

LIGHT AND DARKNESS;

OR,

MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

BY

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# **LIGHT AND DARKNESS.**

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## **I.**

### **THE ACCUSATION.**

**VOL. I.**

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## THE ACCUSATION.

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### CHAPTER I.

It is now nearly three centuries ago that there existed in the south of France, not far from Toulouse, a family called Châteauroux. Like one or two other great families of that nation, they counted up to the Deluge at least: nothing could be more satisfactory than their genealogical tree, root and branch; but, unfortunately, it was pretty nearly the only one they possessed, and the parchment it covered would almost itself have covered the remnant of the patrimonial estate that

remained to them. They had been rich in their day ; but extravagances on the one hand, and occasional confiscations and fines for political offences on the other, had gradually reduced them from wealth to poverty—the worst kind of poverty, that which is accompanied by a sounding title and aristocratic pretensions.

The possessor of these visionary grandeurs, at the period at which our story commences, was called Joachim—Count Joachim de Châteauroux. Like all the nobility of France in former times, he was in the army ; and, unlike many, had seen a good deal of service. He was a worthy man, tenderly attached to his wife and to his only son Philibert—these two names of Joachim and Philibert being hereditary in the family ; and he would have been a happy and contented one, had it not been for his own pecuniary difficulties, and the painful future he anticipated for this beloved child, whom

embarrassments, greater than those he was himself the victim of, necessarily awaited; for since it was beneath the dignity of so distinguished a race to exercise any profitable occupation, their circumstances inevitably deteriorated with every generation, unless a fortunate marriage happened to repair them. Occasional alliances with wealthy heiresses had indeed hitherto alone rescued the Châteauroux from utter ruin; but their family pride, and the desire to maintain the purity of their blood, had stood greatly in their way in respect of these salutary infusions, since they abjured all connection with fortunes accumulated by commerce, and were only willing to accept for their sons the hereditary heiresses of noble families, who were too much in request to be easily obtained.

As for Count Joachim himself, he had done nothing toward the redeeming the fortunes of his house. He had married while absent from home on service, and his wife

was never seen at Châteauroux till after the death of his father. He was himself suddenly called home to see the old Count expire; and sometime afterwards the lady arrived, apparently very ill, and in great trouble. And well she might be; for she had undertaken her journey at that most awful of all periods of French history, the massacre of St. Bartholomew—had been attacked in the night by the assassins at Limoges—had seen her infant son torn from her arms and murdered, whilst she herself had almost miraculously escaped with her life, and through great difficulties reached her husband's home. In process of time, however, another son was born to console them for the loss of the first; and in him all their hopes and anxieties now centred. But his mother did not long survive to share them. She never recovered the shock she had received on that fearful night, and the care of the boy soon devolved wholly on the father.

Although no one knew exactly of what family the lady was that Count Joachim had married, it was generally understood that the union had been very obnoxious to his connections ; and it was very evident that she had brought no fortune to compensate her other deficiencies. She was extremely handsome and amiable ; but these qualities concerned nobody but her husband, and counted for nothing with the rest of his generation, who accordingly hated her, and were extremely glad when she was dead.

The Count's difficulties, however, were by no means diminished by this satisfactory event, which to him, indeed, was a very grievous one ; on the contrary, his affairs, as might be expected, grew rather worse than better, from the want of the superintending eye of the judicious wife, and it was as much as he could do to keep his head above water, and educate his son ; and as the only hope he could anchor on was a union with an heiress,

all his thoughts were directed to the accomplishment of that desirable object. But the affair was difficult. Young Philibert, like his father, had a fancy for youth and beauty, and wanted to choose for himself; whilst the old Count, who had outlived and forgotten the foibles of his own youth, was both astonished and indignant at his son's weakness, more especially when the young man refused to pay his court to Madame de Rosemont, *née de la Rive*, a lady of unexceptionable blood, an heiress in her own right, in possession of a large jointure bequeathed by her first husband, and, in short, one of the richest matches in Languedoc. But young Philibert, though he desired the fortune, extremely objected to taking the lady along with it; and it was for a long time in vain that his father dilated on the various good qualities she possessed, and on the happiness he might promise himself in such a union. He represented that all this might be very true, but



that she was ten years too old, and had never been handsome, and that, moreover, he was in love with Emily de Préville, who had a large fortune, and was also in love with him.

“To what purpose,” asked his father, “when she is betrothed to the Duc de Trémouille?”

And the question was a very pertinent one, for young ladies in France do not even now choose their own husbands, and still less did so then; and there was not the most remote chance that the Marquis de Préville would forego an alliance with the wealthy Duke, to give his daughter to a poor Count, though the young people had been twenty times more in love than they were.

However, two events occurred almost simultaneously that sufficed to conquer the young man's opposition to his father's wishes. First, Emily de Préville married the gentleman she was affianced to. She would rather

have married Philibert; but if she had persisted in saying so, she would have been shut up in a convent till she was brought to a more reasonable state of mind; so she dropped a few tears to the memory of her young love-dream, and then gracefully submitted to become a Duchess. Philibert was furiously miserable for a month, and held frequent and serious debates with himself as to the judiciousness of blowing out his brains at the gate of the Duke's castle; but before he had settled this point to his mind, his father was taken alarmingly ill, and when on his death-bed, having disclosed to his son the amount of the family embarrassment, he obtained a promise that he would lose no time in prosecuting his suit with the rich widow; and, indeed, when the old Count was dead, and the young one began to feel the weight of the burden that had devolved on his own shoulders, namely, the burden of maintaining and feeding an establishment without any

adequate means of doing it, he was willing enough to escape the dilemma by so facile an expedient. So he duly commenced his course of love, which, as it was but a counterfeit, naturally ran smooth enough—for it is only real love that is doomed to encounter so many rocks and shallows. Madame de la Rive de Rosemont, though assuredly not blind to the motives that prompted his suit, was still weak enough to be pleased and flattered by his attentions; and was not a little captivated by the graceful vivacity and agreeable person of her lover. Thus, no long siege was necessary; the lady capitulated after a month's feeble resistance, and at the end of the second the marriage ceremony was performed with all the splendour that became their condition and her great wealth.

And now it seemed quite certain that, if he pleased, the young Count de Châteauroux might have been very happy. Youth and beauty he had not obtained, it is true; but

Sophie de la Rive was an amiable, cheerful, liberal woman, who sat no bounds to his command of her fortune, and who was well disposed to indulge him in all the whims and caprices that sudden affluence is apt to gender. She was fond of society, made all his friends welcome to her house, and in fact was extremely attached to him, and very well disposed to make him a kind and indulgent wife; and thus, with all the elements of contentment and prosperity, the first three months passed very agreeably. But about the fourth month light clouds began to flit across the horizon. The first gloss of his new possessions and way of life having somewhat worn off, Philibert, in the wantonness of youth, and with that hungry appetite for pleasures that ever asks for more, began to seek variety and excitement in small flirtations with the young and handsome visitors of his wife.

Now, this Sophie could not suffer; jea-

lousy was her weak side; and indulgent as she was upon all other matters, in the matter of fidelity she was a dragon. So she pouted and affected coldness; and when that plan ceased to produce any effect, she expostulated and wept. But tears have no eloquence to reach the heart of man, unless they stream from bright eyes and fall upon blooming cheeks; poor Madame de Châteauroux might as well have seared up the sluices of hers as hope to gain her point by them. Her complexion at the best was but indifferent, and when she wept, the point of her nose became red, and her cheeks rough and spotty, defects extremely offensive to the taste of Philibert, and he was only driven by a spectacle so disagreeable to direct his eyes more pertinaciously to the youth and beauty around him, for the purpose of avoiding the unpleasing and intrusive object.

Of course, this harshness reacted upon her, and the stage that next ensued was

still more critical. The disappointed and neglected wife became angry ; complaints that grew louder, and reproaches that gained bitterness from day to day and from week to week, alienated and disgusted the thoughtless husband in proportion to their violence, till at length he began to seek his pleasures and amusements where this persecution, as he deemed it, could not follow him. He made frequent journeys—sometimes to visit his friends in the provinces, sometimes to Paris on business ; and as in those days the nobility of France were bound to serve with the army at certain intervals, as vassals to the Crown, he sometimes stayed away months together on the plea of performing this duty.

In the meantime, Madame de Châteauroux passed her life in alternations of solitude and society. Sometimes she would shut herself up, and refuse to see any one, whilst she mourned over the suspected infidelities and

real neglect of her Lothario ; and at others she plunged into a vortex of company, in order to dissipate her *ennui*, and banish the recollection of her disappointment. But, of course, the world found easily the key to all these inconsistencies. It was known that the *ménage* of the Châteauroux was a very unhappy one ; their squabbles and their reconciliations formed the subject of frequent discussion amongst their acquaintance, and in due course of time their domestic dissensions had become matters of such notoriety, that the names of the ill-matched pair was in everybody's mouth, high and low, and at length had grown to be a proverb and a by-word in the country.

Under these circumstances, it may readily be conceived that the Count's absences grew longer, and his visits shorter ; and that when he did come home, his reception was not such as to induce him to remain there. Indeed, the Countess, whose jealousy and irri-

tation rendered her careless of what she said, did not scruple to aver that she was quite sure he never would come home at all, if it were not that he wanted money; and perhaps she was not far wrong, for certain it was, that M. de Francoeur, Madame de Châteauroux's agent, intimated by frequent hints and insinuations, that the Count's drafts upon the revenue were increasing to a very serious amount.

They had been married about five or six years, and affairs had reached the unpleasant position we have described, when one evening, about nine o'clock, the Countess being at table with a party of friends, whom she was entertaining at supper, the gate bell rang, and through the open window of the saloon the sound of a horse's foot was heard upon the gravel. The Countess turned pale, the guests looked at each other; there was a rush of servants to the hall; and before any one at the table had broken the ominous silence, the door



of the saloon was thrown open, and the chamberlain announced "Monsieur le Comte !" Of course everybody rose to greet the master of the house—everybody but the Countess, who sat still, affecting indifference, but in reality struggling betwixt joy and resentment ; for in spite of all his misdemeanours, she loved him still, and in her heart was glad to see him ; but, as is unfortunately the custom of ladies on similar occasions, she appeared exactly the reverse. In short, no reception could be more ungracious, and the spectators of the scene very generally came to the conclusion, that, if that were the welcome he met with at home, he could scarcely be blamed for staying away from it.

However, he on his part seemed to take no notice of his wife's demeanour. Having silently saluted her, and exchanged a few words with those of the party he was best acquainted with, he took his seat at the table, and endeavoured, by maintaining the current

of conversation, to set the company at ease. But it was in vain. This very attempt at cheerfulness and sociality only irritated his wife the more. She interpreted every smile into insult, and even her good breeding could scarcely control the ferment of her feelings from bursting into words ; till at length her lowering brow and ominous silence having completely defeated every attempt at resuscitating the conviviality of the meeting, the embarrassed visitors, alarmed at the incandescence, and dreading that, if they did not hasten their departure, they might not escape the conflagration, suddenly called for their carriages, and wishing the unfortunate couple—what they had little hopes of their enjoying—a *very good night*, they drove away from the door, under the full persuasion that, before they reached the park gates, this ill-suppressed rage would explode into open quarrel.

And they were right. A quarrel there

was, as it afterwards appeared; and many high words were overheard by the servants. For two hours after the company had departed, the angry voices of the unhappy pair resounded through the silent house—the tones of the lady loud and passionate; those of the gentleman bitter and contemptuous; whilst the listening menials, half awed and half amused, sat exchanging significant glances in the hall. At length the dispute seemed to have reached its climax; chairs were pushed back, the door of the saloon opened, and the husband and wife were heard to come out of the room. Upon this the Countess's maid arose and prepared to attend her mistress up stairs; whilst one of the men accompanied her to wait upon the Count. As they advanced along the passage which led to the foot of the great staircase, they paused a moment to allow the disputants to ascend before them; and as the Countess laid her hand on the latch of her own door, they

distinctly heard her bid her husband beware ! *for that ere long she would find a means of vengeance he little thought of, and he should be made to feel the consequences of ill-treating a woman of her rank and condition.* The Count made her a short and contemptuous answer, and then, turning in a different direction, entered his chamber, and closed the door.

The two servants now ascended the stairs, and having performed their respective offices, retired. The maid Clarice observed that the countenance of her mistress bore an expression of concentrated rage ; her cheeks were pale, her lips compressed, her eyes fixed ; and she was so wrapt in intense abstraction as to be apparently unconscious of the girl's presence. Mechanically, and in silence, she submitted to the accustomed operations of the *coucher*—and the *coucher* of a French Countess of that period, as well as the *lever*, was a very elaborate affair—ever and anon

drawing a long, slow respiration from her over-charged breast, raising her clenched fist to her closed lips, or pressing the points of her jewelled fingers firmly upon her brow, as if her brain laboured with some portentous thought—a birth too monstrous to take on a definite shape.

Impressed with the demeanour of her mistress, Clarice felt too much awed to interrupt her meditations even by the accustomed *Bon soir, Madame!* And when her service was accomplished, and she had closed the door as silently as she could, she stept along the vestibule on the points of her toes, and shut herself into her own chamber, using as much precaution to avoid any sound that might break upon the stillness of the night, as do the watchers of the dying or the dead.

The behaviour of the Count during the attendance of his servant Morel was different. His countenance exhibited little trace of

disturbance, and his behaviour none of abstraction. He asked a few questions about general matters, gave some orders for the next day, and desired to have breakfast in his study at an earlier hour than usual, as he expected his agent to be with him on business. "You had better call me at nine," said he; "and if the morning is chilly, make a fire in the stove."

"Oui, Monsieur," answered Morel, as he closed the door and retired to bed, wondering that his mistress could not contrive to live on better terms with so agreeable a gentleman.

From that moment the Count de Châteauroux disappeared from the castle. When Morel went to call him on the following morning, he was not in his chamber; when he inquired for him below, nobody had seen him; and though the fire was lighted in the study, and the breakfast prepared at the appointed hour, still the Count did not

appear. They sought him in the grounds, and rang the great bell of the tower to advertise him that breakfast waited, but still he came not ; and after waiting a reasonable time, the agent, M. de Francœur, who, according to appointment had come to breakfast with him, having taken a cup of coffee, went away, desiring the servants to let him know when their master returned. But hour after hour passed ; the afternoon, and evening, and night came, and nothing was heard of him ; and then the servants began to look strangely in each other's faces. Clarice remembered the singular deportment of her mistress on the preceding evening, and Morel remarked that it was evident the Count had quitted his bed in haste, for the clothes had been thrown off with such violence, that they lay almost all on the floor at the foot of it.

When the second day passed without any intelligence of their master, their wonder and amazement were proportionally augmented ;

but when not only days but weeks had elapsed, without any solution of the mystery, strange murmurs began to circulate amongst them. Morel and Clarice ventured to whisper that the sheet which lay on the floor had been stained with blood ; and the latter declared that, having laid her hand on the balustrade as she descended the stairs on the following morning, she had been struck with horror at observing marks of blood upon it. Then they combined with these circumstances the Countess's long discontent, her uncontrollable irritation on the night of her husband's return, together with the parting threat overheard by Clarice and Morel ; and as their suspicions grew stronger their voices grew louder—till, ere long, these hints reaching the outside of the castle, they gradually extended beyond the domain and dependents, and began to circulate amongst the public. Next, the authorities heard of them ; still for some time the rank and character of the



Countess were looked upon as a sufficient guarantee of her innocence; but the public voice grew louder and louder, the Count's family began to stir in the affair, and at length some of its members waited on the Countess, and begged to know what she could tell them in regard to her husband's strange disappearance.

Madame de Châteauroux answered that she saw nothing strange in the matter, and that she could not conceive why anybody else should. The Count had long been in the habit of leaving her for weeks, and sometimes months, during which intervals he never wrote to her; and that, in short, she did not suppose he would ever return to her at all, if it were not that he wanted money.

"When his funds are exhausted he will come, no doubt; and in the meantime I can give you no information about him."

This was the sum of all they could extract from her; and when they gave her to under-

stand that they were not satisfied, and that further means must be taken to elucidate the mystery, she only smiled, and seeming utterly unconcerned, told them they were welcome to take any means they pleased.

On the day succeeding this visit, intelligence reached the castle that the authorities were about to institute further proceedings; and on the ensuing night, Morel and Clarice fled, at least they were nowhere to be found; and the Countess took refuge with her friends. When the officers arrived, there was therefore nobody to take into custody; but after examining the premises and interrogating the servants, they went away, fully persuaded that Madame de Châteauroux had murdered her husband in the night, and that Clarice and Morel had been her accomplices. It is true, that these two people had been her principal accusers, and that all the other witnesses gave them up as their authority. They had undoubtedly made very indiscreet use

of their tongues ; but the wary officers looked upon this apparent indiscretion as a cunning manœuvre to divert suspicion from themselves ; and certain it was that their flight told more severely against their mistress than their evidence could have done.

So powerfully indeed did this circumstance operate against her, that in spite of the great exceptions and consideration afforded by the Legislature at that period to persons of rank and condition, Madame de Châteauroux was pursued to the house of her brother, M. de la Rive, and in spite of her own declarations of innocence, and the indignant protestations of her family, she was there arrested and conveyed in her own carriage to the prison of Arles ; whilst the public gossip was to the effect, that Madame de Châteauroux had not only murdered her husband in his sleep, but that, in order to conceal her crime, she had also made away with the principal witnesses against her, Clarice and Morel.

## CHAPTER II.

WE left Madame de Châteauroux in prison ; and as, in the very anomalous state of French judicature at that period, the production of the *corpus delicti*, in trials for murder, was not held necessary to conviction, the step from the prison to the scaffold was often a very short one ; whilst it not unfrequently happened that after the supposed criminal was dead, the supposed victim was found to be alive ; and had the suspected offender in the present instance been an unconnected and obscure person instead of the

Countess of Châteauroux, there is little doubt but that she would soon have been beyond the reach of help ; but as it was, her family and friends rallied around her in considerable force, and, by their influence, obtained that the trial should be delayed till they had had time to ascertain what had become of her husband.

The public journals, with their immense circulation, which now afford such facilities to people who wish to recover their lost friends, or to conjure them, if they do not mean to return themselves, “ to send back the key of the tea-chest,” did not then exist, and, consequently, an inquiry of this description was one of time and difficulty ; but as the lady was wealthy, and their honour as well as their affections involved in the result, no expense was spared nor any means neglected that the machinery of society then furnished for the discovery of the missing gentleman ; but their efforts were vain ; no

traces of him could be detected, dead or alive. And now the friends and connections of the Count began to raise their voices and to insist impatiently that the trial should no longer be delayed ; and their declamations were, perhaps, the louder that their regrets for their relative were somewhat aggravated by personal considerations. They were poor ; the Count was the only wealthy member of the family, and, therefore, the only one to whom each could refer for aid in his occasional extremities ; and as he was a good-natured, liberal young man, he had not turned a deaf ear to their applications. In consequence, therefore, of their interference, the proceedings were at length resumed and pushed forward with so much vigour, that a conviction was obtained, and Madame de Châteauroux was condemned to die, after being first submitted to the rack for the purpose of extracting a confession.

The grief and dismay of her adherents

may be easily conceived ; couriers were despatched to her two brothers, who were still travelling over France in search of the Count, to desire their immediate return ; whilst numbers of the most considerable gentlemen and ladies of Languedoc crowded into Arles from their respective châteaux, in order to lend their countenance and support to the unhappy Countess and her family, and at the same time to gratify their own love of excitement by witnessing so rare a spectacle as the execution of a lady of quality. The preparations for this sad ceremony were commensurate with the rank of the criminal and the interest of the public. Scaffolds were erected, enormous prices were paid for windows, and the commandant of the garrison was ordered to hold his troops in readiness in case there should appear any symptoms of an *émeute* or a rescue on the part of the De la Rive faction.

Two days before that fixed for the execu-

tion arrived M. Eugène de la Rive, the Countess's youngest brother. He was in a state of violent agitation, indignantly arraigned what he called the precipitancy of the proceedings against his sister, which he openly attributed to the malice and undue influence of the opposite party, and authoritatively demanded a respite for the purpose of affording him time to memorialize the King. But his demand was refused, upon the plea that there had already been abundance of time allowed for any such applications, and that the march of justice, as the French call it, could no longer be impeded. He was admitted to see his sister, who again, standing on the brink of the grave, declared that she was entirely innocent of the crime imputed to her, and utterly ignorant of the fate of her husband.

“My own conviction,” she said, “is, that in spite of all appearances, he is not dead, and that the intelligence of these proceedings



has never reached him, or I am sure he would have instantly appeared to justify me. He has probably left the country !”

M. de la Rive, on the contrary, leant to the opinion that the Count had committed suicide, although the strict search that had been made for his body in the neighbourhood of the castle scarcely left any grounds for that conjecture.

The eve of the fatal day had now arrived, and they were hourly expecting the Countess's eldest brother, M. Adolphe, when, towards midnight, the sleeping citizens were disturbed by the sound of a horse's feet clattering at full speed over the pavement, and it occurred to many who heard the noise that the rider was probably a courier bringing a respite from the Crown ; and this appeared the more probable, as the horseman never drew his rein till he reached the Hotel de Ville, where he alighted, and having given an authoritative pull at the bell was presently

admitted. In less than half an hour after this, the chief jailor was roused from his slumbers by a summons to conduct the prefect to Madame de Châteauroux's cell. Lights were procured, the heavy keys clanked through the vaulted passages, the door was thrown open, and the poor lady, who was stretched on the couch in an agony of grief and terror, was informed that a letter had just arrived from M. Adolphe, saying that he had found her husband, whom a long and severe illness had kept in ignorance of all that had occurred—that they were following the courier with as much speed as his infirm health would permit, and that they hoped to be at Arles on the following morning.

Here was a happy reverse! Here was a redemption at the eleventh hour from a cruel torture and an ignominious death. The joy of the Countess and her friends, to whom intelligence of the happy event was immediately despatched, we need not dilate upon.

If she before could not sleep for grief, neither could she now sleep for joy; and although the prefect could not open her prison doors till the actual arrival of the Count, her sympathizing visitors were permitted to stay with her, and the remainder of the night was passed in mutual congratulations on her unexpected escape.

The glad tidings soon spread over the city, and, at an early hour in the morning, the people began to collect in such numbers about the gate of the prison, that it was thought necessary to call out the troops; and such was the excitement and eagerness of the crowd, when, about nine o'clock, the sound of rapidly revolving wheels announced the approach of the expected carriage, that without the aid of the military, the travellers would not have been able to alight for the dense mass that surrounded them. Everybody pressed forward to get a sight of the hero of this strange romance, which, as the

blinds were closely drawn down, nobody could obtain, till a space being cleared by the soldiers, he had an opportunity of alighting. Then, on the door being opened, there descended two gentlemen ; the first was M. Adolphe de la Rive, the second M. de Châteauroux ; at least so the spectators rather concluded then saw, for he was wrapt in a large cloak, and so muffled that very little of his face was visible. What they saw of it looked very pale, and he appeared extremely feeble, M. de la Rive aiding him to descend and giving him his arm, as to a person unable to support himself without assistance.

As those who were near enough to get a view of his features assured the rest that it was the right man, the mob was satisfied ; and as the prison doors closed upon him, they saluted him with a hearty cheer. Nor did they then all disperse ; many who were not imperatively called away by business still

lingered on the spot, in hopes of seeing the lady and her husband emerge from the fortress and depart in triumph ; but to avoid the annoyance of public observation, their departure was deferred till midnight ; and it was not till the shops were closed, and the streets empty, that the emancipated lady and her recovered husband stepped into their carriage, and were conveyed to their château, where the servants, apprised of their approach, were prepared to receive them.

Two days afterwards they removed to Rémy, another estate belonging to the Countess, situated at some distance from the one they had hitherto resided at ; and it was understood that the indisposition of the Count obliged them for the present to decline all visits and live in retirement. For some weeks this strange story furnished a very agreeable subject of gossip to the good people of Languedoc ; but in process of time, like all other wonders, its interest died away, and

the adventures of the Count and Countess of Châteauroux were forgotten in some later event.

But this impunity did not last long. By-and-by a new rumour began to circulate amongst the public, and it was whispered from one to another that the gentleman produced by M. de la Rive was not the real Count, but a supposititious one, who had been bribed by the lady's family to personate him for the purpose of saving her life. At all events, it appeared that M. de Châteauroux's own family positively refused to acknowledge the individual now living in the castle as their relation ; and, moreover that Madame de Châteauroux's behaviour gave great colour to the suspicion that all was not right. It was not simply that she did not inhabit the same chamber—that French people frequently do not—but the indifference she displayed towards him was wholly unlike what her demeanour to her husband had formerly

been. In short, there were no quarrels ; she was never heard to reproach him with his previous neglect, nor with his last cruel departure ; and the servants affirmed that they seldom met but at table.

Then, as his health improved, and visitors were admitted, the people who went to pay their respects and congratulations began to talk too. Some said it *was* M. de Châteauroux ; some, that it was not. The latter declared that the present occupant of the castle was a smaller man, that the voice was not the voice of the young Count ; and that his accent was that of the northern provinces of France. The other party answered, that a man who had had an illness of two years' duration, which was said to have been the cause of his prolonged absence, would naturally be very much altered in appearance, and possibly somewhat in voice ; and that as for the accent, they had always remarked that the Count had a peculiar mode of

speaking, which they supposed he might have acquired from his mother, who had been a native of Normandy.

But whilst the visitors and the servants, and the public, were discussing this question of identity, the family of M. de Châteauroux filed an information against the stranger as an impostor ; and against M. de la Rive, as his aider and abettor ; demanding that the former should be arrested, and that Madame de Châteauroux should be again arraigned for the murder of her husband—a crime of which they were more than ever persuaded she was guilty.

But M. de la Rive had influential connections, and it was not easy to induce the authorities to offer him and his family such an affront without surer grounds to go upon. So—in order, if possible, to satisfy one party, without rashly bringing themselves into difficulties with the other—they set on foot some private inquiries and investigations, which



they hoped might enable them to see their way before them. But the evidence was so conflicting that this was no easy matter. Almost as many were of one opinion as of the other, whilst amongst those best qualified to decide the question, the parties were also balanced—the De la Rives as vigorously supporting the pretender as the De Châteauroux opposed him. With respect to the lady herself, her verbal evidence was scarcely considered of any weight—she was too much interested in the decision; whilst her tacit and involuntary testimony was said by her opponents to be all against herself.

But there was one witness whose evidence was looked upon as so important, that it was held by the authorities sufficient to strike the balance in favour of Madame de Châteauroux—this was M. de Franceur, the agent or factor on the estate.

He swore point-blank that the gentleman whose identity they were disputing was M.

de Châteauroux, and nobody else ; and that he was not only assured of it from recognition of his person, but from repeated conversations, wherein past circumstances and transactions were alluded to, which no other person whatever but himself, and the Count, could by any possibility be acquainted with.

Now, M. de Francœur's character was considered above all suspicion ; he was universally looked upon as a most respectable man, who would not give false testimony upon any subject whatever ; and this was a case in which he could hardly be mistaken, whilst no conceivable reason could be adduced for his violating the truth, unless it were devotion to the Countess ; but since it was understood that they had not been lately on the best of terms, such a sacrifice was considered improbable. According to the lady's opinion, M. de Francœur was somewhat accessory to the Count's irregularities,

from the facility with which he answered his demands for money ; so that, although she entertained a very high esteem for his character in general, they were by no means cordial. The great weight, therefore, attached to the agent's assertions, satisfied the authorities, who consequently declined further interference ; and whilst the public continued, ever and anon, to discuss the question, M. and Madame de Châteauroux lived on quietly and harmoniously together, receiving few people, and going little into society.

But still the Count's family persisted in their protest, and held themselves aloof from the impostor, as they called him ; whilst the lady and her friends affected to treat their objections with contempt, referring them to motives of private enmity and interest, and making such other allegations as tended to account for these discrepant opinions, and vindicate their own cause and characters.

One concession, however, they did make, for the purpose of conciliating public opinion, which was, that they returned to the residence they had previously inhabited; their enemies having taken advantage of their removal from their former neighbourhood and the retirement in which they lived, to strengthen their own cause, alleging that the motive of this violation was evidently the desire to avoid the inquisitorial eyes that might detect their fraud. So they came back to Arles, and being immediately visited by every creature who could advance the slightest claims to their acquaintance, each with the view of gratifying his own curiosity, the dispute with respect to the Count's identity was naturally revived, and that with so much heat and acrimony, that there is no saying what might be the consequence, had not the Count and Countess bethought themselves of giving a grand ball and *fête champêtre*, to which all the persons of any

distinction or pretensions within their reach were invited—an expedient which proved entirely successful; for certain it was, that the sight of the cards they issued on this occasion had a perfectly magical effect upon the opinions of those who received them; and as no expense was spared to render the entertainment brilliant and agreeable, it is needless to say that these favourable impressions were much fortified. A series of pleasant parties, *déjeûners* at noon, and *soirées dansantes* at night, confirmed them; and it was not long before the innocence of the Countess, and the identity of the Count were pretty generally admitted by everybody, except the relations of the latter (who refused to be appeased by these hospitalities, or even to accept them), and a few persons of uncertain position, who had not been included in the invitations, and who felt themselves grievously affronted by the omission.

Public opinion was thus pretty well gained over, or at least, the public voice was silenced; the only remarks that were now indulged in being occasional sly little sarcasms on the Count's manners, or rather his want of *usage*; for his demeanour was always modest, obliging, and inoffensive; but it was whispered amongst this elegant and fastidious aristocracy that he frequently exhibited an ignorance of the customs of good society that was truly marvellous in a person of his birth. However, he had his defenders too; and these affirmed that the manners of the Count de Châteauroux were always exactly as they were now, and, moreover, that they were just what his father's had been. All these foolish observations and strictures, they said, merely arose out of his peculiar position, and the closeness with which his behaviour was watched—a degree of unpleasant surveillance that nobody could endure unscathed.

One thing was certain, namely, that the habits and character of the Count were extremely changed. His roving propensities seemed quite cured ; he never quitted his home now, even for a day ; and, as the lady's partizans suggested, there was little justice in the objection that the husband and wife had ceased to quarrel—the fact being, that the cause of quarrel no longer existed.

This state of affairs had lasted upwards of eighteen months, when one fine morning it was discovered, to the surprise of every body, that M. de Châteauroux, weary of his good behaviour, had again vanished. His room was found empty ; this time, his bed had not been lain in at all ; and he had taken nothing with him but the clothes he wore.

It was now definitively settled that he had either some *liaison* that lured him from home, or that he was the victim of temporary fits of insanity.

There was no suspicion of foul play now and instead of injuring the lady, his departure was of great service to her. It was held to be a triumphant proof of his identity and of her innocence, which was no longer disputed. She bore his absence with perfect equanimity ; and everybody said that he would no doubt reappear when he had recovered his senses, or was tired of roving.

But months flew away, till months became years ; and it began to be apprehended that neither of these desirable consummations were likely to ensue. Whether from lunacy or licentiousness, it was feared that the Count de Châteauroux had abandoned his home for ever. Little children grew to be men and women, and the middle-aged became old, and still he came not ; and at length Madame de Châteauroux herself fell sick, and, after an illness of some weeks' duration—died ; and was buried with all the honours due to her rank and fortune.



On her death-bed, she had a long interview with her confessor, and there arose many and strange reports as to what she had confessed ; but, of course, no one could know the truth on that subject but the reverend father himself.

But even now the interest of the public in this affair was not suffered to die away ; for as soon as the lady was laid in her grave, the question arose on whom her estate devolved. If her husband lived, it was his for the term of his " natural life," as the lawyers have it ; if he were dead, it reverted to Madame de Châteauroux's family.

Now the De Châteauroux, who had before asserted so pertinaciously that he had been murdered, suddenly became equally confident that he was alive ; whilst the De la Rives, with nearly equal inconsistency, declared their conviction that he was dead ; and as it was found impossible to come to any agreement.

between themselves on the subject, they had recourse to the law, which, whilst it consumed the revenues of the estate, seemed little likely to settle the question.

## CHAPTER III.

THE suit between these contending interests had lasted upwards of twelve years, several of the parties concerned in it were dead, and amongst the rest the Countess's elder brother—that M. Adolphe de la Rive who had saved her life by so critically producing her husband—and still the truth of the affair was as much in the clouds as ever. Amongst the survivors, the one to whom the decision was now most important, was M. Eugène de la Rive, the second brother of the

Countess, for he had several children, and was not rich. Madame de Châteauroux's large fortune had descended to her from her aunt, and the other members of the family were by no means wealthy.

As time advanced, and there appeared no prospect of obtaining a verdict one way or the other, this gentlemen felt very desirous of coming to a compromise with the adverse party, an expedient which he had several times suggested, but which had always been vehemently opposed by M. de Francœur, the agent, who urged the folly of giving up a part when ultimately he must inevitably obtain the whole; and as M. de Francœur had a personal interest in the question, he had hitherto, by his strong representations, succeeded in dissuading M. Eugène from what would have been considered by most people a very judicious proceeding. This interest arose from the probability of a marriage taking place betwixt a daughter of the agent and M. Eugène's youngest son.

The young people had been long attached; and although such a connection was somewhat of a *mésalliance* for the son of a noble, yet the father did not seem inclined to forbid it. He had a large family to provide for, and M. de Francœur having been very fortunate in some, as it was understood, rather hazardous speculations, had contrived to amass a good deal of money, and was now the possessor of one of the finest estates in Languedoc. He was, moreover, remotely connected with the De la Rive family, and M. Eugène had a particular regard for him, De Francœur having once, when they were both young men, saved him from drowning at the risk of his own life; and altogether, being of an easy, liberal temper, though he had never yet formally given his consent, the young people had happily proceeded with their courtship, countenanced by De Francœur, and not discouraged by De la Rive. The agent's opinion had thus very considerable weight with

M. Eugène, especially as he was universally considered to be a man of wonderful sagacity and knowledge of business, qualities of which his prosperity was a standing testimony. He was now rich, although he had begun the world with nothing.

Under these circumstances, it surprised nobody that M. de Francœur's opinions had always been coincident with the wishes and interests of the De la Rive family. He had formerly stoutly asserted his conviction that M. de Châteauroux was alive, and that the pretender, as the adverse faction called him, was he. He now maintained with equal pertinacity that M. de Châteauroux was dead. He did not deny that "the pretender" had been the real M. de Châteauroux; at least, he said he had believed so, although he could not but admit that some circumstances during the latter part of his residence in the castle had somewhat shaken his opinion; but whether he had been right or wrong on that

occasion, he was now quite certain that the Count no longer existed; and having been called upon in the course of the law-suit to allege his reasons for his conviction, he answered, that whenever M. de Châteauroux was absent from home, he had always been in the habit of sending to him for money. "This custom was invariable," said he, "and, indeed, how could it be otherwise, when he had no other means of living, but what he derived from the proceeds of the estate?"

The only time the Count had ever failed to do this, he averred, was when he had the first time suddenly disappeared from his chamber, and that circumstance, together with the fact that he had never received any application for funds since, not only satisfied him that M. de Châteauroux was dead, but considerably augmented his doubts concerning the so-called pretender; and as it was well known that the Count had no resources but what were derived from his wife's

property, this argument was not without weight with the legal authorities.

Affairs had been some time in this position, when M. Eugène, finding that as his family grew up, the demands on his pocket became more frequent, and the importance of a final arrangement more urgent, arrived one afternoon at the château, and summoned M. de Franceur to a conference. Ever since the Countess's death, the house had remained under the care of the agent, and untenanted except by the old *concierge* and his wife, who opened the windows and kept it aired. One room only was in habitable order, and that was a small one, which had formerly been the Count's study, or room of business. It adjoined the *salon*, and contained nothing but a writing-table and chairs, except books and a full-length portrait of Count Joachim de Châteauroux, the father of the last Count, attired in a mulberry-coloured suit of clothes, short cloak,



and black stockings. A glass door led from the *salon* to a fine terrace which overlooked the park, and here M. de la Rive, with his mind intent upon the affair that had brought him to Arles, paced backwards and forwards till the agent arrived. When he did, he re-entered the *salon* by the glass door which they left open, and proceeded to the study, where, having seated themselves at the table, they opened their conference by inspecting and comparing certain letters and papers appertaining to the cause, which De Francœur had brought with him.

“I am resolved,” said M. de la Rive, “to put an end to this ruinous suit if any reasonable sacrifice can do it. I agree with you in entertaining no doubt of the Count’s death; but what signifies that to us if we cannot prove it, which it is clear we never shall be able to do? I would rather accept one-third of the property, and let the Châteauroux

have the rest, than pursue the thing any further."

As was his custom when similar propositions were offered, M. de Francœur shook his head, and observed that it would be making a terrible sacrifice.

"No doubt," replied De la Rive, "but a part is less than the whole, and if we do not come to some arrangement, the entire property will be swallowed up by the suit; so that, even if we could obtain a verdict, by-and-by it will be of no use—there would be nothing left to inherit."

"If his death could only be substantiated!" said the agent, speaking rather to himself than to his companion.

"Ay, if it could! But it cannot," replied the latter. "There is the misfortune! If we could only find out what became of the two servants, Clarice and Morel, perhaps they might throw some light on the mystery!"

"They are probably dead," returned De Francœur ; " besides, if we could find them, who knows which way their evidence might turn—it might be exactly the reverse of what we wish."

"Very well, let it be so!" answered De la Rive, who was a man of high principle ; " let it be so ! All I desire to get at is the fact of whether Châteauroux is dead or alive. If he is alive, let him take the estates—they are his for his life, beyond a doubt ; but in the meantime it is very hard that neither one party nor the other can enjoy them, whilst the property itself is melting away in the heat of the dispute ;—but who is that in the next room ? I hear a foot, and I believe we left the window open to the terrace ; just see who it is."

There was indeed a creaking of shoes, and the sound of a heavy firm step, which seemed to be crossing the saloon towards the study. M. de Francœur rose and turned to

open the door; but before he could do so, it was done by a hand on the other side.

“ Ah ! M. de Francoeur, I think ! ” said an elderly gentleman, advancing into the room with his hat in his hand ; “ in spite of the years that have elapsed since we parted, you are still recognisable.”

Whilst the stranger was uttering these words with the calmest countenance, the most gracious smile, and the most complaisant and self-possessed air imaginable, M. de la Rive sat still in his chair, with his mouth open and his dilated eyes fixed upon him, whilst his right hand, which held a pinch of snuff, suspended half-way betwixt the snuff-box and his nose, denoted extreme surprise. On M. de Francoeur the sudden apparition of this visitor had a still more powerful effect ; the moment he caught sight of him, his limbs seemed to fail, and he had staggered back against the wall, where he now stood with his face of an ashy pale-

ness, his eyes fixed with a wild and ghastly stare upon the stranger, and his whole attitude and expression denoting as much horror as amazement, whilst the occasion of this extraordinary disturbance stood composedly awaiting what was to follow.

The first person that made an effort to break the charm that bound him was M. de la Rive, who deliberately turned his head and directed his eyes towards the picture of Count Joachim that hung over the mantelpiece.

"Nay, I am no ghost," said the stranger, addressing the agent, "though," added he, as he turned to M. de la Rive, "time has, I believe, made me somewhat resemble my father."

"I was looking if the picture had stepped out of its frame," replied De la Rive, rising. "Is it possible I see M. de Châteauroux?" continued he, as he advanced towards the stranger.

"I have scarcely a right to be surprised at your asking the question," returned the latter; "so many years have elapsed since we met. I have the pleasure of addressing M. Adolphe de la Rive, I think?"

"I am Eugène," answered De la Rive; "my brother Adolphe is dead. But where, in the name of Heaven, have you been all these years?"

"Ah, that would be a long history," replied the old gentleman, smiling, as he took his seat at the table without appearing further to notice M. de Francœur's demeanour; "we must keep it for more leisure moments; but, tell me—relieve my impatience—how is my wife?"

"Are you not aware that my sister is dead?" answered De la Rive, with an air of astonishment.

"Dead!" reiterated the stranger, covering his face with his hands; "dead, before I have had the opportunity of asking her

pardon for my long desertion. Alas ! poor, poor Sophie !”

“ Long, indeed !” returned De la Rive. “ But if you did not choose to return, why in Heaven’s name did you never write ? Knowing the peril your first desertion entailed upon my sister, it was surely monstrous to do the same thing again, and never take the trouble of ascertaining the consequences to her nor to us !”

“ My first desertion !” repeated the Count. “ Peril to my wife ! What first desertion ? What peril do you allude to ?”

“ How !” exclaimed De la Rive ; “ then it really was not you that my brother brought from Paris the night before my sister was to have been executed ?”

“ You speak in riddles !” said the Count. “ Your sister executed ! What can you possibly mean ?”

“ I mean that in consequence of your unaccountable disappearance, and some ap-

parently corroborating circumstances, your wife was accused of having made away with you ; and that she was only preserved from an ignominious death by my brother's producing you on the very evening preceding the day that was to have been her last."

"Producing me !" reiterated the Count. "How could he produce me ? I do not understand you."

"Why, if it was not yourself, he produced your double," answered the other ; "for although some people disputed the identity, the person my brother brought was generally received as the Count de Châteauroux."

"This is really a most extraordinary story !" said the Count ; "but surely you were not deceived, De Francœur ?" added he, turning towards the agent, who had never resumed his seat, but still stood with his back against the wall, where his first surprise had thrown him, although with a different expression of countenance to that he then ex-



hibited. The terror that had disturbed his features had now given place to an air of contemptuous incredulity; his lip curled, and his nostrils arched, as in reply to the Count's question, he said that, "If he had been deceived once, he would take care not to be duped a second time."

"Why, no," answered the Count, with a careless smile, "*cela serait trop fort!*—that would be too much!"

He then addressed his conversation to M. de la Rive, making many inquiries respecting their mutual friends and relations, and asking especially the most minute particulars regarding the latter days, and the death of the Countess—a circumstance he appeared sincerely to lament.

In this sort of discourse the evening wore on, till, as it grew late, the Count remarked that it was time for him to consider where he should sleep. "Are there any beds prepared here?" he inquired.

"None," replied De la Rive; "I intend to mount my horse and ride back to town, and you had better go with me; you will find a bed at the inn."

"Why, I suppose I must," answered the Count, "unless M. de Francoeur will lodge me for to night. To-morrow I will set people to work to put things in order here; and as soon as I am established, De la Rive, I hope you will come and make this your home for some time, as we have a great deal to say to each other, and a good deal of business to discuss."

M. de la Rive bowed, and appeared tacitly to accept this invitation; and indeed it was remarkable, that, so far from seeming to participate in M. de Francoeur's scepticism, he had rushed into the opposite extreme; as if, by an excess of confidence on his own part, he had sought to counterbalance the insulting incredulity of the other.

The agent's immediate response to the

Count's request of a night's lodging was only a disdainful smile ; but presently, seeming to recollect himself, he changed his attitude for the first time, and, advancing a step or two, he said, " I have a bed at your service."

" Well, then," said the Count with easy gaiety, " I think, as it is getting late, we had better adjourn for to-night. We will first see you mount your horse, De la Rive, and then De Francoeur and I will walk to Beau-lieu," which was the name of the agent's residence. " By the bye, I must speak a few words to the *concierge* before I go," added he. " I suppose I shall see him in the lodge as we pass;" and thereupon, the Count taking the precedence, they went forth to where M. de la Rive's horses and groom were standing ; and the equestrians having mounted their steeds, the whole party proceeded towards the lodge. At the gate, ready to open it, and eager to salute the brother of their former mistress, stood the *concierge* and his wife, on

observing which De la Rive drew his rein to speak to them.

"Well, Martin, how is your rheumatism this year?" he asked.

"But indifferent please your honour," answered Martin; "and I doubt it will never be better. Old age and the rheumatics are friends that, when they have once met, seldom part till death divides them. I hope your honour and the young lords and ladies are all well?" added Martin with his best bow; but before his obeisance was completed, and he had time to recover the perpendicular, he was startled by a loud scream from his wife, and, on looking round, he saw the old woman with her face as white as her apron, leaning against the gate-post. Her arms were raised in an attitude of astonishment, and her eyes fixed upon the newly-arrived Count: and no sooner had the husband turned his in the same direction, in order to discover the cause of her agitation, than he became equally disturbed.

Nor was this to be wondered at. The features and the person of the Count not only bore the most striking resemblance to the picture of Count Joachim, but his dress was precisely the same ; so that the worthy unsophisticated couple, who were perfectly familiar with the portrait, thought nothing less than that it had really come to life, and walked out of its frame, as De la Rive had jestingly insinuated. When an explanation ensued—an explanation in which, however, M. de Francoeur took no part—though less terrified, they were scarcely less surprised ; and no sooner had the gentleman left them than, after sundry ejaculations of wonder and thanksgiving, the old man seized his hat and stick, and hobbled forth to carry the extraordinary news amongst the tenants, who one and all agreed, what a pity it was that the Countess had not survived to see that day !

In the meantime, whilst Martin was spreading the unexpected tidings over the

neighbourhood, and Madelon, his wife, much against her own will, was obliged to stay at home and relieve her excited mind by apostrophising the Countess's parrot (a bird that enjoyed an easy fortune of a hundred francs per annum, bequeathed to it by the Countess, who, at the same time, appointed this worthy couple its guardians), M. de la Rive rode thoughtfully forward to the city of Arles. He had reason to be thoughtful; for the re-appearance of his hale and healthy-looking brother-in-law removed him to a considerable distance from his sister's inheritance; and the projects he had for some time entertained for the advancement of his family must be laid aside for others more consistent with his means. The marriage of his son Ernest with De Francœur's daughter Alphonsine was perhaps now more desirable than he had formerly considered it; but, on the other hand, it was just possible that De Francœur might think otherwise; for the

agent, untitled as he was, had a *de* to his name, and was a gentleman by birth, though the road by which he had passed from poverty to wealth, being soiled by commerce, or something like it, had considerably damaged his pretensions.

