be dry, but uninteresting to the reader, who, I dare say, would bate a little in the article of birth to such as made up the deficiency in honour—but only say that Mr. Gloss made it out very clearly that Sir Sidney was the only living issue of the family who held the honour of the

first English baronetcy, and offered to make a motion in the house, which he should support with many powerful arguments, that his majesty be advised to grant to Sir Sidney Walter Roebuck, and his heirs for ever, an exclusive patent of baronetcy, under the title of baronet in chief, to be considered as an honour between that of a common baronet and a baron, in like manner as a marquis is considered between [Page 268] an earl and a duke, and the precedent to be quoted, as an illustration of the argument, was to be, that as there was but one real marquis—which was the case at that time—so there should be but one chief baronet.

The baronet certainly listened to the proposal, and turned it a good deal in his mind, and though he doubted whether he should avail himself of such an opportunity of aggrandizing his family—especially as he had no son—yet, as he could see nothing but attention to his interest in the conduct of Gloss, he certainly conceived from that moment a great regard for him. This was prodigiously augmented by the attention this last mentioned gentleman paid to Castlewick, and the actual advantage its interests received from his advice, which both gave the baronet an insight into his capacity, and confirmed his good opinion of it. All these circumstances co-operating, as indeed Emma has already told us, no wonder if he had familiar entrance to his house, afterwards to his heart, and at length an offer of his alliance.

Mr. Gloss took care also to appear the friend of Charles; but then his mediation never came without an insinuation that he was more a friend to honour. In short the two characters were so strikingly contrasted in the mind of the baronet, that [Page 269] without any great stretch of propriety, the reader must allow, under these circumstances, that it is not to be wondered he should turn about in the manner I have described. Besides—for I would fain sum up every trifling figure, to make the aggregate of my reasons upon so important a point convincing—Sir Sidney felt a delicate, a nice repugnance, perhaps too much so, at the idea of a connection with the son of a man who had destroyed himself, and who had, assuredly, borne in his youth a very bad character.

Again, he plainly foresaw that all his benevolent attempts at Little Hockley would soon be frustrated by the innovations of the young lord; for

it was not yet so firmly rooted but that, owing to a new crew of revellers, it began already to lose ground. This, and the recollection of the ancient feuds, which he now feared would be renewed, heartily conquered his inclination to be in any respect allied to the family of Lord Hazard, though he admired the talents of our hero, and really had such a value for him as to wish his welfare, though he doubted whether he would ever deserve it.

Mr. Standfast and Mrs. O'Shocknesy must now become a little the subject of our attention. That gentleman and lady had been sometime married: [Page 270] but it was the wish of both that it should not be published. She brought with her a comfortable number of debts, and being now a femme couverte, very soon contracted a number more. In short, there were no bounds to her extravagance, which Mr. Standsast seemed as anxious to feed as she to indulge.—His own income, including a living the gift of my lord, his annuity from that nobleman, the interest of his legacy from Major Malplaquet, and what he had besides been able to realize—for no object upon earth, except Mrs. O'Shocknesy, had been sixpence expence to him—was about seventeen hundred a year; the lady had three; yet we have lately seen above twelve thousand added to their income in a year and a half! But what was this? He doated on her as implicitly, as rapturously, and as boyishly as Barn well did on Millwood, and threw large sums into her lap as willingly, whenever he could steal them: for I think the means he used to get at them might very well be called theft. On her side, no dutchess must dare to vie with her in taste and expence. But every source from whence this profusion was supplied at length dried up. Mr. Gloss being in parliament, nobody would trust him; and thus the whole credit of the confederacy was at a stand. Besides, Lord Hazard, who was expected to grieve himself to death for the loss of his wife and the irregularities of his son, was yet alive, and [Page 271] had no disorder but sorrow, which, though immoderate, did not seem likely to kill him. What joy then to the heart of this lady to hear he was no more!—to find her son in full possession of more than thirteen thousand a year, the whole of which she intended to command! Her transport knew no bounds! She bespoke a new carriage and new liveries, and bowled down into Warwickshire in the most superb and

magnificent style that money could procure or fashion invent: taking with her such domestics for her son as she conceived proper for his situation in life. In short nothing could equal the triumph with which she thought herself sure of taking possession of both her son's senses and his affairs. Judge then what was her astonishment when flying to his arms he stopt her by introducing his wife, being no other than the very Miss Tadpole that Figgins, to use his own words, dubbed him with by anticipation at Lisle! What then did she feel! Words are not strong enough to describe her sensations. It took her breath away. She raved, stampt, laughed, execrated, and would probably have died with the violence of her passion, had not a shower of tears borne away the first torrent of that complication of distressful feelings which assailed her. At length she accomplished something like articulate utterance, when the whole school of Billingsgate, had it been present, might have heard and [Page 272] edified. No opprobrious name that could be scandalously spoken or maliciously applied, was unremembered. His lordship—surely no lord was ever so called before—was a pitiful rascal, a nincompoop, a hop o' my thumb, a paltry puppy, and a pimping scoundrel. The lady was a scurvy jade, a fortune hunting minx, a low wretch, and a sorry trull.