With all the pride of poor nobility, De la Rive resolved to *take the initiative*, as the French have it, and to bid his son immediately relax his attentions till De Franceœur declared himself; and firm in this resolution, he rode into the town, where he found a crowd assembled round the inn door in consequence of the rumour having got abroad that M. de Châteauroux had arrived at the Lion d'Or, the same afternoon in a handsome carriage with four horses, and that, having taken a slight refreshment, without alighting or saying a word to anybody, he had driven forward in the direction of the château. He had no servant, the postilions had been perfectly silent, and moreover, had they been

otherwise, they could have given no information with respect to the traveller, of whom, on their return, they declared they knew nothing whatever, except that they had been engaged to drive him. He paid them liberally, and had sent them back to put up at the inn, finding the stables at the château quite unprovided. But the innkeeper himself had seen him whilst he was taking his coffee at the door, and so had several other persons ; and not one of them entertained a doubt of his being the long lost Count. On the appearance of M. de la Rive, the host and a few others who thought themselves entitled to question him, accompanied him to his chamber, and having communicated their own impressions with regard to the traveller, they had the gratification of hearing them confirmed. There was no doubt about the matter—the long lost Count de Châteauroux was come to light again, and had arrived to claim the estate.



That was a glorious night for the host of the Lion d'Or! What potations, pottle deep, were quaffed to the health and welcome of that prodigal husband! For, if in nothing else, there is one particular in which mankind is apt to resemble the angels; and as heaven rejoices more over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety and nine just persons, so does the world not unfrequently exalt a man into its hero for having simply left off behaving worse than other people; and thus the good people of Arles lavished more time and money in celebrating the return of this peccant Count, than they had ever done upon all the well-conducted Counts of Languedoc put together, who had been staying at home and attending to their conjugal duties, whilst he had been dissolutely wandering over the world and neglecting his. Gratitude, however, may have something to do with this peculiarity. Life is generally but a dull procession of

events ; and at Arles, as elsewhere, it was not unnatural to feel obliged to the man who had broken its monotony by such startling eccentricities and stirring interests. The news-hunters and the gossips might now consider themselves provisioned for a month's campaign at least; and it behoved the host of the Lion d'Or to count his wine casks, and see that his larder was well filled.

## CHAPTER IV.

IN the meantime, the hero of all this sensation had reached Beaulieu with M. de Francœur. When M. de la Rive rode away, the Count had quietly turned his steps in that direction, saying, "Now, I will have the pleasure of accompanying you ;" and the agent had silently acquiesced, and walked by his side.

"I hope Madame de Francœur still survives," said the Count.

"She does," returned the agent.

"Your children were but infants when I saw them," observed the first. The agent made no answer. "May I ask what family you have?" continued the Count.

"I have three daughters and one son," returned De Francœur, in an impatient, sulky tone.

"Any of them married?" inquired the Count, who did not appear at all affected by the ungracious demeanour of his companion, and who, in spite of the almost fierce negative granted to this question, pursued his interrogatories with the most entire composure.

"Ah, you have been building, I see, and making great improvements here," he observed, as they passed the farm where De Francœur had formerly resided. "I think, if I remember rightly, where I now see a garden there was formerly an orchard and a well?"

At this last observation, De Francœur

started, and looked hard at the Count. "That well, I see, no longer exists—where do you get your water now?"

"I opened another behind the house," answered the agent, with a voice that assumed indifference; but it was evident that something had given a shock to his nerves. This discomposure did not escape the Count, and he felt inclined to pursue the subject further, when the new residence came into view, and the appearance of an elderly lady on the door-steps interrupted the conversation.

"Ah, mon Dieu! mon Dieu!" exclaimed she, as she hastened towards them; "surely I cannot be mistaken—the person, the dress. It must be the Count de Châteauroux!"

"Madame de Franceœur, I presume," said the Count gallantly, taking her hand.

"Can it be possible?" said she; "returned after so many years' absence! I was at my

chamber window, and I recognised you the moment my eyes fell upon your figure."

"Yet years have made a great change in it, since you and I danced together at my wedding," said the Count. "You were then not married."

"Ah, that's true!" replied the lady. "However, you look wonderfully well for your age."

The Count, of course, returned the compliment, and thus they walked up the garden towards the house, whilst De Francœur quitted them and entered it, without uttering a word or even informing his wife that their visitor was to pass the night under their roof. However, the Count, whom nothing seemed to discompose or abash, took upon himself to apprise his hostess that her husband had been so kind as to promise him a night's hospitality—a communication that evidently afforded her great satisfaction; so having conducted him to the *salon*, and

introduced him to her daughters, she left them together, whilst she gave orders for the preparation of his chamber ; and so well did he contrive to please the young ladies, that when he retired to dress, two of them at least were voluble in his praises.

“ Oh, mamma,” said Mademoiselle Laure. “ I do not know what the Count was when he was young, but he is perfectly charming now.” Laure was the eldest of the girls by several years, and did not forget that this agreeable elderly gentleman was a widower ; a recollection to which her carefully studied *toilette*, when she appeared at dinner, bore lively testimony.

“ Do look at Laure !” said Alphonsine, “ dressing at that grey-headed old profligate in his chocolate coat ! How eminently ridiculous.”

“ Not if she admires him,” answered Rose ; “ I really think he is very agreeable. But you cannot view him indulgently, I

know, Alphonsine, and I do not wonder at it. His resuscitation, I fear, will be the grave of your hopes."

"I do not know," answered Alphonsine. "If papa is less willing, M. de la Rive will have fewer objections to the match. No, really I am disgusted with the utter selfishness and want of feeling he has evinced all through life. He made the misery of his excellent wife, and nearly caused her to suffer an ignominious death; and now that he is come back to suit his own convenience and finds her dead, he evidently does not care a sou about it; no, I cannot like such a man."

But in spite of the justness of these objections, it was not easy to retain fast hold of them in the Count's presence—his countenance was so open, his manner so frank, and they found his conversation at dinner so extremely entertaining. There was not so much travelling in those days as there is



now ; and as everybody that made a journey did not write a book about it, people who stayed at home knew much less of the world they did not see than we do. M. de Châteauroux, it appeared, had been a great traveller. He had not only crossed the Alps, but he had been to the east and to the west—could talk about those proud islanders who ate raw beef and vegetables boiled in water, which rendered them so savage that they had actually cut off the head of the most beautiful Queen in Europe ; and could relate how the women in the East, as soon as they were married, instead of enjoying that liberty that French maidens sigh for, were shut up in a harem for the rest of their lives, with nobody to admire them but their own tiresome husbands. Even Alphonsine's prejudices began to yield at last ; and when the ladies took their leave, and had retired to enjoy their nightly gossip, she scarcely disputed the justice of their laudations.

"But that papa does not like him," said she, "is very clear. He cannot pardon his unfeeling conduct, because he is agreeable and entertaining, if we can." And so indeed it appeared; for all the Count's addresses had been met by a dogged silence on the part of De Franceur, and now that the gentlemen were left alone, he still retained the same discontented and sullen expression of countenance, while on the other side of the table sat M. de Châteauroux, with an air of the most absolute comfort and complacence.

"I think I could name the vines that grew this wine," said he, raising the glass to his lips; "it has exactly the flavour of the Burgundy I used to get from Lecoque. By the bye, how are the cellars at the château filled? Has the stock been kept up?"

"Indifferently well," replied M. de Franceur, drily.

"I must have that looked into immediately," returned the Count, "as it is my

intention to reside here chiefly for the rest of my life."

"Indeed!" said De Francœur, lifting up his eyebrows with a peculiar expression of sarcasm.

"Yes, indeed," replied the Count. "I suppose you suspect that my roving propensities will be too strong for my resolutions. Is that the case, De Francœur? You think I shall be off again?"

Whereupon M. de Francœur, turning slowly round upon his chair till he faced the Count, placing his two arms upon the table, and fixing his eyes upon those of his companion, answered with a firm and significant tone, "I do."

"You are mistaken, quite mistaken," returned the Count, with perfect good humour and equanimity; "years have brought experience. I see the folly of my past life; besides, age has changed my taste. I languish for repose and a little quiet society."

"Then I would advise you to seek them elsewhere," replied M. de Francœur, with uncontrollable irritation. "The jest is stale, sir," said he, turning away contemptuously; "it may have answered once—it won't do a second time."

"De Francœur," returned the Count, turning towards him a face of amazement, but still with the utmost suavity of voice, "you really surprise me; you don't mean to imply that you doubt my identity?"

"Your identity," echoed the agent, with an indescribable curl of the lip; "your identity! *Aux autres!* You may impose upon M. de la Rive, sir, but you cannot impose upon me; be assured of that."

"Well, this is really singular," said the Count, without the least appearance of displeasure—on the contrary, he laughed; "you believe an impostor when he comes here in my name, and you won't believe me now I am really before your eyes."

"*I never believed in the impostor, sir, any more than I believe in you now; but I countenanced the imposition for a time, for the sake of the Countess,*" answered De Francœur. "But that motive no longer exists, and I will not see her family defrauded of her estates by a scoundrel."

"Bravo!" said the Count, with an air of lively approbation. "You really charm me, De Francœur. You are acting exactly as you ought to do. Your doubts are extremely natural, and so far from blaming your caution, I admire it. It is certainly within the range of possibility that that fellow should have come here to try his luck a second time, and it would be too much to let him stand in my shoes for another eighteen months, wouldn't it? But never fear; I am the right man at last, depend upon it, and so I shall be able to prove to you."

"Never, sir," returned the agent with unflinching firmness—"never;" and as he

uttered the last word, he forcibly struck the table with his clenched fist.

"Ha, ha !" laughed the Count, "there is something really comical in this."

"You may think so," answered De Francœur; "but I fancy you will find the joke not quite so good as you expected. It would, no doubt, be extremely agreeable to step quietly into so fine an estate; and had I been dead, you might probably have succeeded. As it is, you cannot; and if you will take a piece of well-meant advice, you will mount your horse to-morrow morning with the earliest dawn, and disappear from this part of the country for ever."

"A modest request, De Francœur, certainly," returned the Count; "I am sorry I cannot oblige you by complying with it. I shall remain and establish my right and identity beyond the possibility of controversy."

"You cannot do it, sir; you cannot do

it," answered the agent, vehemently; "you cannot prove what is false. The Count de Châteauroux is dead—dead, sir. Who you are, I do not know; but you are no more the Count de Châteauroux than I am myself!"

"But, De Francoeur," returned the Count, "how can you possibly know that I am not he, when not only De la Rive but your own wife recognised my person at a glance? I thought I understood you to say that no tidings of the Count whatever had reached you since his departure. Is not that so?"

"Precisely," answered M. de Francoeur, in a less confident tone, and slightly changing colour.

"Then, how can you be so well assured of his death?" asked the Count, fixing his eyes on the agent's face.

"Because I—I have no doubt of it," replied De Francoeur, with evident embarrassment. "I have no doubt he is dead."

“Pooh !” said the Count ; “is that all ? How will that serve you in a court of law ? What will your ‘no doubt’ weigh there ?”

“It does not matter,” replied De Francœur, making an effort to recover the assured and confident demeanour with which he had commenced the dispute ; “you are not the Count de Châteauroux, and you know it. Resign a hopeless enterprise, sir—one I am resolved to defeat ; begone in peace, and I will not impede your departure, although I am aware that if I did my duty, I should expose you to the chastisement you merit ; but I countenanced your deception once, and I am not perhaps entitled to be severe. I give you till to-morrow morning ; if you have not quitted this house, nay, and this neighbourhood, before nine o’clock to-morrow, beware the consequences. With that, I wish you good night !” and thereupon he summoned a servant, and bade him conduct the visitor to his chamber.



The Count, quite unmoved, rose from his seat, bowed courteously, retired to his room, and carefully locked the door.

By nine o'clock on the following morning he was gone—but it was no farther than the château, where, having engaged the necessary domestics, he quietly took up his abode, his right to do so being unarraigned by the De la Rives or anybody else. Not only so, but to the extreme annoyance of M. de Francœur, M. de la Rive persisted in living on the best possible terms with this, as the agent asserted, impostor. It was in vain that the latter argued the case, and represented the extreme folly of relinquishing the property to a mere adventurer. He went farther than he had ever done before in acknowledging, that he had not been duped by the pretender even for a moment.

“How could I,” he said, “when the pecuniary transactions betwixt the Count and me were unknown to everybody else? The

man, whoever he was, had been extremely well tutored doubtless; and by means of silence and reserve contrived to act his part very tolerably; but much fewer people were deceived than affected to be so, and the moment he was alone with me I detected him. Why, you have confessed to me yourself that your suspicions were very strong, although, for your sister's sake, you never admitted them."

"I had my suspicions certainly," returned M. Eugène, "but I had never seen much of the Count de Châteauroux, and I had no desire to trouble my sister by expressing them; but I have none now. The extraordinary resemblance, or rather identity of feature, air, and voice, leave no doubt upon my mind whatever."

"But this resemblance was just as extraordinary before, yet the man your brother brought was not the Count de Châteauroux," urged De Franceur; "or if he

were, this man is not, by his own confession."

"Very true, but take my word for it this is the veritable man," still responded De la Rive, to the infinite annoyance of the agent, who, after an argument on this subject, would go away in a state of undisguised irritation at what appeared to him the extraordinary infatuation of his friend; and as the belief of men in general is extremely apt to be influenced by their interest, it certainly did seem very extraordinary that M. Eugène should so obstinately persist in a persuasion that was so contrary to his own advantage; and in order to explain this seeming inconsistency, we must request our readers to accompany us back to that night described in our first chapter, when M. and Madame de Châteauroux were overheard in high altercation by their servants.

When the young Count Philibert married Madame De Rosemont, he had no intention

of making her unhappy, for he was a good-natured man in the main, but not loving her so well as he loved his diversions, he wished to make her happy at as small an expense to his own inclination as possible, and he might perhaps have conciliated both objects—his own pleasures and her contentment—if it had not unfortunately happened that she fell in love with him; as men are constituted, the most injudicious thing a wife can do, especially if she is older than her husband. This unlucky passion was the destruction of both. She could no longer control her own feelings, or manage his selfishness—a woman who wishes to manage her husband must take care not to be in love with him—but indeed a woman in love never desires to manage the object of her affection, she only aspires to please him, and poor Madame de Châteauroux would have been too happy to have rendered obedience for love; but the love was beyond her attainment, and by her

struggle to retain her volatile charmer, she only disgusted and alienated him more and more, till, as she justly upbraided him, he never came home except when he was in need of money; and it was precisely the necessity of replenishing his purse, together with an unpleasant report regarding financial affairs, that had brought him back on that unlucky night.

The family of De Francœur, though not noble, were gentry, and, as we have said, distantly connected with the De la Rives; but being without fortune, they had been obliged to seek their subsistence in the law or the church. François de Francœur, who figures in our story, had been educated for the former; but instead of pursuing his vocation, when Sophie de la Rive inherited the immense fortune bequeathed to her by her aunt, he consented to undertake the agency of the property. The entire management of it was placed in his hands, and during her minority

and the life of her first husband, she had every reason to congratulate herself on this judicious appointment. When she married M. de Châteauroux, no alteration was made in this particular. The young Count knew nothing of the business, nor had any vocation to it, and he had no desire to have anything more to do with the estate than to draw what money he wanted, and be left to spend it according to his own pleasure. De Francœur supplied him to his heart's content, and thus at first all went well. Gradually, however, his demands increased; he had taken to play, and he drew to an amount that alarmed the agent, who thought it right to give a hint of the growing evil to the Countess, whose money it was. But she was very fond of her husband then, and had not resigned all hopes of reclaiming him by indulgence. She would not therefore risk offending him for the sake of money. "How can I help it?" said she; "he must spend what he likes."

"You might speak to him on the subject," suggested the agent.

"Never," replied the lady; "if it goes too far, you can say you have no money. If there is to be any restriction, you must manage it yourself."

The agent objected that that would be a very awkward thing for him to do; and so, between them both, nothing was done, and the thing went on as before, ultimately leading to consequences much more serious than the parties concerned had foreseen.

De Francœur's prosperity had been growing with his years, and as his means increased so did his desires. He was no longer satisfied with the profits of his agency and the gains of agriculture, but was induced to embark in speculations more dazzling, but also more precarious. He meant no harm in the beginning, and at first he played this game only with his own money: but, from some unexpected turn of affairs, suddenly finding him-

self in difficulties, he disentangled himself from the immediate dilemma by borrowing from the funds of his client, Madame de Châteauroux. When he took the money, he meant to replace it ; but somehow or other, instead of doing so he borrowed more. The first infraction cost him a good deal of uneasiness ; the second less ; and by degrees he got so used to the thing, that one might have thought the money was his own, he took it so comfortably. He had terrible facilities for doing it, for the Countess never inspected his accounts, nor ever doubted his integrity, although when complaining of her husband's desertion, she accused the agent of furnishing him the means of staying away from her ; but she had refused to interfere when he had honestly recommended her to do so, and his own interest and safety now forbade him to take any step that might force on an explanation.

A circumstance unexpectedly occurred, how-



ever, which seemed extremely likely to produce this very alarming consummation. A property which divided two of the Countess's estates, and which she had on that account long wished to possess, suddenly came into the market, and De Francœur immediately received her injunctions to purchase it; but he had not the money, and the only excuse he could make for not having it, was to lay the deficit at the door of the Count's exorbitant drafts on the revenue. This being an amount of extravagance that she had not reckoned upon, the Countess was both surprised and angry, and she declared her determination to put a stop to it, and to tell M. de Châteauroux her mind on the subject the next time he condescended to visit her.

Here was the crisis which De Francœur had hoped to avert, but which sooner or later overtakes everybody who ventures on a similar course of dishonest appropriation. His perplexity was great; to avoid the impending

exposure he would gladly have sold his own estate, but there was no time to look for a purchaser, and Madame de Châteauroux missed the acquisition of the property she desired. This vexed her extremely, and all the agent dared to hope was, that it might be long before a visit from her husband afforded her an opportunity of arraigning his prodigality, and that in the meantime something might occur to relieve him from his embarrassment. Evil thoughts are sure to find their way into the mind of a man so situated. "What a good thing it would be if the Count never came home again!" thought he; and his imagination painted all the possible casualties that might befall him. Worse thoughts still would intrude sometimes, and it seemed to him as if the devil was at his ear, whispering wicked suggestions of what might happen if they were riding over the lands together, through the tall fern and the lonely pine forests, where a traveller is not seen twice in

a week ; but he cried avaunt ! and would not listen and went away to the fields to see his labourers at work and admire his crops.

But there came a pang again—how fine and rich they looked as they waved in the light breeze, or fell beneath the scythe of the reaper ; but if everybody had their own, whose were they ? Not his assuredly ; and though they grew upon his land, they might never be stacked in his yard ; for he lived with a sword over his head, which, every day he rose, he feared might fall ere night. His life was wretched, and his brain teemed with projects to escape from his misery ; but there are many more roads for getting into trouble than for getting out of it, and before he could find one, M. de Châteauroux came home.

## CHAPTER V.

It was evening, and being the anniversary of his wedding-day, M. de Francœur had some friends at his house. He was at this period a man of about five-and-thirty; he had been married some years to an agreeable woman much younger than himself; he had two little children on whom he doted, and he had in short everything in the world to make life happy, but one thing—the most important of all—a clear conscience; that one blessed

possession which enables us to live without the fear of man.

There can be no manner of doubt that anybody who has once played away this inestimable treasure, and thereby sold himself a bond-slave for life, would, unless he be so sunk in brutality as to have forfeited his humanity and be abandoned of conscience altogether, give everything else he possesses in the world to recover that one untarnished gem. M. de Francœur would have done so, for he was a man still of sentiment and feeling, loving his family and naturally courteous to his friends. But this cruel memory that sat with him at meat and forbade him to be cheerful, marred his enjoyments and spoilt his temper. However, to-day, he had determined to be happy, come what might hereafter: what was the use of meeting sorrow half-way, and poisoning the present by the fear of a future that might never arrive for him? Besides, it had more than once occurred to

him that he might borrow money enough, by mortgaging his own estate, to replace what was deficient, and that then he would go to the Countess, and tell her, that he had discovered an extraordinary error in his own account with M. de Châteauroux ; that by a mistake in figures he had in his book assigned a much larger sum to him than he had received, and that he, M. de Francœur, now found that he had all that money in hand. She would be annoyed at missing the purchase, and would accuse him of carelessness, and there it would end.

His project, which had sometimes appeared feasible and sometimes not, according to whichever side of it he surveyed, now presented its most smiling aspect. He felt sure it would answer his purpose ; and although the mortgage would straiten his own circumstances terribly, yet he might pay it off with time and economy ; and if not, what was the restriction of his means to the anguish of his

mind! Nothing; he would do it; and in the meantime, he would be happy for that day at least.

His wife was delighted to see him more cheerful than he had been for a long time, and his friends took the occasion of its being his wedding-day, to congratulate him on his domestic felicity. When English and Scotch people assemble together for the purposes of enjoyment, their custom is to sit at a table in a close room, and eat and drink for several successive hours as much as they can, which is generally much more than they ought, and enough to make them somewhat uncomfortable the next morning, and unfit them for their day's work, whatever it may be. When French people assemble for the same purpose, they dance—out of doors, if the season will admit of it; and some light and simple refreshments send them home with as clear heads and good digestions as they brought. When they are older and graver, and have no

young ones in their society, a *petit souper*, without any strong potations after it, is a sufficient attraction to bring them together, and is a very innocuous mode of entertainment after their early dinner.

On this memorable night M. de Francœur's young wife and her friends were gaily dancing on the lawn, and Madame de Châteauroux, whose disappointment had made her graver than her years, was pleasantly entertaining half a dozen of her acquaintances with a *petit souper* in her saloon, whilst on the road from Arles to Beaulieu, which latter lay on the way to the château, a fine black horse was jogging gently forwards, bearing on its back the person that was to mar this harmony. However thoughtless, and imprudent, and selfish Philibert de Châteauroux had shown himself since his marriage, he was not a man altogether without conscience and honour, and consequently when any circumstance occurred to place his own conduct be-



fore him in the broad light of day and force him to look at it, he was not insensible to its deformity ; and such a circumstance was a report that had just reached him that the property so long desired by his wife had fallen into other hands in consequence of his extravagance and her inability to purchase it. But two days before, he had written to De Francœur for supplies to a rather large amount, but on hearing this rumour, he resolved to go and fetch the money himself, and at the same time inquire into the state of affairs at home. He had neglected his wife shockingly, but to ruin her into the bargain was too much ; and if he found it necessary, he must resolve to pull in and retrench ; and as he must needs pass Beaulieu, he would stop there and have a little conversation with De Francœur before he met the Countess ; so when he reached the gate, he alighted and fastened his horse to it—for he never travelled with a servant—having his own reasons for

not carrying home with him a person who might blab of his whereabouts.

As by this time the evening was closing in, the dancers had just re-entered the house, and their host was supplying them with refreshments, when a servant approached and told him he was wanted by a gentleman, who refused to come in.

"Say I am engaged," said he, "and bid the person call to-morrow. I cannot see anybody to-night."

The man, who was but an occasional servant, was turning away with this answer, when M. de Francœur's own valet whispered, "It is M. le Comte de Châteauroux that is in the hall, sir."

Little thought he that said those words what a significance they had for him who heard them. They were like an immediate sentence of death to a criminal who had reckoned surely on a reprieve, if not a pardon.

"Excuse me!" said he to a lady standing beside him, and hastening out of the room—for he felt his colour change and his knees giving way—and in a moment he was in the hall face to face with his unwelcome visitor.

"Ah, my dear Count, how are you?" he said, affecting a hearty welcome. "I have some friends here celebrating the anniversary of my wedding; come in and join us."

"I would with pleasure if I were suitably attired," answered the Count; "but I have ridden far in the dust and heat, and am not fit to be seen in a ball-room."

"Oh, nonsense!" replied De Francœur, taking refuge in a forced gaiety; "the gallant Count de Châteauroux will be welcome to the ladies in any dress. Come, come;" and he drew him by the arm towards the door of the dancing-room.

"Excuse me!" said De Châteauroux; "not to-night; besides, I am tired; but I want to talk to you about business, and I

wish you would come to breakfast with me to-morrow at ten o'clock, will you? I am very much annoyed to learn that that property my wife wanted to purchase has fallen into other hands."

"Well, if you will not come in," said De Francœur, "I suppose I must let you go?"

"You'll be with me at ten?" rejoined the Count.

"Certainly!" answered De Francœur.

"Good night, then," said the former: "I will not detain you longer from your friends. *A demain!*" and he quitted the hall to remount his horse.

"Attend M. de Châteauroux!" said the agent to one of the servants, whilst he himself, instead of re-entering the ball-room, strode hastily up-stairs to his own chamber, in order to steal a few minutes from the many eyes below that he feared might read his secret in his face. Oh, blest, blest are they who need fear no human eye!

But sitting alone, and reviewing his situation in all its horrors, M. de Francœur found was not the way to enable him to meet his company with more self-possession ; so he returned amongst them and endeavoured to forget himself and his troubles in wine and revelry. His sober visitors were amazed at the long draughts he swallowed and at his noisy demonstrations of joy ; but they accounted for it by the remark, that when sober, quiet people do outstep their customary bounds of discretion, they are apt to rush into greater excesses than habitual revellers.

“ *Pauvre homme !* ” said one ; “ it has been evident for a long time past that he has devoted himself too much to business and been too anxious ; he is like a child broke loose from school, that manifests its happiness by all sorts of absurd gambols.”

“ He is an excellent man, M. de Fran-

œur," said another; "so desirous of doing well for his family!"

"And such an invaluable friend to Madame de Châteauroux," observed a third. "I do not know what she would have done without him."

"And with all his care and anxiety, I fear the property is very much injured by that scapegrace her husband. It is reported that he has spent enormous sums," remarked a fourth.

"They say it is that circumstance that has been weighing so painfully on De Franceur's mind for some time back," observed one of the speakers. "He has certainly been very much depressed of late."

"Allons; messieurs et mesdames, *dansons la ronde!*" cried the host, clapping his hands, and dispersing the little circle of gossips.

"Why, De Franceur, you have shaken off fifteen years to-night. You are a boy again," said one.

"To be sure," cried the agent, "what is the use of being sad? *Toujours gai, et vive la bagatelle!* that is my motto."

"Bravo!" cried his friend. "De Franceur for ever! Long live our noble host!"

When the hour arrived at which his company would naturally have dispersed, he would not allow them to go; and when they tried to slip away, he locked the hall-door, and threw the key out of the window; and by this and similar mad pranks, he contrived, with or without their consent, to keep them with him till the night was more than half spent. But time, like death, is inexorable, and it will not be defrauded of its prey, which, amongst many other hollow things, reckons all factitious joys and ill-based pleasures; so that, defer their departure as he would, the hour came that left M. de Franceur alone with his thoughts, his memories, and his fears. The moment the doors closed upon the last of his party, he

told his wife that he was quite exhausted, and must go to bed. He could face the visitors, but he could not face her that was accustomed to read his features; so he hid them upon his pillow, where, however, no sleep came to smooth care's furrows, or to bring back colour to the bloodless cheeks; and whilst he lies there, waiting the unwelcome morning, we will follow M. de Châteauroux on his way to the castle.

As we have intimated above, the Count was going home oppressed with a consciousness that he was by no means blameless in regard to his wife. He had hitherto excused himself at her expense, attributing his own errors to her want of youth and beauty, and her injudicious reproaches. But he could not help feeling that if she was not wise, she was at least liberal, when he reflected what unrestrained command he had had of her money; a privilege which she might have retracted at any moment she



chose, the fortune by her aunt's will being entirely in her own power. Softened by this penitent feeling, he resolved to meet her with a more affectionate and genial manner than he had done on his recent visits ; and though he knew himself too well to promise that he would reform his ways altogether, he determined to see his home more frequently, and to be more friendly and agreeable to his wife whilst he was there, than of late years had been his custom.

But unfortunately all these good resolutions were rendered null, and a long concatenation of unthought-of misfortunes, entailed by the circumstance of finding his wife in company. Without that *contretems* all might have been well ; but her injudicious reception and unhappy display of temper reacting upon him, his good feelings of repentance were stifled ; he returned to his former opinion that the faults were hers, not his ; and instead of his heart being softened towards

her, it became harder than ever. She had now, too, destroyed that motive which often serves to keep people from extremes when all better ones have failed; she had exposed their domestic squabbles to her acquaintance, and if *she* had no more delicacy, he thought there was no reason that *he* should. He did not betray so much ill-humour before the supper-party as she did, both because he had more command of himself, and because, having no love to aggravate his vexation, his irritation was less poignant; but as soon as they were gone, and the Countess broke forth into complaints and reproaches, she found him more hard and contemptuous than on any former occasion. Instead of making the slightest admission that he was wrong, he told her that she had no right to expect he would ever come home at all when she made that home so disagreeable to him; and when she reproached him with his extravagance, he retorted by accusing her of meanness—a

reproof she certainly did not merit ; but in domestic quarrels, above all others, people are the least scrupulous with regard to the weapons they use.

When they had exhausted their whole repertory of bitternesses, they retired to their chambers, separating with that vague threat uttered by the Countess, and his contemptuous answer recorded in our first chapter. It was not till the Count had lain down in bed and his servant had left him, that he began to feel the sting of that menace. She certainly could revenge herself if she pleased, by stopping the supplies, and that was probably what she contemplated. This unpleasant anticipation, together with the previous excitement of his brain, very naturally prevented his sleeping. He resolved to banish the whole thing from his mind, but that is a resolution more easily made in similar situations than fulfilled ; he turned on one side, then on the other ; thought of a

flowing stream, of a flock of sheep, and of waving corn ; but it was all of no use—sleep rejected his allurements, and would not visit him. Now, most people have experienced how very unpleasantly active the imagination is apt to become under this sort of insomnia ; how small evils swell into great ones, and what a terrible gripe any disagreeable fancy takes of the mind. It was so with the Count ; he had no money at the time ; not a sou ; probably on the following day she would issue her commands to the agent to give him no more. A pleasant situation he would be in ! A prisoner for want of the means of going elsewhere, and his wife his jailor !

Then another idea occurred to him. These words, prisoner and jailor, awakened a new fear ; how, if the Countess applied for a *lettre de cachet*, and got him shut up in the Bastille ! These terrible letters which might deprive a man of his liberty for the rest of

his life, without his knowing why or wherefore, were rife in those days; and Madame de Châteauroux had many influential connections that might aid her to procure such an order. Perhaps that was the revenge she was meditating; it would certainly be the most signal and bitter injury she could inflict upon him. As these apprehensions and suspicions got possession of him, he now began to regret exceedingly that he had come home, and, from wishing he had not come, he naturally began to question with himself how he could go. The first step was to obtain some money in the morning from De Francœur; but how, if she forbade the agent to supply him? and unluckily M. de Francœur was to be at the château at ten o'clock, which would afford her the earliest opportunity of doing it.

"I'll be beforehand with her," thought he, suddenly flinging off the bed-clothes and leaping to the floor. "I'll be off to De

Francœur, get some money, and be out of her reach before she is up. Then I'll write to her, and propose terms of separation."

The dawn was just breaking when the Count arrived at this determination, so he dressed himself hastily, and was about leaving the room, when, in throwing on his cloak, he overthrew the glass that covered a stuffed bird, and in the attempt to save it he cut his hand severely. Having wiped the blood on the sheet, he bound up his wounded hand with a handkerchief, and then, after softly opening his room door and listening, he cautiously descended the stairs to the hall, and let himself out. His horse he could not get at without disturbing the grooms, so he resolved to borrow one of De Francœur, who would send his own after him; and being thus safely out of the house, he bent his steps towards the agent's.

Now, as we have described, M. de Francœur's couch that night was no more a bed

of down than the Count's. Sleep, that loves the cool and dewy brow and calm pulsations of a heart at ease, shunned these hot, uneasy pillows; and as there is no place so wretched as the bed that sleep refuses to visit, the agent had also risen with the dawn, and had descended to the garden to seek the fresh morning air that his fevered skin was thirsting for, and he was slowly pacing backwards and forwards, weighing his fortune and balancing his chances, when he was surprised to behold the very person that chiefly occupied his thoughts coming towards him.

"Bless me!" he cried, for a moment forgetting his dilemma in his amazement, "what in the world has brought you out so early, Count? Has anything happened?"

"Why, nothing very new has happened," answered the Count, "but I am going away, and I want you to give me five thousand francs immediately."

“Going away!” reiterated the agent, “going so soon?”

“Yes,” replied the other, “my wife and I cannot agree, and it is much better for both parties that we should separate. I dare say I am in fault, but so is she; and whenever I come home there is inevitably a quarrel. She accuses me of extravagance too, and I dare say I have spent more money than I ought, though not so much as she says I have; but women, when they are angry, never stick to the truth. Now, you see, De Francoeur, I cannot stand this any longer, and I mean to bring matters to a settlement. First of all, I want you to furnish me with an exact statement of all the sums I have drawn from you since our last winding-up of accounts, so that at least she may not have it in her power to misrepresent me; and then I shall request her to appoint some of her friends to arbitrate betwixt us, and arrange a separation. Do you not think I am right?”



"But what made you come so early? Why are you in such a hurry?" inquired De Francœur, rather pursuing his own thought than attending to the Count's question.

"Why, I did not sleep, and I wished to be away before Madame de Châteauroux can open her morning battery upon me."

"Then have you left the château without taking leave of her?"

"Certainly I have. I left it before anybody was up, and even came away without my horse, because I wanted to avoid any delay or chance of disturbing her. I believe, De Francœur, that you have no experience of this sort of thing in your *menage*; if you had, you would not be so surprised at my making this vigorous effort to escape it. By the bye, you must lend me a horse."

"You had better stay and take your breakfast here," said the agent.

"Not for the world," answered the Count; "I mean to be ten miles off at least before

breakfast time; but tell me, De Francœur, what is the reason you did not purchase the *La Roche* property, which my wife was always so anxious to possess?"

"Why, we hadn't the money ready," returned the agent, stooping to pluck up some weeds from the gravel; "and a cousin of La Roche's who has long wished for the land, just stepped in and snapped it up."

"But that is exactly what I do not understand," returned the Count; "what do you mean by not having the money ready?"

"If there had not been a purchaser on the spot to anticipate us, I could soon have got it together," replied the other; "but they gave us no time."

"But why should you need time?" insisted the Count, who was not unobservant of De Francœur's confusion, and who, for the first time in his life, was sensible of a faint suspicion that the agent might not be

the mirror of integrity they had hitherto thought him. "Do you not regularly collect the rents?"

"As regularly as the tenants will pay them," answered the agent.

"But what are the arrears?" inquired the Count.

"I am sure I cannot recollect without looking at my books," said the former. "But you know last year some of the vines failed."

"If the deficit arises from arrears of rent, I should like to have it properly understood," said the Count; "because you see, De Francœur, I do not choose to have it in my wife's power to complain to the world that she is distressed by my extravagance, and that it is owing to me that she has lost La Roche. For my part, I am really very sorry the property was not bought, and I confess I cannot understand it."

"It came into the market so unex-

pectedly," replied the other; "but what is the matter with your hand?"

"A mere trifle; I cut it with some glass."

"You had better come in and let me get something to bind it up; it's bleeding."

"Nothing so good as a little cold water; I'll wash it here at the well."

"And I'll fetch you a clean handkerchief," said De Francœur, returning into the house.

"I have half a mind to stay and breakfast with him after all," thought the Count, as he turned towards the well, which was in an orchard on one side of the building. "I should like very much to make out what has become of all the money; I *will* stay too, I am determined."

In the meanwhile, De Francœur, glad to escape into the house in order to avoid so embarrassing a conversation, fetched a clean white handkerchief to bind up the wounded hand, and was returning to the orchard with

it when it occurred to him that he would also take out the five thousand francs which he happened luckily to have by him, as possibly the Count, once provided with them, might be disposed to depart immediately. So he took a key out of his pocket, and opened the door of a small apartment, where he kept his money and valuables. "Ah, Bernard, Bernard! down, down!" said he to a fine young dog of the St. Bernard breed, who was always left by night in that room as a guard. The dog, delighted to be set free, jumped and gambolled about him whilst he unlocked his escritoir and took out the money; and then when he saw his master turn towards the door, he bounded before him into the garden.

At this moment the Count, who had drawn up some fresh water for himself, was stooping over the bucket bathing his hand, the dog, a large and powerful creature, full of spirit and activity, sprang forward, and leaped with his

two forefeet upon his shoulders. The animal was in sport, but it was death to the man ; the sudden push caused him to lose his balance, and he went head foremost into the well.

De Francœur, who was hastening forward to prevent the dog alarming the Count, was just in time to see the accident as he turned the corner of the house ; he rushed forwards a few steps—then he stopped short—there was a voice from the deep water—then a second—and he distinguished his own name ; the dog stood looking down wistfully and whined ; then there was another cry more faint and stifled. The agent looked all around him, and up at the windows of his own house ; they were closed, and there was nobody to be seen, and he stepped a little nearer to the well. He heard the water splashing, splashing ; but presently the sound ceased—the water was still.

Then he drew nearer ; the dog looked at him, and then whined again ; De Francœur turned his eye from the aperture, but with his foot he pushed the board over it, and covered it up.

## CHAPTER VI.

UPON what narrow chances our lives depend! and not only our lives, but even sometimes our guilt or innocence! Had it not occurred to De Francœur to take out the money as well as the handkerchief, the dog would not have been released at that critical moment, and the Count de Châteauroux would not have been drowned in the well; and had De Francœur been a little less rapid in his movements, he would have escaped witnessing the accident, nor was it probable



that he would have discovered what had become of his visitor till it was too late to afford him any assistance. It was certainly possible that his efforts to save the Count might have been unavailing ; though the probabilities were that had he immediately let down the bucket, the victim might have extricated himself from the water ; but whilst the result of what *might* have been done was uncertain, there was one thing too certain—he had done nothing ! he had suffered the man to die whilst calling upon his name ; he had not stretched out an arm to help him, and he felt that he was guilty of his death.

It was not, however, immediately that he was conscious of the weight of this conviction. His first sensations were those of relief and security—no one could arraign him now ; no mortal lived that could prove or disprove anything he had affirmed regarding the Count's expenditure ; he was safe, safe, safe ; nobody could touch him there. What a

release it was from a daily fear ! It is true, there was a worse fear behind ; but that was veiled, and he did not see it yet.

When De Francœur had covered the well, he whistled the dog to follow him, and returned into the house, where he locked up the animal in the same room he had released him from ; and then he retired to his chamber and lay down, for no one in the house knew that he had been astir thus early ; and as the whole family had gone to bed fatigued, they slept soundly and rose late. He would have been glad to sleep too, but he had murdered sleep ! and he lay restless and listening till he heard the servants moving, and then he rose and called for water to shave ; “ for,” said he to his valet, “ I have to be at the château at ten, to breakfast with the Count !”

He did not dare to look at the man as he said it ; he was afraid of what he might read in his face ; but he might safely have done so — the face was perfectly blank, and expressed

no interest whatever in the communication, neither did he make any answer—there was none to make. But De Francœur felt his silence as if it were something significant, and glanced at him to see the reason of it; for how did he know that some wakeful eye, undiscerned by him, had not witnessed that morning's tragedy?

“No, not he, at least,” thought De Francœur, as he saw the man, with an unconcerned countenance, arranging the clothes his master was about to put on.

He felt somewhat fortified by this; he had encountered one human countenance, and it expressed no suspicion. Then he inquired the hour, and what sort of morning it was, and he spoke to the servant with unusual familiarity, for he was glad to keep him in the room; the man seemed to stand betwixt him and that other that was there too—there for him, though the fleshly eye could not discern him.

As soon as he was dressed, he called for his hat and gloves, and sallied forth on his way to the château. He was rather early for his appointment; and indeed there was no need to hasten to keep it—*he would be there first*; but he was restless, and motion relieved him; besides, he did not wish to meet his wife just then, nor to look upon the faces of his young children; and instead of going the direct road, he went a far way round through the fields and meadows, and the clock struck ten as he walked up the avenue to the castle. Madelon, then a young woman, had opened the gate for him, and said she supposed he was aware that Monsieur had returned the night before, and he answered, "Yes; I am come to breakfast with him;" and walked on to the terrace; where he rang the bell.

"I hope I am not late," said he to the servant who opened the door; "is the Count down stairs yet?"

"Oui, Monsieur," answered the man, "my lord is gone out."

"Gone out," repeated De Francœur, "I came to breakfast with him."

"He expects you, Sir," returned the servant, "and he will doubtless return immediately."

"Good," said De Francœur—and good it appeared to him, for here was no suspicion either, and he followed the man into the breakfast room, where the table was laid for two; the servant closed the door, and there he was alone—waiting for him that was to eat with him.

He was in that very room where hung the picture of Count Joachim, over the mantelpiece—the father of him he waited for, and who came not. Do what he would, he could not keep his eyes from the portrait; he felt himself bewitched to stare upon it, and sometimes he fancied it returned his stare and looked at him strangely. Allowing for the

difference of age and dress, it was exceedingly like the young Count; and he saw that the handsome features of Joachim were just what those of Philibert would have become with time—but he and time were divorced for ever, and those handsome young features were fixed in death.

De Francœur passed his hand across his brow, and turned to the window, which looked out upon the broad gravel walk, and the soft greensward beyond. There were a few sheep with very white rich fleeces, and two extremely handsome cows, selected for their beauty, and placed there for the gratification of the Countess. It was a calm and lovely scene; the trees that dotted the turf here and there, and the innocent animals living their pure life—and it brought a choking sensation into the beholder's throat that made him suddenly turn away from the sight of it. Presently the servant entered, under pretence of arranging something on the table, in order that

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he might have the opportunity of communicating that he had been looking for the Count everywhere, but could not find him. Having said this, he went out again, and De Francœur stayed on for another half hour.

By this time the Countess had risen; and having been told by Clarice that M. de Francœur had been waiting below for a considerable time to breakfast with Monsieur, who had invited him to be there at ten, she desired that the great bell should be rung, as no doubt the Count was walking in the grounds and had forgotten the appointment. So they rung the bell which brought up Madelon to ask what had happened.

But still the Count came not, neither had she seen him pass the gate; wherever he was, however, he must be on foot, and therefore at no great distance, for on inquiry it was ascertained that his horse was in the stable. The Countess now sent Clarice to

M. de Francœur to recommend him to take his breakfast and wait no longer ; so he followed her advice and went away. When he reached home he found his wife in great spirits, and very talkative about the preceding evening's amusement, and he tried to listen to her ; but do what he would, his thoughts would wander away to that dismal well in the orchard. Then, there was the dog ; he could not keep the animal shut up in a room, and he was somehow afraid that if he let him out, he would bound away to that fatal spot and draw attention to it. The best thing he could do was to mount his horse and take a ride, and let the dog go with him.

As he had expected, the animal ran to the well the moment he was outside the door ; but when he saw his master cantering off, he left it and sprang after him. De Francœur, though he was fond of the dog, would now have been very glad to get rid of him ; but it was difficult to lose a large animal like that



whose owner was well known, and it being a gift of Madame de Francœur's brother, he could not with propriety part with him. For a few days, the inconvenience continued ; the dog insisted on remembering what his master wished to forget ; but by the end of a week he had forgotten too, and left off running to the spot. At the same time, M. de Francœur closed up the well, under pretence that it was too near the garden, and dangerous for his young children, who were now beginning to run about alone, and he opened one in another situation.

Meantime, the mystery of the Count's disappearance was making a great sensation amongst the servants and retainers of the family, although the Countess herself evinced neither alarm nor curiosity on the subject. The fact was, she entertained no suspicion whatever of any ill having befallen her husband, nor did any such notion occur to her till the rumours that were circulating abroad

were brought home by her own friends. For her part, she concluded that he had never intended to remain with her many days, and the quarrel that succeeded his arrival was quite enough, in her opinion, to account for his sudden departure. Besides, the threat she had used was very likely to have added spurs to his speed. It had been indeed but a mere vague menace uttered in a passion; but she comprehended that he might have understood it as implying a deliberate design. Her pride and the consciousness of her innocence led her to treat the imputation with contempt, and she had scorned to take any steps in her own justification, till she was seized by the authorities.

The first thing that led her to apprehend the possibility that some mischief had occurred, was the flight of her two servants—a proceeding she was quite at a loss to comprehend, and which was itself, in the extremely anomalous state of French judicature, very fatal

to her case ; for as there was no robbery, nor any conceivable reason to be assigned that would have induced Clarice and Morel to take the Count's life themselves, it was concluded that they had been her accessories, or at least the witnesses of her crime, and it was thus that the disposal of his body was accounted for. This suspicion was strengthened by the fact of all the servants testifying that when they themselves retired to bed, these two people went up stairs to attend on their master and mistress. Moreover, Clarice and Morel alone slept on the same gallery as the Count and Countess ; all the rest of the establishment lodged in another part of the building, and quite out of hearing of anything that might have happened.