Zekiel laughed at all the abuse on himself, but taking fire at the insults offered to his wife, cried, "I'll tell you what it is ma'am; I know you see what you'd be at, but dam'me let me tell you dam'me that I am out of my leading strings, dam'me if I 'ent, and I won't no longer be schooled, d'ye see, by any old cat in England." "Old cat!" screamed out the lady dowager.'

The young lady here interfered, and begged her husband to consider he was talking to his mother.— "To my mother,' cried he, 'why so I know I am, and a pretty mother she is, now is not she, to abuse you and I in this here manner? Why I know'd what she was upon; she thought to come here and be lady paramount of every thing, and snub and ding me about like a lout and a school boy; but dam'me if I'll have any such doings: no, I won't old gentlewoman, I'll assure you. I know in a week, if she was to be here, she'd be [Page 273] whole and fole; nay I should not wonder if she wanted at last to take my seat from me in the house of

lords. But hold, now I think on't she has been there once too often already."

"You brute!" exclaimed his mother. 'You wretch!—you undutiful cursed devil! Oh I could tear your eyes out!"

"I dare say you could,' cried the young lord, 'but I'll tell you what mother, if I am so undutiful, you had better go away from such a cursed devil, for to tell you the truth I never intended you should live with my wife, seeing as how it was not unlikely you would advise her to play me a trick or so with my valet de chambre."

Mrs. O'Shocknesy could contain herself no longer: she ran to his sword, and drawing it half way out of the scabbard, swore she would murder him. Lady Hazard here screamed so loud that Tadpole, who had been walking in the garden, came to their assistance, and demanded what was the matter.

"The matter?' cried Zekiel; 'only my old mother wants so send me post to the other world, [Page 274] because I reminded her a little of the follies of her youth. God bless the good gentlewoman,' added he, 'do now pray go home, wash the paint off your saded jaws, and chuckle to old Standfast.—Why do you think I have not been up to all the rum gig? Why yes I have; but it was no business of mine, you know, while I could coax you out of the ready. Now, d'ye see, I can supply myself, and thanks to nobody:—so every one for himself, and God for us all. Mr. Standfast has two or three goodish things: they may keep you snug enough, if you have a mind to live pretty and decent, as an old gentlewoman ought. As for me I intend to live nobly, and spend my money like a man!"

"But still my lord,' said Tadpole—' "Brother Tadpole,' interrupted Zekiel, 'I'll be damned if I live in the same house with a wife and a mother, and there's it d'ye see. That being the maxim of the thing, you had better, old lady, as I said before, go back again; and it may be as well for you to keep a quiet tongue, and advise Master Standfast to do

the same, or it may be the worse for both you, d'ye see, and the rum duke too.'

I have neither time nor inclination, nor indeed [Page 275] capacity to paint the fury of the lady, at her leaving the house, which she did soon after. Every bitter wish her invention could supply was lavished on her son. Among the rest, I think she said she hoped to her soul he would be both a beggar and a cuckold.

The lady's return to Mr. Standfast, who was prevented by business from accompanying her into the country, was truly a curious one. She blamed him for every thing, which was her usual method whenever any thing miscarried; and he, as usual, bore his jobation with astonishing coolness. This provoked her: her passion then provoked him: one epithet begat another, till he was all the old, sapless, doting idiots that her fertile fancy could invent; and she was, by his account, the damnedest infernal hell-cat that ever was born to curse an unhappy rascal like him.

From storming they went to upbraiding then they proceeded to the situation of their affairs, which were found to be plunged over head and ears in difficulties. This, in spight of them, brought on reflexion, and that upbraided them with the infamous practices they had been guilty of to serve an ungrateful wretch, who, after he had mounted to affluence by their means, had kicked down the p [...] [Page 276] that raised him! And here I cannot help remarking that the very devil for whom they had been so long toiling, his ends accomplished, spit in their faces, and forsook them.

2.10. CHAPTER X.

IN WHICH MORE KNOTTY POINTS ARE CLEARED UP.

THE reader will judge right if he fancies this reception of Mrs. O'Shocknesy was a concerted thing between my lord and his brother in law, who was now his steward, as was Flush his butler. Indeed, as every servant formerly in the house was by this time replaced by others, brought in at the instance of these two friends, his lordship was doomed to be as much in leading strings as ever his mother could have held him for the life of her; but as he was suffered in every thing to have his own way, he did not concern himself with what they did privately, but let them feather their nests in quiet, under the idea of taking all his affairs off his hands, because he was a man of rank, in whom it was vulgar to let business interfere with pleasure.

Mr. Tadpole and Mr. Kiddy understood one another very well, for the latter had, while they were in France, made a discovery, of which the reader shall some time hence participate.

[Page 278] A secret to a minister of state, or his type, a great man's butler, is a matter of some consequence.—Here then Flush set up his rest. It is true he balanced, when he first came to England, and was within a hair's breadth of destroying all Tadpole's hopes, by making the above discovery to his old master Standfast; but that gentleman making him some proposal or other that he did not like, he retracted before he had so explained himself as to betray Tadpole, and matters having since turned out so much to his advantage, he thanked his stars that he had now sat himself down comfortably for life.

Whether Kiddy was tired of his youthful follies, or whether his whirligig inclinations had wearied themselves with turning round, I know not, but he seemed like a worn-out weathercock to be glad to rust where he had stopt: and this choice was manifest in a total alteration in his manners. He went to church, nay more, he was very often closeted with a methodist preacher, with whom he got drunk, and sang psalms.

The young lord used to smoke this, as he called it, and gave him many a dry rub, to one of which sallies he one day replied, "Why Lord love your

[Page 279] lordship, my lord, when you come to repent, as I do, of all your worldly gig, and are down upon the heavenly comfort of a religious life, you may tell the old rum codger with his hour glass, come when he will, you are up to all he knows, and indifferent, as some old learned gentleman says, whether you close your peepers in sleep or in death."

Emma, who, as she informed our hero, was up on the watch, no sooner heard of Kiddy's conversion, but knowing he must be full of good intelligence for her, determined to tamper with him: not that she had any expectation of finding him less a hypocrite in his new calling than in his old one. She therefore saw there might be danger in putting her designs in execution personally. In fact Emma saw herself of consequence in the very way she had all her life wished to be; for she was convinced she should have it in her power, in the language of those romances she so dearly loved, to conduct two constant lovers to the temple of Felicity, through all the briars and bogs that impeded their passage.—Flush she pitched upon as the vehicle in this troublesome journey, which Swash and his daughter were to guide, while she herself, like some tutelary genius, should watch their motions, inspire them [Page 280] with courage on the road, and remove all difficulties in their passage to this desirable goal.

In less figurative language, she set Swash, who with good reason loved Charles most sincerely, to insinuate himself into Flush's good graces, who, I can tell you, had already began to love homage, so little had the spirit mended his humility.

It was in the miller's instructions never to mention a word of our hero, or, if he found that unavoidable, to cover any suspicion of his friendship, by railing against him, but at the same time to cherish all that dropt from Flush—who now, for distinction, began to be called Canting Kiddy—that could in the remotest degree lead to any circumstance that implied a plot having been formed against him.

As to Jude, her part was a capital one, and had she not been perfected in it by a very capable instructress, she might have spoilt all.

Kiddy, it was notorious, loved a pretty girl; Judy was instructed to throw herself in his way, to give an account of his behaviour, and proceed step by step as she should be directed by Emma. It was foreseen her virtue would be attacked, but this was [Page 281] the very cunning of the scene. Whenever this should happen to be the case, she was directed to draw, in her simple way, a pathetic picture of the wickedness of mankind, and lament the blindness of the world, who could load the preserver of her innocence with unmerited reproaches, while he who was seeking to destroy it had the character of sanctity and penitence. They were not so mad however as to trust to Judy's prudence alone, nor her rhetoric, for force might overcome both: Swash therefore was to be at hand upon any trying occasion, to rescue her, which being romantic, was still more to Emma's taste.

If she should get at any material evidence, her next step was to strengthen her own weak force by the alliance, as she should think fit, of either Mr: Friend or Mr. Balance, or both; and as she saw many obstacles would lie in the way, particularly the business of Gloss, she advised Annette to avow implicitly her affection for Charles, which her father had formerly authorised, and who would not so far contradict his own excellent character as to insist on her marrying one man before she had forgotten the other. Besides Mr. Gloss was not yet treasurer of the navy, and therefore could not make those offers as to fortune which a man of Sir Sidney's [Page 282] rank and possessions would of course expect, especially when he became chief baronet; which circumstance, ridiculous as it was, really at times occupied his reflections: for what man is there, let him be ever so good or ever so wise, but has his weak side.

All this jumble or chaos of circumstances were fluctuating at this time in Emma's head, out of which she had no doubt but she should form a world of happiness for the young couple.

Matters being in this state as to our hero in England, the reader and I will once more take a trip to the continent, in which journey we cannot do better than follow the steps of Madame St. Vivier and her handmaid Kitty, whose private motives being made clearer—which seems very necessary—this history will stand as disentangled as any one could

reasonably desire who wishes things to be brought forward in their natural order.

It has been seen that I am not very fond of dwelling upon trifling circumstances, I shall therefore, without mentioning a word of these ladies bringing up, say that Madame St. Vivier was a fashionable woman of the town, and that Miss Kitty, [Page 283] though her handmaid, had been in no less a sphere of life than herself. Indeed, but a very few years before, she had cut a figure little less brilliant than Mrs. O'Shocknesy, but falling in love with either the beauty or the brogue of Mr. Ireland, she had really attached herself to him with a singular degree of constancy for a lady of her profession.

When this gentleman was obliged to abscond, in consequence of his duel, he left his affairs in the hands of an intimate friend, who thought proper to take no other notice of the trust, than by appropriating every thing to his own use, without remitting his friend abroad, or allowing the lady at home, a single sixpence: so that in this case Kiddy's remark of honour among thieves did not apply.

Mrs. Kitty having been sometime out of the way of practice—for fashion has as much to do in these cases as beauty—had recourse to her old friend Jenny Singleton, who began just then also to be on the decline, and proposed a visit to Sedan, where Mr. Ireland then was, with a view to consult him on their future operations.