While all this was going on, M. de Francœur kept as much as possible out of the way. He took the opportunity of going to Paris to transact some business he had on hand there, and he professed his opinion that the fuss

that was making about the Count was absurd, and that he would doubtless appear by-and-by to laugh at them. But although affecting to treat the matter thus lightly, he lived in anguish lest all these inquiries should lead to a discovery of where the body was ; in which case he would almost inevitably fall under the suspicion of being the assassin. But when he heard of the Countess's danger, his situation became much worse. He shrank with horror from the idea of allowing her to suffer for a crime of which he knew her to be innocent, when a word of his could vindicate and save her. How gladly he would have spoken the word if he had dared, and how he regretted that he had not made known the accident the moment he witnessed it, instead of entailing by his silence a life of constant terror on himself, and all this injustice and misery on others !

But still the fear that then closed his lips closed them still ; and, no doubt, the longer

the communication was deferred, the more certain it was to bring down destruction on himself. So he delayed and delayed till the Countess's condemnation, and then he felt he must save her, though it was at the expense of his own life and honour. He wrote a statement of the case, omitting, however, to confess his dishonest appropriations of the money intrusted to him, but narrating all the circumstances of the accident as he had witnessed them, dilating upon his own confusion and terror, and attributing his silence to the true motives, namely, as there was no witness but himself, that he might be suspected of the murder, and the difficulty he had placed himself in by not making known the circumstances at first. He made his will and set his affairs in order ; and then, having signed and sealed his confession, and embraced his wife and children on the pretence of a journey to Paris, he bade adieu to his home, as he believed, for ever, and started for

Arles, in order to deliver his letter himself at the door of the prefecture; after which, in order to avoid the ignominy and misery that awaited him if he lived, he had provided himself with a sure and speedy means of death.

The love of life, and the vague hope that the Countess might escape, and so deliver him from this fearful extremity, had induced him to defer this step to the latest moment, and it was now late in the evening of the day preceding that fixed for her execution that he entered the city on foot, for he sought to avoid notice, and he did not wish to be encumbered with a horse. There are few people who are doing anything, although it be an indifferent thing, consciously for the *last* time, who are not sensible of a painful feeling of regret; and there was not a step taken by M. de Francœur on that evening over the ground so often trod in happier circumstances, nor an object on which his eye

fell, that did not bring a pang to his heart, with the bitterness of self-reproach to sharpen its sting. How happy he might have been had he but have observed the simple rule of honesty! By how many blessings was he surrounded! Everything that was required to make life happy he possessed; but he had forfeited all by his unholy greediness for more, and the beloved family whose aggrandizement he had sought would find the fortune he left them tainted with suspicion and disgrace.

Oppressed with these overwhelming reflections, he paced through the street of Arles, unnoticed and unknown, till he reached the one where the prefect resided. As he approached the Hotel de Ville, and was about to lay his hand upon the bell, the consciousness that that paper once delivered, the step was irrevocable, and the vague apprehension that he might be pursued and overtaken before he had reached the lonely spot

he had fixed upon for the closing scene of his sad drama, caused him to hesitate and draw back a moment, more especially as the clatter of a horse's feet denoted that some one was approaching; so he crossed over to the other side just as the animal reached the gate, but he was near enough to distinguish that the rider was a government courier.

"See," said a pastrycook who was standing at the door of his shop with his apron on, "that's a king's courier—what will you bet it is not a pardon, or a reprieve for the Countess?"

"I had rather bet with you than against you," replied his companion; "I never expected, for my part, to see the sentence put into execution. Bah! man, a Countess! They do not cut off the heads of such high game if they can help it."

"It will be a terrible disappointment to the populace," observed the *pâtissier*; "I shouldn't wonder if there was an *émeute*."



"If the despatch regards the Countess, we shall soon know it," observed the other, "because the prefect will carry the news to the prison himself."

So thought De Francœur, who, with burning ears, had been listening to this dialogue. If it were as these men imagined, he was saved; he would have confessed and died to rescue the Countess from death, because he could not contemplate the horror of living with her blood upon his soul; but he was not equal to making so great a sacrifice to vindicate her fame; so that the bearer of that despatch, supposing it to concern Madame de Châteauroux, was the herald of life or death to him. It may be judged, therefore, with what eager interest he observed the movements that ensued at the gate of the Hotel de Ville.

Having rung the bell, the man alighted, and throwing the rein to the porter, who admitted him, he entered the court. The

horse was led in too, and the gate closed. A quarter of an hour now elapsed without any indication of what was going on within; during which interval the people of the neighbourhood were gathering together on the spot, whilst the news spread from mouth to mouth that a royal pardon had arrived for the Countess. A few who, for some reason or other, were attached to her party, rejoiced at her prospect of escape; but the mass of the people, disappointed at losing the spectacle they had hoped to enjoy, vented their vexation in strong expressions of indignation at the favouritism shown to the rich. M. de Franceur stood silently amongst them with his hat drawn over his brow and his eyes fixed upon the gate, which at length opened, and exhibited the prefect already mounted, who rode forth accompanied by the courier, and followed by the mob. De Franceur fell into the throng, and followed too to the door of the prison, where, now feeling pretty

secure that the conjectures of the people were well-founded, he made an effort to disengage himself from the crowd and advance, intending to address the prefect; but before he could push his way through, the great man had entered, and the door was closed. He paused, hesitating what to do betwixt his anxiety to learn the truth, and his dislike to enter those heavy gates, which open so easily on one side and so hardly on the other; and before he could summon courage to ring the bell, the courier came out alone.

“What is it? What’s the news? Is the Countess pardoned?” cried the people, pressing round him.

“What’s that to you?” said the man; “go about your business! Disperse, *canaille*!”

But the *canaille* did not disperse; on the contrary, their numbers kept increasing every moment; and as it was in the nature of such an assemblage to get riotous and make a

noise about something, the mob, finding they could obtain no satisfaction of their curiosity, began to batter at the gates, and utter loud murmurs against the court for pardoning all manner of crimes to rich people, and hanging up poor ones for nothing at all. As one fortified another, and their increasing numbers gave them courage, the disturbance was growing louder and louder every minute, when again the gates opened, and the prefect and the jailors were seen on the other side. Silence instantly ensued, but there was a general rush forwards as if they would have entered the court. The prefect held up his hand.

“My friends,” said he, with a loud voice, “disperse! It is time that all good citizens were in their own homes. The Countess de Châteauroux has been falsely accused. Her brother, M. de la Rive, has found her husband, who is now on the road. The Count de Châteauroux will be here to-morrow morning.”

An English mob would have given three cheers for the Countess; the French one turned away in silence from the gate, and it was a minute or two before they recovered their surprise sufficiently to comment on the unexpected intelligence. When they did, most of them discovered that they "had always thought so," and remarked severely on the imperfect jurisprudence that was constantly subjecting people to death for crimes that had not been committed at all. Those who had nothing particular to prevent them, resolved to be at the prison the next day betimes, in order to witness the arrival of the Count and the lady's liberation; and thus terminated the grand event of the evening as far as the public were concerned.

But there was one amongst that throng on whose ears the words of the prefect sounded strangely! M. de Châteauroux was found! He that was dead—that had lain for months at the bottom of that deep well—would be

at Arles to-morrow ! How could that be ? It could not be the real Count de Châteauroux that was coming—that was impossible ! Yet the prefect had said so ; and M. de la Rive could not be deceived in the identity of his brother-in-law ; his trying to deceive the authorities would be too vain an attempt to be thought of for a moment. Then wild and fantastic thoughts invaded his brain. Could the Count have escaped from the well ? The notion seemed absurd ; but every now and then impossible adventures and miraculous escapes were heard of, that nobody could have believed till they had actually occurred. If this were the case, there was nothing left for him but to fulfil the intention with which he had left home that evening ; but it could not be ; if anything was certain on earth, the Count de Châteauroux was dead, and no mortal knew where the body lay but himself.

Distracted by these thoughts, and feeling

himself quite unable to determine whether he should live and face the future, or die and escape the sufferings it might have in store for him, he resolved to make a bold step, and go at once to the prison for the purpose of ascertaining what was really known regarding the Count's fate. He had but to ring; his name and connexion with the heroine of the drama were his passport to instant admittance, and he was met by the congratulations of all the officials. The prefect shook hands with him, and offered to conduct him to the injured lady.

"But is it certain?" inquired De Francœur; "is the Count de Châteauroux really found?"

"Not a shadow of doubt of it;" returned the prefect. "He was found in Paris in very bad health, a long and severe illness having brought him to the brink of the grave, whilst it prevented his hearing of the strange suspicions his disappearance had given rise to."

"And he will be here to-morrow?"

"He would have been here to-night, were it not that his infirm health obliges them to rest at Nîmes, and so the prefect of Nîmes sent forward the courier to announce their approach. But come, you must see the Countess; her brother, M. Eugène, and several of her friends are with her."

"Excuse me," returned De Francœur; "I must hasten home to inform my wife of this good news; I cannot allow her to remain ignorant of what will give her so much pleasure. Present my congratulations to the Countess."

De Francœur, however, did not go home; these assurances of the prefect had only served to make perplexity more perplexed, and the agitation of his mind forbade repose to his body. So he wandered forth to the outskirts of the town till morning, and then, muffling his face between his hat and handkerchief, he re-entered the gates and joined the throng that was already collected in front



of the prison. He was there when the travellers arrived, and as they alighted from the carriage, he saw what appeared to him the pale and shrunken features, and the attenuated form of the Count de Châteauroux. His intellect said, *No ; it is impossible !* but his eyes responded, *Yes, it is he.*

Terrified and confounded, he fled from the city, and made the best of his way to Paris, there to await the disclosures he expected to follow. But none ensued ; his wife wrote to him that the Count had been found, that the lady was liberated, and that the happy pair were living together in the greatest harmony.

“So we hear, at least,” she added, “for they are not at Châteauroux, but are residing at Rémy, where they pass their days in great retirement. Some foolish people refuse to believe it is really the Count, and declare it is some impostor whom M. de la Rive has substituted to save his sister’s life. Can

anything be so absurd ? I had a letter from the Countess yesterday. She inquires where you are, and begs, with her best regards, that you will pay them a visit as soon as you return."

Upon this De Francœur immediately retraced his steps to Beaulieu, where a pressing invitation to Rémy awaited him. Thither he proceeded, and having the satisfaction of finding himself extremely well received, after a week's visit to the happy pair, he repaired to his own home and resumed his former mode of life.

## CHAPTER VII.

FROM the details of our last chapter it will not be difficult to comprehend, first, the surprise and agitation of De Francœur at the appearance of the old gentleman ; and next his obstinate incredulity with respect to his being the person he claimed to be ; but it was not an easy matter for him to bring the rest of the world over to his conviction, or to communicate the foundations on which he rested it. He had countenanced and accredited the first imposture for the sake of the

Countess and his own safety, but these motives no longer existed ; she was dead, and time had placed him, as he considered, beyond danger, whilst on the other hand, he had every motive for resisting the present aggression. Not only was he attached to the interest of the De la Rive family, but the projected alliance gave him a personal one in the property, and it was not to be expected that he would tamely allow this stranger to step in "and push them from their stools ;" yet while M. Eugène was so infatuated as to believe in him, how was he to be unseated ?

Nobody had discovered who the pretender was, nor whence he came. M. de la Rive had maintained an absolute silence with regard to him, and had never, as far as was known, made a single confidant. It was at one time hoped that the priest with whom Madame de Châteauroux had a long conference before her death, might be able to

throw some light on the mystery, and as during the law-suit it was considered that he might justifiably disclose the secret, if he knew it, he was sought out and examined. But he had nothing to tell. Though very old, he was perfectly capable of understanding what was required of him, and the Countess and M. Adolphe being dead, he had no objection to communicate what he knew. He said the lady had admitted in her confession, that the man her brother had produced was not the Count, though she had not given any indication of who he really was ; but at the same time, with her dying breath, she had declared to him her entire innocence of the crime imputed to her. She lamented the offence she had given to her husband ; and said, that after they had parted on that fatal night, she had become so conscious of her error, that she had actually risen and gone to the door of his room with the intention of seeking a reconciliation ; but that

her pride having got the better of her good resolution, she had returned to her own chamber without doing it—an error she had, during the latter years of her life, continually besought God to forgive her.

Thus the fact of the imposition was established; but on the present occasion, this success was of less value than might have been expected; because the old gentleman himself asserted the same thing. Whilst he assumed to be the real Count de Châteauroux, he declared that he had never returned since his first departure on the night after the quarrel. Then the public were for him decidedly. They urged that there was no reasonable grounds whatever for concluding that the Count was dead; and that it was utterly impossible that anybody could be so like the portrait of the old Count but his own son; and as for M. Eugène, no arguments that De Francoeur could use seemed to make the least impression on him.

The more he talked to him, he said, the more firmly he was convinced that there was no deception.

"You have been deceived once, De Franceœur, and that makes you suspicious ; but be assured you are mistaken ; who the pretender was I know not ; but this is the Count de Châteauroux, I am certain."

"Impossible !" exclaimed De Franceœur.

"But why impossible ? We have no proof whatever that he is dead ; and if alive, he was pretty sure to return sooner or later."

"It is not always easy to prove a death," answered the agent.

"Then, in the absence of such proof, I do not see what we can do but admit the pretensions of this gentleman ; whose person certainly furnishes very remarkable testimony in his favour."

"I am really suprised, sir," responded the agent, "that you should be so willing to give

up a fine estate, and allow yourself to be gulled by a scoundrel !”

“ It is very easy talking, De Francœur,” replied M. Eugène, “ but what can I do ? I am no more willing to give up an estate than other people are—I pretend to no such disinterestedness. Furnish me with adequate proof that the Count de Châteauroux is dead, and you shall soon see the measure of my self-denial.”

“ Ah !” thought De Francœur, as he walked away ; “ but how am I to do that without criminating myself ?” It was certainly no easy matter.

It is not to be supposed that during all these years, M. de Francœur’s mind, with that heavy secret weighing upon it, had been very comfortable ; far from it. For a considerable time the fear of detection had haunted him day and night. Of late years, that apprehension had subsided ; but conscience was not silent ; and if he had escaped



detection on the score of his embezzlements, he had purchased his immunity very dearly. Besides, all the strange events that had arisen out of the Countess's danger had kept him in continual hot water ; and even now, after the lapse of so long a period, he was not free from the persecution !

He was like a man haunted by the spectre of one he had murdered. Thirty years before he had seen M. de Châteauroux fall into the well—he was dead—and yet, here he was returned upon his hands again ; and how to lay the ghost he could not tell. The necessity for doing this, however, became doubly urgent, when one morning the old gentleman sent him a summons to appear at the château on a certain day to render an exact account of his stewardship since the time he—that is to say the Count—had quitted his home. As Madame de Châteauroux had never lost confidence in him, she had neither been in the habit of inspecting his books nor inves-

tigating his statements. For years before her death he had carried everything as he liked, and now, although he had no plea for refusing this demand, he was aware that he could not comply with it without entailing the risk of a ruinous exposure.

What was to be done? Play for a great game—all or nothing? If his books were laid open, he would be deserted, and there was no telling what suspicions might be awakened by the discovery of his dishonesty. But if, without betraying that, the Count's death could be proved, the pretender would be at once unseated, and losing all credit, be obliged to retire with ignominy; whilst he hoped that the advantages accruing to M. de la Rive would indispose him to making too curious inquiry into an affair that happened so long ago. Besides, M. Eugène was his most intimate friend; and he trusted much in his unwillingness either to harm him or even suspect him of evil.

Having come to this resolution, without making any demur, he appointed a day for producing his accounts ; expressing himself perfectly willing to do it, although protesting against the authority that demanded the statement ; at the same time, he begged permission of both M. Eugène and the Count to make some alteration in his old farm at Beaulieu, where, by the bye, he no longer resided, having erected a handsome new house on another part of his property, which was now very considerable ; and his request being granted, he took care that the job should be put in hand without delay.

The plan proposed, however, involved one inconvenience, which was that the well, the *new well*, as it was called in contradistinction to the one into which the Count had fallen, must be filled up and built over. The architect pointed out this, and there was a consultation held as to the best site for opening another. To this consultation M.

Eugène was a party ; as in this, as well as in all his other proceedings, the agent ostentatiously treated him as the real owner of the estate. This naturally led him to inquire why they had filled up the old one ; and De Francœur answered that one of the reasons was, that the water had become so offensive that they could not use it.

“But that must have been from some accidental cause,” observed De la Rive. “The water of that well was not very abundant, but it was always excellent. Didn’t you send anybody down to see what was wrong?”

“I’m sure I forget, it is so long ago,” replied the agent. “But I rather think old Gilles, who was alive then, did go down himself, and said that he could not discover any cause, except that there was very little water—it was an extremely dry season, I remember. But the truth is, I did not spend much trouble about it, because at that time I had a

notion of taking that part of the ground into my garden, and I did not want to have a well so near the house on account of my young children."

"But now it would be no inconvenience to you," said De la Rive; "and it would be much less expensive than digging a new well—a little reparation would possibly set it all right. I recommend you to send somebody down to examine it."

De Francœur made a few objections, but yielded to the opinion of M. Eugène. "We'll send to Arles for Lemoine," said he; "he understands these matters better than anybody, and perhaps you will meet him and hear what he says."

M. de la Rive did not seem to think his own attendance necessary; but as the agent wished it, he promised to ride over.

This was an anxious crisis for De Francœur; but he carried it off wonderfully, going about with a thoroughly disengaged

air; calling upon his acquaintance, talking gaily of his improvements on the farm, and jesting freely on the pretender and his claims. The day before Lemoine was to descend the well, he actually had a party to dinner; walked with them over the grounds—showed them the new well and the old one, and discussed with them the relative advantages of re-opening the latter, or digging a third.

All this excited no attention at the time, it seemed the most natural thing in the world; but it was remembered afterwards by M. de la Rive and the Count, when they compared their recollections, and discussed his character.

Well, the eventful morning arrived. De Francoeur, as may be imagined, had never closed his eyes during the night—but he bathed his face with cold water, and endeavoured to look as fresh and cheerful as he could—indeed, it was subsequently thought that he had rather over-acted his part in this

latter respect—he had been too facetious ; and Lemoine, who had of late years found him a reserved and silent man, was particularly struck with this deviation from his usual demeanour.

When M. Eugène rode up to the gate, the agent was not sorry to see him accompanied by the lord of the château; who, for some reason or another of his own, had never testified any indignation at De Franceur's insulting incredulity, nor taken offence at his refusing to acknowledge him. He had contented himself with quietly asserting his rights and assuming possession of the estate—rights which it was nobody's business to dispute, as long as the next heir raised no objections. He came now, as lord of the soil, to inspect the plans for the proposed improvements.

Whilst Lemoine was making some precautions to prevent accident from foul air and so forth, the gentlemen walked over the farm ; with every inch of which the Count,



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confusion, he busied himself with lowering the basket.

Lemoine's request had awakened curiosity, and all the assistants drew round the aperture to watch for what was to come. The signal being given, the basket was drawn up first. It appeared to be filled with a heap of dirt. One of the labourers put in his hand and took up something.

"What's that?" said M. de la Rive.

"I think it's a bone," said the man. It *was* a bone, perfectly black and much decayed.

"Some dog, or sheep, or something, has fallen into the well—probably it was that that spoilt the water," observed M. de la Rive.

Whilst this conversation was going on, De Francœur was leaning over the aperture, superintending the drawing up of the engineer—but there was an eye upon his face that watched every turn of feature or change of colour with scrutinising curiosity.

"What is this you've sent up?" inquired M. Eugène, as Lemoine set his foot on *terra firma*.

"I don't exactly know yet," replied the engineer, stepping towards the basket.

"Is there any leak, or falling in, anywhere?" asked De Francoeur, affecting to have no interest in its contents.

"None whatever that I can see," replied Lemoine; "a few bricks out here and there, that's all. Was anybody ever missing in these parts?" said he, turning out of the basket; "for if I'm not much mistaken somebody has been lost in this well. Here are the remains of clothes; and I suspect these are human bones."

"Here is a watch, too," said one of the men, taking up what at first appeared clay, till the outer covering of dirt was cleared away.

"That may have been dropped in," said M. Eugène.

“Disturb nothing more,” said the lord of the château, cutting short the discussion with authority. “Place it all in the basket again ; bring out a cart, and it shall accompany me home.”

When De Francœur entered upon this bold enterprise—this neck-or-nothing expedient—he had overrated his own powers of dissimulation ; and when the crisis arrived, they utterly failed him. Indeed, it was too severe a trial for any man’s nerves ; and what exceedingly added to his confusion, was the demeanour of the Count from the moment the basket was drawn up. There was something in that curious, inquiring eye, following his every look and gesture, that put to flight all his self-possession, and confounded all his tactics. That eye seemed to read his soul ; and his own fell before its penetrating glance convicted and abashed.

“Come, De la Rive, let us be gone,” said the Count ; “and you, Lemoine, will take

charge of the basket and accompany us."

M. Eugène acquiesced in silence ; whilst M. de Franceur, making an effort to recover himself, asked them to go into the house and take some refreshment, but they declined ; and he walked beside them to the gate, where their horses and the cart awaited them.

"We will ride gently, and you will keep near us with the basket," said the Count to Lemoine in a low voice. "I must not lose sight of it."

As the two gentlemen rode away, they silently touched their hats to the agent, who stood bareheaded on the footway. "I'll be back," said Lemoine, who understood nothing of what was going on, "as soon as I have delivered the basket at the château, and tell you what I advise about the water."

"I am lost !" said the agent, as he turned from the gate. "Fool, fool, that I was to attempt it. I have pulled down the roof

upon my own head, and must perish beneath the ruins !”

“Didn’t I tell you so ?” said the Count to M. Eugène ; “I was certain that sooner or later he would betray himself.”

## CHAPTER VIII.

"AND now," said M. de la Rive, as they sipped their wine on the evening of the day that had betrayed M. de Francœur's secret, "fulfil your promise to tell me your story. I cannot imagine how you came to suspect what nobody else ever dreamt of."

"I will," said the Count, "but I must begin with a sketch of my own history."

"The earliest thing I can recal, was living with my mother, then a very pretty young woman, in a square opposite to a large

church, and being visited by a gentleman, whom I called father. He was a soldier; and the men who came to the house with messages from him, used to call him *Le Commandant*. I conclude he was commander of the garrison. Be that as it may, he was evidently a person in authority. He seemed very fond of me, and always told me I should be a soldier and an officer; and already in my childhood I began to sigh for the fine clothes and fine horses I saw in the possession of my father. I can recal those circumstances and feelings perfectly, although I do not think I could be more than four, or at the most five, years of age, when I understood that my father had lost some near relative, and was about to quit us, and that I and my mother were shortly to follow him.

“He departed; and my mother busied herself in preparing a quantity of clothes, some of which were black. I remember

being delighted when I was put into mourning myself.

“ After an interval of, I fancy, some weeks, I was placed on a horse in front of a servant, and with my mother, and a girl called Lucile, who had the care of me, we started on a journey. My recollections of this journey are very vague ; but I think we must have travelled several days, when one night I was awakened out of my sleep by a great noise and the light of numerous torches ; and on opening my eyes, I perceived two or three men in the room with drawn swords, and my mother, in whose bed I slept, on the floor, in an attitude of supplication. She was on her knees, and holding up her hands, as if entreating the assassins to spare her. At this sight, I gave vent to my terror in as loud a cry as my small lungs could emit, by which means, I fancy, I first betrayed my presence to the troop, for I remember one of them immediately rushed to



the bed, and lifting me up in his arms, was about to thrust his sword into my side, when my mother, forgetting her own danger, flew to my rescue; and so sudden were her movements, that she had snatched me from the men, and had darted out of the open door with me in her arms, before they could stop her.

“Of what followed I have a very obscure recollection. I remember that the whole town was in a violent commotion; that I saw soldiers and naked swords in every direction, and people flying as if for their lives; the cries and screams I can never forget.

“Somehow, in this confusion, I cannot tell by what means, I was separated from my mother. I think a man took me from her arms, and was going to kill me, when another interfered and prevented him. At all events, I was cut by a sabre on the shoulder, for I have the mark of it still.

“From that hour to this, I never saw my

mother again ; and for many years, I supposed she had been killed in that fray. I have since made out, from a comparison of dates, that it must have been the fatal night of St. Bartholomew, and how she escaped I cannot tell. For my own part, a number of events are mixed up in such confusion in my memory, that I have very little idea of anything, till I found myself following a troop of soldiers, with a drum tied to my back, which I was regularly taught to beat. In this way I went about the country for a few years, till at length, for some reason or other, my services being no longer required, I was discharged, and a good-natured serjeant procured me a situation as errand-boy with a relation of his own, who kept a hair-dresser's shop in the Faubourg St. Honoré. My master taught me his trade ; and in process of time I grew so expert, that I was able to set up for myself ; and by degrees became the most fashionable artist in

my line in the city. I assure you," said the old gentleman, quietly smiling, and tapping his snuff-box, "I have dressed the perruques of some of the greatest men of the age.

"Well, I was living contentedly enough, and was making a very good living of it, when I was one day sent for to wait on a gentleman at the Croix d'Or. Though I carried my tools in my pocket, I always made a point of appearing in the street well dressed; and the servant of the inn, who did not know me, I fancy, took me for a gentleman; so that I was shown into the saloon instead of the bed-chamber, and my client was informed a visitor was waiting to see him.

"This client was your brother, M. Adolphe de la Rive. You may judge of my amazement, when on entering the room, he first stood for a moment as if transfixed by amazement; and then rushing towards me and throwing himself into my arms, he burst

into tears of joy, and poured forth a torrent of mingled congratulations and reproaches that confounded me. The expression of his feelings was so vivid, that for some moments I could not get in a word; but as soon as his excitement was somewhat subdued and he began to interrogate me, I discovered that he was mistaking me for some connexion of his family whom he had been anxiously seeking, and had despaired of finding. But even then, although I assured him of his error, it was with much difficulty I convinced him of it, especially as I could not deny that I was called Philibert; so extraordinary a resemblance he declared he had never beheld, except in the case of twins, whilst the coincidence of name rendered the circumstance still more inexplicable.

“When, however, I had satisfied him that what I asserted was true, and that, instead of being the Count de Châteauroux, I was only a hair-dresser, he, after some inquiries into

my character and situation, sent for me again; and told me that I had it in my power to do him a great service, and save the life of a most worthy lady, if, for a short time, I would consent to personate the gentleman he had taken me for.

“At first I refused positively; not that I wanted ambition or a taste for being *grand seigneur*; on the contrary, I should have been very glad to have been in reality the Count de Châteauroux or any other Count; but I had a conscience, and I recoiled from the idea of the fraud; besides which, I was by no means insensible to the danger I should incur if I were found out—a catastrophe I thought unavoidable.

“With respect to the danger, your brother promised to hold me harmless, and to dismiss me after a certain period undamaged in person or character; and as regarded my conscientious scruples, he took great pains to convince me, that whilst I should be doing

him and his family a considerable service, I injured nobody. He moreover, promised that if I would listen to his entreaties, I should not only receive a very handsome reward, but that he would take care of my fortunes for the rest of my life—this, he observed, being but common justice, since so long an absence from Paris might possibly ruin my prospects in my present line of business.

“Well, at length, I consented ; and as there was no time to lose, we started for the south ; it being stipulated, both on his side and mine, that we were to take nobody into our confidence, except his sister. For all the rest of the world, even his own family, I was to be the real, *bond fide* Count de Châteauroux ; if we do not adhere strictly to this precaution, he said, the truth will be sure to ooze out in one direction or another.

For myself, I shut up my shop, and said I was going into the country for a little while ;

and as I had no relations, it was nobody's business to inquire what was become of me.

"As we travelled along the road, your brother, whilst he treated me as if I were really the person whose character I was about to assume, gave me such information and instructions as he thought necessary to enable me to support my part; and he always declared he had found me a very apt scholar, and that I fully justified the appellation by which I was known in Paris as *The Gentleman Barber*.

"Well, everything went on prosperously enough, till we drew near the end of our journey, and then my courage failed me. I told M. de la Rive, that I was certain I should be detected and exposed; that he would share the disgrace and infamy of the imposture, and be not only unable to protect me, but himself; and I entreated him to let

me return and resume my old trade in the Faubourg St. Honoré. But he would not hear of it, though it cost him a great deal of argument, and indeed supplication, to overcome my fears, and win me back to his purpose; and as I expressed a conviction that the confusion of my countenance would betray me, it was agreed between us that I should bleed myself copiously on the morning we were to arrive at Arles—an operation I was very well able to perform for myself, as I had often done it for others. This would give me an appearance of sickness, and by entitling me to muffle my person, render discovery more difficult.

“What followed you know—the cheers of the mob, the congratulations of the governor; and other authorities, and the reception given to me by your sister. M. de la Rive had not dared to write the truth to her—and at my first introduction she was entirely deceived.



It was not till we were in the carriage on our way to the chateau, that he ventured to inform her of the real state of the case.

“I was now installed as the Count de Châteauroux ; and I fancy acted my part tolerably well. Your sister and I lived very peaceably together—though we seldom met except at table, or when we drove through the town occasionally to show ourselves, or to repay or receive visits. We conversed with few people, considering that our safety depended much on retirement.

“In spite of my good acting, I was conscious that many persons doubted my identity, especially the servants, who must necessarily be very difficult to deceive under such circumstances ; and I was therefore not the least surprised that De Francœur, who resolutely supported me in public, gave me clearly to understand, when we were alone, that he was fully aware of the substitution.

At first, I imagined him to be entirely actuated by his desire to serve the Countess ; but gradually some doubts arose in my mind with respect to the integrity of his motives. The equivocal position in which I appeared threw him off his guard, and as he took me for an adventurer, he was indifferent to my esteem. For the purpose of maintaining my character, it was necessary that I should occasionally sign papers and transact business with him ; and inexperienced as I was, I fancied I could discern that he was not altogether the disinterested, honest agent that Madame de Châteauroux represented him to me. I even ventured to give her some hints of my opinion ; but, of course, it was hardly to be expected that she would listen to the representations of a person in so equivocal a situation as I was, against a man she had confided in for years. Seeing, therefore, that I did myself harm, and her no good, I

forbore. My own opinion, however, was rather confirmed than otherwise, by continued observation.

“I suspected that he was in some degree making a tool of me ; and I was often struck by the certainty with which he pronounced on the Count’s death ; he always spoke of him as actually dead ; there was never an *if* in the case ; at least when he was alone with me and off his guard. In the presence of others he was more cautious ; and even with me, after I had once turned suddenly towards him, and inquired how he could be so well assured of a fact that appeared buried in mystery, he changed his tone and spoke of the matter, if at all, hypothetically. Certain strange suspicions did even then occasionally glance across my mind, but they were too vague to justify me in communicating them. Besides, I was not in a situation to become an accuser ; and I felt that I should probably

bring myself and perhaps the Countess and her brother into trouble by my interference, and do no good to anybody.

“However, before I quitted the château finally, I did venture to address a few lines to your brother, recommending M. de Francœur to his surveillance. How he was affected by them, I do not know, as he made no response to that part of my letter.

“I can hardly say whether it was with satisfaction, or the contrary, I learnt at the end of eighteen months that the purpose of the substitution being answered, I was at liberty to depart when I pleased. I was not dismissed, observe; I was only told that I was free, that a certain sum of money would be lodged in Paris for my use, and that a situation had been procured for me in a merchant’s house, which would enable me to rise to affluence and an agreeable position in society, if I conducted myself prudently—

a point on which your brother and sister were pleased to intimate that they entertained no doubt.

“I confess the life I led was in some respects too agreeable to be resigned without regret; but, on the other hand, it was too quiet and inactive to be quite satisfactory to a young man; and my mind had, besides, never become reconciled to the idea of the imposition I was practising. So I resigned my Countship with a good grace; and after privately taking leave of the Countess, I departed in the middle of the night, as the mode most consistent with my assumed character, and without giving any notice of my intention to the servants, carrying with me the warmest assurances of good-will on the part of your brother and sister.

“The promises they made me were amply fulfilled. I had been recommended to the Messrs. Colard as a distant connection of your family. I found, beyond my hopes,

that a junior partnership in the house had been purchased for me ; and it would have been my own fault if I had not prospered.

" I was not guilty of this treason to myself, and ingratitude to my benefactors ; I rose rapidly, married well, and, to make a short history of myself, I am now a rich man."

" But still," said M. Adolphe, " I am in the dark with respect to the motives of your late sudden appearance here, and the source of your augmented suspicions of the agent."

" That is the part of my story I am now coming to," returned the old gentleman. " About six years ago, business took me to Normandy ; and when in the neighbourhood, I thought I should like to take a peep at the antique city of Rouen, of which I had heard so much. I must tell you, that although I remembered the few circumstances of my infancy I have related to you, I had not the smallest idea of the name of my birthplace,

or of the part of France in which it was situated ; but I had no sooner set my foot in the Cathedral Square of Rouen, than the whole scene seemed to me like a vision of the past—I recalled the very individual houses, and felt sure I could point out the one in which I had lived with my mother. I cannot find words to express the sensations this recognition awakened in me ; but having discovered thus much, you may easily conceive my anxiety to learn more ; and from the circumstance of my father being called *Le Commandant*, my inquiries were greatly facilitated. My own age fixed the date of the year, or nearly so, and I had no difficulty in ascertaining that the commandant of the garrison stationed at Rouen at that period was the Count Joachim de Châteauroux."

## CHAPTER IX.

## CONCLUSION.

ON hearing the unexpected announcement with which we closed our last chapter, M. Eugène very naturally looked somewhat surprised, and not a little disconcerted, and we are afraid a slight suspicion crossed his mind that this story might possibly be part of a plot of the pretender's to possess himself of the estate and title by hereditary right ; at all events, he was about to remind him that the death of the Countess's husband being now established, the property necessarily re-



verted to her family and not to his, when the old gentleman, who probably read his thoughts in his countenance, rendered this warning needless.

“Do not suppose,” said he, “I am come here to lay claim to any property my brother may have left, nor even to his name; although of the relationship I am satisfied. Having secretly taken measures to ascertain the particulars of Count Joachim’s marriage, I have established, beyond a doubt, that he was wedded at Rouen, whilst he commanded the garrison there, to a daughter of a cloth merchant; but that, on account of the lady’s inferior condition, the union was kept secret till the death of his father, when he quitted Normandy, and that she shortly afterwards bade adieu to Rouen, accompanied by her little boy, avowedly to join her husband in the south.

“I cannot entertain the most distant doubt that I am that child, and that I am in fact

the eldest son of that house ; but I have no intention of establishing my claim. As a private gentleman I am rich, and my son, who is a partner in the business from which I have now withdrawn, will be rich after me, whilst my daughters are happily married to respectable professional men. The discovery that I was a Count would possibly disturb their contentment, destroy the agreeable equilibrium which my family affairs now maintain, and would assuredly reduce me at once to straitened circumstances. To be a poor nobleman is a position I am far from aspiring to. The name I have always borne is that of Philibert Petit. The first was the baptismal appellation by which my mother always called me ; the second was given me in the regiment, because I was a child when they picked me up. As Philibert Petit I have lived, and as Philibert Petit I mean to die.

“ But to continue my story. Having thus

ascertained my birth and my near relationship to him whom I had been personating, and whom I may now, I think, venture to call my brother, I naturally felt desirous of learning whether any tidings of his fate had reached Arles. Through my mercantile correspondents, however, I soon ascertained that after my departure all inquiry had ceased, the characteristic mode of my disappearance having been generally accepted as satisfactory proof of my identity with the late lord of the château.

“For my own part, after the lapse of so many years, I could entertain no doubts of his death, and I confess my former suspicions of De Francœur not only revived, but often gave me great uneasiness. I could not help questioning with myself, how far I was justified in my silence and inaction, especially since I found myself a member of the family. Still, on the other hand, the foundation of these suspicions was so unsubstantial, and

would probably appear so visionary to the world in general, that I shrank from stirring in the business. I had not the slightest shadow of proof, nor could I devise any mode by which I could attain any. Thus I deferred moving in the affair from year to year, and had grown pretty well reconciled to my own inaction, when a circumstance happened that suddenly roused me from my indifference.

“ I had often been invited to spend a few days with a friend in the neighbourhood of Fontainebleau ; and some business taking me into the country, I resolved to avail myself of the invitation, and spend the night at his house. So I wrote, saying that I proposed arriving to supper provided I heard nothing to the contrary before a certain day. Receiving no letter, I concluded I was expected, and made my arrangements accordingly ; but the distance was greater than I had reckoned on, and as it was nearly

midnight when I drove up to the gate, I was not a little disconcerted to learn from the man who opened the door that his master had been absent from home for some weeks.

"I did not know what to do, for it was a long way to go back to an inn at that late hour; and besides, I was very tired. I suppose I appeared a good deal disappointed, for the man, after a little reflection, said, that if I would alight, he would speak to the *femme de charge*, or housekeeper, and ascertain what could be done for me; so I got off my horse, and was shown into a large saloon hung with family pictures, where my friend, the *concierge*, left me with a single candle, that dimly lighted the apartment.

"I had taken the candle in my hand to examine a portrait of my absent host, when, hearing the door open, I turned round, and saw a respectable-looking woman enter, who, the moment she cast her eyes on me, uttered

a loud scream, and rushed out of the room. Supposing that her fright arose from seeing a stranger where she had not expected to see anybody, I ran after her, begging her not to be alarmed, and assuring her I was a very harmless traveller. But it was some time before I could so far overcome her terrors as to arrive at an explanation of them. She sank into a chair in the hall, crying and sobbing like a child; and every time she lifted her eyes to my face, her emotion burst forth afresh.

“‘It is he!’ she said; ‘it is his very self! yes, yes, it is he! it is he!’

“For some time this was all I could get from her; but, at length, when she was somewhat soothed, I learned what I had indeed began to suspect, namely, that she took me for my brother; and I did not immediately undeceive her. She was now all anxiety to accommodate me, and make me comfortable; and I soon discovered her

to be that Clarice, Madame de Châteauroux's maid, who, with the footman Morel, had disappeared previous to the Countess's arrest. Morel was dead, and she was now my friend's housekeeper.

"You may suppose this was a very interesting discovery; and I not only stayed there that night, but the whole of the following day, for the purpose of conversing with Clarice, whom I found willing enough to tell me all she knew, which indeed was not much; but little as it was, combined with my own previous observations and suspicions, it had a significance for me.

"What had become of the Count she knew no more than the world in general. Both she and Morel, to whom at the time she was privately married, had overheard the quarrel and the Countess's threat, when they parted for the night. Clarice, who slept near her, had also heard her rise from her bed, and go towards her husband's chamber; and she

confessed that her first idea, when in the morning they found the room empty, and the bed stained with blood, was, that she had murdered him. She also admitted that, under the horror and excitement of this suspicion, both herself and her husband had spoken very injuriously of the Countess ; and that, moreover, although various observations and reflections subsequently caused a change in their opinions, they had not had the honesty and courage to withdraw the imputation they had flung upon their mistress, from the apprehension that they might be suspected themselves.

“ ‘ We knew that some people entertained suspicions of the servants,’ she observed, ‘ and M. de Francœur alarmed us very much by different things he said to us on the subject, and we thought my Lady, with her large fortune and great connexions, had a better chance of getting justice than we had. But when we heard that the *marechaussée*



were coming, we were so frightened lest we should be called upon to prove what we had said, that we took flight, and never returned into that part of the country again.'

"The indications of my brother's fate that I extracted by interrogating Clarice were but small; yet I gathered enough to satisfy me that he had not been murdered in the house; for it was utterly impossible the Countess, or any other woman, had she taken his life, could have removed his body without assistance. It would not have been an easy thing for a man to do. Now, not the smallest suspicion attached to any one in the château except it were the Countess and the two people who fled; and of their innocence I felt perfectly assured. Moreover, it seemed pretty clear that the Count had withdrawn himself voluntarily. I ascertained that the great hall-door, which had been locked on the inside when the servants retired, was found only on the latch in the morning, and that

the latch, as well as the ballisters of the stairs, were stained with blood. These stains had been supposed to be from the hand of the murderer; but I thought them much more likely to have proceeded from my brother's, when I learned that some broken glass had been found on the floor of his chamber. Then, although it was true that he had left his cloak and horse behind him, if he were bent on departing secretly, he could not do otherwise; for the horse was locked in the stable, and Morel had himself taken away the cloak. The remainder of his attire had vanished with himself, and, I could scarcely doubt, had been carried away on his own back.

“Then, I must say, the more I questioned Clarice, the more vivid my impressions became with respect to De Francœur. I learnt from her that on the morning after my brother's disappearance, when the agent arrived to breakfast, he was in a state of such

visible agitation and confusion, that when Madelon, on hearing the great bell ring, came up to the house to know what had happened, she said she was quite terrified because she had seen from M. de Francœur's face, when she opened the gate to him, that something dreadful had occurred. Everybody had remarked his livid paleness and the strange expression of his features; and also how his hand shook and his lip quivered. Moreover, though he had waited long enough to get an appetite, he had not eaten a morsel of breakfast; and when he left the house, the footman observed that, instead of making for the hall-door, he turned in an opposite direction as if he had been a stranger to the locality.

"These symptoms of disturbance, and many other singularities that were subsequently remarked, were attributed to his anxiety about the Count; but I placed another construction upon them, especially when I

learnt from Clarice that he had sought, by various and repeated insinuations, to inspire her and Morel with the apprehension that they would be implicated in the danger if the authorities interfered; and that, in short, though he had never directly counselled them to fly, he it was that had suggested the idea to them. I thought I could discern through the whole of his proceedings the restless interference and the tortuous path of a guilty and anxious mind, desirous that suspicion should affix itself somewhere lest it should float about till it settled on himself, and yet shrinking from the additional horrors of allowing another to suffer for his crime. Still, to come forward with an accusation of this nature against a man whose character had never been impeached, was a very serious undertaking, the more so that my own conviction was, on the whole, rather instinctive than based on evidence; and even were it well-founded, I might not be able to

substantiate the allegation, whilst a failure would, on all accounts, have been extremely painful and embarrassing.

“ I believe, under all these considerations, I should have been tempted to let the matter alone, had I not heard of the impending alliance betwixt the families. That decided me ; I could not permit your son to marry the daughter of an assassin, and it was then I formed the plan I have executed—the success of which has been considerably aided by the frank unsuspicion with which you received me on my arrival. I felt pretty confident that if you would allow me for a few weeks, unquestioned, to pass for the Count, that I could extract the truth from De Francœur, if he were not guilty of my brother’s death, or force him to betray himself if he were ; and the result is as I expected ; for I am satisfied that the discovery of this morning has been planned as a *dernier ressort* to get rid of me altogether

and put you in possession of the property. How it happened that M. de Châteauroux placed himself in his power, and by what means he effected his death, we shall never know unless he confesses ; but I feel satisfied that the motive which impelled him to the act, was the desire to conceal his dishonest appropriations."

It was not without considerable pain that M. de la Rive yielded to the conviction of De Francœur's guilt thus forced upon him. There was an intimacy, approaching to friendship, subsisting between them, and the attachment of his son to the agent's daughter, rendered the matter doubly distressing. He had, however, great reason to rejoice that this last link had not been made faster before the discovery.

The question now arose, what was to be done? The contents of the basket furnished indisputable evidence that the remains found in the well were those of the Count ; and it

never occurred to them to doubt that De Francoeur had been instrumental to his death. Still, for the sake of his family, M. de la Rive felt great reluctance to accuse him, and entail ineffaceable disgrace on his innocent children. But justice demanded the exposure of so great a criminal; and Philibert Petit enforced it as a duty not to be evaded.

Whilst the two gentlemen were deliberating on this affair at the château, the unhappy agent was suffering tortures of suspense at the farm. He was conscious that he had acted his part badly, and he had read suspicion in M. Petit's face. The veil had fallen from his own for ever—it was laid bare to the world's eye—and he knew that he could never raise his own again to that of an honest man. After some interval, he returned home, where he passed the day and night in inexpressible agonies. The sight of his children, especially of his beautiful daughter, the one beloved by Alexis de la

Rive, tortured his soul. He wished he had courage to rush upon death, but his spirit quailed at the Beyond—there “what dreams might come !”

We never write these sad records of crime without being disposed to reiterate that, all dread of human vengeance or Divine judgment aside, could wretched man but realize to himself for one moment the hell inalienable that he would thereafter carry in his bosom, no such deeds of guilt could ever be committed. Human vengeance, or even discovery may be eluded, and the Divine judgment may be deterred to the end of a long life, but the fiery curse of an ill conscience is born of the crime—its certain and unfailing offspring—the bitter fruit that surely blossoms, but never dies.

We do not deny that the lives and deaths of some few criminals of the lowest classes, who are steeped in ignorance and obduracy, seem to contradict this assertion ; but these



he has are strange exceptional cases, on which let no  
is spirit man reckon for his own exemption. They  
dreams are as strange and exceptional, as the  
of crime instances we sometimes read of insensibility  
that, as to physical pain; and one might as well  
be judge hope to undergo the amputation of a limb  
it realize without suffering, on the strength of these  
inalienable few precedents, as expect to enjoy peace and  
y in his holy sleep with the blood of a fellow-creature  
uld ever staining our souls; and although it is true  
or even M. de Francœur had not murdered the  
e Divine Count, the circumstance of the case made  
end of a him feel as guilty of his death as if he had.  
ill con He had reaped the harvest he had sown;  
rtain and from the hour of the Count's death he had  
at surely been a miserable man, and not a whit the  
id deaths: less miserable for the success with which he  
t classes, had deceived the world. No one ever bore  
obduracy, about a secret burden of woe, without feeling  
but these how much its weight would be alleviated by  
VOL. I. sympathy and participation; and the deeper  
P

we need to hide it from our fellow-men, the more inexorably it will press upon ourselves.

It must be a bitter pang to a human being, not sunk into the sloughs of utter corruption, to feel, whilst associated with the virtuous and upright, that every pure soul and friendly face would be turned away from him for ever, could they but read the records inscribed on the black tablets of his own undying memory.

Long years had those eating cares been gnawing at the heart of M. de Francœur, and undermining his constitution. He was not more than fifty years of age, but he looked and felt seventy; and now that the struggle was over and the game irretrievably lost, nature collapsed, and sunk exhausted.

When De la Rive and Philibert Petit rode to the farm on the following morning, for

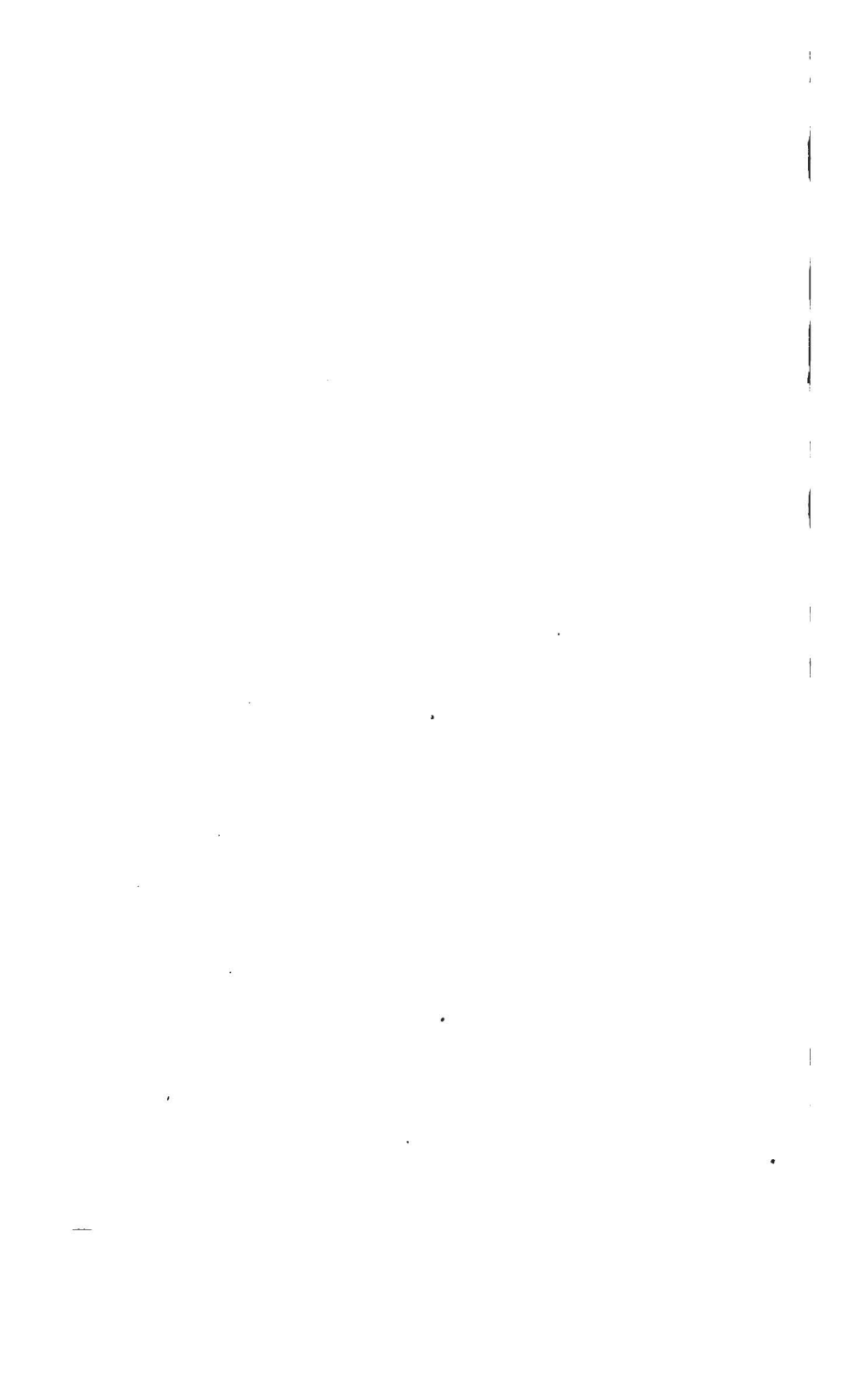
the purpose of having an interview with the agent, and hearing what he had to say with respect to the events of the preceding day, they learnt that he was so ill that he was unable to leave his bed, and that his wife had sent to Arles for a physician. But no earthly physician could help him. He never rallied, and died on the third day. Before he departed, he made a full confession to a priest; and enjoined him, after he was dead, to communicate the substance of it to M. de la Rive, whom he conjured, for the sake of their past intimacy, to spare his innocent wife and family the horrors of exposure, or the pangs of learning their father's guilt.

It occasioned M. de la Rive as much satisfaction as surprise to learn that De Francoeur was less guilty than they had supposed him, and he and Philibert willingly acceded to his dying supplication—the young Alexis

alone being made acquainted with the sad secret; after which his father sent him to travel, whilst he took upon himself to break off the subsisting engagement betwixt him and De Francœur's daughter. Time, absence, and change of scene, at length healed the wounds of the lover; but the poor girl's heart was of softer material, and a slow consumption and a patient death were her share of expiation of her father's guilt, and the sad termination of her true love's course.

His object being attained, M. Philibert Petit returned to Paris, content with the station that so strange an accident on one side, and his own good conduct on the other, had combined to place him in; whilst the intimacy thus originated, together with M. de la Rive's conviction that he was really of the blood of Châteauroux, ultimately led to a union betwixt Alexis and his youngest

daughter. So that the grandchildren of Philibert Petit became the heirs and possessors of the estate that had formed the fatal dowry of his unfortunate brother.



## II.

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### THE MORNING VISITOR.

ONE of the features of our time—as of all times, each of which is new in its generation—is the character of its crimes. Every phasis of human affairs, every advance in civilization, every shade of improvement in our material comforts and conveniences, gives rise to new modes and forms—nay, to actual new births—of crime, the germs of which were only waiting for a congenial soil to spring in ; whilst others are but modifications

of the old inventions, accommodated to new circumstances.

There are thus stages in the history of crime indicative of ages. First, we have the heroic. At a very early period of a nation's annals crime is bloody, bold, and resolute. Ambitious princes 'make quick conveyance' with those who stand in the way of their advancement; and fierce barons slake their enmity and revenge in the blood of their foes, with little attempt at concealment, and no appearance of remorse. Next comes the age of strange murders, mysterious poisonings, and life-long incarcerations; when the passions, yet rife, unsubdued by education and the practical influence of religion, and rebellious to the new restraints of law, seek their gratification by hidden and tortuous methods. This is the romantic era of crime. But as civilization advances, it descends to a lower sphere, sheltering itself chiefly in the squalid districts of poverty and wretchedness;



the last halo of the romantic and heroic fades from it ; and except where it is the result of brutal ignorance, its chief characteristic becomes astuteness.

But we are often struck by the strange tinge of romance which still colours the page of continental criminal records, causing them to read like the annals of a previous century. We think we perceive also a state of morals somewhat in arrear of the stage we have reached, and certainly some curious and very defective forms of law ; and these two causes combined, seem to give rise to criminal enterprizes which in this country could scarcely have been undertaken, or, if they were, must have met with immediate detection and punishment.

There is also frequently a singular complication or imbroglio in the details, such as would be impossible in this island of daylight—for enveloped in fog as we are physically, there is a greater glare thrown upon our

actions here than among any other nation of the world perhaps—an imbroglio that appears to fling the narrative back into the romantic era, and to indicate that it belongs to a stage of civilization we have already passed.

How thoroughly foreign and strange to us was the history of Madame Lafarge! How unlike ours were the modes and habits of life it disclosed, and how vividly one felt that it was the tale of another land! So of the Priest Riembauer, noticed in a late number of the "Edinburgh Review," who murdered the woman he had outraged; the details of whose crime were as foreign to us as the language he spoke. To what age or class our present story might be properly assigned, we should be puzzled to determine—the circumstances of the crime being, as far as we know, without precedent, and, we hope, not destined to form one; whilst the boldness of the enterprise on the one hand, and the veil of mystery that still hangs over the motives of the

perpetrator on the other, seem to endue it with the mingled hues of the savage and the romantic. The question, however, we will leave our readers to decide for themselves.

It was between ten and eleven o'clock on the morning of the 28th of February, 1812, that a gentleman presented himself at the door of Mr. Schmidt, an affluent merchant of Leipsic. Being admitted to an interview, he informed Mr. Schmidt that he was from Hamburgh, where, not finding affairs favourable to his objects, he had come to see what could be done in Saxony; and, describing himself as especially recommended to Mr. Schmidt's good offices, he requested that gentleman's advice with respect to the most advantageous mode of laying out his money.

In the course of this conversation, which lasted upwards of half an hour, Mr. Schmidt opened his desk, and took from it a bill to the amount of one hundred dollars, which the visitor begged leave to inspect. Having

done so, he restored it to the owner, who, whilst returning it to the place whence he had taken it, suddenly sank to the ground, deprived of consciousness. On recovering his senses, he cried to the stranger to assist him ; but the stranger was gone.

When Mr. Schmidt arose from the floor, which he did with much difficulty—for his head was bleeding profusely—he saw the chairs standing about in confusion, and his desk open, and a moment's examination showed him that bills to the amount of three thousand dollars were missing.

By this time his cries had summoned to his aid Vetter, the landlord of the house, and his wife, who, having bound up his bleeding head as well as they could, the unfortunate man, to whom indignation and despair lent strength, rushed into the street, and, making his way to the sheriff's office, there lodged information against the stranger, giving the best description of him he could. Notices

were immediately sent to all the banking-houses in the city, together with the numbers of the missing bills ; but, quickly as this was done, it was too late. The house of Frege and Company had already cashed them.

On learning this, Mr. Schmidt returned home, took to his bed, and, after an illness of some duration, died from the consequences of the wounds in his head, which the surgeons declared had been inflicted with considerable violence, and by a blunt instrument.

Before he expired, he reiterated upon oath the above particulars, adding, that he did not know how or why he had fallen, nor whether the stranger had struck him or not. An idea seems to have prevailed at the time that he had sank to the ground immediately after taking a pinch of snuff from the stranger's box ; but this fact was not positively established. Of the appearance of this ill-omened visitor he could give very little description, except that he believed him to be about forty years of age.

The account given by the bankers was, that between the hours of ten and eleven on the day in question, a stranger had presented himself, requesting cash for the bills, which he duly received, partly in gold, and partly in silver. As far as they had observed, he exhibited no appearance of haste or uneasiness whatever. On the contrary, he had not only counted the money and inspected the various coins with great deliberation, but he had returned some of them, requesting others in their place. With respect to his appearance, both they and Vetter, who had seen him in Mr. Schmidt's office, agreed that he was well dressed, and had much the air of a country clergyman.

This scanty information furnished no clue to the discovery of the assassin. The murdered man was laid in his grave; and after causing much terror and excitement amongst the inhabitants of Leipsic for a time, the story sank into oblivion, and was forgotten, or at least ceased to be talked of.

A year had elapsed, and the month of February had come round again, when one morning a rumour spread through the city that a fearful murder had been committed on the person of an elderly lady of property called Kunhardt. It appeared that Madame Kunhardt had sent out her maid between eight and nine o'clock in the morning to fetch a flask of wine from a house hard by. The girl declared she had not been absent five minutes, and that, on her return, she was met in the entrance-hall by a clergyman, who asked her if she were going out, and whether she should be long. She told him she was now returning; whereupon he went quickly forth at the street door. The girl then ascending to her mistress, heard the old lady's voice crying, "Hanne! Hanne!" and on entering the apartment, she discovered her lying in one corner of the ante-room, with her head bleeding. She told the maid that a stranger, who had brought her that letter,

pointing to one on the floor, had struck her down. On being asked if she knew him, she said she had never seen him before to her knowledge. The letter, stained with blood, proved, on examination, to be addressed to Madame Kunhardt, and purported that she should give the bearer one thousand dollars. It was dated Hohendorf, 24th January, 1813.

The walls and the floor were sprinkled with blood, and from one spot the colouring of the wainscot seemed to be rubbed off.

A Dr. Kunitz, who resided in the same house, said that, just before he heard the maid crying for help, he had seen a middle-sized man, in a dark frock-coat and a black cap, going out at the street door. His coat was marked as if it had been rubbed against the wall.

Of course suspicion fell upon this stranger; the more so as the maid said that the same gentleman had called two days before, and



inquired for her mistress, but had gone away on learning she was engaged with company. The coachman's wife also, who lived in the lower part of the house, had seen the stranger on that occasion, and at his request had directed him to the apartments of Madame Kunhardt. She having business that way herself, had followed him up stairs. Just, however, as they reached the door, Hanne opened it to let in the baker, whereon the stranger turned down stairs again, saying it was a mistake, and went straight out of the house.

Meantime Madame Kunhardt died, and the alarm became very general: people grew extremely shy of receiving morning visitors; and several persons came forward laying claim to the honour of having already been favoured with the attentions of this mysterious stranger; amongst the rest, the wife of Dr. Kunitz, and a Demoiselle Junius, a lady of considerable fortune. But on both of

these occasions circumstances had been adverse to the success of his object.

Presently a rumour began to circulate that the maid had been heard saying that she knew who the assassin was, and that he was a clergyman whom she had often seen whilst living in her last place, with a certain Dr. H——; whereon being called upon to name him, she fixed upon a gentleman, who was immediately arrested; but on being confronted with him, neither she nor any of the witnesses recognised him as the person whose morning visits had become so notorious. This mistake, however, directed attention to another clergyman, who was in the habit of frequenting her late master's house; and Dr. H—— remembered that a friend of his, called Tinius, had slept at his house on the night preceding the murder of Madame Kunhardt; had gone out about eight o'clock in the morning; and had returned at nine, after having read the newspapers, and bought

a book of a person named Rau, which he brought in with him.

Dr. Tinius was a man on whom no shadow of suspicion had ever rested. He was minister of Posenna, an eloquent and far-famed preacher; an author, amongst other things, of his own biography; a man of deep learning; and one of the greatest book collectors in Germany. His library contained not less than sixty thousand volumes.

Nevertheless, strange as the thing seemed, suspicion attached itself to Dr. Tinius; but in so delicate a matter, where the reputation of so eminent a man was concerned, great caution was felt to be requisite. Before they ventured to accuse him, they carried the maid Hanne to Posenna. Tinius, who happened to be just stepping out of his house, turned pale at the sight of her. She declared he was the man, and he was forthwith arrested, and carried to prison.

Nothing could equal the surprise of the citizens of Leipsic at this discovery, nor their horror when further investigations brought to light many other attempted assassinations, besides the successful one of Mr. Schmidt. When we say *brought to light*, we mean produced a universal persuasion that the, till now, respected Dr. Tinius was the criminal; for to this day, although so many years have elapsed since these events occurred, they are shrouded in an impenetrable mystery; and Dr. Tinius still lives, residing at a place called Zeitz, under surveillance. Nor does there appear much reason to hope that the secret will be cleared up by a death-bed confession, old age having hitherto brought with it no appearance of remorse.

At the end of the first year, he was degraded from his clerical office, a ceremony which appears to have been conducted with great solemnity, and given over to the civil power; after which, by his talent and ob-

stinacy, the investigation or trial was spun out nine years more.

The success with which many criminals in Germany seem to elude conviction, frustrate the law, and thus prolong their own lives, forms a very remarkable feature in the criminal records of the country, and appears to indicate something extremely defective in the judicial process: in short, the difficulty of obtaining a conviction seems quite extraordinary; and we find numerous instances of trials extending to ten or more years, where no shadow of doubt could exist as to the guilt of the parties arraigned.

Neither, as regarded Dr. Tinius, has any reasonable motive for these extraordinary assassinations been discovered: the one most commonly suggested is that which romance has attributed to Eugene Aram; namely, an inordinate desire to purchase books. Others believe him to have been actuated by a diabo-

lical hatred to mankind, more especially to the prosperous portion of it.

He had had two wives, neither of whom lived happily with him; and there were not wanting persons who declared that he had always inspired them with an inexplicable repugnance; but this feeling had never been heard of till after the crime.

Dr. Tinius endeavoured to prove an *alibi*, but with very indifferent success; and it goes far to establish his guilt, that several letters were found in his house of a like nature to the one he had presented to Madame Kunhardt, and addressed to various opulent people in the city, evidently intended for the same atrocious purpose. A hammer, with the handle shortened, so as to be conveniently carried in the pocket, was also discovered; and it was thought that the wounds on Madame Kunhardt's head had been inflicted with such an instrument.

But amongst the most extraordinary features in this affair, are the numerous letters he wrote to his friends—respectable men, generally clergymen—whilst he was in prison, and the investigation was pending : letters, coolly requesting them to hide this, destroy that, and swear the other, which, whilst they furnish the strongest proof of his guilt, betray at the same time either the entire absence of all moral perceptions on his own part, or else a conviction that these honourable men were in that condition themselves. These letters referred to certain matters connected with the murder of Mr. Schmidt, as well as that of Madame Kunhardt.

It appeared that the first intimation he had that he was suspected, was from a letter sent to Posenna by some friend, dated February 17. It informed him of the maid-servant's deposition ; and at the bottom of the page were these words : *Deleatur et igni tradatur ;*

a piece of advice which, strangely enough, he neglected to follow.

The murder of Mr. Schmidt was supposed to be the first successful crime of this bold assassin; though, doubtless, not the first attempted. And a bold enterprise it certainly was: in broad daylight, in a frequented street of a populous city, to introduce himself into the office of an affluent and well-known merchant, and rob him of his life and his money with so much adroitness, that the people in the house heard no disturbance; and with so much self-possession, that he was able immediately afterwards to present himself at a banking-house, and not only coolly demand cash for the stolen bills, but count the money and select his coin with a degree of deliberation and repose of manner that would have been sufficient to disarm suspicion, had any existed.

He does not appear, however, to have been



quite so much at his ease after the murder of Madame Kunhardt. Circumstances there had been less favourable ; and if booty were his object, he had been disappointed. The maid Hanne, to whom he spoke in the hall, asserted that he looked very pale ; as did also the cook at Dr. H——'s. She said that when he returned home that morning his face was ashy white, and his step unsteady ; and that when he entered the parlour, he stood for some minutes with his hand, which visibly shook, resting on the Bible. She had remarked the same symptoms of agitation at table whilst he laughed and joked, and exerted himself to appear cheerful and disengaged ; and although, during his several examinations, the system of obstinate denial he had adopted was never shaken, yet there were moments wherein he betrayed an irrepressible confusion, which he endeavoured to mask by pretending a violent fit of yawning.

Whilst in confinement, he occupied himself

chiefly in writing and corresponding with his acquaintance. When he was released under surveillance, his former congregation, disliking to receive him amongst them, subscribed a sufficient sum to provide him with a domicile elsewhere.

He is described as a middle-sized man, of pale complexion, and black hair, which he wore combed straight down on each side of his head. He was generally wrapt in a blue cloak ; and thus he went about paying these fearful morning visits, with his mysterious snuff-box and deadly hammer in his pocket, biding his opportunity.

The following remarkable passage was found in his autobiography, written *previous* to the occurrence of the events above narrated :

“The fact that it is not customary to publish the histories and motives of living persons, is sufficient to exonerate me for having omitted to treat openly on these

subjects. The picture which I now paint is for posterity. The colours will remain unfaded, and the drawing correct. Many men's thoughts have been laid open to me, and their words and deeds have pronounced judgment upon them ; and, be it longer or shorter, we shall one day stand before the great Judge, where the secrets of all hearts shall be revealed, and all that is hid in darkness be brought to light. Meantime, I wait my justification in patience, being so accustomed to calumny, that it has ceased to affect me—especially since I observe that it is not *my* honour, but their own, that my enemies injure. To suffer for righteousness' sake is pleasing in the eyes of God and man. I will hold fast the truth that is in Jesus, fight the battles of my God unto the death, and rest my hopes on the promise of the dying saint: 'So, my son, shall the Lord fight for thee.' "



### III.

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#### THE TWO MISS SMITHS.

IN a certain town in the West of England, which shall be nameless, there dwelt two maiden ladies of the name of Smith; each possessing a small independence, each residing, with a single maid-servant, in a small house, the drawing-room floor of which was let, whenever lodgers could be found; each hovering somewhere about the age of fifty, and each hating the other with a restless and implacable enmity. The origin of this

aversion was the similarity of their names each was Miss C. Smith, the one being called Cecilia, the other Charlotte—a circumstance which gave rise to such innumerable mistakes and misunderstandings, as were sufficient to maintain these ladies in a constant state of irritability and warfare. Letters, messages, invitations, parcels, bills, were daily mis-sent, and opened by the wrong person, thus exposing the private affairs of one to the other; and as their aversion had long ago extinguished everything like delicacy on either side, any information so acquired was used without scruple to their mutual annoyance. Presents, too, of fruit, vegetables, or other delicacies from the neighbouring gentry, not unfrequently found their way to the wrong house; and if unaccompanied by a letter, which took away all excuse for mistake, they were appropriated without remorse, even when the appropriating party felt

confident in her heart that the article was not intended for her; and this not from greediness or rapacity, but from the absolute delight they took in vexing each other.

It must be admitted, also, that this well-known enmity was occasionally played upon by the frolic-loving part of the community, both high and low; so that over and above the genuine mistakes, which were of themselves quite enough to keep the poor ladies in hot water, every now and then some little hoax was got up and practised upon them, such as fictitious love-letters, anonymous communications, and so forth. It might have been imagined, as they were not answerable for their names, and as they were mutual sufferers by the similarity—one having as much right to complain of this freak of fortune as the other, that they might have entered into a compact of forbearance, which would have

been equally advantageous to either party ; but their naturally acrimonious dispositions prevented this, and each continued as angry with the other as she could have been if she had had a sole and indefeasible right to the appellation of *C. Smith*, and her rival had usurped it in a pure spirit of annoyance and opposition. To be quite just, however, we must observe that Miss Cecilia was much the worse of the two ; by judicious management Miss Charlotte might have been tamed, but the malice of Miss Cecilia was altogether inexorable.

By the passing of the Reform Bill, the little town wherein dwelt these belligerent powers received a very considerable accession of importance ; it was elevated into a borough, and had a whole live member to itself, which, with infinite pride and gratification, it sent to parliament, after having extracted from him all manner of pledges, and loaded him with all manner of in-



structions as to how he should conduct himself under every conceivable circumstance ; not to mention a variety of bills for the improvement of the roads and markets, the erection of a town-hall, and the reform of the systems of watching, paving, lighting, &c., the important and consequential little town of B——.

A short time previous to the first election—an event which was anticipated by the inhabitants with the most vivid interest—one of the candidates, a country gentleman who resided some twenty miles off, took a lodging in the town, and came there with his wife and family, in order, by a little courtesy and a few entertainments, to win the hearts of the electors and their friends ; and his first move was to send out invitations for a tea and card party, which, in due time, when the preparations were completed, was to be followed by a ball. There was but one milliner and dressmaker

of any consideration in the town of B——, and it may be imagined that on so splendid an occasion her services were in great request—so much so, that in the matter of head-dresses, she not only found that it would be impossible, in so short a period, to fulfil the commands of her customers, but also that she had neither the material nor the skill to give them satisfaction. It was, therefore, settled that she should send off an order to a house in Exeter, which was the county town, for a cargo of caps, toquets, turbans, &c., fit for all ages and faces—"such as were not disposed of to be returned;" and the ladies consented to wait, with the best patience they could, for this interesting consignment, which was to arrive, without fail, on the Wednesday, Thursday being the day fixed for the party. But the last coach arrived on Wednesday night without the expected boxes; however, the coachman brought a message for Miss Gibbs, the milliner,

assuring her that they would be there the next morning without fail.

Accordingly, when the first Exeter coach rattled through the little street of B——, which was about half-past eleven, every head that was interested in the freight was to be seen looking anxiously out for the deal boxes ; and, sure enough, there they were—three of them—large enough to contain caps for the whole town. Then there was a rush up stairs for their bonnets and shawls ; and in a few minutes troops of ladies, young and old, were seen hurrying towards the market-place, where dwelt Miss Gibbs—the young in pursuit of artificial flowers, gold bands, and such-like adornments—the elderly in search of a more mature order of decoration.

Amongst the candidates for finery, nobody was more eager than the two Miss Smiths ; and they had reason to be so, not only because they had neither of them anything at all fit to be worn at Mrs Hanaway's party,

which was in a style much above the entertainments they were usually invited to, but also because they both invariably wore turbans, and each was afraid that the other might carry off the identical turban that might be most desirable for herself. Urged by this feeling, so alert were they, that they were each standing at their several windows when the coach passed, with their bonnets and cloaks actually on—ready to start for the plate!—determined to reach Miss Gibbs's in time to witness the opening of the boxes. But "who shall control his fate?" Just as Miss Cecilia was stepping off her threshold, she was accosted by a very gentlemanly-looking person, who, taking off his hat, with an air really irresistible, begged to know if he had "the honour of seeing Miss Smith"—a question which was of course answered in the affirmative.

"I was not quite sure," said he, "whether I was right, for I had forgotten the number ;

but I thought it was sixty," and he looked at the figures on the door.

"This *is* sixty, sir," said Miss Cecilia; adding to herself, "I wonder if it was sixteen he was sent to," for at number sixteen lived Miss Charlotte.

"I was informed, madam," pursued the gentleman, "that I could be accommodated with apartments here—that you had a first floor to let."

"That is quite true, sir," replied Miss Cecilia, delighted to let her rooms, which had been some time vacant, and doubly gratified when the stranger added, "I come from Bath, and was recommended by a friend of yours, indeed probably a relation, as she bears the same name—Miss Joanna Smith."

"I know Miss Joanna very well, sir," replied Miss Cecilia; "pray, walk up stairs, and I'll show you the apartments directly. (For," thought she, "I must not let him go out of the house till he has taken them, for

fear he should find out his mistake.) Very nice rooms, sir, you see—everything clean and comfortable—a pretty view of the canal in front—just between the baker's and the shoemaker's; you'll get a peep, sir, if you step to this window. Then it's uncommonly lively; the Exeter and Plymouth coaches, up and down, rattling through all day long, and indeed all night too, for the matter of that. A beautiful little bed-room, back, too, sir—Yes, as you observe, it certainly does look over a brick-kiln; but there's no dust—not the least in the world—for I never allow the windows to be opened: altogether, there can't be a pleasanter situation than it is."

The stranger, it must be owned, seemed less sensible of all these advantages than he ought to have been; however, he engaged the apartments: it was but for a short time, as he had come there about some business connected with the election; and as Miss Joanna had so particularly recommended him

to the lodging, he did not like to disoblige her. So the bargain was struck: the maid received orders to provision the garrison with bread, butter, tea, sugar, &c., whilst the gentleman returned to the inn to despatch Boots with his portmanteau and carpet-bag.

"You were only just in time, sir," observed Miss Cecilia, as they descended the stairs, "for I expected a gentleman to call at twelve o'clock to-day, who I am sure would have taken the lodgings."

"I should be sorry to stand in his way," responded the stranger, who would not have been at all sorry for an opportunity of backing out of the bargain. "Perhaps you had better let him have them—I can easily get accommodated elsewhere."

"Oh dear, no, sir; dear me! I wouldn't do such a thing for the world!" exclaimed Miss Cecilia, who had only thrown out this little inuendo by way of binding her lodger to his bargain, lest, on discovering his mis-

take, he should think himself at liberty to annul the agreement. For well she knew that it *was* a mistake: Miss Joanna of Bath was Miss Charlotte's first cousin, and, hating Miss Cecilia, as she was in duty bound to do, would rather have sent her a dose of arsenic than a lodger, any day. She had used every precaution to avoid the accident that had happened, by writing on a card, "Miss Charlotte Smith, No. 16, High Street, B——, *opposite the linendraper's shop*;" but the thoughtless traveller, never dreaming of the danger in which he stood, lost the card, and, trusting to his memory, fell into the snare.

Miss Cecilia had been so engrossed by her anxiety to hook this fish before her rival could have a chance of throwing out a bait for him, that, for a time, she actually forgot Miss Gibbs and the turban; but now that her point was gained, and she felt sure of her man, her former care revived with all its



force, and she hurried along the street towards the market-place, in a fever of apprehension lest she should be too late. The matter certainly looked ill ; for, as she arrived breathless at the door, she saw groups of self-satisfied faces issuing from it, and, amongst the rest, the obnoxious Miss Charlotte's physiognomy appeared, looking more pleased than anybody.

“ Odious creature ! ” thought Miss Cecilia ; “ as if she supposed that any turban in the world could make her look tolerable ! ” But Miss Charlotte did suppose it ; and, moreover, she had just secured the very identical turban that, of all the turbans that ever were made, was most likely to accomplish this desideratum—at least so she opined.

Poor Miss Cecilia ! Up stairs she rushed, bouncing into Miss Gibbs's little room, now strewn with finery. “ Well, Miss Gibbs, I hope you have something that will suit me ? ”

“ Dear me, mem,” responded Miss Gibbs, “ what a pity you did not come a little sooner. The only two turbans we had are just gone—Mrs. Gosling took one, and Miss Charlotte Smith the other—two of the beautifullest—here they are, indeed—you shall see them;” and she opened the boxes in which they were deposited, and presented them to the grieved eye of Miss Cecilia.

She stood aghast ! The turbans were very respectable turbans indeed ; but, to her disappointed and eager desires, they appeared worthy of Mahomet the Prophet, or the Grand Sultana, or any other body, mortal or immortal, that has ever been reputed to wear turbans. And this consummation of perfection she had lost ! lost just by a neck ! missed it by an accident, that, however gratifying she had thought it at the time, she now felt was but an inadequate compensation for her present disappointment. But there was no remedy. Miss Gibbs had nothing fit to

make a turban of; besides, Miss Cecilia would have scorned to appear in any turban that Miss Gibbs could have compiled, when her rival was to be adorned with a construction of such superhuman excellence. No! the only consolation she had was to scold Miss Gibbs for not having kept the turbans till she had seen them, and for not having sent for a greater number of turbans. To which oburgations Miss Gibbs could only answer: "That she had been extremely sorry, indeed, when she saw the ladies were bent upon having the turbans, as she had ordered two entirely with a view to Miss Cecilia's accommodation; and, moreover, that she was never more surprised in her life than when Mrs. Gosling desired one of them might be sent to her, because Mrs. Gosling never wore turbans; and if Miss Gibbs had only foreseen that she would have pounced upon it in that way, she, Miss Gibbs, would have taken care she should never have seen it at all," &c., &c., &c.,—all

of which the reader may believe, if he or she choose.

As for Miss Cecilia, she was implacable, and she flounced out of the house, and through the streets, to her own door, in a temper of mind that rendered it fortunate, as far as the peace of the town of B—— was concerned, that no accident brought her in contact with Miss Charlotte on the way.

As soon as she got into her parlour, she threw off her bonnet and shawl, and plunging into her arm-chair, she tried to compose her mind sufficiently to take a calm view of the dilemma, and determine on what line of conduct to pursue — whether to send an excuse to Mrs. Hanaway, or whether to go to the party in one of her old head-dresses. Either alternative was insupportable. To lose the party—the game at loo, the distinction of being seen in such good society—it was too provoking; besides, very likely people would suppose she had not been invited; Miss

Charlotte, she had no doubt, would try to make them believe so. But then, on the other hand, to wear one of her old turbans was so mortifying—they were so very shabby, so unfashionable—on an occasion, too, when everybody would be so well-dressed! Oh, it was aggravating—vexatious, in the extreme! She passed the day in reflection—chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies; recalling to herself how well she looked in the turban—for she had tried it on; figuring what would have been Miss Charlotte's mortification if she had been the disappointed person—how triumphantly she, Miss Cecilia, would have marched into the room with the turban on her head—how crest-fallen the other would have looked; and then she varied her occupation by resuscitating all her old turbans, buried in antique band-boxes deep in dust, and trying whether it were possible, out of their united materials, to concoct one of the

present fashionable shape and dimensions. But the thing was impracticable: the new turban was composed of crimson satin and gold lace, hers of pieces of muslin and gauze.

When the mind is very much engrossed, whether the subject of contemplation be pleasant or unpleasant, time flies with inconceivable rapidity; and Miss Cecilia was roused from her meditations by hearing the clock in the passage strike four, warning her that it was necessary to come to some decision, as the hour fixed for the party, according to the primitive customs of B——, was half-past seven, when the knell of the clock was followed by a single knock at the door, and the next moment her maid walked into the room with—what do you think?—the identical crimson and gold turban in her hand!

“What a beauty!” cried Susan, turning it round, that she might get a complete view of it in all its phases.

"Was there any message, Sue?" inquired Miss Cecilia, gasping with agitation, for her heart was in her throat.

"No, ma'am," answered Sue; "Miss Gibbs's girl just left it; she said it should have come earlier, but she had so many places to go to."

"And she's gone, is she, Susan?"

"Yes, ma'am, she went directly—she said she hadn't got half through yet."

"Very well, Susan, you may go; and remember, I'm not at home if anybody calls; and if any message comes here from Miss Gibbs, you'll say I'm gone out, and you don't expect me home till very late."

"Very well, ma'am."

"And I say, Susan, if they send here to make any inquiries about that turban, you'll say you know nothing about it, and send them away."

"Very well, ma'am," said Susan, and down she dived to the regions below.

Instead of four o'clock, how ardently did Miss Cecilia wish it were seven; for the danger of the next three hours was imminent. Well she understood how the turban had got there—it was a mistake of the girl—but the chance was great that, before seven o'clock arrived, Miss Charlotte would take fright at not receiving her head-dress, and would send to Miss Gibbs to demand it, when the whole thing would be found out. However, no message came: at five o'clock, when the milk-boy rang, Miss Cecilia thought she should have fainted; but that was the only alarm. At six she began to dress, and at seven she stood before her glass in full array, with the turban on her head. She thought she had never looked so well; indeed, she was sure she had not. The magnitude of the thing gave her an air, and indeed a feeling of dignity and importance that she had never been sensible of before. The gold lace looked brilliant even by the



light of her single tallow candle ; what would it do in a well-illuminated drawing-room ! then the colour was strikingly becoming, and suited her hair exactly—Miss Cecilia, we must here observe, was quite grey ; but she wore a frontlet of dark curls, and a little black silk skull-cap, fitted close to her head, which kept all neat and tight under the turban.

She had not far to go ; nevertheless, she thought it would be as well to set off at once, for fear of accidents, even though she lingered on the way to fill up the time, for every moment the danger augmented ; so she called to Susan to bring her cloak, and her calash, and her overalls, and being well packed up by the admiring Sue, who declared the turban was “without exception the beautifullest thing she ever saw,” she started ; determined, however, not to take the direct way, but to make a little circuit

by a back street, lest, by ill luck, she should fall foul of the enemy.

“Susan,” said she, pausing as she was stepping off the threshold, “if anybody calls, you’ll say I have been gone to Mrs. Hanaway’s some time ; and, Susan, just put a pin in this calash to keep it back, it falls over my eyes so that I can’t see.” And Susan pinned a fold in the calash, and away went the triumphant Miss Cecilia. She did not wish to be guilty of the vulgarity of arriving first at the party ; so she lingered about till it wanted a quarter to eight, and then she knocked at Mrs. Hanaway’s door, which a smart footman immediately opened, and, with the alertness for which many of his order are remarkable, proceeded to disengage the lady from her external coverings—the cloak, the overalls, the calash ; and then, without giving her time to breathe, he rushed up the stairs, calling out, “Miss Cecilia Smith ;” whilst

the butler, who stood at the drawing-room door, threw it open, reiterating, "Miss Cecilia Smith;" and in she went. But, O reader! little do you think, and little did she think, where the turban was that she imagined to be upon her head, and under the supposed shadow of which she walked into the room with so much dignity and complacence. It was below in the hall, lying on the floor, fast in the calash, to which Susan, ill-starred wench! had pinned it; and the footman, in his cruel haste, had dragged them both off together.

With only some under-trappings on her cranium, and altogether unconscious of her calamity, smiling and bowing, Miss Cecilia advanced towards her host and hostess, who received her in the most gracious manner, thinking, certainly, that her taste in a head-dress was peculiar, and that she was about the most extraordinary figure they had ever beheld, but supposing that such was the

fashion she chose to adopt—the less astonished or inclined to suspect the truth, from having heard a good deal of the eccentricities of the two spinsters of B——. But to the rest of the company, the appearance she made was inexplicable ; they had been accustomed to see her ill dressed, and oddly dressed, but such a flight as this they were not prepared for. Some whispered that she had gone mad ; others suspected that it must be accident—that somehow or other she had forgotten to put on her head-dress ; but even if it were so, the joke was an excellent one, and nobody cared enough for her to sacrifice their amusement by setting her right. So Miss Cecilia, blessed in her delusion, triumphant and happy, took her place at the whist table, anxiously selecting a position which gave her a full view of the door, in order that she might have the indescribable satisfaction of seeing the expression of Miss Charlotte's countenance when she entered the

room—that is, if she came; the probability was, that mortification would keep her away.

But no such thing—Miss Charlotte had too much spirit to be beaten out of the field in that manner. She had waited with patience for her turban, because Miss Gibbs had told her, that, having many things to send out, it might be late before she got it; but when half-past six arrived, she became impatient, and despatched her maid to fetch it. The maid returned, with “Miss Gibbs’s respects, and the girl was still out with the things; she would be sure to call at Miss Charlotte’s before she came back.” At half-past seven there was another message, to say that the turban had not arrived; by this time the girl had done her errands, and Miss Gibbs, on questioning her, discovered the truth. But it was too late—the mischief was irreparable—Susan averring, with truth, that her mistress had gone to Mrs. Hana-

way's party some time, with the turban on her head.

We will not attempt to paint Miss Charlotte's feelings—that would be a vain endeavour. Rage took possession of her soul; her attire was already complete, all but the head-dress, for which she was waiting. She selected the best turban she had, threw on her cloak and calash, and in a condition of mind bordering upon frenzy, she rushed forth, determined, be the consequences what they might, to claim her turban, and expose Miss Cecilia's dishonourable conduct before the whole company.

By the time she arrived at Mrs. Hanaway's door, owing to the delays that had intervened, it was nearly half-past eight; the company had all arrived; and whilst the butler and footmen were carrying up the refreshments, one of the female servants of the establishment had come into the hall,

and was endeavouring to introduce some sort of order and classification amongst the mass of external coverings that had been hastily thrown off by the ladies ; so, when Miss Charlotte knocked, she opened the door and let her in, and proceeded to relieve her of her wraps.

“ I suppose I’m very late,” said Miss Charlotte, dropping into a chair to seize a moment’s rest, whilst the woman drew off her boots ; for she was out of breath with haste, and heated with fury.

“ I believe everybody’s come, ma’am,” said the woman.

“ I should have been here some time since,” proceeded Miss Charlotte, “ but the most shameful trick has been played me about my—my—Why—I declare—I really believe — ” and she bent forward and picked up the turban—the identical turban, which, disturbed by the maid-servant’s manœuvres,

was lying upon the floor, still attacked to the calash by Sukey's unlucky pin.

Was there ever such a triumph? Quick as lightning, the old turban was off and the new one on, the maid with bursting sides assisting in the operation; and then, with a light step and a proud heart, up walked Miss Charlotte, and was ushered into the drawing-room.

As the door opened, the eyes of the rivals met. Miss Cecilia's feelings were those of disappointment and surprise. "Then she has got a turban too! How could she have got it?"—and she was vexed that her triumph was not so complete as she had expected. But Miss Charlotte was in ecstasies. It may be supposed she was not slow to tell the story: it soon flew round the room, and the whole party were thrown into convulsions of laughter. Miss Cecilia alone was not in the secret; and as she was suc-



cessful at cards, and therefore in good humour, she added to their mirth, by saying that she was glad to see everybody so merry, and by assuring Mrs. Hanaway, when she took her leave, that it was the gayest party she had ever seen in B——.

“ I am really ashamed,” said Mrs. Hanaway, “ at allowing the poor woman to be the jest of my company ; but I was afraid to tell her the cause of our laughter, from the apprehension of what might have followed.”

“ And it must be admitted,” said her husband, “ that she well deserves the mortification that awaits her when she discovers the truth.”

Poor Miss Cecilia *did* discover the truth, and never was herself again. She parted with her house, and went to live with a relation at Bristol ; but her spirit was broken ; and, after going through all the

stages of a discontented old age—ill temper, peevishness, and fatuity—she closed her existence, as usual with persons of her class, unloved and unlamented.

#### IV.

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#### THE TILE-BURNER AND HIS FAMILY.

IN the early part of last century, there lived near the town of Pont de l'Ain, in the South of France, a brick and tile-burner, named Joseph Vallet. Joseph was an industrious man, skilful in his profession, and his bricks and tiles were in great request in the neighbourhood. No man does well in life without exciting the envy and the enmity of mean-spirited persons about him, and Joseph was not exempted from the common

fate. He had a few evil-wishers, and among these was M. Frillet, who had no other reason for hating Vallet than that he was a rival in trade. Vallet's bricks and tiles commanded a better market than those of Frillet, and that was enough. This hostility of Frillet might have been of little consequence in ordinary circumstances. He possessed, however, the power as well as the inclination to torment his rival; being the king's Attorney-General for the district, a function which rendered him a dangerous enemy to a poor man.

Some time in 1705, a peasant named Dupler, a neighbour of Vallet's, died in what were alleged to be suspicious circumstances. He had been seen one night somewhat intoxicated in the company of Vallet, who, it was said, had given him a blow, which led to his illness and death. How this rumour arose no one could tell; but having become public, the Attorney-General made a

rigorous investigation into the subject. He failed, however, to criminate Vallet in the affair; and it finally appeared that Dupler had died a natural death. Vallet fortunately suffered nothing in character from this attempt to injure him; nobody doubted his innocence. He married, and had a family, and his trade flourished as before.

Nineteen years had elapsed, and the story of Dupler had been long forgotten, when Joseph Sevos and Antoine Pin, two persons of loose character and intemperate habits, disappeared, after having been seen the previous evening—February 19, 1724—in a state of inebriety. They were nowhere to be found; and when a week elapsed without their making their appearance, the question arose, what had become of them?

After some inquiry, it was found that Pin had gone to Dombes and enlisted—a thing he had often threatened to do. But of

Sevos there were no traces. This was the more strange, seeing he was in good circumstances, and was the possessor of a small property. Some thought Pin must have made away with his companion; but others combated this idea, under the impression that if Pin had committed murder, he would have fled no one knew whither, instead of enlisting as a soldier.

While public curiosity was on the stretch to discover what had become of Sevós, a rumour was propagated that all was not right with the family of Vallet the tile-burner. It was said they were very much discomposed, as if conscious of having committed a grievous crime. The report spread rapidly through the country, and the Attorney-General, Frillet, lost no time in inquiring into the facts. The result of his investigations was, that on the 19th of August, 1724, he filed an information to the effect that, "On Sunday evening, the 19th of February,

Joseph Sevós, after eating and drinking in Vallet's house, had suddenly disappeared, and has never since been heard of. That further, according to general belief, he had been murdered in the tiler's house, and buried under the stove; but that afterwards the body had been raised, and consumed in the kiln."

Upon this information proceedings were commenced by the authorities at Pont de l'Ain, and witnesses summoned. The first person was a man called Vaudan. He averred that, on the night of the 19th of February, having been to Mastalion, he was returning by Vallet's house, about three hours before daylight, when he heard a great noise, and clearly distinguished the words, "Help! help! I will confess everything! Forgive me this once, and spare my life!" Whereupon a voice, which he knew to be Joseph Vallet's, answered, "We want no more confessing; you must die!" This

sort of dialogue continuing some time, the witness became alarmed ; but, anxious to hear the end of it, he hid himself behind a bush, whence he distinctly heard the blows that were given to the victim. Suddenly, however, all became still ; and presently afterwards the door of the house opened, and Vallet, accompanied by his wife and two sons, came out, bearing a dead body, which they carried to the brick-kiln, and there buried, heaping a quantity of wood over the spot to conceal it. He added, that three or four days afterwards he made a pretext to call on Vallet at the brick-kiln, in order to see if he could recognise the place ; but, from what he observed, he concluded that the body had been removed ; and he had since learned that the murdered person was Joseph Sevos ; and that on Good Friday the Vallets had consumed the body in the furnace.

There were several other witnesses exa-



mined ; but on close inquiry, it appeared that they had received their information from Vaudan. However, the presumption appeared so strong against the Vallets, that their arrest was decreed, and executed with all the aggravated circumstances that so unnatural a crime seemed to justify. A brigade of mounted police, followed by a mob of the lowest class, proceeded to the tile-burner's house, and, amidst hooting and howling, dragged away the whole family to Pont de l'Ain, and shut them up in prison.

It happened that at this time Vallet was ill. He was suffering from a violent fever, accompanied by ague fits. Nevertheless, he was placed in a miserable dungeon, and loaded with irons ; and his wife and sons were exposed to equally harsh and unjustifiable treatment. With not less injustice, his house was given up to pillage ; the authorities neither took an inventory of his goods nor set a seal upon them. For eleven

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Perhaps a more extraordinary case of criminal jurisprudence than this is not on record, nor one that exhibits a more frightful picture of the effrontery with which the strong dared to oppress the weak, or of the carelessness, precipitance, and contempt for the most ordinary principles of justice with which, at one period, the judicial proceedings of France were conducted.

repulsed, M. Louison had the good sense not to press his suit, and proceeded to Vienna, where he was installed in a lucrative office suitable to his wishes and abilities. Here, however, he could not altogether relinquish the expectation of being one day married to the fair Adelaide Hext, with whom he continued to correspond.