This expedition was lucky enough, for Mr. Gloss [Page 284] coming across them, they were tutored by Mrs. O'Shocknesy how to make their journey worth while.

Figgins gave them intelligence concerning the departure of Charles; and, as it had been concerted, they met him at Dover.

The ladies however, determined to make all sure, had privately agreed to act in the very manner Figgins has described; for their experience gave them reason to believe that it was not impossible but Mr. Ireland might forget to give them the meeting. They therefore were in appearance to be alternately mistress and maid, both to save expence, to keep their secrets

to themselves, and also to avail themselves of any opportunity that might happen of snapping up any English booby, by way of completing his tour for improvement.

Matters turned out however very much to their satisfaction. They met with Mr. Ireland at Sedan; he attended them to Nancy, where, as it has been seen, he plundered our hero of a tolerable supply. Nor did he absolutely part with them, but hovered about as it were, till his affairs called him into Italy, to which place—after robbing our hero [Page 285] of every thing they could lay their hands on, as we heard Figgins inform him—these two kind ladies followed him.

2.11. CHAPTER XI.

A JESUITICAL EXPLANATION—THE SEPARATION OF TWO FRIENDS—AND AN ANSWER TO EMMA'S LETTER.

IF the reader and I were unfeeling enough to leave Charles in such a situation that death seemed almost desirable to him, Mr. Figgins appears to have been more solicitous about him, for in less than half an hour after the melancholy moment wherein I describe him reading his father's letters, he returned with great pleasure in his countenance, took his friend by the hand, and giving him joy, told him he was liberated!

Charles, going from one extreme to the other, was enraptured at the news, and requested to be informed how so unexpected an event had been brought about. Figgins answered him that they were in no place to satisfy his curiosity. They were then joined by their attorney, who had stayed behind to pay the fees of the prison; and now the jailor, who a little before had earnestly examined [Page 287] our hero's chains, to see if they were fast enough, came with great ceremony to unfasten them.

This and all other punctilios over, they sallied forth, and Charles and Figgins being arrived at their inn, the latter thus accounted for his friend's enlargement.

Mr. Figgins said that no single day had past since his friend's imprisonment but some step had been taken to get at the truth of the unhappy business, which had been the means of his suffering in so worthy a cause. The accounts had been for a good while various and unsatisfactory, and therefore he determined, as he had enough in all conscience to vex him without being eternally tortured with such suspense, not to say a word till some certain intelligence should arrive. He said the first clue he had of any thing like a chance of success, though he took no notice of it at the time, was his friend's saying he was sure he had somewhere seen the murderer. This put it into his head—though he owned it was a conjecture greatly at random. "But.' added he 'I would catch as much at a straw for my friend's safety as my own. That Ireland, who was a great duellist, was probably the man."

"And by heaven,' said Charles, 'I do believe [Page 288] he was; though it never struck me so till this moment."

"You shall hear,' said Figgins.' "I was inclined the more to believe this on hearing his name mentioned in an odd way by Madame St. Vivier, with whom I now began to think he had maintained some intelligence all along; for I recollected that it dropt from her at Nancy that she had seen him in England. This set me upon interrogating Kitty, who confessed his having been at Lyons, and that very probably he was the guilty person."

"I was now convinced they knew it. Thinking therefore to practise the trick your brother taught us at Lisle, I ordered John to enquire every day at the post-office, and to bring me any letters directed to Madame St. Vivier. He, I suppose, made them acquainted with these instructions, for after waiting till about three weeks ago, to no purpose, I was just thinking what other method I could hit upon, when, all on a sudden, the ladies and Mr. John decamped, as I imagined, together, but we have since learnt he went to England."

"Women cannot so easily travel secretly in France [Page 289] as men. I therefore soon found out their route, which, as I suspected, led to where Mr. Ireland was waiting for them. My first intention was to have pursued them myself, but reflecting I should be of more use to you upon the spot, I got, by the interference of our banker, a very intelligent young man to go in my stead.'

"The instructions given to this young man were not to act so as to endanger Mr. Ireland—for that I knew you did not wish—but only to get from him such sort of satisfaction as should acquit you.—The first part of this injunction was unnecessary, for though he overtook the ladies in the kingdom of France, the gentleman was safe in the confines of Savoy. They however, fearing for themselves, served him as a guide, and coming at length to where Mr. Ireland had appointed them, he did you ample justice, making voluntary oath that you had no part in the fray, but that of a mediator, and that so far from having any malice, you could not possibly know either the quarrel or its cause; for that all you did was

merely the effect of accident, and entirely with a view to prevent mischief."

"This confession, so sworn—which is now lodged [Page 290] to ground your discharge upon—he accompanied with this letter, which you will find attributes the duel to the hastiness of the gentleman who unfortunately fell. He talks of unhandsome reflections against Englishmen in general, and him in particular. In short, be the cause of quarrel what it may, he had it in his power to palliate the matter as he thought proper, for there are no witnesses to contradict him.'

"Thus,' added he, 'my noble friend, you are at liberty, and I offer myself to avenge you on your enemies in any way you may think proper to point out for me."