After the lapse of a few months, the aspect of affairs underwent a material change. Hext lay, as he supposed, and as the doctors told him, on his deathbed, and, pondering on the probable destitution of his family, he repented of his rash vow, and stated to Adelaide that he should no longer oppose her wishes. M. Louison, procuring leave of absence for a few days, was speedily on the spot, and, with as little loss of time as possible, was united to the daughter of the seemingly dying merchant. As, in such circumstances, it would have been cruel for Madame Louison to leave the bedside of her aged parent, it was arranged that she should remain till the period of his decease, and then join her husband, who, in the meanwhile, was compelled to



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## THE BRIDE'S JOURN

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## THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY

alas ! he had committed himself and the evil prevailed. Louison slept in peace, he died in the night of agony ; and when dawn dawned he retired to his chamber to solve to spare himself the pain of his victim depart.

At an early hour the carriage arrived. Adelaide, who had not before, with her travelling companions, was here. She wore a bonnet, a Chantilly veil, a collar, a lisse, profusely trimmed with the same costly material ; and as the weather was cold, she threw on a cloak, lined with rich furs.

Mazzuolo and his wife augmented the contents of her heavy trunks.

As they drove away from the house, he felt grateful to De Monge for his presence. It was proper, it was due to the other circumstances, his absence was augured a want of good luck, considering the relation in which

she thought his forbearance highly commendable: her spirits rose, she cast her cares behind her, and prepared to make herself agreeable to her companions, whose appearance rather pleased her than otherwise. Mazzuolo was a fine-looking, dark man, and his wife extremely pleasing and prepossessing.

The length of the journey, the dangers of the road, and the goodness or badness of the inns they should have to rest at, formed the subjects of conversation for the first hour or two. The stage was very long, and it was eleven o'clock before they reached their first relay of horses, by which time the young traveller had decided that she had much reason to be satisfied with her escort. The Italian was polite and entertaining; he had travelled a great deal, and was full of anecdote; and being naturally lively and garrulous, the design he entertained of taking away the life of his charge did not prevent his making himself agreeable to her in the meantime. With his well-seared conscience, he neither felt nervous

nor saturnine at the prospect before him—why should he be the only part of the prospect upon which his eye was turned? the gain; the means of which it was to be did not think very seriously; he did not intend to perform it himself.

When they stopped to change horses, a lad of about seventeen years, named Karl, nephew of Mazzuolo's, opened the carriage door: he seemed to be waiting for them. Mazzuolo stepped aside for some minutes, and then started again, the youth mounting the carriage. The Italian said that they had engaged to look after him and be useful on the journey. In fact, one who was hired to do any work, good or bad. He possessed great strength, could be easily led by his employers; and, in short, was a faithful ally. He had a broad, fair, open face; and, from the glimpse she had of Adelaide thought she had seldom

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## THE BRIDE'S JOURN

room; and then the party closed the door, and bidding and eat his supper, they held her fate.

Mazzuolo opened the conferring that he had already a hint of what was expected of asked him if he thought he was undertaking. Karl said he did whereupon they encouraged him with promises of a handsome share of the booty, telling him also that they would help him, and help him if necessary. The question was, how was the journey to be done, and where? Whether on foot, or by day, or in the night when they were out, in either case, there were difficulties: the road they had to pass was long, and lonely, and fit for the purpose; but were they to get rid of the post-horses as they had a fresh one at every inn, there was no time to win him to the inn. Then, at the inns, the obstacles were considerable, especially as the houses were generally small.



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# LIGHT AND DARKNESS;

OR,

## MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

BY

MRS. CATHERINE CROWE,

AUTHOR OF

"THE NIGHTSIDE OF NATURE," "SUSAN HOPEY," &c.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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# THE BRIDE'S JOURNEY.

(CONTINUED.)

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## CHAPTER II.

DURING the progress of the conversation already described, Karl made no observation whatever. He listened in silence; not without attention, but without objection, even although, in the different plans that were proposed, he heard himself always designated as the active agent in the murder. When the council broke up, the parties retired to bed—their present station being too near Dresden for their purpose.

Next day, they resumed their journey ; and as their way lay through a gloomy forest, nothing but the presence of the postilion saved the young bride's life. The night was passed at a post-house, where there were so few rooms, that Adelaide had to sleep in the same apartment with the daughter of the owner : so here was nothing to be done either.

The Italians began to grow impatient at these difficulties, and Mazzuolo proposed a change in their tactics. On the previous evening, the weather being very cold, Madame Louison had ordered a fire in her chamber. She would doubtless do the same on the ensuing night ; and all they had to do was to fill the stove with charcoal, and her death would follow in the most natural way in the world. They were to pass the night at Nuremberg ; and, as soon as they arrived, Karl was sent out to procure the charcoal ; but, after remaining away a long time, he



came back, saying the shops were all shut, and he could not get any ; and as the inn at Nuremberg was not a fit place for any other kind of attack, Adelaide was respited for another four-and-twenty hours.

On the following day, in order to avoid such another *contretemps*, the charcoal was secured in the morning whilst they were changing horses, and placed in a sack under the seat of the carriage.

It happened on this day that the road was very hilly, and as the horses slowly dragged the vehicle up the ascents, Madame Louison proposed walking to warm themselves. They all descended ; but Tina, being stout, and heavy on her feet, was soon tired, and got in again ; whilst Mazzuolo, with a view to his design against Adelaide, fell into conversation with the driver about the different stations they would have to stop at. He wanted to extract all the information he could obtain, so he walked

beside the carriage, whilst Madame Louison and Karl, who were very cold, walked on as fast as they could.

“ You look quite chilled, Karl,” said she ; “ let us see who will be at the top of the hill first ; a race will warm us.”

The youth strode on without saying anything ; but as she was the more active, she got before him ; and when she reached the top, she turned round, and playfully clapping her hands, said, “ Karl, I’ve beaten you !” Karl said he had had an illness lately, and was not so strong as he used to be ; he had gone into the water when he was very warm, and had nearly died of the consequences. This led her to observe how thinly he was clad ; and when the carriage overtook them, she proposed that, as there was plenty of room, he should go inside ; to which the others, as they did not want him to fall ill upon their hands, consented. With the glasses up, and the furs that the party were

wrapt in, the inside of the carriage was very different to the out; and Karl's nose and cheeks, which had before been blue, resumed their original hues.

It was late when they reached their night station, and, whilst the ladies went up stairs to look at their rooms, Karl received his orders, which were, that he should fill the stove with charcoal, and set fire to it, whilst the others were at table. The lad answered composedly that he would. "And when you have done it," said Mazzuolo, "give me a wink, and I will step out to see that all is right before she goes to her room."

Karl obeyed his directions to a tittle, and when all was ready, he gave the signal, and Mazzuolo, making a pretext, quitted the table. He found the arrangements quite satisfactory, and having taken care to see that the window was well closed, he returned to the supper-room. He was no sooner gone, than the boy took the charcoal from the stove, and

threw it into the street ; and when Adelaide came to undress, there was no fire. Cold as it was, however, she had no alternative but to go to bed without one, for there was no bell in the apartment ; and Mazzuolo, who had lighted her to the door, had locked her in, under pretence of caring for her safety.

Karl, having watched this proceeding, accompanied him back to the supper-table, where they discussed the plans for the following day. Whether would it be better to start in the morning without inquiring for her at all, and leave the people of the house to find her dead, when they were far on the road, or whether make the discovery themselves ? Karl ventured to advocate the first plan ; but Tina decided for the second. It would be easy to say that the lad had put charcoal in the stove, not being aware of its effects ; and there would be an end of the matter. If they left her behind, it would be avowing the murder. This settled, they went to bed.

What to do, Karl did not know. He was naturally a stupid sort of lad, and what little sense nature had given him, had been nearly beaten out of him by harsh treatment. He had had a miserable life in a rude and unhappy home, and had never found himself so comfortable as he was now with his aunt and her husband. They were kind to him, because they wanted to make use of him. He did not want to offend them, nor to leave them ; for if he did, he must return home again, which he dreaded above all things. Yet there was something in him that recoiled against killing the lady. Grossly ignorant as he was, scarcely knowing right from wrong, it was not morality or religion that deterred him from the crime ; for he had a very imperfect idea of the amount of the wickedness he would be committing in taking away the life of a fellow-creature. Obedience was the only virtue he had been taught ; and what those in authority over him had ordered him to do,

he would, under most circumstances, have done without question. To kill his beauteous travelling companion, who had shown him such kindness, was, however, repugnant to feelings he could not explain even to himself. Yet he had not sufficient grasp of intellect to know how he was to elude the performance of the task. The only thing he could think of in the meanwhile was to take the charcoal out of the stove; and he did it; after which he went to sleep, and left the results to be developed by the morning.

He had been desired to rise early; and when he quitted his room, he found Mazzuolo and his wife already stirring. They bade him go below and send up breakfast, and to be careful that it was brought by the people of the house. This was done; and when the waiter and the host were present, Tina took the opportunity of knocking at Madame Louison's door, and bidding her rise. To the great amazement of the two Italians, she

answered with alacrity that she was nearly dressed, and should be with them immediately. They stared at each other ; but presently she opened the door, and appeared as fresh as ever ; observing, however, that she had been very cold, for that the fire had gone out before she went to bed. This accounted for the whole thing, and Karl escaped all blame.

During the ensuing day nothing remarkable occurred : fresh charcoal was provided ; but at night it was found there were no stoves in the bed-chambers ; and as the houses on the road they were travelling were poor and ill-furnished—all the good inns having been dismantled by the troops—the same thing happened at several successive stations.

The delay began to render the affair critical, for they were daily drawing near Augsburg, where M. Louison was to meet his wife ; and Mazzuolo resolved to conclude the business by a *coup de main*. He had learnt



from the postilion that the little post-house which was to form their next night's lodging was admirably fitted for a deed of mischief. It lay at the foot of a precipice, in a gorge of the mountains: the district was lonely, and the people rude, not likely to be very much disturbed, even if they did suspect the lady had come unfairly to her end. It was not, however, probable that the charcoal would be of any use on this occasion; the place was too poor to be well furnished with stoves; so Karl was instructed in what he would have to do.

“When she is asleep,” said Mazzuolo, “you must give her a blow on the head that will be sufficient to stun her. Then we will complete the job; and as we shall start early in the morning with Tina in female attire, they will never miss her.”

Karl, as usual, made no objection; and when they arrived at night at the inn, which fully answered the description given, and was



as lonely as the worst assassins could desire, the two men sallied forth to seek a convenient place for disposing of the body. Neither had they much difficulty in finding what they wanted: there was not only a mountain torrent hard by, but there was also a deep mysterious hole in a neighbouring field, that looked very much as if the body of the young traveller would not be the first that had found a grave there.

Every circumstance seemed to favour the enterprise; and, all arrangements made, the two men returned to the house. Karl thought it was all over with him now. He was too timid to oppose Mazzuolo, and he had nobody to consult. Tina had found a weapon apt for the purpose, which she had already secured; and when they sat down to supper, considering the completeness of the preparations, nobody would have thought Adelaide's life worth six hours' purchase. However, she was not destined to die that

night. Just as they had finished their supper, the sound of wheels was heard; then there was a great noise and bustle below; and Karl being sent down to inquire what was the matter, was informed that a large party of travellers had arrived; and as there was a scarcity of apartments, it was hoped the lady and gentlemen would accommodate the strangers by allowing them to share theirs. Consent was inevitable; so, like the Sultan's wife in the Arabian tale, the victim was allowed to live another day.

“Now,” said Mazzuolo, “we have only two nights more before we reach Augsburg, so there must be no shilly-shallying about the matter. If there is a stove in the room to-night, we may try that; though, if the house be in a pretty safe situation, I should prefer more decisive measures. The charcoal has failed once already.”

“That was from bad management,” said Tina; “we could be secure against such an

accident on another occasion. At the same time, if the situation be favourable, I should prefer a *coup de main*."

When they arrived at their night's station, the absence of a stove decided the question. It was merely a post-house, a place where horses were furnished; the accommodation was poor, and the people disposed to pay little attention to them. Close by ran a river, which obviated all difficulty as to the disposal of the body.

"The thing must be done to-night," said Mazzuolo; and Karl said nothing to the contrary. He also feared that it must; for he did not see how he could avoid it. His aunt said everything necessary to inspire him with courage and determination, and made many promises of future benefits; whilst Mazzuolo neither doubted his obedience nor his resolution, and spoke of the thing as so entirely within the range of ordinary proceedings, that the boy, stupid and ignorant, and accus-

tomed, from the state of the country, to hear of bloodshed and murders little less atrocious committed by the soldiery, and neither punished nor severely condemned, felt ashamed of his own pusillanimity—for such his instinctive pity appeared to himself.

But as he stood opposite Madame Louison at supper, with his eyes, as usual, fixed upon her face, his heart involuntarily quailed when he thought that within a few hours he was to raise his hand against that beautiful head; yet he still felt within himself no courage to refuse, nor any fertility of expedient to elude the dilemma.

When supper was over, Tina desired Karl to bring up two or three pails of warm water, and several cloths. “For,” said she, “it will do us all good to bathe our feet.” Whereupon Adelaide requested one might be carried to her room, which was done by Karl. He was now alone with her, and it was almost the first time he had been so, except when they

ran up the hill together, since the day they met. When he had set down the pail by her bedside, he stood looking at her with a strange expression of countenance. He knew that the water he had fetched up was designed for the purpose of washing away the blood he was about to spill, and he longed to tell her so, and set her on her guard; but he was afraid. He looked at her, looked at the water, and looked at the bed.

“Well, Karl,” she said, laughing; “good night! When we part the day after to-morrow, I shan’t forget your services, I assure you.”

The lad’s eyes still wandered from her to the water and the bed, but he said nothing, nor stirred till she repeated “Good night!” and then he quitted the room in silence.

“Poor, stupid creature!” thought Adelaide. “He has scarcely as much intelligence as the horses that draw us.”

“Now, we must have no bungling to-night,

Karl," said Mazzuolo. "We will keep quiet till two o'clock, and then, when everybody is asleep, we'll to business."

"But what is it to be done with?" inquired Tina.

"There's something in the carriage, under the seat. I brought it away the night we slept at Baireuth," replied Mazzuolo. "I'll step and fetch it," and he left the room, but presently returned, saying there were people in the stable-yard, and he was afraid they might wonder what he was going to do with so suspicious-looking an instrument. "Karl can fetch it when they are gone to bed."

As it was yet only midnight, Tina proposed that they should all lie down and take a little rest; and the suggestion being agreed to, she and her husband stretched themselves on their bed, whilst Karl made the floor his couch, and, favoured by his unexcitable temperament, was soon asleep, in spite of what was before him.

It was past two o'clock when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder. "Come, be stirring," said Mazzuolo ; " we must about it without delay—the house has been quiet for some time."

Karl was a heavy sleeper, and as he sat up rubbing his eyes, he could not at first remember what he was awakened for, nor how he came to be upon the floor. "Come," said Mazzuolo, "come she's fast asleep ; I have just been to her room to look at her. You must step down now to the carriage and bring up the axe I left under the seat."

Karl began to recollect himself, and, awkwardly rising from his hard couch, shaking and stretching himself like a dog, he prepared to obey, indifferent to everything at the moment, but the annoyance of being disturbed in his slumbers. "If you should meet anybody," said Mazzuolo, "say that your mistress is ill, and that you are going to fetch the medicine-chest."



By the time he got below, the motion and the cool air had aroused the lad, and, with his recollection, revived his repugnance to the work before him ; but he saw no means of avoiding it, and with an unwilling step he proceeded to the yard where the carriage stood, and having found the axe, he was returning with it, when he observed hanging against the wall a large horn or trumpet. Now, he had seen such a thing at several of the post-houses on the road, and he remembered to have heard one sounded on the night they slept in the mountains, when the travellers arrived late, and prevented the assassination. Instinctively, and without pausing to reflect how he should excuse himself—for if he had, he could not have done it—he placed the instrument to his mouth, and lustily blew it ; and then, terrified at his temerity, and its probable consequences, rushed into the house, and up the stairs again to his master.



"The travellers' horn !" said Mazzuolo, frantically. The lad was too frightened to speak, but stood still, pale and trembling. "Wait," continued the Italian ; " perhaps it may only be for horses, and they may go on again. I hear the people stirring."

Feet were indeed heard upon the stairs, and presently a lantern gleamed beneath the window. "I hear no carriage," observed Mazzuolo. And for some time they sat listening ; but there being no appearance of any travellers, he said he would go below and see how matters stood.

"Nobody is yet arrived," said the master of the post-house in answer to his inquiries ; " but doubtless the signal was given by the avant-courier, who has rode on to the next station ; and the carriage will be here presently. We must be ready with the horses."

As the travellers, however, did not arrive, but continued to be expected, the postmaster

and the postilions remained up to watch for them ; and when four o'clock came, Karl was bidden to go to bed, as nothing could be attempted under such circumstances.

"Now," said Mazzuolo on the following day, "we sleep to-night at Meiningen, which is our last station. I know the place ; it is too busy a house for a *coup de main* ; we must try the charcoal again ; but this time we must be sure of our game."

Karl hoped there might be no stoves in the bed-chamber ; but it was a well-furnished house, and there were. Adelaide said how glad she should be to have a fire again, she had suffered so much by the want of one, and desired Karl to light hers early. It appeared, however, that the servant of the house had already done it. Mazzuolo said, "So much the better. The stove will get well heated, and when you put in the charcoal, there will be no danger of its not burning." And Tina suggested that that

should not be done till just before Adelaide went to bed, lest she should perceive the effects of the vapour whilst she was undressing.

The young traveller had never, on her journey, been in such high spirits as to-night. Well she might; it had been so prosperously performed, and to-morrow she was to meet her husband. She prattled and laughed during supper with a light heart; expressed her gratitude to the Italians for their protection; and said that, if Monsieur Louison could be of any use to them, she knew how happy he would be to acknowledge their kindness to her. "Really," she said, "travelling at such a period, with so many valuables, and such a large sum of money as I have with me, was a bold undertaking!"

Mazzuolo, during the first part of her speech, was beginning to weigh the advantages of the commissary's favour against the

dangers and difficulties of the assassination—difficulties which had far exceeded his expectations, and dangers which were of course augmented by the proximity to Augsburg—but the latter part of it decided the question; the money and valuables preponderated in the scale, and the good opinion of the commissary kicked the beam.

Partly from the exaltation of her spirits, and partly because the day's journey had been a short one—for the stoppage at Meiningen was quite unnecessary, as they were within four hours of Augsburg, and might very well have reached it—Adelaide was less fatigued and less willing to go to bed than usual. She sat late; and it was past twelve when, having asked for her candle, Karl received the signal to go and prepare the stove. Mazzuolo followed him out, to see that the work was well done, and the charcoal ignited before she went to her room. When all was ready, her candle was put into

her hand, and Mazzuolo having conducted her to the door, took the precaution of turning the key, which he afterwards put in his pocket. She rallied him on the strictness of his guardianship; but he alleged gravely that the house was a busy one, and she might perchance be disturbed if her door were not secured.

They listened till she was in bed, and then Mazzuolo said that they could not do better than go to bed too; "for," said he, "the earlier we are off in the morning the better. There will be the fewer people up, and the less chance of her being missed."

When Karl reached his room, he sat down on the side of his bed and reflected. He had observed that the last thing Mazzuolo had done before leaving Adelaide's chamber, was to see that the window was well closed. "If I could open it," thought he, "to-morrow we shall be at Augsburg, and then I should not be told any more to kill her. I wish I

could. They'll go away in the morning before she is awake, and so I should never be found out." With this idea in his head, he went down stairs, and letting himself out, he crept round to the end of the house where her window was.

She slept on the first floor, and the difficulty was how to reach it; but this was soon overcome. In the stable-yard stood some high steps, used for the convenience of passengers when they mounted the waggons and diligences. These he carried to the spot, and having reached the window, he was about to break some of the panes, since, as it fastened on the inside, he could not open it, when it occurred to him that the noise might wake her, and cause an alarm that would betray him. The window, however, was loosely fitted in the lattice fashion, and he saw that, by a little contrivance, he could lift it off the hinges. He did so, and drew aside the curtain; there lay the intended victim

in a sound sleep ; so sound that Karl thought he might safely step in without disturbing her. There she lay in her beauty.

He could not tell why, but, as he stood and looked at her, he felt that he *must* save her at all risks. The air he had let in might not be enough ; he would take the charcoal from the stove and throw it out of the window ; but what if she awoke with the noise, and screamed ? He hesitated a moment ; but he remembered that this would be a safer plan than leaving the window open, as that might be observed in the morning from below, and he would thus be betrayed. So, as quietly as possible, he emptied the stove, burning his hand severely in the operation, and then, having sufficiently aired the room, he hung on the window again, and retired.

During the whole of these operations Adelaide had remained quite still, and appeared to be sound asleep. But was she ?



No. The opening of the window had awakened her: surprise and terror had at first kept her silent—a surprise and terror that were by no means diminished by discovering who the intruder was. Although she had always spoken kindly to Karl, and even endeavoured, by the amenity of her manner, to soften his rude nature, she had from the first moment, felt his appearance most repulsive, and disliked him exceedingly; a dislike that was not diminished by the persevering stare of his dull eyes, which she found at all opportunities, fixed upon her face: so that when she saw him entering her room through her window, she did not doubt that he was come for some very bad purpose. She hoped the worst he intended was to rob her, although the booty he was likely to get was small, since her trunks, with all her valuable property, were nightly placed under Mazzuolo's care for safety. Still, the little money she carried in her



purse, together with her rings and watch, would be a great deal for so poor a creature; and expecting to see him possess himself of these, she thought it more prudent to lie still, and feign sleep, than to disturb him. But when she found that all he came for was to take the fire out of the stove, she was beyond measure puzzled to conceive his motive. Could it be a jest? But what a strange jest! However, he did nothing else; he touched neither her money nor her watch, though both were lying on the table, but went away as empty-handed as he came.

The amazement and alarm that so extraordinary a visit inspired, drove sleep from her eyes, and it was not till the day dawned that she so far recovered her composure and sense of safety, as to close them in slumber. Then, however, fatigue got the better of her watchfulness, and she gradually sunk into a sound sleep.

In the meantime, Karl, whose unexcitable

temperament insured him his night's rest, even under the most agitating circumstances, was in a happy state of oblivion of the whole affair, when he felt himself shaken by the shoulder, and heard his uncle say :

“ Come, come ! rise, and make haste ! The sun is up, and we must get the horses out and be off.”

Karl was as anxious to be off as anybody ; the sooner the better for him ; for if Adelaide should awake before they started, he, on the one hand, dreaded that he might incur his uncle's suspicion, and, on the other, that some new plot might be formed, which it would be impossible for him to evade ; so, between the exertions of one and the other, the horses were out, the bill paid, and the carriage at the door, very soon after the sun had shown his broad disc above the horizon. Tina, in female attire and a veil, was handed down stairs by Mazzuolo ; the waiter stood on the steps and bowed, for the landlord was not yet

up ; they all three stepped into the carriage ; the postilion cracked his whip, and away they drove, rejoicing.

In the meantime, Monsieur Louison had become very uneasy about his wife. He had received no intelligence since she quitted Dresden ; for although she had, in fact, written more than once, Mazzuolo had not forwarded the letters. Day after day he had waited in impatient expectation ; till, at length, unable to bear his suspense any longer, he resolved to start on the road she was to come, in the hope of meeting her. When he reached the gate called the Gözzinger, his carriage was stopped by a berlin containing two men and a woman. It was loaded with luggage, and, thinking that this might be the party he expected, he jumped down, and put his head into the window of the berlin, to ascertain if his wife was there. She was not : so, with a bow and an apology, he proceeded on his way.

At Meiningen, he stopped to change horses ; and the first question that was asked him was, if he had seen a heavily-laden berlin, containing two men and a woman. On answering in the affirmative, he was informed that they had gone off with the property of a lady, whom they had left behind, and who was then in the inn ; and in a moment more the young husband pressed his bride to his heart. Eager to chase the thieves, however, they wasted no time in embraces, but started instantly in pursuit of them. On reaching the same gate where the berlin had been seen, the officers described in what direction the party had driven ; and the police being immediately on the alert, the criminals were discovered and arrested just as they were on the point of starting for Vienna.

The ample confession of Karl disclosed the villany of the Italians, and made known how narrowly the commissary had escaped the loss of his fair young bride ; whilst, as he told his

rude and simple tale, without claiming any merit, or appearing to be conscious of any, Adelaide learnt that to this repulsive, stupid clown she had three times owed her life.

The Italians were condemned to the galleys ; whilst Monsieur Louison and his wife discharged their debt of gratitude to Karl, by first educating him, and then furnishing him with the means of earning his living with respectability and comfort.

De Monge was degraded from his situation, and the universal execration that pursued him, drove him ultimately to America, where, under a feigned name, he ended his days in obscurity.



## I.

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# THE MONEY-SEEKERS.

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## CHAPTER I.

“PRAY, sir,” said a little man, who, with a great-coat buttoned up to his chin, and a red worsted comforter round his throat, was standing in front of the Glo’ster Coffee House, in Piccadilly, one cold winter’s morning,—“are you waiting for the Telegraph?”

“Yes, I am, sir,” answered the person he addressed, who was a handsome, gentlemanly-looking youth, somewhat above twenty,

—"I wish with all my soul it would come, for it's devilish cold standing here."

"It'll be up directly, sir," said a porter, touching his hat.

"There's a fire in the office if you like to walk in, sir," said a clerk, who just then came to the door.

"No, thank ye," answered the impatient traveller; "I want to be off."

"So do I, sir," said the little man who had first spoken; "but as we can't get off till the coach comes, we may as well take advantage of the fire."

"I am not cold," answered the young man, walking rapidly backwards and forwards, with his hands in his pockets, and forgetting that he had just asserted that he *was* cold. "I thought the coach started from here at half-past six?"

"Seven, sir," said the porter.

"They always tell you half-past six for seven," said the little man.



“I wish they’d be a little more punctual,” exclaimed the other.

“There’s seven striking now, and here’s the coach coming up,” said the porter; and at the same moment, the well-appointed vehicle turned out of St. James’s Street, and dashed up to the inn door: the ostler placed himself at the horses’ heads, the coachman flung down his ribbons, and rolling off the box, turned into the office, whilst the porters began to throw up the boxes and portmanteaus that were accumulated on the pavement. Several other passengers, also, who had been lounging in the street, or warming themselves at the fire, now drew near, and began to take their seats.

“Inside or out, sir?” said the coachman, issuing from the office, with the way-bill in his hand.

“Inside,” answered the impatient traveller.

“Then we shall have the pleasure of

travelling together," observed the little man who had first spoken.

The gentleman he addressed did not look as if he foresaw much pleasure in the companionship. However, they both stepped in ; and, all other preliminaries being arranged, the coachman mounted his box, and away.

" Stop ! stop " screamed a female voice—  
" Hoigh ! hoigh !" cried the men at the inn door.

" Is that the Bath coach ?" asked the belated passenger.

" No room outside," cried the coachman.

" No room !" exclaimed the indignant girl.  
—" Why, our John took my place a week ago, and saw it booked himself !"

" Did he, my dear ?" said the coachman ;  
" why then I s'pose we must give you an inside. Put her inside, Bill, till we drop somebody upon the road, and put that 'ere bandbox into the boot."

These orders were quickly obeyed, and, once more, the coach started on its way, with its three insides and its full complement out.

After the first glance at each other, the former, till they had got off the stones and proceeded some distance beyond Hyde Park Gates, seemed sufficiently occupied with peering through the dim glass at the houses that lined the road they were flying through. Probably, however, in reality, not one of the party was thinking anything about the material objects to which their eyes were directed. Their thoughts were with what they had left, or what they were going to. Jenny Spike, for example, was thinking of John, the footman at the place she was just leaving, wondering much that he had not made her the proposals of marriage which she had been daily expecting for the last six months ; but concluding that, as he had not taken the trouble to leave his bed on that morning early enough to conduct

her to the coach, he had no design of carrying his attentions any further, she determined to banish him from her heart for ever. Following up this resolution by fixing her mind, with uncommon fortitude, on the visionary image of the footman yet unseen, with whom she was next to be domesticated, she considered it highly probable that he would be tall and thin, and interesting and amiable, because she had observed those to be the attributes of footmen in general; and that he would be struck with her she could not doubt, for that had been another peculiarity attending all the footmen she had yet lived with, a circumstance which caused her to look upon it as something rather inexplicable that she should still be called *Miss Spike*.

The thoughts of the little man, who was a lawyer, and whose name was Mr. James Pilrig, were intent upon the condition of a purchase that he was travelling into the country to effect for a client of his; starting

from which point, they took a rapid survey of the many and complicated affairs of that gentleman, concluding with congratulating himself on having so desirable a client; whilst his mind, for a single moment, dwelt on the possibility that, if he transacted the old man's business very much to his satisfaction, a codicil, in which his own name should appear, might be added to the testamentary document he had lately been engaged in drawing up. This was uncertain; but, in the meantime, the being employed at all by so wealthy an individual, was extremely gratifying, and would, infallibly, be the means of introducing him to more business, not to mention the beautiful bills of costs in all their lovely longitude, and leaves "thick as the leaves of Valombrosa" that presented themselves to his delighted fancy. The truth was, that Mr. James Pilrig's success in business had not hitherto been great; he had had no opportunity of

getting into a profitable line, and he looked upon his employment by this gentleman as his first step towards fortune. "Let the world but know that I am the confidential agent of Obiah Livingstone, Esquire, and my name is up, was the agreeable conviction with which he closed his cogitations on the subject.

With respect to the impatient traveller, he had his thoughts too, not less engrossing than those of his companions, but the subject of them we shall leave time and the course of this history to disclose.

In the meanwhile, Mr. James Pilrig, having wound up his reflections, in the satisfactory manner we have indicated, began to feel a disposition to loose his tongue and unlock the casket of his thoughts; so, rousing himself from his air of pre-occupation, he rubbed his hands, and, turning briskly to his fellow-traveller, remarked that he supposed the coach would stop to breakfast

about nine o'clock—a proposition which the gentleman addressed did not seem to feel himself called upon either to affirm or deny, and to which, therefore, he said nothing; but Mr. Pilrig, who, for the reasons above mentioned, was feeling extremely comfortable, was not to be depressed by one failure; so, turning his attention to Jenny Spike, he asked her if she was going all the way to Bath—a question which that young lady unreservedly answered in the affirmative, following up the conversation by an inquiry as to what hour the coach was likely to arrive there. Neither did it require much encouragement to make her further communicative; and before they reached their breakfast station, with the exception of the loves of the footmen, Mr. Pilrig was in possession of the leading events of Miss Spike's history, which, however, were not sufficiently remarkable to be set down here. The conclusion was that she had left her



last place, where she was housemaid, because, after being always accustomed to wait on her mistress, that lady had thought proper to engage a regular lady's-maid, "and she wasn't going for to be under her, in course—a proud, conceited minx!" and, indeed, she confessed that not only this lady's-maid in particular, but all lady's-maids without exception, were the objects of her especial aversion; and she did not scruple to confide to Mr. Pilrig her firm determination never to live in the house where "one of that sort was. The airs they give themselves," she assured him, "wasn't to be told; and, for her part, she never could abide 'em!"

This conversation lasted Mr. Pilrig till the coach stopped for breakfast; and when they started again, they found the fourth seat occupied by another passenger, and one who, to the chatty little lawyer's satisfaction, appeared perfectly well disposed for conversation. He was a man apparently about five-



and-thirty years of age, well dressed, sleek, and not ill-looking ; his manners were confident, and his mode of speaking plausible. Benevolence seemed to be his favourite virtue ; and he had delivered himself of several very amiable sentiments before he had been in the coach half an hour. Nor was he less communicative with respect to his own affairs, informing the company that he had been to Maidenhead, to look at an estate that was to be sold in that neighbourhood, but he had found it so inferior to the auctioneer's description of it that he was quite disgusted. In short, he said, the extravagant romancing with which those gentlemen, the auctioneers, amused themselves and perplexed their customers were quite vexatious. They kept him running from one end of the island to the other, looking for what he never found ; the hanging woods, and velvet lawns, and silver streams, appeared nowhere but in their

advertisements. He then proceeded to draw a splendid picture of the sort of place he wanted ; and, altogether, talked in a manner that could not fail to inspire his hearers with a magnificent idea of his fortune and a profound veneration of his person. At least, if they were not so impressed, the fault must have been theirs not his ; and, accordingly, Mr. Pilrig, for one, yielded without a struggle to the fascination. Miss Spike would, no doubt, have been equally enchanted, had she been able to discover any possible connection between the wealth of her fellow-traveller and the advancement of her own fortune, but she did not ; and as for the impatient gentleman by her side, he appeared too much wrapt in his own reflections to be conscious of anything that was going on.

But the lawyer was subdued ; a man evidently of immense fortune and high connections, running about the world to look for an estate, and not able to find one magnifi-

cent enough for his purpose—the idea was sublime! And, then, there was so much urbanity, so much frankness, not the slightest reserve about his affairs: he wondered who was his agent! How desirable it was that he should have somebody who could relieve him from part of the trouble of pursuing these unattainable beauties, or, at least, prevent his being deluded by the excursive fancies of the auctioneers! In short, Mr. Pilrig perceived at once that which Miss Spike had failed to discern in her own case; he saw that a very agreeable connection might be established between the stranger's purse and his own pocket. He therefore felt he was only doing justice to himself, when he seized the opportunity of a pause in the monologue—for such it had hitherto nearly been—to hint that he was himself a professional man, and to insinuate delicately that no one understood his business better; taking occasion to cite several instances in which, through his acute-

ness and penetration, enormous sums had been saved to his clients. He observed, that gentlemen about to purchase estates could not be too cautious in selecting a man of business to examine the title-deeds—some one who thoroughly understood the thing; he himself had had considerable experience in that line, and he flattered himself had been the means of preventing a great deal of mischief.

These words appeared by no means to fall upon an inattentive ear; the stranger seemed struck with Mr. Pilrig's account of Mr. Pilrig; he asked his opinion on several knotty points, and gently insinuated that whenever he met with anything to suit him, he should like very much to have the affair looked into by a gentleman who seemed so thoroughly conversant with the subject. Mr. Pilrig felt flattered, and became excited and voluble; he had evidently made a hit, and he resolved to clench it; so, with a significant nod, he

avowed that he was then on his way into Somersetshire for the purpose of transacting a little private business for a client of his, one of the richest men in the country—no less a person than the great Obiah Livingstone. He placed his hand beside his mouth, and stooped forward to meet the stranger's ear when he pronounced the awful name; but the whisper was so loud, that if there had been twenty people in the coach, they might have heard it, and he would, probably, have been sorry if they had not. The impression made on the present company, however, except the stranger, seemed very slight. Jenny Spike had never heard of Mr. Livingstone in her life, and appeared totally unmoved; the impatient traveller slightly turned his head as the name reached his ears, as if he, like the rest of the world, had heard of the enormous wealth imputed to the owner, but he immediately resumed his former position, and seemed to take no further

interest in the conversation. But he for whom the hit was intended, was evidently struck:—"Indeed!" cried he, with evident astonishment; "you surprise me. I have no acquaintance with Mr. Livingstone whatever; but I had always understood that Wright and Miller were his solicitors"—and Mr. Pilrig felt that he looked a little incredulous.

"Yes," said he, "for general business—general business, he does employ Wright and Miller; but for anything of a particular nature—you understand me—confidential"—and Mr. Pilrig nodded, as much as to say, "I am the man."

The stranger then fell to asking a variety of questions about Mr. Livingstone, as of a person whose great wealth and eccentric character rendered him an object of legitimate curiosity to the world; all of which Mr. Pilrig answered, to the best of his knowledge, with evident pride and pleasure.

“ Among other strange peculiarities he has,” observed the stranger, “ I understand he is determined never to make a will.”

“ That’s a mistake, sir,” said Mr. Pilrig ; “ he *has* made a will.” And when he had said this, he knitted his brow, folded his lips, and looked out of the corner of his eye at nothing, as who should say, “ There’s a weighty matter for you ! There’s a bone for you to pick ! I’m not going to say any more ; I’m going to think of something else, while you digest that as well as you can.”

“ Well,” said the stranger, in a tone of *bonhomie*, “ I am glad of it—very glad of it, indeed. As I said before, I know nothing of Mr. Livingstone, nor of anybody belonging to him ; but I think it’s always a pity when a man of his fortune does not provide handsomely for his connexions, but allows his wealth to fall into the hands of a single person, who perhaps doesn’t deserve it ; I mean, of course, where there are no children.



I believe Mr. Livingstone is not married? At least, I never understood that he had any family."

"He never was married, sir," said Mr. Pilrig.

"I thought I had heard as much," replied the stranger, with assumed indifference; "but every man who, like Mr. Livingstone, has been the architect of his own fortune, must, necessarily, have poor relations; brothers and sisters, who have not been able to keep pace with him; nephews and nieces, perhaps, who have no means of rising but through the assistance of their rich uncle. Now, how much better is a fortune bestowed, when divided amongst ten or a dozen such worthy persons, or even half a dozen, than if the whole were accumulated on the head of one thankless, good-for-nothing spendthrift. I trust Mr. Livingstone, under the influence of your advice, has avoided an error so common to wealthy persons."



“ Ah, sir,” replied Mr. Pilrig, “ if these moneyed men could be induced to take advice! But when once they have got a crotchet into their heads about the disposal of their property, the devil himself can’t get it out again. What would you think, now, if Mr. Livingstone were to leave every stiver of his fortune—a few small annuities excepted—every stiver of his immense fortune to a person who is no relation to him, a person whom he never saw, and not only whom he never saw, but whom he never intends to see! I don’t say that it is so; I only ask you if that wouldn’t be a whim worthy of a millionaire?”

“ God bless me !” exclaimed the stranger, looking astonished, and at the same time mysterious and confidential; as much as to say, “ Of course, you’re quite safe with me, this conversation is strictly private, and will go no further.” “ God bless me, you don’t say so! A person whom he never saw, and whom he never intends to see! It’s one of

the most singular caprices I ever heard in my life. But what's the motive? What's the connexion?"

"None, sir; no connexion at all. The young man's a son of an old college chum, a poor parson, who never had more than three hundred a year in his life; and the youth himself no more expects to inherit the fortune than you do."

"What's his name?" asked the stranger.

"Gerald Gage," replied Mr. Pilrig.

Now, when Mr. Pilrig commenced these disclosures, which he had done with the view of giving himself importance, and gaining the confidence of his wealthy fellow-traveller, he had not the most distant intention of exceeding, what he considered, the bounds of prudence and professional faith; but his own vanity and love of talking on the one hand, and the leading questions of the stranger on the other, had enticed him on from one stage to another, till, at last, when the final ques-

tion was put to him, quite unexpectedly—put, too, with an air that evinced no consciousness of impropriety, nor implied any doubt of a ready answer—he had not presence of mind, or resolution to draw back. To have declined answering would have been a reproof to the asker, well-merited, certainly; but the easy confidence and *bonhomie* of the stranger, disarmed him, his apparent wealth and high connexion dazzled and awed him, and his own imprudence confounded him—so that, well-merited, as he felt it would have been, he had not resolution to administer it. But the words had no sooner passed his lips than he would have given the world to recall them. He cast an uneasy glance at his other two fellow-travellers. Jenny Spike was looking out of the window, with an air that plainly indicated it was perfectly indifferent to her who Mr. Livingstone left his fortune to; but the eyes of the impatient gentleman

were turned upon him with an expression of the most unbounded amazement.

Mr. Pilrig blushed to his fingers' ends, and felt all over in a heat; he could not wonder at the young man's surprise at such unpardonable indiscretion; he could have bitten off his tongue with vexation; whilst his reverence for the stranger, extinguished by his own mortification, was changed into a feeling very like resentment; and, acting upon the old adage, "when the steed is stolen," he resolved to close his lips for the remainder of the journey, and not answer another question upon any provocation whatever. But this resolution, wise as late, soon appeared to be also superfluous; nobody seemed disposed to *ask* him any questions. The impatient gentleman, although his countenance still retained its expression of astonishment, and although he cast sundry glances of wonder and curiosity at Mr. Pilrig, con-

tinued as silent as before ; and the stranger, seeming suddenly to have caught the infection, said not another word.

The silence was first broken by Jenny Spike's inquiring, when they entered Marlborough, if that was Bath ; a query which, being addressed to the general society, no one felt himself called upon to respond to, and which, therefore, remained unanswered. The dinner passed over sulkily and silently. As it was the depth of winter, and the sky heavy with snow-clouds, the evening soon closed in after they re-entered the coach, and it became dusk, whereupon the whole party drew into their respective corners, and either went to sleep, or pretended to do so. Jenny's head, however, was the only one whose nodding betokened a genuine slumber, which was first disturbed by the rattling of the coach over the paved streets of Bath. Everybody looked through the windows as the vehicle dashed through the lighted thoroughfares, till a sud-

den stop at the door of the White Hart, announced that those who were going no further than Bath had reached their destination.

The moment the coachman drew up his horses, and before the door could be opened to liberate the passengers, a person, who had been standing at the inn door, advanced, and, putting his head in at the window, appeared to be looking for somebody ; but the passengers were in the shade, and undistinguishable.

“ I have a letter,” said he, in a hesitating voice, “ for a gentleman that was to come by this coach.”

But though the passengers were in the shade, the light fell sufficiently upon the face of the messenger to admit of their seeing him, and the impatient traveller immediately held out his hand, as if recognising the man had satisfied him that the packet was for himself.

“Stay !” exclaimed Mr. Pilrig, stretching out his hand also, “*I* expected a letter to meet me here. Perhaps it’s for me?”

“No, sir,” replied the messenger, who by this time had caught a glimpse of the impatient traveller’s physiognomy—“No, sir, it’s for this gentleman—it’s for Mr. Gerald Gage.”

## CHAPTER II.

BEFORE the unexpected announcement with which we closed our last chapter had well escaped the lips of the messenger, Mr. Gerald Gage was upon the pavement. "Get my portmanteau," said he; "it's in the boot, I believe, and take it home. Tell my father I will be there by-and-by."

"I believe master wished to see you, sir," answered the man, touching his hat, "before you go anywhere else."

"Do what I tell you, will you?" said the



young man, impatiently, as he turned to walk away.

“Sir, sir, give me leave—allow me—one word, before you go,” cried Mr. Pilrig, hastening after him; “one word, I beg of you.”

“I’m in a hurry, sir,” replied Gerald; “some other time.”

“I’ll not detain you a moment,” said Mr. Pilrig, “I’ll not detain you at all; I’ll walk by your side, if you’ll give me leave, while I say a few words, that, a circumstance so unforeseen—a—a coincidence so extraordinary—so—so unfortunate, if I may venture to say so, has—has rendered necessary. I have been to blame, sir, very much to blame—I won’t attempt to excuse myself—I never was guilty of such a thing in my life, and I’d rather have cut my tongue out than have done it, if I had had time to think what I was about. But I was surprised into it—taken unawares—but, as I said before, sir, I won’t attempt to excuse myself; I know

it's impossible. But, good God! sir, when I think what the consequences may be—the consequences to you, sir, if Mr. Livingstone only suspected that you had got an inkling of the matter; such an odd man, sir—a man of the most eccentric character. I say, sir, when I think of what the consequences of my imprudence may be, he'd alter his will, sir—he'd alter it that very hour—”

“And not employ you to make the alteration, I fancy,” said Gerald Gage.

“That's nothing, sir,” panted out Mr. Pilrig, “I'm not to be considered—I should get but what I deserve; but you, sir; the loss of such a fortune—thousands upon thousands—I won't say it may not be a million—a word, sir, a single word—a hint, and it's all smoke, sir—smoke. Mr. Livingstone's an old man, too, sir. It is but keeping silence for a few years—perhaps a few months; and then, sir, what a thing to step into—no incumbrance—everything

clear as the back of my hand; such a fine property—everything so well secured—so, so desirable, sir, in every way—and to lose it all for—for—just for—”

But, by the time he had reached this point of his discourse, Mr. Pilrig was fairly done up. Mr. Gerald Gage was a tall, slender young man, with long legs, and wind like a race-horse. Mr. Pilrig was the reverse of all this; added to which, his expenditure of breath, betwixt his agitation and his eloquence, was tremendous. So, seizing the young man's arm in the desperation of his dilemma, he exclaimed, in the most earnest voice that his lungs would permit :

“For God's sake, sir, stop! stop and speak!”

“What would you have me say, sir?” said Gerald Gage, abruptly turning round, and facing him.

“I want you to reflect, sir, upon the consequences—” began Mr. Pilrig.

“I have no time to reflect, sir,” replied the impatient youth. “Besides, sir, it’s you that should have reflected on the consequences. But, in two words, what is it you want of me?”

“I want you, sir, to promise that you will never let the secret pass your lips—that you will never mention to anybody whatsoever—the—the circumstance that I have been so unlucky as to—to—”

“Why, sir,” interrupted Gerald; “I think I have pretty strong reasons for not mentioning it, since I do not doubt the truth of what you assert, namely, that Mr. Livingstone would alter his intentions if he supposed they were suspected. I only wish you had been as cautious as I shall be. How do you know, sir, that the fellow you have been talking to in the coach will not blazon it all over Bath to-morrow, and that we may not see it in one of the evening papers by the next night?”