Charles thanked him heartily, but said his only revenge would be contemptuous indifference.

In some parts of this account Mr. Figgins exceeded the truth, and in others fell short of it. He had not set John to enquire about letters; he had not taken a hint from our hero as to Ireland; he had not wormed the matter out of the ladies. On the contrary, a note had been received explanatory of Ireland's flight on the very morning it happened, and the intelligence had not been protracted out of tenderness to Charles, but to cover the safety of the sugitive; for though a gentleman was sent, as [Page 291] our hero was informed, and did actually return with the letter and oath already mentioned, yet Madame St. Vivier, who, to do her justice, was as willing as any body to save Charles, stipulated however that no arrangement should take place till Mr. Ireland should be fully out of danger. Then again there was no part of the conduct of these ladies unknown to him. He knew why they went to Sedan; he was accessary to the loss of the money at Nancy; he even learnt that Kitty and Ireland were upon the best terms; he consented when they went away to their taking that money of which he pretended to have been robbed; and, lastly, so far from not being acquainted with John's departure for England, he sent him there, and—not to hide the truth—with proper

instructions how our hero should be written to: so that he knew every word of Mr. Standfast's letter before Charles received it.

Mr. Figgins now began to be very inquisitive as to our hero's future plan. Charles said he should immediately write to Mr. Balance, and if he found him willing to supply him without the ceremony of going to England, he should continue his tour as he originally intended; "for,' said he, 'I see nothing in my native country that should make me desirous of returning to it."

[Page 292] "Nor I either,' said Figgins, 'except it were to curse them all round."

"Pretty advice indeed,' said Charles, with a laugh: 'want a man deliberately to go seven hundred miles for no better purpose than to put himself in a passion."

"Well then may I be damned,' said Figgins, 'if I think there is your fellow upon the face of the earth. Such prudence and discernment at your age is truly astonishing."

The reader sees that Figgins did not want Charles to go to England, but as he well knew the right kind of argument to hold with mankind, the stronger Charles's obstinacy appeared, the more he argued against it. He shewed how easy it would be to undeceive Sir Sidney. He painted the beauties of Annette; the danger of losing her; the triumph of obtaining her from his rival; till at length, being highly exhilirated with wine, he had reason to repent of his warmth, for Charles, in the heat of his vivacity, said something that implied a determination to return.

Fortune however, envious perhaps of his having so narrowly escaped an untimely end, or thinking [Page 293] the hero of such a history as this had not been long enough upon his probation, or bent upon bringing about his catastrophe, whatever it be, by the means of Mrs. Emma, her agent, or for some other equally wise and considerate motive, determined to give Charles good time to deliberate, before he should come to any resolution; for he was that night taken with a violent fever, which lasting him several days without the smallest intermission, and several weeks with

but very little, he was at length left in a most emaciated condition, with all the symptoms of a gradual decline.

The moment he was able he wrote to Mr. Balance, without however dropping a hint of his illness, which precaution he enjoined Figgins also to observe, thinking, probably, it would look like an overture to a reconciliation, which, had he even wished, his pride would have forbid him to acknowledge.

Indeed he was pretty resolute as to his future intentions; for though his bodily strength was greatly impaired, his mental faculties were at least as strong as ever.

This was the only serious illness he had ever had in his life. It had given him excellent time for reflection, [Page 294] and the more he reflected the less he saw to be ashamed of. In proportion therefore as he found himself wronged, he persisted in his firm determination to consider himself independant, and accountable to no man for his actions: and, as to enjoy the full possession of such principles he must not have many friendships, he resolved to continue his tour, that, by gathering a plentiful stock of accomplishments, he might be the better qualified to find a friend in himself.

This scheme he was also determined to pursue after his own fancy, which part he digested as deliberately as the rest. Taking therefore an opportunity one day, when the physician advised him to try the air of Montpelier, he thus opened his mind to his friend Figgins.

"My dear sir, it would be but a poor return to your warm and unshaken friendship, merely to say it will ever be remembered by me with that sort of heart-felt pleasure every thing gives me that originates from such handsome and liberal principles. It would however be taking a very unfriendly advantage of you if I could be so unreasonable as to requite so much generosity by suffering you to neglect and injure your affairs on my account.'

[Page 295] "My father has settled on you an annuity, to which is now annexed no conditions on your side of attention to me; for he being dead,

his kindness must naturally be considered as a remembrance of past, instead of a reward for present, services: but as I know your worthy heart will not let you regard yourself as entitled to this esteem, unless you acquit your conscience of receiving it upon any other principle than that of desert, instead of throwing away your time on me—time which, at your season of life, must be very precious to you, and which you can without doubt employ to greater advantage in the bosom of your family and affairs—you shall keep a constant correspondence with me, and I will promise to profit by that advantage as much as my capacity and abilities permit me: so now do not take it unkind that I should have resolved to pursue my travels alone, but rather let me have your excuse that I have already taken up so much of your time, to your prejudice."