“I hope not, sir,” said Mr. Pilrig. “A gentleman of his fortune and standing in society would be above doing such a piece of mischief. But I shall hasten back directly, and speak to him on the subject, and endeavour to obtain his promise.”

“Then, the sooner you go the better, sir,” said Gerald. “And pray learn to be a little more cautious in your communications for the future.”

“I shall, sir; you may rely on it, I shall,” said the humbled Mr. Pilrig, as he turned his steps towards the White Hart, whilst the eager young man hurried on his way with augmented velocity, to make up for the time he had lost in the above conversation. But, by the time the lawyer reached the inn, the coach had departed on its way to Bristol, and whether the other two inside passengers had gone on with it, or had remained in Bath, the waiter could not inform him. He rather thought he had seen a young woman asking a

porter to carry her box for her ; but, with respect to the gentleman, he had not observed him at all. There was nothing left, therefore, but to trust to the stranger's discretion ; but Mr. Pilrig felt an uneasy conviction that people that ask indiscreet questions are apt not to be good keepers of counsel ; and, although he tried to banish the thing from his mind, and to hope for the best, yet he could not recover his former complaisance.

The consciousness of his imprudence sat heavy on his mind, which occasioned the Welsh rabbit he ate for supper to sit heavy on his stomach. He passed a bad night. His mind was disturbed, and his body restless. He had not only perilled the young man's fortune, but, what was worse, he had perilled his own, just, too, as it was taking a favourable turn. He had not much distrust of the woman ; he thought she had probably not attended to, or not understood, the conversation, sufficiently to comprehend the

importance of what had passed, or its connexion with the final discovery. The stranger was his *bête noire*, and he resolved to pass the following day in hunting for him through the streets and public resorts of Bath, in order, if he could find him, to make an appeal to his honour and good-nature on the subject. But his labour was vain. Unfortunately, he did not know his name; otherwise, he concluded, a man of such eminence would have been easily discovered; and, after bestowing more time on the ineffectual search than he had to spare from his other business, and making vain inquiries of the coachman, who knew nothing about him, he was obliged to return to London, and present himself before his wealthy client, with the painful consciousness that he had betrayed his trust, and a distressing uncertainty of the use that might be made of his imprudence.

In the meantime, Mr. Gerald Gage pursued his course with eager steps, through



street after street, to the outskirts of the city, till he reached a small house, that formed one of a row, called Prospect Place—although, whatever it once might have had, its only prospect now was the back of a similar row of houses on the opposite side of the way.

“ She is still up,” said he to himself, as he cast up his eyes to a window in the second floor, through which a faint light glimmered ; “ that’s fortunate, for I should have gone mad before to-morrow, if I had not seen her ;” and, so saying, he advanced eagerly to the door, and knocked.

“ I am not too late to see Miss Dering, I perceive,” said he to a respectably-dressed woman, whose appearance denoted her to be the mistress of the house.

“ No, sir,” said the woman, half smiling as she admitted him ; “ you’re time enough yet ; but we shan’t have *Miss Dering* much longer, I fancy ; I suppose you’ve heard, sir. I’m sure everybody is so glad, for a more



deserving young lady never breathed ; and it was a real pity to see a lady that had been brought up to a carriage, and had the first of educations, and of company too, reduced to such straits as she has been. Few know, sir, but me, what she's had to struggle with, for she always tried to make the best of things, and never complained ; but many a day, to my certain knowledge, a bit of meat has never passed her lips ; and a cup of tea and an egg has been all the nourishment she afforded herself. But they say, when things get to the worst, they must mend ; and I trust, poor young lady, she has seen her worst days, and that she'll be as happy with Mr. Weston as she deserves to be ; for they say he's an excellent gentleman ; and, no doubt, he has a fine fortune, and can keep her as she ought to be kept."

And, as the worthy woman liked Miss Dering, and delighted in the sound of her

own voice, there is no telling to what length the thread of her discourse might have run out; but, just as she concluded the last paragraph, the flame of the candle she held in her right hand having communicated itself to the wick of the one she held in her left, Mr. Gerald Gage, without pausing to listen to what further she might have to say, snatched the latter from her hand, and, ascending the narrow staircase by two steps at a time, was at the door of Miss Dering's apartment before the echo of Mrs. Venn's last words had died away in the passage below.

“Come in,” said a sweet female voice, as the handle of the door, half turning, indicated that some one was there. “Is it you, Mrs. Venn?”

There was but one dim light upon the table, beside which the fair tenant of the room sat, diligently plying her needle,

when Gerald threw open the door; and, as he stood there in silence, she started from her seat at perceiving the figure of a man.

“Don’t be alarmed, Emily,” said he, “it’s only me!”

“Gerald!” exclaimed she, in an accent of surprise.

“Yes, Emily,” answered he, “it’s Gerald; the person you least expected, I fancy, and, perhaps, least *wished* to see.”

“I did not expect you, certainly,” replied she. “I understood from your father, that, when your shooting was over, you were to spend the rest of the vacation in London, with the Millers.”

“Is that a reproach, Emily?” said he. “If it is, I deserve it; richly I deserve it. It’s quite true, I did mean to have finished the vacation in London.”

“And why should you not?” said she. “It would have been a great pity not to

have availed yourself of so pleasant an invitation."

"So I thought, Emily!" replied Gerald; "and therefore I accepted it. But I should have remembered how easily the absent are forgotten, and have been less confident."

"Confident of what, Gerald?" asked Miss Dering, raising her eyes to his face.

"Of what I thought was my own—of your affection, Emily!" said he.

"That would have been a strange confidence, had you entertained it," said she, assuming more coldness.

"I'll not affect to misunderstand you, Emily," answered Gerald. "You think I have neglected you; and perhaps you are justified in thinking so. The truth is, I *have* been too confident. I thought myself so secure of your affection, that I have not taken sufficient pains to keep alive a sentiment that I fancied too firmly rooted in your heart to be easily ejected."

“You have then been greatly mistaken,” said Miss Dering, calmly. “The sentiment you allude to, and the existence of which I do not intend to deny, was awakened by your kindness—shown when I most needed it—but with that kindness it died. Not my gratitude; that still remains and inspires me with the warmest wishes for your happiness.”

“Am I to believe this, Emily?” exclaimed Gerald, throwing himself into a chair, and forcing her to seat herself beside him. “I cannot believe it; if I did, there should be but one step between that conviction and a—. But I did not come here to threaten you—that would be like a blackguard; but I came to know my fate definitively; and then, when I know it—”

“What then?” asked Emily, as he paused.

“No matter what,” answered Gerald; “to you it will, of course, be indifferent—

but this night must decide. Mr. Weston is rich, I know it, and I am poor. It is true, you plighted your faith to me, and we exchanged vows of never-ending love ; but faith has been broken ere now, and vows cannot bind a fickle heart. If you are changed—really changed—say so ; and, however hard it may be, I will believe yourself against yourself. But oh, Emily, if,

I believe, your heart is still mine—for I have that confidence in your truth, that what appears arrogance in *me* is but trust in *you*—if you are sacrificing yourself to pique, or selling yourself for wealth—”

“ For wealth ! For bread, you mean,” interrupted Miss Dering. “ I never desired wealth, nor do I desire it now ; but neither *am* I sacrificing myself. It is true I am not in love with Mr. Weston, neither does he suppose I am. He is of an age to want a kind and faithful companion ; and I need a home and a protector. I am satisfied of his worth ;

and he is satisfied that I shall honestly and cheerfully fulfil the duties I undertake. In short, it is a union of prudence on both sides, and therefore likely to be a happy one."

"If your heart were free from any other attachment it might," replied Gerald; "but is it so? Question it, Emily. I know you better than you know yourself. I estimate better your unchanging constancy, the unalienable nature of your affections: it has been on that acquaintance with your character that I have presumed too far. You have felt yourself neglected, and are justly displeased, and you mistake pique and displeasure for indifference. But you will awaken from that delusion by-and-by, when it's too late, and find yourself miserable!"

"No, Gerald!" replied Emily; "no; I'm sure I shall be happy in doing my duty." But her lip trembled, and her voice faltered, as she spoke.



“ I tell you, no, Emily !” said Gerald. “ If, indeed, you had supposed I had ceased to love you, time and absence and indignation might have banished my image from your heart ; and you might then, perhaps, have found your happiness—an insipid, joyless happiness in the performance of the duties you speak of ; but it is too late, Emily ; it can never be so now. You know it yourself—you feel it. You can never marry Mr. Weston, for now it would be a sacrifice—a hateful sacrifice—a sacrifice from which your heart recoils.”

“ Then, O, Gerald !” exclaimed Miss Dering, bursting into tears, “ O, Gerald, Gerald ! how selfish and how cruel it was of you to come !”



## CHAPTER III.

BEFORE Gerald quitted Miss Dering's lodgings, on that night, he had, as may be supposed, put her in possession of Mr. Pilrig's grand secret; and it was arranged between them, that she should throw herself on Mr. Weston's generosity to forego and to forgive—that is, that she should ask him to release her from the engagement she had entered into but two days before; and to pardon her for the involuntary deception she had practised, and the disappointment she

was about to inflict : and, painful as the dilemma was, she had every confidence in the success of her appeal. For her own part, she was deeply grieved and ashamed ; but she knew Mr. Weston was a man of a philosophical mind, and a calm temperament, and she did not apprehend that his pain would be very acute or very durable ; and as he was also very reasonable and very benevolent, she felt assured that he would believe what was true—namely, that she had fancied her heart was free when she accepted him ; and that he would much rather she told him the truth now, at the expense of inflicting a temporary disappointment, than that she should fulfil her engagement, at the risk of making herself and him permanently miserable. The embarrassment of this communication was, necessarily, the first subject that engrossed her thoughts ; but when, on the following day, the letter to Mr. Weston was dispatched, other cares and anxieties came

crowding thick and fast upon her. She knew Gerald well, and although, to her sorrow, she found she loved him still—she loved him in spite of many and great faults. He was handsome, clever, accomplished, and eloquent ; but he was impetuous and selfish—and too much the creature of circumstance to be relied upon under *any* circumstances. What could be a greater proof of how little he was to be depended on, than the manner in which he had neglected her for the last two or three years? She, whom he had vowed to love, and whom, he now declared, he had never ceased to love—he had left her to struggle with her poverty and her loneliness, unsupported and unconsolated.

Money he had none, neither had she—for he was the son of a poor clergyman, who was starving himself, to keep his son at Oxford till he could take orders ; and she was the daughter of a general officer, whose income had died with him ; and who, having lived

expensively, had little to leave for the support of his wife and child, but the poor pension that Government afforded. Mrs. Dering had soon sunk under a loss and a reverse, which her already impaired health unfitted her to encounter; and Emily, educated in affluence and bred in elegance, was left, at seventeen, to struggle with the cold world alone, and to make the sad experiment, on how little life and a respectable appearance could be supported. Their mutual poverty had prevented the young couple marrying in the first bloom of their attachment; but for some time after her mother's death, Emily had been cheered and supported through her afflictions, by Gerald's attention and kindness. But, as time advanced, his attentions slackened; his visits to Bath became rare and short; and the correspondence, which had, at first, been regular and frequent, had gradually declined, till it had died away altogether, and Emily knew nothing of Gerald's movements

but what she occasionally gathered from his father.

In the meantime, the reduction of her circumstances had kept pace with that of her consolations. The small sum that remained to her after her mother's death was daily becoming less, and the pension she received was altogether inadequate to her support. Sorrows and difficulties were thickening around her. Gerald's long neglect not only appeared sufficient to release her from her engagement, but seemed to justify her in the belief that she would be doing him a service in releasing him from his ; and his father, who looked upon their union as hopeless, and considered their attachment a mutual misfortune, encouraged her in these views of the case. Under these circumstances, she had accepted Mr. Weston ; and, had not Gerald unfortunately learnt her intentions, and found his love so far revived, by the apprehension of losing her, that he started instantly from

London to enforce his own long-neglected claims, a few weeks more would have seen her the wife of a worthy, wealthy man, of a certain age, whose kindness would have rendered her duties easy, and whose reasonable expectations would have been satisfied with such a degree of affection as that kindness would have ensured. But now all was undone again, and Emily was once more on the wide world ; for, though Gerald had convinced her that he could not part with her without pain, and although he had revived in her breast the fire that neglect had chilled, and so rendered her union with Mr. Weston impossible, he had not convinced her that his character was changed, and he had not shown her any way out of the difficulties that encompassed them. As for Mr. Pilrig's story, it might not be true ; besides, if it were, Mr. Livingstone might alter his intentions and will ten times before he died ; and, even in the most favourable view of the case,

the prospect of great wealth hereafter could be of no use to them now ; and five hundred pounds in hand would have been worth a million in prospective.

To give him his due, these thoughts weighed heavily on Gerald's mind, too, as he walked that night to his father's house ; and he felt keenly the justice of Emily's reproach, " How selfish and cruel it was of him to come ! " But the mischief was done, and the question that remained was, how was the injury he had done her to be compensated. There was but one way that he could see, and that was to marry her immediately, and persuade his father to let her live at the vicarage, until he had taken orders, and obtained some means of supporting her himself ; and this, with a heavy heart, when he had heard the story, Mr. Gage acceded to. But, when the plan was proposed to Emily, although she consented to accept the shelter offered her, she recoiled from the idea of an



immediate union. She felt that there would be a want of delicacy towards Mr. Weston in so abruptly transferring the hand to another, which she had, within so short a period, promised to him; and she insisted on a delay of six months; which interval was to be employed by Gerald in completing his studies, and by his father in the most strenuous endeavours to obtain some provision for his future subsistence.



## CHAPTER IV.

MR. LIVINGSTONE and Mr. Gage had been schoolfellows at Winchester, and fellow-collegians at Oxford. They were both the sons of poor clergymen, and both designed for the Church ; but just at the moment that, with anxious hearts and throbbing heads, they were preparing for their examination, Obi, as he was commonly called by his familiars, received an invitation to India, from a connexion who was prosperously settled there ; and, bidding adieu to theology and the Greek

Lexicon, he started upon a new and more hopeful career. From that period, although they had vowed eternal friendship several hundred times, Mr. Gage heard no more of his chum, till he happened, many years afterwards, to read in the newspaper that his old friend had returned from India, the possessor of enormous wealth. But for the last clause of the paragraph, he would have made some attempt to renew the acquaintance; but he was himself so very poor, that the "enormous wealth" deterred him; and it was by accident only that Mr. Livingstone's recollection of his fellow-student was revived. He chanced to see a card lying on the table, one day, when he called at his solicitor's, inscribed with the words *Gerald Gage*. The name struck him, and, on inquiry, he learnt that the owner of it was the son of his former friend. No intimation of this discovery, however, reached the obscure vicarage of N——, and the extraordinary conse-

quences that resulted from it would have remained an unsuspected and impenetrable secret, but for the strange indiscretion of Mr. Pilrig. As Obi had always shown a tendency to eccentricity, old Mr. Gage, to whom the affair was communicated by his son, had no great difficulty in believing that he had made such a will; but the probability that he might alter it, and the remoteness of any advantage to be expected, if he did not, induced him to urge his son to banish the subject as much as possible from his mind, and Gerald promised that he would return to Oxford, and finish his studies, as steadily as if no such contingency awaited him; and whilst we leave him to fulfil these laudable intentions, we will introduce our readers to Mr. Livingstone's drawing-room, in Portland Place; where, seated in an easy chair, and surrounded by every appliance of comfort and luxury, the respected possessor of so much wealth was solacing himself alternately with

his hookah, and a pile of Indian newspapers that lay beside him.

He wore a brown wig, and a brown coat, and shorts of the same colour. His age might be sixty-five, but there was nothing either in the appearance of his face or of his well-formed legs, which were clothed in white-ribbed cotton stockings, that would have been very encouraging to a legatee. The expression of his countenance was not ill-tempered; on the contrary, there was a spice of fun and humour about the nose, and in the small twinkling eyes; but there was something around the mouth, and the closing of the lips, that denoted a degree of firmness amounting to obstinacy.

On the opposite side of the fireplace, attired, although it was morning, in a small blue gauze turban, and a green silk dress, with her collar all awry, and a locket and chain, that were intended to be in front, hanging over her left shoulder, sat Miss Sally

Nichols, a middle-aged lady, to whom nature had never been very kind in the matter of personal attractions, and whose incongruous taste in dress, combined with a total incapacity for putting on her wig, or anything else she wore, straight, gave her a comical air that was very apt to excite laughter in those who were not accustomed to her appearance. She was a distant and poor relation of Mr. Livingstone's, and, when young, had gone out to India to look for a husband, but, not succeeding in the speculation, had ever since resided with him in the capacities of house-keeper, companion, nurse and interpreter; for the old gentleman was very deaf, and, for more reasons than one, preferred having an interpreter of his own to applying to people to repeat what they had said. One of these was that he detested bawling; whilst Nicky, as he called her, knew the exact tone that was most agreeable to his auditory nerves; and another, that he, by this means, avoided

the conversations he had no desire to be troubled with, and only asked her to repeat when his curiosity prompted the inquiry. But the consequence of this arrangement was, that he heard only through Nicky's ears, and understood only through her understanding, except on those rare occasions, when he chose to hear and understand for himself, which, perhaps, he had not quite so much difficulty in doing as he pretended to.

Now Nicky's ears were much like those of other people, but her understanding was different; and, although she was the most honest creature in the world, and had every intention of reporting correctly what she had heard, yet the discourse and propositions she conveyed to Mr. Livingstone, had not unfrequently undergone so strange a transmutation in their passage through her mind, that they could never have been recognised by their owners; whilst he, who was satisfied of her truth, never doubted the correct-

ness of her reports, and only attributed the extravagant assertions and unaccountable nonsense that often reached him, to the daily increasing folly of the world; a persuasion, by the way, in which he delighted, and which was a principal element in his happiness, as it was at once the source of his mirth, the maintenance of his self-complacence, and the justification of the obstinacy, incredulity and aversion, with which he received the advances of all his connexions.

“Nicky,” said the old gentleman, “what’s o’clock?”

“Twelve, sir,” answered Nicky, glancing at the or-molu clock on the mantel-piece.

“And that fellow not here yet, although I consented to see his ugly face at half-past eleven. What can he have to say to me?”

“I can’t think—I’m sure,” said Nicky.

“I’ll answer for that, Nicky,” said Mr. Livingstone, chuckling; “you never could in your life.”



“Isn’t it natural he should wish to see his uncle?” said Nicky, “even if it were nothing else.”

“Uncle!” said Mr. Livingstone; “pshaw! it *must* be money he wants.”

“But he said it wasn’t,” objected Nicky. “He said he had something of importance to communicate.”

“I don’t believe him,” said Mr. Livingstone. “How should a fellow like that know anything of importance? Who’d tell it him? Who’d trust him?”

“But he may have found it out,” said Nicky.

“Then it won’t be true,” said Mr. Livingstone. “However, I shan’t believe it, at any rate. I never do believe anybody, especially him.”

“No, you never do,” answered Nicky, in a tone of quiet assent; adding presently: “There’s a knock at the door now; I dare say that’s him.”



“Come and sit over here,” said Mr. Livingstone, “and leave your chair for him ; and then you can tell me what he says. I can’t bear the sound of his voice.”

Nicky did as she was bid ; and, in a minute afterwards, the door opened, and the black footman announced Mr. Graves Livingstone, who, advancing eagerly across the room, with his hand extended, “hoped he saw his dear uncle quite well.”

Instead of returning the salutation, Mr Livingstone pointed to the opposite chair ; whilst his nose curled, and his eyes twinkled, and his lips closed on one another as firmly as if they intended to remain hermetically sealed for the rest of his life. But the visitor was not a man easily daunted ; so, before he sat down, he rubbed his hands over the fire, and observed that it was very cold, and he believed the glass was lower on that morning than it had been all the winter.

Mr. Livingstone did not know what he

said, nor did he care to inquire ; and the remarks would have fallen to the ground had not Nicky observed that she supposed that was the reason she had found a lump of ice in her water-jug in the morning.

“What does he want, Nicky?” said Mr. Livingstone.

“I have something,” said Mr. Graves, rising from the chair into which he had just dropped, and approaching his uncle, “of the greatest importance to communicate—something for your ear alone, uncle.”

“Tell it to Nicky,” said the old gentleman.

“I believe, sir, it would be better that you should hear me yourself,” said the nephew.

“I won’t,” said Mr. Livingstone, taking up his newspaper.

“Very well, sir,” said the nephew, evidently disappointed and annoyed ; “it’s a matter that concerns you, not me. I only wish to put you on your guard against a person that betrays your confidence.”

“I am on my guard, and I never give my confidence to anybody,” said Mr. Livingstone; “so nobody can betray it.”

“Excuse me,” said the nephew, “there’s a certain lawyer called Pilrig —”

“What of him?” said Mr. Livingstone, surprised out of his determination not to listen.

“He babbles about your affairs,” continued the nephew,—“boasts of being your confidential agent —”

“The devil he does!” exclaimed Obiah.

“And goes about telling people that you have made a will.”

“Did he tell you so?” inquired Mr. Livingstone.

“He did,” answered Mr. Graves; “and in the presence of your intended heir, too.”

“Then I’ve no doubt you asked him the question. And pray, did he tell you what I’d left you?”

“No, sir,” said the nephew; “nor did I

ask him. He said you had left everything to a stranger of the name of Gage; and, only imagine, sir, Gage was in the coach himself at the time."

"And that's your business here, is it?" asked the uncle.

"It is," replied Mr. Graves. "I thought it my duty to inform you."

"You needn't have troubled yourself," said Mr. Livingstone, resuming his paper, with an air of indifference. "What a fool says is of no consequence; nobody'll believe him; and if they do, it's of no consequence still."

"Why, sir, few people like their private intentions to be made known to the world," said Mr. Graves.

"Nobody's acquainted with my private intentions," said Mr. Livingstone, nodding significantly, "therefore, there's no danger of their being made known to the world. And now I want to read my paper, so if you've anything more to say, tell it to Nicky."

“ My uncle seems determined not to believe anything against this Mr. Pilrig,” said Graves, in a low voice, as he took up his hat and rose to depart ; “ but I beg you’ll explain to him that my only motive for coming was to prevent mischief ; for, a person that talks of one thing, may talk of another, and there’s no telling what may come of it.”

“ Very true,” said Nicky. “ I’ll tell him so.”

“ You know I can have no motive for interfering but interest for him. If it wasn’t for that, the man might talk to all eternity for me ; but I couldn’t bear to hear my uncle’s private intentions blabbed in that manner, in a stage-coach. I was quite shocked. You’ll be sure and make him understand this.”

“ I will,” said Nicky ; “ depend upon it.”

“ What does he say ? ” inquired Mr. Livingstone, as soon as his nephew had left the room.

“ He says,” answered Nicky, “ that he

wouldn't interfere if it wasn't for his interest ; but that he wishes to prevent mischief ; and that when he heard of your intentions in the stage-coach, he was quite shocked."

"I warrant him," said Mr. Livingstone ; "and I've no doubt he has been getting round that fool of a lawyer, and sucked this out of him. Write to Pilrig for his bill ; and tell John, if he calls, to say I'm not at home."

That night, before he went to bed, Mr. Livingstone tore up the will that Mr. Pilrig had made, and threw the fragments into the fire.

## CHAPTER V.

“WHAT an idle dog you’re grown, Gage,” said young Marmaduke Vane, on entering Gerald’s room one morning, and finding him, as was usual of late, sitting in his dressing-gown and slippers, with his knees crossed, and smoking a cigar. On the table before him lay a hunting-whip, and a shot-belt, a pair of foils, and a boxing-glove. There were, also, materials for writing, and a sheet of paper, with the beginning of a letter, which had proceeded as far as, “My

dear Emily, I am really ashamed of my long si——,” below which words appeared the sketch of a beautiful setter, called Rover, the original of which portrait was lying at the young man’s feet. The walls of the room were hung with shooting and hunting-coats, guns and pistols ; interspersed with engravings, chiefly of horses celebrated on the turf, or boxers eminent in the ring ; and on the mantel-piece lay a variety of cigar-cases, mingled with tubes of various sizes and shapes—short and long, crooked and straight—intended for the purpose of smoking ; together with a dice-box, and sundry packs of cards. “How do you expect to get through your examination, I should like to know ? Why, I suspect you’ve forgotten what the inside of a book is made of !”

“Pretty nearly,” said Gerald, in a desponding tone. “Is that to-day’s paper you have in your hand ? Just let me look at it !”



“What do you think Willoughby said last night?” said Vane, giving him the journal; “he said, ‘that though you were always borrowing everybody’s paper, you never read anything but the Births, Deaths, and Marriages.’”

“He does me too much honour,” said Gerald; “I never read even so much!”

“What *do* you read, then?” said Vane, looking at him with unaffected curiosity.

“The Deaths!” replied Gerald.

“Oh, I have it!” said Vane; “I have it! You’re expecting a legacy! I hope it’s a plumper!”

“A few hundred thousand pounds,” answered Gerald.

“The deuce!” cried Vane. “You don’t say so! What a lucky dog you are!”

“I should be, if I’d got it,” answered Gerald; “but ‘there’s many a slip,’ you know.”

“What, ar’n’t you sure of it?” asked Vane.

“Oh, yes, quite sure!” replied Gerald, who, seeing how he was rising in importance, had not resolution to say he was not; “sure enough, if I live; but one may die, you know.”

“Oh, hang dying!” said Vane. “Nobody dies that’s got a hundred thousand pounds!”

“That’s exactly what I complain of,” said Gerald.

“Oh, but I mean when one’s young. He’s an old fellow, I suppose?”

“Oh, yes!” said Gerald, “and has been many years in India. That *ought* to shake a man’s constitution.”

“Oh, he’ll die!” said Vane, “never fear; he’ll pop off some morning when you’re not thinking of it.”

“He’ll find it difficult to do that, I fancy,” replied Gerald, with a half smile.

“Then, I suppose, the truth is, you don’t mean to take orders,” continued Vane.

“Why, I don’t much think I shall,” answered Gerald. “I always had an inclination for the army; and if I could get a commission, I believe I had better indulge my fancy than tie myself to a profession I don’t like.”

“Get somebody to recommend you at the Horse Guards, and purchase a commission,” said Vane.

“I have no money,” replied Gerald. “I may be the master of a million in six months’ time; but at present I haven’t a rap.”

“Won’t the old fellow come down?” asked Vane.

“I daren’t ask him,” answered Gerald. “He’s eccentric, and such a request might ruin me.”

“Whew!” said Vane, “that’s the way

with them all. They're the devil to deal with, those old fellows. But why don't you try the Jews?"

"I've no means of convincing them of the reality of my expectations," answered Gerald. "They're afraid of being done; and my hands are so tied, that I daren't take any step to satisfy them."

"Is there nobody you can get to answer for you?" said Vane.

"Nobody," replied Gerald; "the old fellow's been so close—stop, though," added he, "what if I could get the lawyer that made the will?"

"The very man!" cried Vane. "Huzza! Where does he live? What's his name?"

"I don't know where he lives!" answered Gerald, eluding the last question, "but I can easily find out. You think he'll do?"

"Think! Certain of it!" replied Vane. "Is it in London he lives?"

“Yes, that much I know,” replied Gerald.

“Then come along with me!” said Vane; “I’m off to-night, and I’ll drive you up in my tilbury. Besides, I know an honest fellow—honest for a Jew, I mean—that’ll do your business for you capitally.”

The remaining preliminaries were soon settled; and, at the appointed hour, the two young men started for London. As the name was not a common one, Gerald had little difficulty in discovering that Mr. Pilrig was to be found in Lincoln’s Inn, and, accordingly, thither he bent his steps. The lawyer was busy at his desk, happily oblivious of his ill-starred journey to Bath, and his own imprudence, when he was “frighted from his propriety” by the announcement that Mr. Gerald Gage was in the next room, and begged to see him immediately. “Gerald Gage!” said he to the clerk who had

entered with the intelligence. "Did you say I was at home?"

"Yes, sir," replied the clerk. "The gentleman says he wishes to see you on particular business."

"Humph!" said Mr. Pilrig, with a sigh. "Show him in, Smith! What the deuce can he want with me?" thought he. "To tell him more about the will I suppose. He'll think he has me under his thumb, and that he can screw anything out of me he pleases. And how the plague can I help myself, if he chooses to use the power he's got?" . And as these agreeable reflections passed rapidly through the lawyer's mind, he rose to receive the visitor, to whom he offered a chair, with an air of as much complaisance and welcome as he could assume on so short a notice.

"I dare say, Mr. Pilrig," said Gerald, "that I need not remind you of our meeting

in the Bath coach last December; nor of the conversation that passed on that occasion."

"I remember the circumstance you allude to perfectly, sir," said Mr. Pilrig, "and allow me to add that it is not without great pain that I remember it. It was the first time that I was ever guilty of such an indiscretion, and I hope you will believe me, when I assure you that it will be the last."

"Did you succeed in finding our fellow traveller?" inquired Gerald.

"No, sir," replied Pilrig, "I made every inquiry, but without success. However, I trust he has made no ill use of my imprudent disclosure. I have no reason to think that he has."

"Then you have heard nothing from Mr. Livingstone on the subject?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Have you seen him lately?"

“Not very lately,” replied the lawyer: “I only go, of course, when he sends for me.”

“What sort of a man is he?” inquired Gerald.

“A good man enough, I believe,” replied Mr. Pilrig, “but eccentric, obstinate, suspicious, and disliking everybody that he thinks has a design upon his property, or entertains hopes of succeeding to it—not from avarice, but rather from an ill opinion and contempt for human nature.”

“But I meant,” said Gerald, *almost* blushing, “what sort of a man is he in person, age, health?”

“Oh,” replied Pilrig, “I should think he’s upwards of seventy; and as for his health, you know, he was a long while in India, and I needn’t observe how that tells against a man when he comes to be in years; for,” thought the cunning lawyer,



“the nearer I represent the prize the more cautious he’ll probably be, for fear of losing it.”

“Well, then,” said Gerald, “altogether, I suppose you consider me pretty secure of stepping into this property before many years are over my head?”

“I do, sir,” said Mr. Pilrig; “I’ve no doubt of it, provided you keep your own counsel, and that he never suspects you know anything of the business: perhaps before many months.”

“He shall never have any reason to suspect it from me, you may rely on it,” said Gerald. “But you see, Mr. Pilrig, in the meantime, whilst the corn grows, the steed starves. I want money, and you must help me to get a little.”

“I, sir!” exclaimed Mr. Pilrig, with a look of alarm. “Why, if I were but to hint such a thing to Mr. Livingstone, the business would be all up. He’d throw his will into

the fire, and, most likely, kick me out of the house into the bargain."

"I'm well aware of that," replied Gerald; "and I don't want you to hint it to Mr. Livingstone. What I want you to do is, to stand godfather to me. You must promise and vow three things in my name: first, that I am the heir to a great estate; secondly, that the present incumbent is stricken in years, and has gout and asthma, with a dropsical diathesis; and, thirdly, that I am a right honest fellow, who will pay my debts handsomely as soon as I come into my property."

"You're jesting, I'm sure, sir," said Mr. Pilrig. "You wouldn't ask me to do such a thing!"

"I was never more serious in my life," replied Gerald: "and I think I've every right to ask you to do such a thing. You say, yourself, that you have no doubt I shall inherit the property in a few years at furthest;

and where's the harm of helping me to a little cash in the meantime, when a few words can do it?"

"I'm sure, sir, if I had any money to spare that could be of any use to you," said Mr. Pilrig, "I should be most happy ; but, setting every other consideration aside, to go and put another person in possession of such a secret—surely, you must see it's the height of imprudence!"

"Not at all," replied Gerald. "As soon as that other person has lent me money, it will be as much his interest as it is ours to keep the secret. Besides, you need'nt say what property it is that I expect. You've only to satisfy the person in question that my prospects are what I represent them."

"But you'll get no money under such circumstances, sir," objected Mr. Pilrig, "except upon enormous interest."

"That may be," replied Gerald. "I dare say the interest will be enormous ; but it isn't

much I want—only a few hundred pounds to purchase a commission, and fit me out. A thousand would do it abundantly.”

“A thousand pounds, sir!” said Pilrig. “It’s easy to talk of a thousand pounds; but a thousand pounds isn’t so easily got.”

“But, I tell you I *can* get it,” replied Gerald, “if you’ll only do what I require.”

“I couldn’t—indeed I couldn’t, sir,” said Pilrig.

“Nonsense! Mr. Pilrig,” exclaimed Gerald, contemptuously. “What’s the use of affecting such scruples after what has passed? Is there anything worse in helping me to a little cash for an honourable purpose, which you know I shall pay, than in betraying your client’s private affairs to a stranger in a stage-coach? I should like to know, if the two peccadilloes were placed in a balance, which would weigh the heaviest?”

“You’re hard upon me, sir,” said Pilrig. “But you must remember that my unfor-

tunate disclosure was unpremeditated—a mere *lapsus linguæ*, while this would be a deliberate act.”

“That makes no difference in the result,” observed Gerald. “Your *lapsus linguæ*, as you are pleased to call it, might have been, and may still be, as injurious to me as if you had premeditated the thing for a twelvemonth. You’ve risked doing me a great mischief, and you are bound in justice to make me some compensation. Besides, I’m desperate; money I must have; and, in a word, if you won’t assist me, I’ll go to Mr. Livingstone myself, and explain my situation. It’s true, I dare say he’ll alter his will if I do; but he can hardly refuse a thousand pounds to a man for whom he intended a million, and the son of his old friend, too; and, situated as I am, the thousand is almost as much an object of desire now, as the million at an indefinite period.”

“Will you give me till to-morrow morning

to think of it?" said Pilrig, seeing the determination of the other to carry his point.

"Very well!" said Gerald; "I will if you desire it, though the delay is useless, seeing the thing must be done. I will be with you, then, at ten, to-morrow; and I'll bring the man that's to lend the money with me."

"No, sir," said Pilrig; "don't do that. If you *must* have the money, I think I can get somebody to advance it at a cheaper rate than you can get it yourself. I'll consider of it between this and then."

"Now you talk reason, Mr. Pilrig," said Gerald. "Good-by, then, till to-morrow," and the unwelcome visitor departed.

"Yes," said the unlucky lawyer to himself, after maturely weighing the *pros* and *cons*—"yes, although if he shouldn't live to inherit the property, I shall never see my thousand pounds again, I believe it will be more prudent to lend it him myself, at a legal interest, and take his bond, than risk my

professional reputation by letting the secret go any further. Besides, I shall be laying him under an obligation; and, if he gets the money, I may find my account in it hereafter."

So, when Gerald called on the following morning, after expatiating largely on the difficulty he should have in raising the sum on the one hand, and the dislike he had to see gentlemen cheated, as they invariably were by the money-lending craft, on the other—interspersing his discourse with hints of the interest he could not help feeling for a young gentleman so peculiarly situated—Mr. Pilrig consented to advance the required amount, and Gerald returned to his hotel with a thousand pounds in his pocket, to begin the world with.

## CHAPTER VI.

It is unnecessary to observe, that when a man, who never had a thousand shillings, finds himself possessed of a thousand pounds, he thinks the sum inexhaustible. So thought Gerald Gage. He felt that he carried in his pocket a key to all manner of pleasures, and the only question was, which he should explore first. It is true, the money was destined to purchase a commission and his outfit; but he considered that six or seven hundred pounds was enough for that, and



the rest he was at liberty to do as he liked with. But then there was Emily. The six months she had insisted on were already elapsed, and he was bound in honour to go and claim her hand; but what was a subaltern in a marching regiment to do with a wife? He loved her still—as selfish men love; and if he had been in any danger of losing her, he would probably have enforced his claim as energetically as he had done before. But he felt so sure of her, that his mind was sufficiently disengaged to see all the inconveniences that would arise from their union; more especially now, that he was resolved not to go into the Church. The humblest curate must have a home; and, however his poverty may be augmented by having a wife to support, his respectability is not diminished. The world feels that, in the manner of life he is destined to, he needs a companion; and an early marriage, if it cannot be approved, is rather pitied than

blamed. But a subaltern with nothing but his pay, places himself, and the woman he marries, in a situation that vibrates between the melancholy and the ridiculous. The red coat and the gold epaulets, and the miserable barrack-room that serves for parlour and bedroom, form an incongruous whole, that no man with the slightest reflection would choose to introduce his wife to.

Gerald had not much reflection, but he had a great deal of pride, which served equally well to enlighten him on this occasion. The obscure curate and the smart ensign were two different persons; and the one might have been proud of the wife that the other would be ashamed of. Not but that any man might have been proud of Emily's beauty and accomplishments; but what are beauty and accomplishments to a woman who is obliged to wash her own stockings? Gerald could not bear the thought of it. He was involuntarily begin-

ning to measure himself and form his ideas, according to what he expected to be hereafter, not according to what he was now ; and his college friends, as soon as they learned the good fortune that awaited him, helped him to cherish the delusion. He found himself hourly rising in importance. They declared he was the luckiest dog in the world, with his million of money in perspective ; and affirmed that no man need want cash, or anything that cash can purchase, with such a prospect before him. All this was very seducing to an impetuous, impatient, aspiring lad of one-and-twenty, who had, all his life, felt the *gêne* and mortification of being poorer than his companions, and had thirsted for pleasures that he could not afford. But tying himself to a wife was tying himself to poverty and obscurity. Prudence, as well as selfishness—and Gerald, like most men, was selfish—forbad it ; the misfortune was, that he had not thought of

all this before he prevented Emily's marriage with Mr. Weston. But the jealousy that had been aroused by hearing of her engagement had rendered him reckless of all consequences ; and the wound to his self-love had been so acute, that even Mr. Pilrig's grand secret fell coldly on his ears ; nor could his pre-occupied mind and eager passions stop to weigh its importance, until he had accomplished the object that absorbed him, and to which all the energies of his nature were at the moment directed. But, the marriage with Mr. Weston broken off, the jealousy appeased, the self-love and the vanity satisfied, a calm ensued, which afforded leisure for other reflections ; and then it was that the brilliant prospect opened to him began to play its part on his unstable mind. The dull curacy and the sober habits which he had always looked upon with distaste, now inspired him with disgust ; and, although he still loved Emily as much as he could love

any woman, where there was neither the excitement of pursuit nor the zest of uncertainty, he felt he did not love her well enough to bind himself, for an indefinite term, to a life of poverty and obscurity for her sake.

But how, without insulting her, was he to evade the arrangement that had been made for their union, now that the appointed period had arrived? It is true that the objections he had to urge were in the highest degree reasonable; but he felt, after all that had passed, that they ought to proceed from her, not from himself. In him, caution was coldness, and he feared that she would not fail to discern its true character; in her, it was the offspring of reflection—the fruit of a young mind, tutored and strengthened by adversity. But whilst he was debating whether to make some excuse for absenting himself from the vicarage till he could determine what to do, or whether to go down immediately and claim

the hand of his affianced bride, leaving it to her judgment to consent or decline as she thought proper, Fate took the affair into her own hands. His father, returning one dark night from visiting the death-bed of one of his parishioners, rode into an old marl-pit, where he was found lying beside his horse on the following morning. He was carried home in a state of insensibility, and a letter was despatched to his son, who arrived just time enough to receive his last breath and the hand of Emily, which the dying parent placed in his, with an earnest injunction to take her to his heart, and make her as happy as she deserved to be.

The death of his father affected Gerald's feelings, softened his heart, and steadied his character for a time; and Emily's attractions regained their influence over his fluctuating mind. His dreams of ambition and visions of splendour grew dim, and faded before the delights of a pure and innocent love. The

image of the despised curacy, and the pleasures of a life of retirement and virtue, took the place of his aspiring hopes and restless desires, and he eagerly entreated her to comply with his father's last wishes, and become his wife.

But, young as she was, Emily's sad experience had taught her caution. She knew how unfitted Gerald was to encounter poverty, and well understood how much worse poverty was with a family than without it; so she entreated him to wait till he was in some situation that should at least secure them from want. Whereupon, as gentlemen are apt to do in such cases, he accused her of want of affection; declaring that true love made no such calculations, and that poverty together would be much more endurable than poverty apart. But she was firm in what she knew to be right, and would not be shaken. So he wrote to a former pupil of his father, to solicit the patronage that had been promised



to the old man ; resolving to return to Oxford next term, read hard, make up for lost time, and take orders. And, in the meanwhile, they both took up their abode with an aunt of his, a single woman, with a very small income, which she eked out by letting part of the house she resided in.

All the money the young people had between them was Gerald's one thousand pounds, which, indeed, appeared to him inexhaustible ; but, as Emily thought differently, although she did not refuse, in some measure, to share it with him, she insisted on helping herself with her needle, as she had done before.

For a few weeks, Gerald read ; and the novelty of living under the roof with Emily supported him through the tameness of existence ; but as time crept on, *ennui* crept in, and it was impossible not to observe that he was becoming depressed and restless. Nothing could be more natural. Although Gerald could have studied for an immediate



object, he did not love study for its own sake. He wanted a powerful incentive to keep him to it, and the remote prospect of the curacy was not strong enough for the purpose. Then, though he loved Emily, the love grew cool with security ; there were no doubts, fears, nor jealousies, to stir the flame, and keep it bright. He began to yawn a great deal, stretch out his legs as if he did not know what to do with them, turn over the leaves of his books without reading them, and look out of the window into the dull back street, where there was nothing to see. Emily worked on the while, thinking how fortunate it was she had kept her resolution, and bade him walk out more, and see some recreation ; so, in compliance with this recommendation, he one night went to the theatre, and there the first persons he saw were his friends Willoughby and Vane ; the former of whom introduced him to his sister, Madame de

Violane, a very lovely woman, married to a Frenchman.

A few words, whispered by Willoughby to his sister and her husband, immediately after the introduction, caused the lady to turn upon him, with a look of awakened interest, a pair of the finest dark eyes he had ever seen ; whilst the foreigner, who had already acknowledged the introduction by the requisite number of bows, involuntarily added a supernumerary one, in compliment to the hint he had received ; and Gerald felt that he was enjoying a foretaste of his fortune—a first instalment of the homage which the reputation of great wealth is sure to command.

“ Where are you staying ? ” said Vane ;  
“ we’re at the York.”

“ I’m visiting a sick friend a little way out of town,” replied Gerald, “ or else I’d ask you to call on me. How long are you going to stay ? ”

“A few days only,” said Willoughby. “We’ve been making a tour, to show the Marquis a little of the country. Our next move is to London, and then to Paris. But you must come and see us; come to breakfast to-morrow at eleven.”

Gerald promised that he would, and Madame de Violane’s beautiful eyes expressed her satisfaction at the arrangement.

It is singular, and not much to the credit of human nature, that we are more gratified by the homage paid to our wealth than to our merits. Gerald was an extremely handsome young man; but, as he had not a confirmed air of fashion, Madame de Violane’s first glance had been one of utter indifference. He saw it; he saw the change that ensued, and comprehended it, and yet he was won by a compliment so little flattering; and felt more proud and pleased when she selected his arm to lean on when leaving the theatre, than if the preference had been given to his

personal qualities, instead of to a fortune which he not only did not possess, but which he never might possess; and which, even supposing it his, he had attained without effort, and without desert. But mankind and womankind are so fond of being admired for what they are not, that very few are content to take credit for what they are.

Madame de Violane shook hands as cordially with Gerald, when he handed her into her carriage, as if she had known him a dozen years; whilst the Frenchman, as he stepped in after her, made several deferential bows, which intelligibly announced his undisguised respect for wealth; after which, Gerald walked home to his obscure lodging in a state of confusion and excitement that would have made it difficult to analyze his own feelings, if he had tried. His cheeks were flushed, and his eye was animated by pleasure, and his heart was big with the triumph of gratified pride; and yet there was

a weight, a constriction, about the breast ; an undefined feeling of dissatisfaction and insecurity, and apprehension for the future ; so that, when he accosted Emily, who was sitting up for him, she was puzzled to interpret the mixed expression of his countenance. His manner was gay and excited, his complexion was heightened, and his eyes were bright and triumphant ; but there was an alloy about the mouth—the smiles were not free, and frank, and joyous ; some unseen, unknown, almost unfelt, care sat there ; a portent, a shadow, that came unsummoned, and would not be exorcised, and that made such strange discordance with the lustrous brow, that Emily's first words were, "Where have you been, Gerald ? What has happened ?"

"Nothing," answered he, gaily, "except that I have met some friends—some old college chums."

"Is that all?" said she.

"All, except that I am going to breakfast with them to-morrow at eleven," said he.

"Are they staying in Bath?" asked Emily.

"Only for a few days," replied Gerald. "There's Willoughby, and Vane, and a sister of Willoughby's that's married to a Frenchman. I never can understand how English women can marry Frenchmen."

"Nor I," replied Emily. "Is she pretty?"

"Yes, she is," answered Gerald: "she has beautiful dark eyes."

"And what sort of man is he?"

"Oh! he's not ill-looking; he's well enough for a Frenchman," replied Gerald.

"He's a Marquis, too."

"And are they rich?" asked Emily.

"That I don't know," answered Gerald. "She was beautifully dressed; but I don't think she could have had any fortune; for

I've heard Willoughby say that everything went to the eldest son, who will be a Baronet, and that the rest of them had nothing but their name to get on with."

"And where did you see them?" inquired Emily.

"At the theatre, where I looked in for an hour," answered Gerald. "They happened to be in the very box I was put into."