It happened luckily for Mr. Figgins, that this was the very subject he had himself been two or three times on the point of broaching, but he felt so awkward about it that he could not for the soul of him tell how to begin. Having however the ice broken for him, he did not scruple to acknowledge [Page 296] that his affairs at home were rather in a disordered condition, and that he sincerely believed, were he on the spot, a certain bishop would at that time have an opportunity of promoting him: but yet he could not think of leaving his dear, his honoured friend; it would look as if he was of a piece with the rest of the world, and had basely deserted his cause.

"Your own heart and my experience of your generous friendship will, my dear Figgins,' said Charles, 'acquit you; for, after all, what signifies what all the world says abroad, when you have a cheerful monitor at home that approves your actions. Beside, in the opinion of those who take the freedom so very liberally to talk of me, you will retrieve your character instead of injure it, by quitting a man so unworthy to be spoken well of."

"Rather,' said Figgins, if I am induced to leave you, let it be with a view to confound any rascal who shall dare to use you ill. Now I think of it, you have need of a friend there to silence your calumniators, and I assure you neither Mr. Standfast, whose friendship it is my intention to renounce, Mr. Gloss, your brother, nor even Sir Sidney, shall dare to traduce your character with [Page 297] impunity." To which Charles

said, "Figgins, if you would have me believe you value either my friendship or peace of mind, imitate what I should do in the same situation. When you hear any one vilify me, laugh in his face, without lifting him into consequence enough to think him worthy an answer."

After a great deal of persuasion on one side, and much apparent reluctance on the other, it was agreed upon that our hero and Mr. Figgins should part. This they did with many warm protestations of friendship, and future attention to each other's interest—on one side I am sure very sincere—and a firm promise to keep up a regular correspondence.

Not two days after the departure of Mr. Figgins, Charles wrote to Mr. Balance, by whom he had been treated, as to his money, in a very gentlemanly manner, desiring, without giving a single reason, that he would immediately grant out of his fortune a hundred a year to Mr. Figgins for life; and about four hours after this letter was dispatched, he received one from Emma, informing him of his brother's actual marriage—and also that Lady Hazard was in a way to bless him with a son and heir—the discomfiture of the Lady Dowager; the unaltered [Page 298] inflexibility of Sir Sidney; the neutrality of Lady Roebuck; the constancy of Annette; a congratulation on his release, which they had all heard from some spy in the camp; to which she added, pray God Mr. Figgins prove not rather an Euristeus than a Pylades; a gentle reproach for his silence; an exhortation to return; "but indeed,' said she, 'to what purpose? Justice, come as amply as it may, can now scarcely make you amends. Of what use was the pyramid to Aesop after they had hurled him from the rock?"—and lastly, she informed him that she had a most formidable plot, which had already taken root, and when it should have grown, blossomed, and borne fruit, she doubted not but she should gather a plentiful crop of justice to him, credit to herself, conviction to the abused, and confusion to his enemies.

Charles had not answered Emma's former letter, it is true, but he was determined now to do so once for all. This was his letter.

MY GOOD EMMA,

Your attention to me, to speak in your own way, is a panegyric on yourself, and a lampoon [Page 299] on those around you; for even though I should deserve all they have so very liberally laid to my charge, a little charity one should think would not do them any harm. But I see the confederacy is strong, and had I the shadow of a wish to break it up—which I really have not—it would, I dare say, be no easy matter.

Your information, as to your sweet young lady, is very flattering, and, at any other time, would have been very delightful; but why should I pursue what I can never arrive at: since the folly of her own family has made an union between us impracticable? Be therefore, good Emma—for upon my soul you are really a good creature—a friend to her, and instead of filling her ears with imaginary happiness, which she can never enjoy—recommend to her an observance of her duty, by which she will no doubt more fully accomplish all her wishes. You will the more readily induce her to this by assuring her, which you may with great truth, that whatever may have been my sentiments, I am determined not to think of her in future.—Indeed my intention, and that for many reasons, is never to see her again, and without any ill compliment to your literary wisdom, I must say you are a dunce if you do not see why.

[Page 300] As to Sir Sidney and the rest of my formidable accusers, I will not take the trouble to care what they think of me; for, though I heartily forgive them—though I think pity is the properer word—and would do them any service I honourably could—but I believe they think mine rather a shabby kind of honour—yet the world should not purchase from me a grain of friendship for them.

And now Emma, as you are so kind as not to think me quite the hang dog they have painted me, do pray believe that what I have said above was dictated by sincerity; and, this admitted, your understanding will tell you that I shall be insensible to all persuasion; for you see, by my deliberation, that these resolutions are not the caprice of a moment. Seeing this, it will also strike you as repugnant both to your safety and my honour—which you know it would be a terrible thing not to redeem—to hold farther conference on the subject. The same reasons will shew you the necessity of dropping your plot. No, my strange, valuable,

kind girl, keep the friendship of your patron; keep your good opinion of me nevertheless; and leave the rest to time, who, according to SHAKESAEARE—for you love a quotation— "'tries all old offenders,"' and Time being [Page 301] a very just judge, I shall never have any objection to appear before him.

Adieu: shew your wishes to oblige me by implicitly adhering to the contents of this letter.

Your kind well-wisher, CHARLESHAZARD.

2.12. CHAPTER XII.

CONTAINING AN EVENT WHICH, HOWEVER SAGACIOUS THE READER MAY BE, WILL NOT BE ANTICIPATED.

CHARLES continued in a very weak state. As soon therefore as he had received from Mr. Balance such kind of authority as enabled him to find himself in cash, travel where he might, he complied with his physician's advice, and removed, by short stages, to Montpelier, with only a valet de chambre and a laquais, both Frenchmen: his intention being to shun the English as much as possible.

His disorder for some time gave every appearance that if the malignity of his friends went so far as to wish him in the other world, they would soon be satisfied. Perhaps some of them might have been happy to have contemplated his situation.—Their charitable expectations however would have been disappointed, for his youth and constitution triumphed over the consumption, and, what perhaps was a greater victory, over the united efforts of the physicians; and at length—but not in less [Page 303] than seven months—his recovery was pronounced to be certain.

I might here draw a striking picture enough of a young man of rank and fortune, with excellent talents, an admirable heart, young, handsome, and sweet tempered, without a single fault that might not be defended upon principles of reason, hemmed in by an host of enemies, and apparently dying by himself in a remote corner of a strange kingdom. All this interspersed with apt observation, and embellished with proper reflections, would indeed make up good moral matter in this place, and give me an opportunity of finishing the second volume with some very pretty, round, well-turned reading:—but the business of this history is—as indeed I think every other ought to be—action, which I give the reader warning will be more and more rapid as we go on. I therefore beg, that whoever shall wish I had paused at such and such a place, and given my muse a bait, cramming down every mouthful with a moral sentence, will supply that sentence themselves, which will be more than one advantage to me: it will save me the trouble; it will be more to the taste of every reader;

and it will give free scope to all those who think with me, to go on without skipping.

[Page 304] Charles did not want company at Montpelier, for he did not want money. He had officers and abbes out of number, and sometimes ladies, and now and then an English gentleman in misfortunes, who was not the worse for his trouble in visiting him. At other times he read the best authors, and never lost any opportunity of speaking French, which he at last accomplished correctly and elegantly.

His health was re-established sooner than his strength. On this account he slowly visited most of the towns in the south of France, where he met with a variety of characters, with whose histories, were I so disposed, I could interlard my book, till, as I once heard an Irishman say of a bad play, the main plot would be all episode. I shall however, which is modest enough, chuse but one, and now we are talking of Irishmen, it shall be a gentleman of that country; he shall be a monk, called Father Fitzgibbon, and member of a convent of Benedictines.

Our hero, because perhaps he was in a wine country—for sick people are very whimsical—took it in his head to long for some beer; an inclination however he did not seem likely to gratify, for enquiry had been repeatedly made for that beverage to [Page 305] purpose. His valet, who had a most indulgent master—and they say a good master makes a good servant—determining not to give the matter up quietly, procured intelligence that about two leagues off there was a convent of English, Irish, and Scotch, where, for their own use, they brewed excellent beer. To this convent, without saying a word to Charles, he posted. Having told his story, he received for answer, that they brewed the beer for their own use, as he had heard, but, nevertheless, if upon paying them a visit they should like the gentleman, they would supply him with as much as he could drink. A card to this effect was dispatched, inviting Charles to dine with them the next day. He obeyed that summons and several others, till, what with the beer, the good company, and the ride, which I believe had most merit—as the air in Wales performs that cure which the physicians attribute to the goat's milk—in a short time he found himself in perfect health.

I should not have mentioned this circumstance so minutely had I not designed to introduce Father Fitzgibbon, who was superior of this convent, to the reader, and I should not have introduced Father Fitzgibbon to the reader if I had not had a material reason for it.

[Page 306] This friar was, as I have said, a native of Ireland. He was of a good family, but being a younger brother, he quitted Dublin and went to Bath—the usual market—in search of a fortune. There he contrived to lodge in the same house, where lodged also an ancient lady and her daughter, the widow and heiress of an old hunks, who had amassed a large fortune by boiling blubber at Deptford. It was immaterial to him which he married, but he was determined upon one of them, and that one should be her who was richest. This his intelligencers informed him was the daughter, who being very ignorant and conceited, and besides beset hard, yielded upon easier terms than marriage, which conditions the Irishman did not boggle about, because for why, said he, "sure can't I make you very happy after I have ruined you for ever."

The appointment being made when and where this forward young lady, for the first time, was to yield up the possession of her person to her intended husband, Fitzgibbon, which is not extraordinary in an Irishman, made a blunder; for, mistaking his way, instead of Miss's room, he got into her mamma's, who expected a gallant likewise.

Before the morning they discovered their mutual mistake, and before the next morning Fitgibbon, [Page 307] prevailed on the old lady to rob the young lady of her fortune, with which they set off for France, and of which money, three years after, when this antiquated Venus died, he had just enough left to purchase a commission in the Irish brigades. To be brief: After much riotous conduct, and many misdemeanours, he was broken, when the church,—which is in France something like what we say in England of the sea and the gallows—received him.

He had been superior of this convent of Benedictines four years, and at the end of three more he was to visit his own country for a twelvemonth, when he assured our hero he would spend a month with him in England.