"Oh, how I should have liked to be with you!" exclaimed Emily.

"What for?" asked Gerald.

"Why, to have seen the play, to be sure," answered she. "It's so long since I saw a play! What was it?"

"The play? I'm sure I don't know," replied he. "We were talking all the time; I never attended to it."

"Well, then, I'm glad I wasn't of the party," answered Emily. "I should have been out of patience. But don't you think we might go some night to the pit? It



wouldn't cost much, and it would be such a treat to me ! I've never seen a play since my dear father died."

"Oh, yes, we can go, certainly," answered Gerald, rather coldly ; "but we had better wait till these people are away. It would be awkward if they saw us."

"Then we'll look out for a nice play," said Emily "and have a delightful evening, as soon as your fine friends are gone. We shall not have much gaiety for the rest of our lives, I dare say ; so we may venture to indulge for once."

"Why," asked Gerald, "why are we not to have much gaiety for the rest of our lives ?"

"Why, setting aside that we shall not be able to afford it," answered Emily, "you know we shall probably be *relégués* to the end of the world, when you get your curacy—far out of the atmosphere of theatres, and all such temptations !"



The lustre of Gerald's brow, which had been gradually fading, vanished. "The curacy!" said he; "I'm sure I'm not made for it, nor it for me. There's no use in trying to force one's inclinations into a channel nature never designed them for. I'm sure the thing will never do; and it's better not to enter on it, than to thrust oneself into a situation, only to show one's unfitness for it."

"But, what other resource have we?" asked Emily, surprised at a declaration, apparently so sudden; "and what has altered your intentions?"

"Reflection, and the knowledge of my own character," replied Gerald. "I never did like the profession, and I like it less and less the more I think of it. As for what we're to do, I'm sure I can't tell. I've a mind to go to London, and try if I can't get some sort of situation!"

"But we've no interest, Gerald," objected

Emily. "We've no friends to help us to a situation."

"I don't know that," answered Gerald. "Willoughby's father's in Parliament, and Vane's uncle is Secretary-at-War. They're both devilish civil to me, because they expect some day I shall be richer than any of them; and I don't think they'd be sorry to have an opportunity of laying me under an obligation. Vane told me, some time ago, that, if I liked to go into the army, he'd speak to his uncle about me,"

"But the army'll never do for us, Gerald, without money," said Emily.

"What a thing poverty is!" exclaimed Gerald, with sudden bitterness. "What a thing it is to be a gentleman, and not be able to live like other people. Here are we, pent up in this little dirty hole of a lodging, that I shall be obliged to sneak into and sneak out of, for fear any of these people should see me. I told them I was living

out of town, to prevent their offering to call on me."

A vast proportion of young women would have been tempted to weep at this rending of the veil ; and indeed, there was cause enough ; for certain it is, that like the old story of the egg upon the wall, no human power could ever repair the damage, or replace the young couple exactly where they were before this outbreak. The charm was broken for ever. They had eaten of the tree of knowledge, and Gerald saw that he was living in a mean lodging, and he was ashamed ; and Emily saw that she had no longer power to make the lodging appear a palace to her lover, which, whilst he was happy, had appeared a paradise to her, and she felt that they were cast out of Eden.

But she had been schooled in adversity. She knew that this was no occasion for expostulation and tears ; so she shed none. Her heart swelled and her cheeks were for a

moment suffused, but she waited to speak till the passion had passed away ; and then looking up from her work, with a sweet loving smile, she said, " This is merely a little fever, dear Gerald, that you have caught by sitting near your fine friends. They've infected you with the love of grandeur. It's very natural. I dare say I should be just the same if I had been with you. But it will go off again. Fortunately, one's happiness does not depend on such matters, as I'm sure we've both felt for the last two months ; and although one may occasionally have little fits of this sort, they don't last—we soon cease to pine for things that are beyond our reach. Haven't you always found it so ?"

" I don't know," said Gerald, with less irritation than he had spoken before—for Emily's judicious forbearance had sprinkled cool patience on his passion : " I'm sure I have always pined to be rich, which is a

desire as likely to be gratified as a child's that cries for the moon—unless, indeed, that old fellow would cut. I really think poverty's more stinging when one has such a thing as that in prospect, than if one had no hopes of ever being better off. One would make up one's mind to it then ; but the possibility of such a change keeps one in a constant state of restlessness. I wish to my soul I had the fortune, or that I'd never heard of it !”

“ I wish you had not, with all my heart,” said Emily. “ But as that is past wishing for, believe me the next best thing you can do is to forget it, and endeavour to act as if you never had.”

But, alas ! Gerald could not forget it. The memory that had slept for a time, rocked by Love's zephyrs ; the passions, that had been fanned into forgetfulness by his balmy wings ; the pride, the impetuosity, the ambition, that had been soothed into still-

ness by his soft-toned melodies—were awake and abroad again. The last two months seemed a tame dream ; the small lodging and the dull street became insupportable ; the japanned tea-board and the scanty tablecloth disgustingly mean ; and even Emily's pink gingham gown, in which he had often thought she looked so pretty, seemed only fit for her maid. But what was to be done ? The commission, even had it been attainable, would not mend the matter ; and the curacy, which *was* attainable, seemed, if possible, less desirable. The former, certainly, if he remained single, might have been a resource ; and, as the thought struck him, the profane wish crossed him that he had not engaged himself. What was he to do with his few hundred pounds, and a wife ? Where could he go ? How advance himself ? Poverty is a prison ; it shuts a man in, he can neither move to the right nor to the left for it—that is, where discontent and pride

dwelt with it. Indomitable industry, or the strong energy of genius, may burst the bonds, and set the prisoner free, but Gerald had neither. He was not without ability, but he wanted purpose and perseverance to make use of it; besides, his thoughts were set upon the golden harvest that awaited him—the harvest which another had sown, and which he was to reap, he could not tell how soon; and all the ordinary methods of attaining wealth appeared to him slow, tedious, uncertain, and, in short, insufferable. Trade of any sort he could not condescend to; and studying for any profession was out of the question; nay, his mind was a great deal too unsettled to think of it; and yet Mr. Livingstone persisted in not dying.

Gerald thought he should like to see him, and felt a mind to go to London, if only for the purpose of ascertaining what symptoms of decay he could discover about him. Here was an idea—an object—a something to do;



and the fancy took possession of him more and more. In fine, he resolved to do it ; the advantages were many—movement, variety, the possibility of something happening—for he was in that state in which people are apt to think the sky will fall, or something not less miraculous occur, to relieve them from difficulties they cannot make up their minds to put their own shoulders to—and not least, was the advantage of getting away from Emily. Not that he had ceased to love her ; but she had no communion with his present thoughts and feelings, and was therefore no longer a companion to him : so he told her that he had determined to go to London to see if he could not get a situation, or something to do, that might support them till the old gentleman dropt off.

Emily sighed over the delusion and the weakness ; but Gerald's self-will and impetuosity were not things to be argued down



by common sense, and, like a wise woman, she submitted to what she knew she could not amend. Vane and Willoughby expressed great satisfaction at hearing he was going to London; and Madame de Violane offered him a seat in her carriage. So he went to London in a barouche, with four horses, seated beside one of the most beautiful and fashionable women of the last season. It seemed a foretaste of the joys that awaited him hereafter; and, forgetting the embarrassments that entangled him, he became joyous and agreeable. Madame de Violane pressed him to take up his residence at her house whilst he was in town, an invitation too pleasant, as well as too convenient, to be declined. Thus, he became her guest, and as she took care to whisper abroad that he was heir to an immense fortune, he had no reason to complain of the world's want of civility. He was suddenly initiated into all the pleasures of the fashionable life of

London, and found it thoroughly to his taste ; in short, his present position had but one fault, and that was, that it had no secure foundation—it was not built upon a rock, but upon a quicksand—and there was not a day that he did not feel it shaking beneath him. His money melted, too, with rather an unseemly rapidity ; for though he paid nothing for lodging or boarding, he was, nevertheless, led into expenses very disproportioned to his means. He could not dress worse than his associates ; nor dispense with a horse and groom ; nor decline paying his share of expensive parties to Richmond ; nor refuse to play at cards and billiards for high stakes—at least, he *thought* he could not, which, in its consequences, amounted to the same thing.

Thus sped away three months ; during which time he wrote repeatedly to Emily, to tell her that he hoped the friends he was amongst would do something for him ; but

this was not true, he had no such hope. Even if they had the means—and it is not always so easy to *do something* for people as the lookers for *something* believe ; but, even if they had the means, they were much too thoughtless, and too much occupied with their own daily amusements, to make any serious effort about the matter. Nor was their friendship for Gerald deep enough to make them concern themselves about his interests. It was a mere holiday liking, that answered all the purposes of gay fellowship, but would bear no wear and tear ; and he had sagacity enough to be quite aware of this. But what could he do ? This was the question he daily and nightly asked himself ; but, alas ! no answer came. In the meantime, Madame de Violane broke up her establishment, and returned to Paris, giving Gerald a warm invitation to accompany her. At first he refused, but the temptation was

too great, and, after some hesitation, he consented ; resolving, however, only to stay three weeks, and then positively to return to Bath, and try once more to read and prepare himself for orders.

Whilst these events were happening, Emily kept on her even way, practising the most rigid economy, and supporting herself, as far as she was able, by her needle ; though Gerald had left her fifty pounds, and in all his letters urged to apply to him if she wanted more. But she knew that he would have quite enough to do with his money, and she carefully avoided every expense that could tend to render the application necessary. Although she supposed that he believed what he asserted with respect to his expectations from his friends, she had herself little hope of their realization, and she acted as if no such promises had ever been made : most wisely—for a promise is like money ; it

should never be anticipated, never be spent beforehand, or be counted on till it is safe in hand. Notwithstanding all his faults, she loved Gerald dearly, and she believed that, in spite of them, he loved her too. He had shown it when he thought he was about to lose her; and, in the first blush of his great fortunes, it had superseded all other considerations. After this, could she doubt him, because his ambition and the impetuosity of his nature unfitted him for a life of dull obscurity? That this was so, was, doubtless, in their circumstances, a serious misfortune: but these are faults of character that do not cure affection. In Gerald they were inherent, and to quarrel with them was to quarrel with himself; she must take him for better and worse, or reject him altogether; and, being just twenty, and in love, it is easy to descry which counsel must prevail. So, she held fast to her faith, trusting that time

would modify, if not cure, the faults of youth, and that, when once convinced of the folly of relying on hopes that might never be realized, common-sense and necessity would combine to make him do something for himself.

## CHAPTER VII.

“ LAUK !” cried Miss Spike, as she looked out of one of the windows of Meurice’s Hotel, in the Rue St. Honoré into the court below, “ there he is again, I declare !”

“ Who ?” said her mistress, half rising from the sofa, where, tired with her morning’s sight-seeing, she had stretched herself for a little repose before dinner.

“ The young gentleman that I was speaking of, that’s to have the great fortin’,” replied Spike.

“Where is he? which is he?” inquired Mrs. Graves, starting up suddenly and approaching the window.

“He’s just come into the hotel,” answered Spike. “Perhaps he’s going to dine at the *table dot.*”

“I wish I’d seen him,” said Mrs. Graves. “What sort of looking man is he?”

“As handsome a young gentleman as you’d wish to see,” answered Spike. “I don’t know as I ever see a handsomer. He’s got beautiful dark whiskers, and teeth as white as fish-bones.” ∴

“Where’s Miss Graves?” inquired the lady. “Is she drest?”

“Yes, ma’am,” answered the lady’s-maid; for, by “a fortuitous concatenation of circumstances,” the *ci-devant* Jenny had been elevated into that distinguished position, from which she remorselessly inflicted upon other unfortunate Jennys the scorn she had herself formerly so much resented—“I have just



finished her. She's got on her blue muslin."

"Ah!" replied Mrs. Graves, "she looks much better in white. Go and tell her, Spike, that I wish her to wear white to-day." But the entrance of the young lady herself superseded the necessity of this embassy.

Miss Graves was evidently a young lady made up for sale; her waist was contracted to the smallest span; she was dressed in the height of the fashion; she held her head very high, and her gait was something between a wriggle and a twist, which arose partly from tight stays, and partly from the perpetual consciousness of herself and her figure, which she had been persuaded was very fine, and she believed every eye was fixed upon her when she moved. She was insipidly fair, with very light hair, and white eyelashes; her features were heavy, and her face destitute of expression; but on the credit

of this exceeding fairness she set up for a beauty, and her mother was satisfied that she was one. Of course, she was extremely accomplished, doing a little of everything, without having the slightest genius, taste, or feeling for anything.

“Rolinda,” said Mrs. Graves, “I wish you had worn your white crape or your pink gros-de-Naples to-day, you look so much better in them than in this blue muslin.”

“La, mamma !” replied Rolinda, “they are a great deal too good to wear at a *table-d’hôte*, where one never meets anybody worth looking at.”

“Yes, my love, but you *may* meet somebody, you know. I wonder if there would be time to change your dress before dinner. What o’clock is it, Spike?”

“It just wants five minutes, ma’am,” answered Spike.

“Oh, no, mamma,” replied Rolinda, “it will make me so red. You know if I have

to dress in a hurry, I am sure to get flushed ; and then the dining-room is so hot, and there's such a fume from the dishes, that if I go down heated, I shall get crimson. It's all I can do to keep my complexion down there of a day, by drinking cold water and eating ice."

" Well, then, it's better not," replied Mrs. Graves ; " but it's provoking, too, that you should have just fixed on to-day to wear that nasty blue muslin."

" Why, mamma, I don't think I look bad in it," said the young lady, surveying herself in the glass, with some anxiety ; " do you, Spike ?"

" Lauk, miss, no," answered Spike : " it's just your mamma's idear ; " I never see you look better, to my mind."

" Who is it, mamma ?" inquired Rolinda, who had no difficulty in rightly interpreting her mother's anxiety.

" Oh, nobody particular," replied Mrs.

Graves, with assumed indifference. "Just go to my bed-room, Spike, and see if you can find my vinaigrette. (Exit Spike) I'll tell you who it is, Rolinda: it is the young man Spike said she saw this morning; he that is to have your uncle Livingstone's fortune; he is just come into the hotel, and I have no doubt he's going to dine at the public table."

"Did you see him?" inquired Rolinda.

"No; I did not," replied Mrs. Graves; "it's a pity your papa's away, for he could have easily claimed acquaintance, and introduced us; but, however, we shall easily recognise him from Spike's description. He is tall and handsome, with dark whiskers and fine teeth."

"He can't guess that we've heard anything about his prospects, at any rate," observed Rolinda.

"Certainly not," answered the mother; "and so far, it is, perhaps, as well that your

papa is away to-day ; because, if you *should* be struck with each other, there can be no suspicion of any ulterior motives."

" I wonder if it is certain Mr. Livingstone will leave him his fortune !" said Rolinda.

" Your papa thinks there is no doubt of it, from what he has heard," answered Mrs. Graves ; " and, though I am the last person in the world to wish a child of mine to make a marriage of interest, I must say, that nobody has so good a right to this fortune as yourself. If your uncle wasn't a brute, he'd have left it to his own nephew, instead of squandering it all on a stranger ; and then it would have been yours, without being obliged to any husband at all."

Here Spike put in her head to say that the dinner-bell had done ringing ; and the ladies having taken a last glance at themselves in the mirror, they proceeded down stairs—Mrs. Graves giving her own cheeks a little rub by the way, in order to bring the blood

into them, having observed that she looked somewhat pale after her morning's fatigue.

The dinner-hour was always a dull time with Spike. The male servants, both of the house and of the lodgers, were engaged in waiting at table ; and, unless she was lucky enough to fall in with some stray English lady's-maid, who was as much abroad as herself, she had nothing in the world to kill the time, but looking out of the window, or trying on her mistress's things before the looking-glass. She was so entirely absorbed in this last occupation, on the day in question, that she had scarcely time to take Miss Graves's last new bonnet off her head, before the ladies entered the room, clearly in a state of less pleasing excitement than they had left it. Gerald *had* dined there, and had actually sat opposite to Rolinda ; but he had taken no notice of her whatever ; an insensibility which Mrs. Graves attributed wholly to the sinister influence of the blue muslin, and

Rolinda to his own stupidity; for she had remarked that he was extremely absent, and appeared much more engrossed with his own thoughts than with the company he was in.

She was quite right—and well he might be; for since he arrived in Paris, he had been initiated into some of the mysteries of the Palais Royal; and having persuaded himself, that by adhering strictly to a certain system, he might win a great deal of money, and could only lose very little, he, somehow or other, in the course of verifying the experiment, had contrived to lose pretty nearly all he had; and what step to take next he was quite at a loss to determine. Another cast of the die might certainly bring it all back again: should he try it, or should he forswear play for ever? But, even if he did, what was he to do? Which way could he turn himself? Here he was initiated into the most fashionable society of London and Paris, *fêted*, and caressed, and looked upon



as a millionaire in expectation, if not in actual possession ; and many even thought that he was in possession—so far had report diverged from the truth—and he had scarcely five pounds in his pocket ; nor did he know where to get more when that was gone. It would need more powerful charms than Rolinda's to charm a man out of the recollection of such an embarrassment.

The Graves family were not much better off ; and, as nothing is more irritating to the temper than continual disappointment, nor more depressing to the spirits, than the sickness of hope deferred ; and as the lives of the mother and daughter were passed in a constant succession of such vexations, no wonder that they vented their mortification on each other, and were constantly quarrelling. Theirs was certainly a more than commonly painful case of fortune hunting. Mr. Graves was Mr. Livingstone's nephew and heir-at-law. During the residence of the



former in India, he was known to be amassing a large fortune, and having been the victim of an early disappointment, he had the reputation of being a determined *célibataire*. The consequence was, that Mr. Graves looked upon the large fortune as his own, and the world in general being of the same opinion, he enjoyed, in anticipation, many of the advantages or disadvantages, as the case may be, of the persuasion. Tradesmen gave him credit; he procured access into much better, at least higher, society than he could otherwise have aspired to; and he married a woman of quality with a fortune of ten thousand pounds, and on this ten thousand pounds and the reputation of the great fortune that he was some day to inherit, he had, by one contrivance and another, managed to live luxuriantly ever since. It is true it had long been all spent, but that did not signify—he lived on it still; he was a wonderful manœuvrer, always talked very big, and never

remained more than nine months in one place.

When Mr. Livingstone landed at Portsmouth, on his arrival from India, he found Mr. Graves with outstretched arms on the beach, ready to embrace him. Had the latter been better acquainted with the man he had to deal with, he would have known that nothing could possibly be more injudicious than this proceeding. Naturally of a suspicious disposition, and aware that nobody in the world had sixpenny worth of disinterested regard for him, Mr. Livingstone had returned to England with a thorough antipathy to heirs expectant, and an inexorable resolution not to be bored with them, and accordingly the *empressement* of the nephew, which it was extremely difficult to suppress, was very soon requited by the thorough detestation of the uncle.

For a long time Mr. Graves neither could nor would believe in the alienation. He

insisted that it was only Mr. Livingstone's manner ; and when he found the door shut against himself, he forced in his wife and daughter, who, by their injudicious efforts to win the old man's heart, completed the mischief ; and it was not till he wormed out Mr. Pilrig's strange disclosure in the stage-coach, that he was actually convinced of the disappointment awaiting him. From that moment, the constant study of both himself and his wife had been to keep the world in ignorance of this fatal secret, and to get their daughter well married on the strength of her great expectations, before the truth was discovered. But with respect to the latter enterprise, they had hitherto been unsuccessful. When suitors came to close inquiries, they found the fortune was too much *en l'air* to satisfy their tender affections for the *beaux yeux* of the young lady's *cassette*—and one after another fell off, just as they were supposed to be coming to the point. And

yet matters were getting more and more urgent, resources were wearing out, creditors becoming pressing, and excuses growing stale. It was in this crisis of affairs that the ladies met Gerald at the *table-d'hôte*; and when, after a couple of days' absence, Mr. Graves returned, he was immediately informed of the *rencontre*.

"We must get acquainted with him, at all events," said he; "there is no telling what may come of it."

So Mr. Graves waylaid Gerald at one of his resorts in the Palais Royal, and found no difficulty in making his acquaintance. Indeed, the young man, who was at his wits' end for means to carry on the war, was too happy to find himself courted by a gentleman who, from his conversation in the coach, he felt satisfied must be a man of immense fortune. Not that he had recollected his features, till Mr. Graves reminded him of their former *rencontre*, and then they shook hands very

cordially ; and Mr. Graves invited Gerald to dine with him at Meurice's.

Rolinda wore her pink gros-de-Naples, and her pale hair was teased into innumerable small ringlets, with about half-a-dozen hairs in each. Gerald thought he had never seen anything less attractive than the *ensemble* ; but he wanted friends and upholders at the moment too much, to be otherwise than extremely gallant and *empresé*. His fine friends had left Paris for Italy, but the consumptive state of his funds had prevented his accompanying them, and the same difficulty kept him in Paris. He fancied it was easier to live there upon nothing than in England ; and he felt a mixture of shame and remorse that made him dread the sight of Emily. He was fully sensible of his own folly and of her good sense, and ardently wished he had had resolution to act according to her counsels, though he felt himself just as far as ever from being able to do so, and

excused himself by the persuasion that it was now too late. Then, although he really loved her still, was fully sensible of what an admirable wife she would make him, and could not bear the thoughts of seeing her in the arms of another, he was so disgusted at the selfishness and cruelty that had induced him to break off her match with Mr. Weston, when he had no support to offer her himself, that he had for some time ceased even to write to her. "It's better that she should forget me," he said to himself; but he did not think she would, and if he had thought so, he would probably have written.

In the meantime, Mr. Graves invited him frequently to dinner, and initiated him into some gambling secrets that he found very useful; and, as they were both actuated by secret motives of interest, unsuspected by the other, they soon became great friends.

## CHAPTER VIII.

“HERE, Emily, look at this,” said old Miss Gage, to her young inmate one day. “I saw this paper at Baxter’s shop, and I asked them to lend it me ; for I think there is something in it that would suit you. You were saying the other day that you wished you could get a situation as companion, and here is an advertisement for the very thing ; and I am sure it must be something of a superior kind, for applications are to be made to Wright and Miller, and that is a first-rate London firm.”



“I have heard Gerald speak of them,” said Emily. “Charles Miller was one of his schoolfellows, and they were great friends.”

“Yes,” answered Miss Gage; “and his father and my brother were intimate all their lives. Hear what the advertisement says: ‘Wanted, as companion to an elderly gentleman and lady, a young lady of education and respectability; she must be well-tempered and cheerful —’ ”

“I am sure I am not cheerful,” interrupted Emily.

“Oh, but you are cheerful, naturally,” answered Miss Gage; “though you are not so just now; and your spirits will return fast enough when you are out of your troubles.”

“When will that be?” asked Emily, with a sigh.

“Never while you stay here, Emily, working your fingers to the bone for scarcely enough to keep body and soul together: but



if you were once easy in your circumstances, you'd soon recover your spirits."

"You speak as if circumstances were the only trouble I had, aunt," said Emily.

"Upon my word, I think they ought to be, my dear," answered Miss Gage. "I should be sorry to think you were fretting after a man who has left you alone to struggle with your difficulties for nearly a twelvemonth, whilst he is living in luxury and idleness; and who has not even written to you for some months."

"I may be at least allowed to grieve that Gerald should be capable of doing so," replied Emily, with a sigh.

"It is a very lamentable thing that he should, certainly," answered Miss Gage; "and, as he is my nephew, I have as much right to regret it as you can have; and so I do. But the contempt such conduct deserves ought to come to your aid, as it does to mine. He has pursued his own inclinations, without

the least regard to your claims on his affection, and as he has sowed he must reap. I should think it arrant baseness in you to continue to love him after the neglect with which he has treated you."

"I dare say it is," said Emily; "but it is not so easy as those who have never tried may think, to cure oneself of loving a person that has long been dear to us, by simply thinking of his unworthiness. Time may do it, perhaps."

"And to give time a fair chance, you should get free as soon as possible of this lonely, hopeless, melancholy sort of life."

"The life of a companion will, probably, be just as dull," said Emily.

"It will not be so laborious, at any rate," answered Miss Gage. "Now do, Emily, let me answer the advertisement. I do not know Mr. Miller myself, but I am sure, for my brother's sake, he will be disposed to listen to my recommendation."

And, after some persuasion, Emily having consented to the proposal, the letter was sent ; and, in due time, an answer arrived, requesting the appearance of the young lady in London.

“I am very glad you wrote so immediately,” said Mr. Miller ; “for the candidates are coming in thick and fast ; although, in mercy to ourselves, foreseeing the pressure that would ensue, we only said ‘a liberal salary will be given,’ instead of saying, as we were directed, that, ‘provided the person suited, terms would be no object.’ However, that is really the case ; and, if your young *protégée*, who, from your description, appears eminently fitted for the situation, can reconcile herself to the confinement, she may, I think, find it both very profitable and very comfortable.”

“There now, Emily, I am quite delighted that I insisted on writing. You must set off

to-morrow morning; and I should not the least wonder if this is to be a turn in your fortune."

"I wonder what Gerald would think of it?" said Emily.

"I'm sure that is of very little consequence," answered Miss Gage. "Go, and pack up your things, and think no more of Gerald, I entreat."

Emily observed the first injunction, though not the second; and, in due time, she presented herself at Mr. Miller's, who had, in compliment to the sister of his old friend, requested she would make his house her home, till the affair was settled.

"I think you and the situation will suit each other admirably," said he. "I am sure my client must be a more unreasonable man than I think him, if he be not pleased; and, although you may have some eccentricities to put up with, and may be required

to read out loud more than you like, you will meet with a great deal of kindness, and will live in the midst of luxury."

"What is the gentleman's name," inquired Emily, "and how old is he?"

"Why, his name we are not permitted to tell; he is so afraid of being troubled with direct applications from quarters that would not be agreeable, if the thing became public. With respect to his age, he is sixty-five."

"But that is not so very old," objected Emily, with some alarm, "I am afraid —"

"Oh, fear nothing," interrupted Mr. Miller, "everything will be quite correct; a female relation of his own lives with him, an elderly respectable woman, but she has become very deaf—deaf<sup>er</sup> than he is a great deal, and that does not suit him."

"Then he is very deaf? They are both deaf?" inquired Emily, in some alarm.

"He'll hear what *you* say very well," said

Mr. Miller, "never fear. He can hear what he likes."

Emily had great misgivings ; she thought she should not like it at all, and regretted her journey to London, which had cost as much as would have maintained her for a fortnight ; but Mr. Miller was so kind that she forebore to enforce her objections, and consented to accompany him to the gentleman on the following morning ; whom perhaps our readers will have already guessed was no other than Mr. Livingstone. Nicky's hearing had become so imperfect as to render her unfit for her office of interpreter, and he wanted somebody to fill her situation. A young man, he affirmed, he could have no confidence in—he would be wild, if he were not stupid, and would not like the quiet, prosy life ; and either man or woman that was not young would not be sufficiently pliable to submit to his ways and notions.

Besides, he argued that men more easily found employment, and that there were many reduced gentlewomen to whom the situation would be a godsend ; “ for you know, Miller,” said he, “ if I like her, she shall not be turned destitute into the world when I die. I shall want somebody to take care of Nicky, and I will provide for her.”

Old Mr. Livingstone was sitting, as usual, with a file of Indian papers before him, when the lawyer and his *protégée* were announced ; but he arose with all the alacrity he was master of, and as much gallantry as he could assume, when he saw the young lady. In doing this, he dropt his spectacles, and Emily, with the natural deference for age of well-bred young people, stept hastily forward, and picked them up for him.

“ Thank you, my dear,” he said, holding her hand for a moment, as he took them



from her, in order to get time to look at her. "Thank you," said he again, more warmly, and shaking the hand in a manner betokening that the result of the inspection had been satisfactory. "Sit down, sit down. Well, what do you say? Do you think you could put up with the humours of a gouty old Indian like me?"

"I dare say I could, sir," said Emily, blushing.

"At least, you are disposed to try, eh?" said Mr. Livingstone. "I don't know whether I am much worse than my neighbours," continued he, "but I know that age and India make one selfish, arbitrary, and impatient. Don't they, Nicky?" for the long habit of appealing to her made him forget she was deaf.

"What is it?" inquired Nicky.

"Mr. Livingstone is accusing himself of being selfish, arbitrary, and impatient,"



said Mr. Miller, who was sitting beside her.

“Oh, yes; that’s true enough,” answered Nicky.

“You hear!” said Mr. Livingstone to Emily, not the least offended by Nicky’s sincerity, which, indeed, was one of her prime qualities in his eyes. “Does not that frighten you?”

“There are difficulties to be encountered in all situations,” answered Emily; “even independence is not exempt from them.”

“That’s very true, my dear,” said he; “very true, indeed. If that were better considered there would not be so many discontented people as there are in the world. However, it is not exactly the pleasantest thing in life for a young woman to be shut up with two old deaf people; I am very well aware of that.”

“But necessity subjects people to much greater evils,” observed Emily.

“ Well, my dear, all I can say is, that I must endeavour to make it as much worth your while as I can, to bear with me,” said Mr. Livingstone; and, after some further conversation, in which, however, the subject of salary was not touched upon, the visit terminated, and Mr. Miller, having placed Emily in his carriage, returned to hold a private conference with the old gentleman.

“ Her name is Dering,” said he; “ she is the orphan daughter of a Colonel Dering; and was recommended to me by the sister of a very old friend of yours and mine, Miss Gage, of Bath.”

This communication led to further inquiries; and the information elicited seemed to set Mr. Livingstone a-thinking. He was naturally suspicious; probably, thought he, she is acquainted with that young fellow, old Gerald’s son. Who knows but this may be a plot to bring him about me? and the idea took such strong hold of him, that, much as

he had liked Emily, he felt greatly inclined to reject her; but, not wishing to communicate his real reason to Mr. Miller, he dismissed him, saying he should hear from him next day.

In the meantime, the lawyer, having finished his business for the morning, returned home to dinner; and, having congratulated Emily on the favourable impression he saw she had made, and on the high salary she was to receive—no less than £300 per annum—he asked her how she liked his client, and if she were fully prepared to encounter the difficulties he had dwelt upon?

“I like him very well indeed,” answered Emily. “I should think his was a very bearable sort of temper, in spite of the faults he owns to; and I am sure there is a great deal of real goodness behind it. But, what is his name? I suppose I may learn that now.”

“His name is Livingstone,” replied Mr.

Miller. "He is the rich Obiah Livingstone—perhaps you have heard of him—one of the richest commoners in the country, I suppose."

"Indeed!" said Emily, looking aghast.

"Why, what is the matter? Why do you look so surprised?" asked Mr. Miller.

"How unfortunate!" exclaimed Emily, who saw herself plunged again from ease and affluence into all her existing difficulties; for she felt that there would be a sort of indelicacy in accepting the situation, and placing herself in such an intimate relation with Mr. Livingstone, knowing what she knew; besides she saw at once to what suspicions she might subject herself.

"Why unfortunate?" inquired Mr. Miller.

"Because," replied Emily, "there are private reasons why I cannot accept the situation."

Mr. Miller expostulated with her; but he found it quite impossible to influence her

determination, or to elicit the motive of it. She even wished to return immediately to Bath; but to this he felt too much interested in her to consent; he promised to convey her decision to Mr. Livingstone, which he did by a note on the same evening; but he entreated her to remain at his house, for a week or two, till he sought out something that might suit her: and seeing that he was sincere in his offers of service, she accepted his invitation and good offices.

Mr. Livingstone felt a mixture of pleasure and displeasure, when he learnt that Emily had declined the situation. He was sorry to lose her, more especially as his suspicions were entirely removed by the circumstance; but, at the same time, he felt a certain disinclination to have anybody connected with the Gage family about him, after what had happened. The cause of her refusal he never suspected, as Emily had forbidden Mr. Miller to hint whence the objection had arisen; and as the

most desirable candidate soon supplied her place, no more was thought of the matter in Portland Place.

In the meantime, Emily remained at the lawyer's. He had found no situation for her; indeed, he had scarcely sought one. His wife was an invalid; and as they had no daughter, she found Emily's society so agreeable, that after a short time, they proposed her remaining there altogether, on a salary of one hundred pounds per annum. She accepted the proposal, and the arrangement suited all parties extremely well, till young Charles Miller, Gerald's friend, came home. When he heard who she was, he was extremely surprised to find her there; and still more so, when he found she could give him no intelligence of Gerald; for he was the confidant of the latter, and had long been aware of the engagement, which he mentioned to his father. "It is very odd," he said; "surely it must be broken off."

It was natural he should think so, and equally natural that, living under the same roof, and daily sitting at the same table with so attractive a person as Emily, he should become very desirous of succeeding his friend in her affections. But, doubtful of the actual relation in which the lovers stood, he felt it a point of honour not to advance his suit; so, though he did not fail to recommend himself by such little attentions as the circumstances of the case warranted, he said nothing, but bided his time, waiting to see if Gerald would reappear. But no Gerald came; and as he had generally an opportunity of seeing the letters that were laid on the hall-table, he was pretty sure that she received none from him. So, on the strength of this apparent alienation, he ventured to throw a little more warmth into his attentions, and at length declared his suit, but it was met by a gentle refusal. Emily really felt grateful, for Charles



Miller was the son of a prosperous lawyer, and she saw how entirely disinterested his affection was : added to this, he was amiable and clever, and she liked him exceedingly ; but she had not yet torn the image of Gerald from her heart. Perhaps it was fainter ; and certainly the pangs that his disaffection had for some time caused were much less poignant ; but the memory of his love was still dear to her, and she sometimes flattered herself that he might not be so much to blame as he appeared. Besides, even had she been free, she would have felt it an unjustifiable thing to take advantage of her situation, by allowing the son of the house to form an engagement that would, doubtless, be little pleasing to his parents. She even feared that these considerations might have obliged her to quit Mr. Miller's family ; but, on her refusal, Charles again left home, and so relieved her from this difficulty. But he did



not go without disclosing the secret of his attachment and rejection to his father, in whom he had entire confidence.

Mr. Miller, although he would not have vehemently opposed the match, was very well satisfied with the result ; and one day, when Mr. Baring was inquiring what had become of Miss Dering, he told him the circumstance ; accounting for her declining his son's proposal, by mentioning her engagement to the son of their mutual old friend and school-fellow, Mr. Gage. This led to some further inquiries ; and, at length, Mr. Miller was induced to ask Mr. Livingstone, if he could in any way account for her having declined so advantageous a situation as the one he had offered her.

“ She was frightened at my stern, old, bronzed visage, or at our deafness, I suppose,” replied Mr. Livingstone.

“ That was certainly not the motive of her

refusal," replied Mr. Miller ; " on the contrary, she liked you, and expressed herself very grateful for the liberal salary you proposed, and much obliged to me for my recommendation."

" Did she know my name?" inquired Mr. Livingstone.

" Not when she came here," replied Mr. Miller ; " but, in the evening, thinking the matter settled, I told her who you were."

" And then she made no objection?"

" She did," answered the lawyer, who thought that, now the transaction was over, there was no necessity for making a secret of the matter.

Mr. Livingstone comprehended the affair in a moment. He saw that Gerald had told her about the will, and that she had declined the situation from the most delicate motives. To a man of his character, nothing she could

have done could have recommended her so powerfully to his good opinion. The result of his experience had been so unfortunate, that he scarcely believed in the existence of disinterestedness and lofty motives, where money was concerned. He resolved to cultivate her acquaintance, and bade Mr. Miller bring her, with his wife, to dine with him. The halo of brightness with which her dignified proceeding surrounded her in his imagination even extended to Gerald. He considered that surely the man must be worthy that was loved by such a woman; and he remembered that it was a very unjust thing to punish him for Mr. Pilrig's indiscretion. Gerald could not help it, and it did not appear that he had taken any advantage of the information, even though it was clear he must be very poor, or he would not leave his intended wife in such necessity. So he determined to reconstruct a will in his favour, of course not employing the babbling Pilrig,

but a stranger ; avoiding Mr. Miller for the same reason as formerly, namely, the intimacy between young Miller and Gerald ; being still determined that the secret should not be disclosed till his own time.

## CHAPTER IX.

THE very day that the projected dinner took place at Mr. Livingstone's, Gerald was married to Miss Graves, in Paris. Never went man to the altar less willingly. He had never loved Emily so much, nor had been ever so sensible of the value of what he was resigning, and the worthlessness of what he was accepting in exchange, as at the moment that he swore to love, honour, and cherish Rolinda Graves. He disliked her person, despised her intellect, and abhorred her cha-

racter. He knew very well why she married him, so that his disgust was not even tempered by the solace of self-love; and he very honestly thought, when he handed her into the carriage, after the ceremony, that he had much better have hanged himself to a bed-post than have tied himself for ever to a woman he hated. Why did he do it, then? Because he was proud and idle, infirm of purpose, and weak in principle. He could neither endure poverty nor labour; he had involved himself in difficulties, by entering into the society of those he could not afford to live amongst; he was too proud to confess himself penniless, and too weak to disentangle himself, and kick away the trammels that compassed him about. So he sold himself to misery for wealth and splendour. But where were they?—nowhere but in his own imagination. But this he did not yet know; it was a truth that gradually opened upon him after his marriage. He then discovered that

Mr. Graves was a man living upon expedients, like himself, only so much more fertile and practised in them than he was.

Before Mr. Graves consented to the match, he had taken care to ascertain from Mr. Pilrig that there had been no alteration in the will. As things had turned out, he regretted exceedingly the communication he had made to his uncle, which might have had consequences very adverse to his present plans; but he was relieved by Mr. Pilrig's assurance that all was safe. In reality, Mr. Pilrig knew nothing about the matter; and, having never been employed by Mr. Livingstone since, he had very considerable misgivings on the subject. But it neither suited his pride nor his interest to say so.

Mr. Graves went back to Paris satisfied, and now that the marriage was accomplished, he hinted to Gerald that there could be no difficulty in extracting a little money from the fears of the indiscreet lawyer. Gerald

represented how much difficulty he had had in doing so before ; but Mr. Graves set that down wholly to his want of experience in such transactions ; and determined on their starting for London immediately, to see what could be made of it ; attributing his own want of cash to some temporary accidents. Gerald, however, soon extracted the truth from his wife, and saw that he had been duped, or had rather duped himself ; but he was so thoroughly conscious of deserving it, that he hardly felt he had a right to complain ; and, as he had nothing to depend upon but the manœuvres and expedients of his father-in-law, he could not afford to quarrel with him.

Mr. Pilrig was annoyed at this man of large estates coming to borrow money from him. Mr. Graves pleaded temporary difficulties, and the money was lent and spent ; then came another application, and another—and refusals were met by threats. The little



lawyer was at his wits' end. He was not rich, and was only now getting into a profitable line of business ; whilst his purse was being drained by these exactions at one end as fast as it filled at the other. But then his professional reputation was at stake, and his fears being stronger than his understanding, he for some time weakly yielded to menaces, that, had he had more fortitude, he would have defied in the beginning. Better far is it to face the utmost evil our enemy can do us than sell ourselves to slavery by succumbing to his threats.

“ I don't see, Gerald,” said Mr. Graves, one day, to his son-in-law, “ why you should not try what could be done with my uncle Livingstone. You say he and your father were great friends : that is a claim in itself. Then—selfish and suspicious as he is—it is not likely that he would wish the man he means to make his heir should die of starva-

tion before he comes to the fortune. Why not make an application to him?"

"Because I am afraid of risking everything by it," answered Gerald. "You know what Pilrig told us; besides, you know he hates you, because you are his natural heir."

"Ay, that's very true; but I did not play my cards well. I did not know the man; now I do. You shall go a very different way to work. You shall write him a letter, making no allusion to the will, but describing your difficulties, and asking for the smallest assistance, to enable you to do something for yourself, on the strength of his being the only surviving friend of your father in a situation to aid you. Then, if he sees you, you must own to having been imprudent; and if he asks you about Pilrig and the will, say that you thought the man was drunk, and that you never believed a word of it. The thing is to get about him, without

awakening his distrust. He is as strong in his attachments as he is virulent in his hatreds. He was in love with a girl in his youth—she died, and he never got over it ; and although Nicky is the most insufferable of bores, his kindness to her has been unvarying ; and, I have no doubt, she has an ample provision for her life, in case she survives him. Yes, Gerald, I think I see our way clearly through this business (Mr. Graves was very sanguine) ; if you play your cards well, the game's your own. Come, let us draw up the letter."

Gerald thought the plan might succeed too, and consented to make the experiment, though with much less animated hopes than Mr. Graves, who was never depressed at anything ; but, having no principle and very little feeling, pushed on, boasting and lying through life, always hoping the next turn of the die would make his fortune. Gerald, on the contrary, had both principle and feeling,

but they were weak and unstable, and they had succumbed in the struggle with his idleness, his selfishness, and his ill-directed pride. But, though not strong enough to govern, they were strong enough to gall him, now that he had violated their laws: and his pride helped to make him heartily ashamed and disgusted both with his conduct and his position. Added to which, there was the wife that he hated for ever at his side—not the less hateful that, since their marriage, she had grown fond of him. He was, as we have said, handsome and clever, and his civil indifference had piqued her into liking him.

However, he wrote the letter according to Mr. Graves's advice, and in due time there came an invitation to call at an appointed hour.

“Don't say you are married, Gerald,” said Mr. Graves. “He hates me, and the effect might be very prejudicial to your interests Sink the wife.”

Gerald wished he could ; and as he went along, on his way to Portland Place, he very naturally reflected upon his own folly. If this step were to be taken, why had he not taken it before he tied himself to Rolinda ? who, instead of being likely to advance his fortunes, was so far an impediment to them, that he was positively advised by her own father to conceal his connexion with her. How he cursed his madness and extravagance that had brought him into such a dilemma. In short, he felt so wretched and despairing, that he had no occasion to make up the face of a distressed man, as Mr. Graves had directed him to do, when he entered Mr. Livingstone's library : he was distressed enough in reality for all purposes.

Mr. Livingstone received him very well—indeed, kindly ; first asked him much about his father, and then gradually fell to speak of his own situation. Gerald owned to great imprudence.

“ It was my misfortune, sir, not to like the Church, for which my father designed me. I ought to have overcome my objection, for it was the only hope he had of providing for me ; but, trusting to get into the army or some situation more congenial to my tastes, I neglected my studies ; and when my father died, I had no longer the means of remaining at College.”

“ And what have you been doing since ?” inquired Mr. Livingstone.

“ Partly living on the little money I got by the sale of my father’s furniture, sir ; I had also a few College friends who invited me to their houses, and I staid hanging about upon them longer than I should, in hopes that as they were well connected, they might have done something for me.”

“ Bad look out,” said Mr. Livingstone ; “ but what would you like to do now ?”

“ Anything,” replied Gerald, “ that I am fit for.”

“And what *are* you fit for?” inquired Mr. Livingstone.

“I always wished to go into the army, sir,” answered Gerald.

“You are too old,” responded Mr. Livingstone. “Can you think of nothing else?”

“A situation, sir,” suggested Gerald.

“What do you say to a wife?” said Mr. Livingstone, with a sort of comic abruptness.

“A wife, sir?” answered Gerald. “I am afraid a wife would be more likely to augment my difficulties than relieve them.”

“But what if she were an heiress?” said the old gentleman.

“Money, sir, of course, would be very acceptable to a person in my situation,” replied Gerald; “but a marriage of interest, sir—a marriage without affection—” and, after hesitating, he stopped, from mere shame and conscious degradation.



“ Oh,” said Mr. Livingstone, “ but why should it be a marriage without affection? Why should a woman want attractions because she is an heiress? Surely, she may be as beautiful, amiable, and accomplished, as if she were the daughter of a poor curate or a half-pay officer.”

Gerald blushed at the last words, for they brought Emily to his mind; but at the same time they suggested a ready excuse, and he hinted something about his affections being engaged.

“ Oh, that alters the case, certainly,” replied Mr. Livingstone; “ and I am sorry to hear it, because it puts an end to my plan. The young lady I meant to propose to you is a ward of mine, and will be one of the richest heiresses in the country. She is, moreover, lovely, both in person and mind, and the man who gets her will be a very fortunate fellow, I assure you. Come, think twice



before you say no. I am certain she has no attachment, and will listen to my recommendation."

"It cannot be, sir," answered Gerald, with a sigh of deep regret.

"It is true, I may be able to procure you some sort of situation in the India House, but the candidates are numerous, and advancement slow. You will probably have a good deal of confinement at the desk, and small emoluments for several years; whilst the alternative is a large fortune and a lovely wife."

But Gerald was firm, of course; he muttered the words, "honour and affection, and engagement of several years," blushed and stammered, cursed his own folly and precipitance, not forgetting his wife and her parents, whom he consigned energetically to the devil; but he was fast bound—there was no getting free, kick and struggle as he would; so he was obliged to make a virtue of

necessity, and take credit with Mr. Livingstone for the most inexorable fidelity. The old gentleman shook his head, said he would see if he could do anything for him, but that he feared that he might live to regret his pertinacity ; and finally desired him to return at nine o'clock on the evening of the eighth day, when he would acquaint him with the result of his exertions in his favour. "By the bye," said he, as Gerald was quitting the room, "has the lady you are engaged to any money?"

"None, sir," replied Gerald ; "none whatever."