For a few hours, at a time of vacant hilarity, Charles could not be in more agreeable company. He laid himself out for their convenience, sent them several desirable presents, and left, at his departure, a handsome donation, which Fitzgibbon did not scruple to tell him, in a whisper, should be laid out in excellent claret.

Charles had stayed so long in France that the time was now nearly arrived which he had intended to have apportioned to his whole tour: for his promise to his father had been to return in time to pass his birthday [Page 308] with him, when he should have attained his one and twentieth year. He therefore determined to go back to England, in order to take his affairs into his own hands, after which, if he should feel himself so disposed, he might then be in time to make his tour of Italy; for so far from having any body to control him, he did not think there were six persons upon the face of the earth who cared three-pence about him. In this mind he set out, with a view to stay a month at Paris, and then jog on leisurely for England. He arrived at Aix la Chapelle late in the evening, where he supped, and then ordered post horses to be ready the next morning. The house seemed to be very full of guests, and just as our hero got into bed, they were reinforced by a company from the play. Charles had been dropt asleep about an hour, when he was, all on a sudden, awoke by a violent screaming. For a moment—which is very natural in a strange bed—he knew not where he was. Recollecting himself however, he hurried on his breeches and slippers, and throwing a morning gown over him, took his sword, and darted from his own chamber to that from whence the noise issued. The door was locked, but he burst it open with his foot, and immediately saw a French officer struggling with a young lady, who still shrieked with all her force. With the hilt of his sword he struck the ravisher in a moment to the ground, then placing [Page 309] himself between him and the young lady, he stood ready for him, in a posture of defence, against he should attempt to rise. At the moment he placed himself in this attitude, rouse reader your whole attention!—exert your whole stock of penetration!—prepare for a most unlooked-for surprise!—yet, let it be ever so great, it cannot be any thing equal to that of our hero, when, on looking towards the door, he saw

several persons enter the chamber, and, among the foremost, Sir Sidney, Lady Roebuck, and Emma!

Reader, it was Annette herself whom Charles had rescued from a ravisher!—who having in the fifteen months that he had been absent ripened into woman, and improved in every limb and feature into more perfection than ever was described by the ablest pen or correctest pencil; nay had the best poet or painter that ever wrote or drew seen her, like our hero, at that moment, and even felt the same captivating sensation from the astonishing power of her irresistable charms, then so greatly heightened, still must a description of them have been incomplete: for neither are there words nor colours strong enough for the task. Charles, though he had but a moment, which was imperfectly lent him by the relative intelligence received from seeing who entered the room, in that moment gazed away his soul; [Page 310] his very brain received the whole force of her incomparable attractions, and love took triumphant possession of him.

During this interval, short as it was, the officer had got up, unseen by our hero, and was coming towards him. This constrained him to transfer his attention from the lady to the gentleman. He asked, in a firm voice if he dared justify his conduct; to which he was answered, "No sir; it was unpardonable. It was wine, it was distraction! I have suffered an ignominious blow, but I deserved it, and you are a stranger. No sir, I shall ask for no satisfaction; for light and blameable as I may have behaved, though my existence depends on my courage, and the sword is my profession, I dare not draw it in a dishonourable cause."

Sir Sidney, who at first thought very differently of this business, especially when he heard Emma exclaim as they approached the chamber, "Oh Christ, there is Mr. Hazard!" felt, from the strongest conviction, a warm glow of gratitude towards our hero. This however was a little checked by reflection, as well as a contemplation of what Charles was then doing, who, forgetting there were a number of spectators present, stood like a statue, devouring with his eyes the beauty of Annette, [Page 311] which was now heightened by conscious innocence and thankful pleasure. In this short interval, during which Sir Sidney

deliberated, Annette was modestly delighted, Emma hugged herself, and our hero was fascinated, in came to their relief Mr. Gloss, who being in a few words informed of the business, went up in a style of the greatest familiarity to Charles, and seizing him by the hand, cried out, "My dear sir, how do you do? I thought you were in Italy. For God's sake why don't you let your friends hear from you?" Charles flung from him in great indignation, saying, "I don't know you sir," and was making towards the door, but Sir Sidney, who could not bear to receive a service of such magnitude without noticing it, stopt him, saying, "I cannot refrain from warmly acknowledging this unexpected kindness, which has been as bravely and gallantly, as disinterestedly, shewn me. You know Mr. Hazard I have a warm heart, and a generous action touches it; therefore, this of yours, which has probably saved my honour, I shall not, you may be assured, think lightly of; and if—"

"Surely,' said Charles, recovering himself into a complacent, yet erect dignity, 'you jest Sir Sidney! What I have done is at best but a common duty, which requires no partial thanks, because [Page 312] the greatest stranger would have been equally entitled to it. But how do you know it was not the act of one ravisher anxious to defeat the designs of another? I dare say it will have that colour by to-morrow morning. In the mean time you shall be assured I am honest in something, nor will you doubt it when I tell you that whatever motive induced me to that which has preserved Miss Roebuck's honour to her family, it was not friendship to her father: and so sir, good night to you." So saying, he bowed respectfully to the ladies, and left the room.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.