On the same afternoon, a solicitor was sent for, and directions given for the intended will, which was duly prepared and signed by the day appointed for Gerald's visit. Invitations were also sent to Mr. and Mrs. Miller and Emily, to take tea in Portland Place on that evening at eight o'clock ; and the party were already assembled in the drawing-room,

when Gerald knocked at the door below, and, according to Mr. Livingstone's directions, was shown into the library. Begging his company to excuse him for a short time, the old gentleman descended the stairs in better spirits, and a more agreeable frame of mind than he could remember to have found himself in for the last thirty years. The whole thing had turned up so neatly ; he had had an opportunity of testing the disinterestedness of his intended heir, in a manner so entirely satisfactory ; the young people pleased him, and he had found an occasion of emphatically rewarding constancy and affection—sentiments with which, from his own early disappointment, he had an exceeding sympathy ; but of whose frequent existence he was extremely sceptical. He chuckled with pleasure as he entered the room.

“ Well, young man,” said he, “ I hope you have thought better of this business ; for, to say the truth, I fear it will be impossible to

meet with a situation that you will not find very objectionable."

"Of what business, sir?" asked Gerald.

"Of my proposal. The young lady is at this moment in the house, and has expressed her willingness to accept you, for it appears you are not wholly unknown to her. Indeed, I have reason to believe that she really has entertained a preference for you for some time."

Here the images of the various young beauties he had danced and flirted with at Madame de Violane's recurred to the mind of the mortified Gerald, and he wondered which of them it might be.

"Her present fortune will be two hundred thousand pounds; hereafter, something much more considerable."

Gerald's head seemed in a whirl; the past, the present, the future, darted through his mind with the rapidity of an electrical shock—what he was, what he might have been;

his madness—his stupidity—his “d—d ill luck.” His throat was parched, and his tongue clave to the roof of his mouth; so that when Mr. Livingstone pressed him for an answer, he could only gasp out, “It cannot—cannot be.”

“Well,” said Mr. Livingstone, “I shall only make one effort to shake your determination, and that is, the sight of the lady herself;” and, before the unfortunate victim could expostulate, the old gentleman had left the room.

Gerald felt disposed to rush out of the house; but the dread of offending Mr. Livingstone, and so losing what appeared his only chance of escape from utter destitution, prevented him. So he sat, with his eyes fixed vacantly upon the door, till it opened, and Mr. Livingstone, pushing in Emily, cried: “There, look at her; and if you don’t like her, why I must try and get you fifty pounds

a year at the India House, to keep you from starving."

The door was shut, the old man gone, and the young people in each other's arms in a second. Emily forgot the neglect—Gerald forgot the wife: young loves, past scenes, were alone remembered. Emily was all happiness. Gerald was in a delirium; it was too much for his brain; he pressed her convulsively to his heart, and covered her face with kisses. Emily felt how he loved, and thought how he must have suffered; and she tried to calm him, and lead him into conversation, but in vain.

Some time—they knew not how long—had passed in these wild transports, when the door again opened, and Mr. Livingstone entered with parchments and papers in his hand. "Come!" said he, "you have years of love and love-making before you—this evening must be mine. It's long since I

have made anybody happy, and now that I hope I have done it completely, you must come up stairs to the drawing-room, and let me enjoy the sight of my work. First, however, before we go, I will put this deed in your hand, Gerald—it is your wife's marriage-settlement of two hundred thousand pounds ; I have chosen to vest the property in her, rather than in you, for various reasons. One is, that I know her better, and am attached to her ; another, that I am aware, from your own confessions, that she is better fitted to take care of it. But a good husband need very seldom complain of this sort of arrangement ; few women are so ungenerous as to make him feel any difference : and I am sure Emily Dering will not be one of them !”

Emily turned a sweet smile of assurance on Gerald, but his lips were compressed, and his features ghastly.

“ Come,” continued Mr. Livingstone, “ they are waiting tea for us ; let us go up



stairs ;” and he gave Emily his arm. “Remember, Gerald,” said he, tapping the young man on the back ; “remember, when I die, she will be my heir.”

Silently and mechanically, Gerald followed to the drawing-room, shook hands with Mr. and Mrs. Miller, took his seat, and went through the dumb show of the tea-table. Everybody was struck with his countenance and strange demeanour, except Nicky, who never observed anything. Mr. Livingstone thought that this sudden heap of joy had crushed him for the moment. “He will be all right to-morrow,” whispered he to Mr. Miller : but the lawyer’s sagacity, and Emily’s affection, were not so easily satisfied. The former was completely puzzled—he began to doubt his attachment to Emily ; but she, strong in her conviction, from what had passed below, was sure that, whatever it might be, it was not that that was affecting him so strangely ; and, true womanlike, she



felt that any other woe must be light and remediable. So she tried to cheer him ; smiled on him, gave him sweet loving looks ; and when they took their leave, and he handed her into Mr. Miller's carriage, she pressed his hand tenderly, and bade him " see her to-morrow."

Gerald went home, knocked at his father-in-law's door, and, on being admitted, asked for a night candlestick, and ascended to his room ; locked himself in, loaded his pistols, put one in his mouth, and blew out his brains. The report brought up the family, but, when the door was broken open, he was dead.

His wife died a few months afterwards, in bringing a child into the world, for which Emily amply provided ; and when some years had elapsed, and her grief and regret had subsided, she married Charles Miller.



## II.

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### THE STORY OF LESURQUES.

ONE of the great grievances under which the French nation laboured, previous to the revolution of 1792, was the extreme inequality with which the law was administered. The judges were too frequently corruptible ; the influence of the aristocracy was enormous ; and if neither of these succeeded in averting an unpleasant verdict, the King's grace was ready to come to the rescue, provided it were solicited by a pretty woman, or that any

interest, of whatsoever nature, disposed his Majesty to a favourable view of the criminal's case. The law therefore became, in too many instances, a mere instrument of oppression, from which the people had everything to fear and nothing to hope; whilst the aristocracy used it as a convenient veil for their injustice and exactions.

It was to remedy these crying evils that the National Assembly established the trial by jury; but as people who have long suffered from one extreme are apt to seek a remedy in the other, they at the same time abrogated the right of pardon, enacting the terrible statute that, provided all the forms of law had been duly observed in a process, the verdict of the jury should be irrevocable. It was not long before instances occurred which exhibited the fearful nature of this edict; and of these we are about to relate one of the most remarkable; but so distrustful had experience rendered the people, that they

could never be brought to annul, but only to modify the law. Unwillingly, they consented to restore the royal privilege of pardon ; but to this day, in France, not only cannot the verdict of a jury be reversed, but it is held criminal to arraign its justice. Neither, when they pronounce their decision, can they recommend the criminal to mercy ; the sentence once registered must be executed ; but to avert the fatal consequences of this rigour, they have recourse to two expedients. One is, that if they entertain a shadow of doubt with respect to the guilt of the prisoner, they give in a verdict of “ guilty, but with extenuating circumstances.” This particularity will account for the verdict in the case of Madame Lafarge, which surprised everybody unacquainted with the forms of criminal jurisprudence in France. There were no extenuating circumstances apparent to the public ; but the jury feeling too well assured of her guilt to acquit her, and yet not so

certain of it as to feel quite satisfied that it was right to take her life, had recourse to this *mezzotermine*.

In cases, however, where the evidence has appeared, at the time of the trial, so conclusive that this saving clause has been omitted, should any subsequent disclosures raise a doubt in favour of the prisoner, the Court of Cassation comes to his aid. They take upon themselves to review the proceedings, and in most instances succeed in discovering that there is some flaw in the indictment, or that some form of law has been overlooked, which involves a necessity for a new trial. If neither of these imperfections be found, however, the sentence must be executed, even though the judge and jury were morally convinced of the innocence of the sufferer. A French jury cannot err, nor can their verdicts be revised.

It was in the latter end of the month of April, of the year 1796, that a gentleman of

the name of Joseph Lesurques arrived with his family in Paris. His age was about thirty, his fortune easy, his character unimpeached. He had served his country with credit in the regiment of Auvergne, and, since his retirement from military life, had filled respectably and without emolument the situation of *chef de bureau* in his native district. He was a man deeply attached to his family, undisturbed by ambition, un-seduced by pleasure. His income of seven hundred a year sufficed for all his wants, and his object in coming to reside at Paris for a few years, was not to plunge into its gaieties, but to afford his children those advantages that the provinces could not supply. On the arrival of this family in the metropolis, they established themselves as lodgers in the house of a notary called Monnet, in the Rue Montmartre; arrangements were made for the instruction of the young people, and Monsieur and Madame Lesurques anticipated

much satisfaction in watching their progress. It will be admitted, we think, that the reasonable views of these worthy persons entitled them to all the happiness they promised themselves; yet so precarious are human hopes and expectations, that Joseph Lesurques and his family had not been many days in Paris before, without any fault of their own, they were plunged into an ocean of troubles from which no exertions of themselves or their friends could ever extricate them; an ocean whose waters of sorrow to this day embitter the bread of their descendants.

There resided at that time in Paris a gentleman of the name of Guesno; he, as well as Lesurques, came from Douai, where the property of both was situated; and being gratified at the arrival of his townsman, the new comer was scarcely settled in his lodgings when Guesno invited him to meet a few friends of his, in the *Rue des Boucheries*,



where he proposed to give a breakfast in celebration of this reunion. The immediate origin of this compliment appears to have been, that Lesurques had formerly lent Guesno two thousand francs, and though the latter had repaid the debt he still felt bound by the obligation. The company, for some reason or other, seems to have fallen short of the entertainer's intentions, since the only guest besides Lesurques was the *Sieur Richard*, the owner of the house. After they were assembled, however, a young man of the name of *Couriol* happening to call to speak to *Richard*, he was invited to join the party, which, it will be observed, thus consisted of four persons, all young men, dressed in the height of the fashion of that time, which was a fashion more remarkable for extravagance than taste. They wore, for example, ponderous pig-tails, top-boots with silver spurs, very large eye-glasses, a quantity of jewellery, and, amongst the rest, two long

watch-chains dangling from their waistcoat-pockets. As this costume was *de rigueur*, they were necessarily all dressed alike.

During the breakfast nothing particular seems to have occurred except the arrival of Couriol, who was known only to Richard. The appearance of this visitor does not seem to have been altogether prepossessing, for although he was a well grown man of twenty-five, and had a set of features that would be commonly called handsome, there was something in his countenance that inspired distrust and suspicion. He had black bushy eyebrows, and a pair of dark unsettled eyes that could not look anybody straight in the face. In the course of the conversation, Lesurques explained the motives of his removal to Paris, and expressed a hope that he might have an early opportunity of entertaining the present company at his own table.

“Your plans for the future seem well

arranged," observed Couriol, lifting his eyes from his plate, from which they had hitherto scarcely wandered; "but who can foresee the future? Who knows what may happen to him before to-morrow morning? I sincerely wish that your anticipations for enjoying peace and happiness in the bosom of your family may be realized; but if they are, you may consider yourself peculiarly favoured by fortune, for, during the last five or six years, there is not a citizen in France, however secure his position may have seemed, who could reckon on the fee simple of it for a week."

This evil augury of Couriol's seemed the more strange and sudden, that until that moment he had never opened his lips, but had appeared buried in thought; whilst the richness of his attire, and his excellent appetite, had not prepared the company for the announcement of such desponding views. After the *déjeuné*, which lasted about two

hours, the party adjourned to the Palais Royal, where having taken a cup of coffee in the *Caveau* they separated.

Four days had elapsed since the breakfast in the *Rue des Boucheries*, when at an early hour in the morning of the 8th *Floréal* (a month which consisted in the then French calendar, of half April and half May), the guard at the *Barrière de Charenton* observed four horsemen pass through the gate, and take the road to Melun. It was not difficult to perceive that the animals they rode, though handsome and in good condition, were on hire ; whilst, from the lively jests that seemed to be circulating amongst the cavaliers, they were supposed to be leaving the city for a day's diversion in the country. A closer observer might perhaps have discovered some traces of anxiety beneath their smiles and laughter ; and a slight metallic clang that was heard now and then, when their impatient horses reared or plunged,

would have suggested the suspicion that they carried arms beneath their long riding coats. This gay humour, however, only extended to three of the party; the fourth seemed of a different temper. He rode somewhat in the rear of the others, taking no part in their conversation. His eyes were fixed and his countenance gloomy. This man was Couriol.

The little party reached Mongeron, a village on the road to Melun, between twelve and one o'clock; one of them having galloped forward for the purpose of ordering a luncheon to be prepared at the *Hôtel de la Poste*. They ate with excellent appetite, and after their repast two of them called for pipes and smoked very deliberately till towards three o'clock, when having taken their coffee at a neighbouring casino, they mounted their horses again and pursued their journey. The road they selected was that which leads through the forest of Senart, and as it was

protected from the sun on each side by rows of elm trees in luxuriant foliage, they allowed the reins to drop on their horses' necks, and advanced at a foot's pace, as if to enjoy the pleasant shade.

In this manner they reached Lieursaint, a beautiful village, surrounded at that period by a forest, and famous in history as the scene of Henry IV.'s adventure with the miller; and here they made a somewhat unusual stay; one of their horses had lost a shoe, and the chain which attached the spur of one of the riders to his boot was broken. This last, on entering the village, stopped at the house of a woman called Chatelain, a *limonadière*, of whom he requested a cup of coffee, and asked also for some strong thread to repair his chain withal, which she gave him; but observing that he was not very expert at the job, she summoned her maid to his assistance, during which operations they had both of course ample leisure to notice his person and features.

In the meantime, the others had ridden through the village as far as an inn kept by a man of the name of Champeaux, where they alighted and called for wine ; whilst the horse that had lost its shoe was sent to the blacksmith's. They then all repaired to the widow Chatelain's, where they played several games at billiards ; after which, having once more refreshed themselves with a draught of wine at the inn; they mounted their horses, and started in the direction of Melun, about half-past eight in the evening.

When Champeaux returned into the room they had just quitted, he found a sabre in its sheath, that one of the party had forgotten. This he immediately sent after them, but they were already too far on their way to be overtaken by the messenger. In about an hour afterwards, however, the owner returned in great haste to reclaim it ; it was he whose spur had been repaired at the *limonadière's*,



and, having hastily tossed off a glass of brandy, and buckled on his sword, he put his horse to its speed, and rode off as rapidly as he had come.

Precisely at the same moment, the courier bearing the mail from Paris to Lyons drove into the village of Lieursaint, for the purpose of changing horses. It was exactly half-past nine o'clock, and already quite dark. He was presently away again, with fresh horses and postilion, galloping at full speed towards the forest of Senart. The carriage which in those days conveyed the French mails is described as an elegant, light vehicle, with a strong box behind for the letters, and room within for two persons, one place being occupied by the courier in charge of the bags, and the other being let to any traveller who was willing to pay for it. On the present occasion, this place was occupied by a gentleman, apparently about thirty years of age,



who had booked himself under the name of "Laborde, silk-mercier at Lyons." At about two hours' journey from Lieursaint, the road sinks into a hollow, out of which it rises on the other side by a very steep ascent, and up this the postilion was slowly walking his horses, when there was a rustle in the thicket, followed by the sudden appearance of four men, two of whom seized the horses' heads, whilst the other two attacked the postilion, and in a moment separated his head from his body; at the same instant the courier was stabbed to the heart by his fellow-traveller—both murders being performed so dexterously that not a cry escaped from the victims. The coffer was then forced open, and the assassins possessed themselves of all the money the courier carried with him, amounting to a sum of 75,000 francs, in bills, bank-notes, and silver. They then returned immediately to Paris, the fifth conspirator being mounted on one of the carriage-horses, and betwixt the

hours of four and five in the morning they re-entered the city by the *Barrière de Rambouillet*.

A bolder and more reckless enterprise than this has seldom been undertaken, and even at that period, when deeds of blood and violence were too common in France, it awakened terror and amazement throughout the country. The assassins were scarcely in Paris before intelligence of what had occurred had reached the authorities, and the most rigorous measures been instituted for their discovery.

The first indication met with was the post-horse, which the rider had turned loose on the *Boulevards*, and which was found wandering about the *Place Royale*. It was also ascertained that four other horses, bathed in sweat, evidently much over-ridden, had been brought into the yard of a stable-keeper named Muiron, at five o'clock in the morning. Muiron admitted at once that they had been hired on the previous day by two persons

known to him ; one was a Monsieur Bernard, the other was Couriol. The former was instantly arrested, but the latter, with the rest of the band, had effected his escape ; nevertheless, as the whole country was on the alert, and the descriptions given by the innkeepers, where the four horsemen had baited, were extremely precise, there seemed little chance of their ultimate evasion.

With respect to the fifth, the people at the post-office, where he had taken his place, described his person with equal accuracy. In the mean time, Couriol had taken refuge in the house of a friend, named Bruer, who resided at Château Thierry, whither he was traced and arrested. In the same house was found Guesno, who appears to have gone there on business of his own. They however seized him and Bruer also, together with their papers ; but the two latter having clearly proved their *alibi*, were dismissed ;

whereupon Guesno demanded back his papers.

“Come to-morrow morning,” said the magistrate, “and they shall be delivered to you.”

Now, Guesno was extremely anxious about his papers, the want of which was retarding some business he had in hand, so on the ensuing morning he started betimes for the police-office, and, as the Fates would have it, who should he meet on his way but his old friend Lesurques! Naturally enough, they fell to discussing this strange affair, which was then the theme of every tongue, and, engaged in conversation, they proceeded arm-in-arm till they reached the office, where partly from curiosity and partly for the sake of his friend's company, Lesurques consented to wait for Guesno till his business was concluded. They were, however, so early that Daubenton the magistrate had not yet ar-

rived, so the two friends seated themselves in the ante-room, through which they expected him to pass, where several other persons were also waiting, and amongst them the witnesses who had been brought in from Lieursaint and Mongeron to give evidence against Couriol and the others.

Daubenton, in the meanwhile, having entered his office by another door, was busily engaged in looking over the informations relative to this business, when one of his assistants hastily entered to inform him that some women in the ante-room declared that two of the murderers were calmly sitting amongst them. The magistrate could not believe it, and he sent for the women, separately, to question them; but, in answer to his inquiries, they both positively reiterated their assertions. One was the maid Santon, who had served the travellers whilst dining at the inn at Mongeron; the other was Grossetête, servant to Madame Châtelain, the *limonadière*, who

had mended the spur, given them coffee, and seen them playing at billiards; they were confident that they were not mistaken.

Still the magistrate, who appears to have been most worthy of his office, could not bring himself to believe that the guilty parties would so recklessly run into the lion's jaws; and he urged the women to consider well the consequences of what they were saying—the lives of two of their fellow-creatures hung upon their breath—but their conviction was not to be shaken. He then bade them sit down, whilst he called in the gentlemen separately, and conversed with them both on indifferent matters, and also on the late assassination. When he dismissed them, promising Guesno to send him his papers, he again turned to the women, whom he hoped to find ready to retract their assertions; on the contrary, they were more than ever confident of their correctness. Nothing therefore remained for the magistrate but to

order the immediate arrest of Guesno and Lesurques, although himself, especially after the late conversation, was intimately persuaded of their entire innocence. What a dreadful situation for him !

The two prisoners were immediately confronted with the witnesses, who one and all swore to their persons, agreeing, without exception, that Lesurques was the man whose spur-chain had been broken, and who had afterwards forgotten his sword at Lieursaint.

On the day of his arrest, Lesurques wrote the following letter to a friend :—

“ Dear S——,

“ Since my arrival in Paris, I have met with nothing but vexations ; but a misfortune has now overtaken me that exceeds belief. I am accused of a crime, the very thoughts of which make me shudder with horror ! Three women and two men, none of whom I ever beheld in my life before, have positively



sworn that I was one of the band who murdered the Lyons' courier! I leave you, who know me so well, and are also pretty well acquainted with the mode in which I have passed my time since I came here, to judge of the probability of this astounding accusation. But the dreadful consequences that may ensue, if this accursed lie cannot be disproved, render the most energetic proceedings necessary. For God's sake! assist me with your memory. Try and recall where, and with whom, I was at the time these people assert that they saw me."

The writer then enumerates all the persons he can recollect to have conversed with on the day he was supposed to have been absent from Paris, including the Citizen Texier, General Cambrai, the Demoiselle Eugénie, Citizen Ledru, his wife's hair-dresser, the workmen employed in his house, and the porter that kept his gate; and he concludes his letter by a request that his



friend would frequently visit, and endeavour to support the spirits of his wife.

Lesurques, Guesno, Couriol, Bernard, Richard, and Bruer, were all brought to trial, the three first as principals, and the latter as abettors or receivers, on which occasion the witnesses swore as positively as before to the persons of Lesurques and Guesno. The last, however, proved a most satisfactory *alibi*, and Bruer succeeded in entirely establishing his innocence. Lesurques was less fortunate, although his *alibi* was also sworn to by fifteen respectable witnesses, some of whom had lunched with him, others dined with him, at such hours as rendered it physically impossible he could have been at Mongeron or Lieursaint on the day in question. The porter, and workmen employed in his house, also gave testimony in his favour.

It was just as the jury were about to yield to the weight of this evidence that the well-meant zeal of a townsman of Lesurques

proved fatal to him. This man was a jeweller called Legrand, who had sworn to having transacted some business of importance with the accused on the day mentioned in the indictment, which fact was corroborated by another jeweller named Aldenoff. Elated at the weight of testimony brought in favour of his friend, Legrand most unfortunately proffered his books, where, he said, a certain entry would be found establishing the fact of Lesurques' presence in Paris on the 8th Floréal. The books were accordingly sent for and examined; but an evident erasure and alteration of a 9 into an 8 overthrew, not only the evidence of the jewellers, who were very respectable men, but seems to have cast a doubt on that of all the other witnesses. The president of the court pressed for an explanation, which Legrand not being able to give, an order was issued for his arrest, whereupon the poor man, entirely losing his presence of mind, confessed that

he did not know to a certainty on what day he had seen Lesurques, but that, being entirely assured of his innocence, he had made that alteration in his book with the hope of establishing what he was satisfied was true. From that moment the tide of opinion changed—the evidence of the other witnesses was looked upon as the result of a conspiracy, and a certain degree of anger and resentment took possession of the minds both of judge, jury, and audience. Lesurques alone was calm ; the more things went against him, the more unmoved he appeared.

At this critical juncture, whilst the jury had retired to consider the verdict, a woman, in a state of excitement bordering on insanity, rushed into the court, and demanded to be heard. Being brought before the president, she declared, with the utmost vehemence, that Lesurques was entirely innocent of the crime imputed to him.

“The witnesses are deceived,” said she, “by the extraordinary resemblance which exists between him and the real criminal, for whom they mistake him. I know him well—he has fled—and his name is Dubosque.”

This woman, Madelaine Brebon, was Couriol’s mistress; and in making this avowal, to which her conscience urged her, she admitted the guilt of her lover. Yet was she not believed, nor was her evidence investigated; the ill effects of Legrand’s confession was yet too recent. Couriol, Lesurques, Bernard, and Richard, were found guilty—the three first being condemned to death, the last to the galleys. Guesno and Bruer were acquitted.

As soon as the sentence was pronounced, Lesurques rose from his seat, and, with entire composure, declared his innocence, adding, that “if a murder on the highway were a fearful crime, it would be well for his

judges to remember that a judicial murder was no less so."

Then Couriol arose. "I am guilty," said he; "I confess it; but Lesurques is innocent, and Bernard had no part in the murder."

Four times he reiterated this assertion, and from his prison he wrote a letter, full of sorrow and repentance, to the same purpose. "Lesurques knew nothing of the affair; the names of the other parties concerned were Vidal, Rossi, Durochat, and Dubosque; it is the last for whom Lesurques is mistaken."

Madelaine Brebon also made another effort to convince the authorities of their mistake; but, strange to say, neither her assurances, nor those of Couriol, who could have no interest but a conscientious one, in denying for Lesurques what he avowed for himself, were sufficient to save the life of

this unfortunate victim. It is true, a petition was sent into the Directory, and the Directory referred the matter to the *corps législatif*. All they asked for was a postponement of the execution.

“Must Lesurques die,” said they, “because he has the misfortune to resemble a criminal?”

The answer of the legislative body was, “that the process had been strictly legal; that a single case could not justify the violation of a well-considered statute; and that to set aside the verdict of a jury for the reasons advanced, would be equivalent to arraigning the wisdom and justice of the law as established.” Since the right of pardon no longer existed, there thus remained neither hope nor help for Lesurques.

On the day of his execution, he wrote the following letter to his wife, which, from the stoicism it exhibited, was very much admired

by the Republic : at that period, in the midst of their disorders, affecting a great admiration of classical heroism :

“ My dearest love,

“ No man can elude his destiny—it is mine to die on a scaffold, the victim of an error. I shall meet my fate as becomes me. I send you some of my hair ; when my children are old enough, you will divide it amongst them. It is the only inheritance I have now to leave them.”

Unhappily, it was so, his whole property being confiscated to the state.

After sentence was pronounced on him, Lesurques also caused the following letter to be inserted in the public journals, addressed to the real criminal :

“ Be thou, in whose place I am to die, content with the sacrifice of my life. The



day will probably yet come that you will find yourself in the hands of justice—then, remember me! Think of my children, and of their broken-hearted mother, covered with disgrace. Restore them their good name; repair their dreadful misfortune, which has wholly originated in the fatal resemblance betwixt you and me.”

The executions took place on the 10th of May, 1797. It was Maundy-Thursday, and Lesurques, who conducted himself to the last with the most heroic calmness and self-possession, went to the scaffold in a complete suit of white, which he wore as the symbol of his innocence. He said, he regretted it was not a day later—Good Friday being more suitable for such a sacrifice. As they went through the streets, Couriol stood up in the cart, and cried aloud to the people, “I am guilty, but Lesurques is innocent!” The latter died forgiving all men, and calling God



to witness the injustice of his sentence. Thus the climax of all injustice was committed through the very fanaticism of justice. Nothing was stable in the Republic, so they determined that at least they would have one thing to hold fast by, and that was the law, right or wrong.

Amongst those who were perfectly satisfied of Lesurques' innocence was Daubenton, the Justice of the Peace; and as he had unfortunately been a principal agent in the catastrophe, he felt that nothing could appease his remorse but the reintegration of the victim's fame—a tardy, but, as regarded his family, most important reparation; and as this could only be effected by the arrest of the other three criminals named by Couriol, he resolved never to relax his exertions, till he laid his hands upon them. It would fill a volume to recount the means he used to effect his object; we can only here detail the result of his self-imposed and meritorious labours.

Two years had elapsed since the death of Lesurques, before Daubenton discovered the slightest indications of what he sought ; but at the end of that time, he found in the police reports, which day and night were brought to him, the name of Durochat. This was the man who, under the name of Laborde, had travelled with the courier, and he was now in the prison of St. Pélagie for a robbery. There was no difficulty in identifying him ; and, accompanied by Daubenton, four gendarmes, and a constable, he was conveyed to Versailles to be examined. On the road, he expressed a wish to breakfast, alleging that he had had nothing to eat since his arrest on the previous day. They accordingly stopt at a small public-house, and there Durochat requested a private interview with the magistrate. The constable pointed out the danger of trusting himself alone with such a confirmed villain ; but Daubenton, bent on ob-

taining the justification of Lesurques, ordered breakfast to be served for himself and the prisoner in a private room. They seated themselves opposite each other, and Daubenton took up a knife to open an egg; it was the only one on the table, the constable having cautioned the maid who waited not to put down a second.

“You are afraid of me,” said Durochat to the magistrate, looking hard at him; “you arm yourself already.”

“Take the knife,” said Daubenton, handing it to him. “Cut yourself a slice of bread, and tell me what you know of the affair of the Lyons’ courier.”

He had taken the right way. Durochat savagely clutched the knife; but in a moment more he stood up, and laid it on the table.

“You are a brave man, citizen!” said he, “and I am a lost one. You shall know all.”

Whereupon he made a full confession, confirming in every particular the account given by Couriol. He had himself fled on the first alarm, and the name of Lesurques he had never heard till after his execution. It was Dubosque that had repaired his spur at Mongeron—Dubosque that had forgotten his sword at Lieursaint.

Some time elapsed before the other three were taken, but finally the exertions of Daubenton were crowned with success : Vidal, Dubosque, and Rossi, were arrested, and paid the penalty of their crimes. The confessions of Durochat and Rossi coincided entirely with that of Couriol ; Vidal and Dubosque denied to the last, though no doubt remained of their guilt. A light wig, such as he had worn on the fatal day, being placed on the head of Dubosque, the resemblance betwixt him and Lesurques became so remarkable, as perfectly to account for the unfortunate error of the witnesses, who had

also been led by a certain similarity of feature to mistake Guesno for Vidal.

The innocence of Joseph Lesurques was thus made manifest to all the world ; nobody could doubt it ; and his family seemed naturally entitled to the restoration of their property, and such a full and perfect vindication of his fame as a revision of his sentence alone could afford. And for these, we will not say favours, but sacred rights, they have never ceased to supplicate, backed by the support and assistance of several eminent jurists ; whilst the good magistrate, Daubenton, devoted not only the latter years of his life, but a considerable part of his fortune, to the promotion of their suit. But, alas ! without success—the verdict of a French jury cannot be revised !

In 1842 died the widow of Lesurques, leaving a son and daughter, from whom, on her death-bed, she required a promise that they would never relax in those duties to

their father's memory to which she had devoted her life. Her eldest son had fallen, some years before, in the service of his country. During the reigns of Louis XVIII. and Charles X., a part of the property of this unfortunate family was restored to them—not as a *restitution*, however, but as a *favour* !

Never was there a more lamentable verification of the maxim, *summum jus summa injuria*, than is afforded by the story of Joseph Lesurques. Man is too fallible a being to venture on irrevocable statutes. We are the subjects of the law ; but justice and mercy are the laws of God, and to these all human institutions must yield precedence.

### III.

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#### THE PRIEST OF ST. QUENTIN.

It is in the annals of the doings and sufferings of the good and brave spirits of the earth that we should learn our lessons. It is by these that our hearts are mellowed, our minds exalted, and our souls nerved to go and do likewise. But there are occasionally circumstances connected with the history of great crimes that render them the most impressive of homilies; fitting them to be set aloft as beacons to warn away the frail mortal,

tossed on the tempest of his passions, from the destruction that awaits him if he pursues his course ; and such instruction we hold may be best derived from those cases in which the subsequent feelings of a criminal are disclosed to us ; those cases, in short, in which the chastisement proceeds from within instead of from without ; that chastisement that no cunning concealment, no legal subtlety, no eloquent counsel, no indulgent judge, can avert ; but which, do what we will, fly where we may, “*Monte en croupe et gallope avec nous.*” It is because we think the history of Antoine Mingrat affords such a lesson, that we propose presenting it to the reader.

In the year 1822, a young priest bearing the above appellation, was inducted into the cure of a small village called St. Quentin, situated on the borders of Piedmont. He was about eight-and-twenty years of age ; tall, stout, and gifted with uncommon bodily strength. But his countenance was not



pleasing ; his complexion was sallow, his eye malicious, his smile treacherous ; so at least it was said after the events we are about to detail had occurred, when people were willing to vindicate their own discernment by the earliness of their adverse impressions. He was, moreover, a rigid pastor ; zealous overmuch ; reproving harshly, inflicting severe penances, and magnifying small faults into great sins. He forbade his parishioners all sorts of innocent pleasures as strictly as mischievous ones, and dancing and singing were as much proscribed at St. Quentin as drinking and gambling. The fact was, he was extremely ambitious, and, not possessing those qualities that were likely to recommend him to the notice of his superiors, he sought to win their favour by his burning zeal and exemplary rigour.

It may be easily conceived that Antoine Mingrat was not much beloved by his flock ; but at that period the Church was all-power-

ful, and out of Paris no one dared to raise his voice against her members, so that whatever may have been thought, except in confidential whispers, no murmurs were heard against the pastor of St. Quentin.

About a quarter of an hour's walk from the church there resided a retired soldier, named Stephen Charnelot, with his beautiful wife Marie Guérin. He was the possessor of a small bit of land, and passed his days in peace and contentment with Marie, who was as pious and prudent as she was beautiful. Her only fault was, that where religion was concerned, she did not allow herself the exercise of her judgment; her piety amounted to fanaticism, and every priest, in her eyes, was a saint. Antoine Mingrat was her confessor, and the pastor of her parish; and it is not to be doubted that her extraordinary beauty had inspired him with a criminal passion, although we have neither witnesses nor proofs to establish the fact, the evidence

in this case being purely circumstantial, though of a very decisive, as well as singular character.

On the 8th of May, 1822, several young persons in the adjoining parish of Veuray were to receive their first communion, and Marie, who was a constant attendant at all the religious festivals in the neighbourhood, announced her intention of being present. Mingrat, hearing of this, made it the pretext of a visit to her. He had a letter for the minister there, which he requested her to take charge of. He had not, however, brought it with him, but promised to have it ready by the evening when she came to confession. On the same afternoon she was seen to leave the village for this purpose, having requested her friends, when her husband came home, to tell him whither she was gone. Poor Marie never returned to her happy home, and, after one other momentary glimpse of her, we see her alive no more.

We learn from Madame St. Michel, a lady of great respectability, who happened to be at her devotions in the Church of St. Quentin, about five o'clock on that afternoon, that she saw Marie Charnelot enter and throw herself on her knees before the confessional, whilst at the same moment she perceived a strange figure in black, apparently without either arms or legs, and with some singular headgear, glide behind the altar. Alarmed at the phantom, she tried to draw Marie's attention to it; but the latter was too deeply absorbed in her devotions to heed her; and when Madame St. Michel looked again the spectre had disappeared. The circumstance seems, however, to have so far terrified the old lady, that she immediately quitted the church. There can be no doubt that the phantom was Mingrat, though the motive of his assuming the disguise does not appear; neither do we know what further occurred in the church, except that she must have been

induced to accompany him to his house, which was close at hand, probably for the purpose of receiving the letter for the minister of Veuray. No one, however, saw her enter. The priest kept but one maid, a simple, honest, young creature, who was also very devout, and standing in great awe of her master.

The first indications we gather that a crime had been committed, are from the evidence of this girl, extracted from her, for reasons which will be hereafter explained, with great difficulty. Somewhere betwixt the hour of five and the closing in of the evening, she thought she heard suppressed sighs proceeding from a back room of the parsonage, but these sounds she did not investigate further. Later, came the sacristan, to ask if he should ring in the mass for the dead, and then the girl knocked at the door of the parlour where she supposed her master to be, in order to make the inquiry. There

being no answer, she ascended the stairs to his chamber, where at first she was not more successful, although she heard heavy sighs from within, as of one very sick or in the agonies of death. She tried to lift the latch, but the door was fast, and, alarmed, she knocked vehemently. Then the priest spoke, and in a loud voice bade her go below and he would follow her immediately. She went, but she had scarcely reached the bottom of the stairs when he appeared at the top, inquiring who wanted him. On learning what the sacristan sought, he answered decidedly *no*; and then retreating into his chamber, closed the door behind him.

There was something in this that seems to have awakened the girl's curiosity as well as her fears, so she crept softly up the stairs and listened at the door—she heard still the sighs and groans—then there was a shaking of the bed—then the groans ceased, and there was silence. Pale and trembling she went below.

By-and-by the priest came down, evidently much disturbed. She told him she had been frightened; she thought he had been dying in the chamber above. He bade her hold her tongue, called her a fool, and ordered her to take the newspaper to Monsieur Huddard, with his compliments. But curiosity was stronger than obedience. She took the paper, but instead of going to the neighbour's with it, she went round the church and came again to the portal. She could now hear nothing; but she saw a light in the upper room, and tried to climb to the window; but she could not do this without making some noise—instantly the light was extinguished, and she heard the priest descending the stairs. Presently he opened the door, and stepping out cried: "Who's there?" He had called several times before she had courage to speak; at length she answered, trembling: "It is I."



“What are you doing there?” he asked, in an angry tone.

“I was going to shut the door of the hen-coop,” she replied.

“That’s false!” said he. “You were here for some other purpose.”

She then returned into the kitchen to prepare the supper. When it was ready he seated himself, but he scarcely touched a morsel. After a few minutes, he started from the table, and bade her now convey the paper to Huddard. This time she went. When she returned, he conversed with her for some minutes, betraying, however, great inquietude. Then he ascended the stairs again, and shut himself into the mysterious chamber. The girl remained below, oppressed with fear and anxiety; what could be going on above? She took a book of devotion and tried to calm her mind by reading it; but in vain—she could not collect



her thoughts. Suddenly she was startled by a violent knocking at the door, but before she could reach it, the priest came down, and thrusting her aside, opened it himself. It was Charnelot, come to inquire for his wife; she had left home, saying she was going to confession, but had not returned. Mingrat had his answer ready. He said that he had seen her in the church, but that displeased with the unsuitableness of her attire, he had sent her home again. Nevertheless, his speech was not calm; he stammered and spoke thick; but no suspicion of the truth seems to have entered the husband's mind. He retired; and Mingrat, saying he would remove the supper things himself, sent away the maid, who did not sleep in the house, and then commenced the labours of that most awful night.

Not far from the church was an ascent, on the summit of which rose a wall of huge strangely-formed rock; at the foot of this

cliff flowed the river Isère. Mingrat's object appears to have been to convey the body of his victim thither, and throw it into the stream. With this view, he bound it hand and foot with cords, and let it down from the window; then he extinguished the light, and, descending himself by the stairs, he lifted it, and, partly by carrying and partly by dragging, he succeeded in conveying it to the top of the hill; but here he found a difficulty he had not reckoned on; great as was his strength, he could not raise the body over the rock.

This was an alarming discovery, for the night was short where there was so much to be done. It then occurred to him, that if he could separate the limbs from the trunk, he might more easily dispose of it; and he attempted this by means of his pocket-knife, and by some others which we will not detail; but all were inadequate.

And now imagine his situation! Let us

picture to ourselves the murderer as he stood on that lonely hill, scantily sprinkled with thorn-bushes and withered hazel-trees; battered by the storm, for the rain fell and the wind raged furiously on that awful night: before him, the steep ascent that he could not surmount; beside him, the body that he could not get rid of! Conceive his horror, his anguish, his despair! How little do we think, when each night we lay our heads calmly on our pillows, of the scenes that at that moment may be acting in different parts of the world! For myself, I could not, on hearing this fearful story, help endeavouring to recall the fearful drama; bringing back to my memory that May of 1822; contrasting situations—my peaceful chamber, my calm sleep, and my cheerful waking. I felt ready to fall upon my knees, and bless God that I had been exempted from such trials. Indeed, it is the melting of the heart that this tale produced on myself that has induced

me to relate it ; for such contemplations are very wholesome. Trembling whilst we rejoice, we learn the inestimable value of innocence ; and whilst humbly thankful for the past, we prepare to encounter the future, at once softened and strengthened, encouraged and reprovèd.

But to return to that lonely hill and the conflict there. What was to be done ? He must either carry the body round to the river by the public path, or return home and fetch a more efficient instrument. The time that either operation would absorb was terrific to think of. At length, he decided on the latter expedient, probably from the apprehension that passengers would be abroad upon the road before he could accomplish his task. So with rapid strides he made his way back to the manse, possessed himself of the kitchen hatchet, and returned to the hill. With the aid of this weapon he attained his object, and then succeeded in conveying the

mangled remains to the river ; leaving, as he believed, no traces of his own whereabouts, or of his victim's fate, except a handkerchief she had worn about her neck. This he hung on a thorn-bush near the water, in order to encourage the idea that she had destroyed herself.

The morning now began to dawn, but his night's work was scarcely half finished. How much must be done before the maid returned ! There were the murdered woman's clothes to be disposed of ; his own blood-besprinkled habiliments to be cleaned ; the hatchet to be polished. It was a sore labour, for still, toil as he would, some spot, some stain remained ! Her dress he burned, cutting it up into shreds, and then cutting again to make them small enough for hasty combustion ; but the very ashes were treacherous, and cried aloud against him. They were so red that he was obliged to mingle sand and earth amongst them to disguise

the colour. As for the hatchet, in his anguish he rubbed it so bright that its very lustre stood out as a testimony against him. It is surely one of the providences of God, that the stains of blood should be so difficult to efface !

But suddenly he pauses—his whole frame is relaxed—his visage, inflamed by the torture of his mind and his vehement labours, is overspread with a ghastly pallor—what is it that affrights him so ? Is there a noise without, or has he discerned some human eye watching him through an unguarded chink ? Why does he fling down the hatchet, and thrust his hands wildly into his pockets, and then rush frantically from the house ? *He has missed his pocket knife !* He must have left it behind him on the hill. Oh, the agony of that moment ! Away he strides again, this time in the broad light of day—but everything must be risked to recover such a damning evidence. He reaches the

summit—seeks it—looks here, looks there—under every bush, in every cleft—runs hither, thither—but in vain; the knife has disappeared. He dare linger no longer—he must return without it.

He reached the parsonage before the maid's arrival, and had it not been for her fanatical faith in his holy office, his demeanour must now have betrayed him. He met her now with confusion; addressed her with fury—"Where had she been? What had she seen? What did she think?" The poor girl, trembling, answered that she had seen nothing, understood nothing. She had only heard a sighing and groaning, and she fancied that her master was ill. He looked hard at her, uttered fearful threats that she could not comprehend, and commanded her to be silent on the peril of her life. So he left her and shut himself up in his chamber.

The girl seems at this crisis to have



suffered a severe conflict betwixt her uncertainty, terror, and amazement on the one hand ; and her sense of duty and allegiance to her master, together with her respect for his priesthood, and humble reverence for his office, on the other. That he, the ordained minister of God, the director of her soul, the keeper of her conscience—he who had authority to absolve her sins, and lend her wings for heaven—that he should do wrong, seemed so strange, so impossible !

Nevertheless, she could not close her eyes to what she saw ; why was the kitchen hearth heaped with ashes ? There must surely have been a large fire since she had last been there ! She swept them aside, and there appeared a half-burned wreath of flowers ; in the back yard, upon some straw, she perceived blood spots, and picked up a withered leaf of hazel ; there were no hazel-trees there, and the leaf was stained, and there was something adhering to it that made



her own blood freeze. She found a bit of the minister's cloak, too, and that was stained. What should she do? What ought she to do? She resolved she would leave him, and tell him of her determination immediately; then, be this fearful mystery what it might, she was free of it. So she turned to seek him, expecting to find him in his chamber or reading his breviary in the parlour, but she no sooner opened the kitchen door than he stood before her, more wild, more gloomy than before. When she saw him she durst not open her lips to speak, and was about to retreat when he sternly bade her go up stairs. This harshness rendered her desperate, and folding her hands, as in earnest prayer, she besought him to "let her go away, for she could bear it no longer."

What a thunderclap to Mingrat! The request told all. He was betrayed; his fatal secret, his life, his honour, were in the power

of this girl. He could not kill *her* too—the burthen of the blood he had spilt was too heavy upon him. That fearful night had already made another man of him. If the expression of his features had been before unpleasing, it had now become frightful; the anguish of his soul was imprinted on his countenance. His complexion, formerly sallow, was now purple, and that not on this day alone, but for the remaining eight days of his agony it continued so. His eyes stared wildly, his step was uncertain, he stammered in his speech, and could never sufficiently command himself to perform any office of the Church with decent composure.

Shaking like a leaf, the girl stood before him; whilst he, barring her way to the door, and holding her arm with a grasp of iron, his eyes fixed on the earth, deliberated what was to be done. Suddenly a resource presents itself. He is acquainted with her simplicity and scrupulous conscience, and hope awakes

once more. Still grasping her arm, he dragged her to the church—it was yet early morning, and no one was there to witness the scene—flung her on the steps of the altar, and gave her the choice at once to die or there swear to observe an inviolable secrecy on the events of that night. She consented to take the oath, and he held the crucifix upon her lips whilst she pronounced it.

The poor young creature seems to have thought that in making this vow she not only bound herself to silence, but also to the abstaining from every act which could possibly tend to the betrayal of her master. On this account she believed it to be her duty to remain with him. She therefore returned to the manse, and resumed her service, endeavouring to the best of her power to conceal her terror and agitation.

In the meanwhile, the disappearance of the beautiful Marie Charnelot was beginning to excite general attention, and her husband natu-

rally became extremely uneasy. Her having been seen to enter the village of St. Quentin, conjoined to her avowed intention of going to confession, inevitably connected Antoine Mingrat with the mystery ; but the people of the neighbourhood were extremely pious ; however unloveable a being their pastor was, he was a holy one in their eyes ; and if any vague suspicions arose in their minds they sought to suppress them. But of the awful crime committed no suspicion did arise ; the only idea that seems to have occurred—and this only to a few young men—was the possibility of an improper intimacy betwixt the priest and Marie. Incited by curiosity, two or three had agreed to watch his house on the night she was first missed. They seemed to have arrived during the few minutes he was at home seeking the kitchen hatchet. Little thought he, when he issued from his door with the fatal weapon under his cloak, of the eyes that were peering upon him from the

angle of a neighbouring wall. They, however, seeing no one come out but himself, grew weary of the frolic, and the increasing storm drove them away.

It happened that very early on that morning, a gentleman, named Michon, had occasion to visit a part of his property which was situated at a little distance from the village. His way lay across the hill, and, although the day was but dawning, it was light enough for him to perceive that the ground was stained with newly-shed blood. He stopt; some animal might have fallen a prey to the eagles! But no; here were traces of human intervention. Near at hand lay a bloody cord; farther, stuck in the earth, a pocket-knife with a black handle bearing the same fatal marks. He picked it up; but, overcome with horror, flung it from him into a bush, and hastily left the place. Presently, however, recollecting how important this instrument would be to the conviction of the assassin,

whoever he might be, he returned, and buried it in the earth. Thus, when Mingrat went back to seek it, it was no longer to be found.

It was an hour or more after this, though still early morning, that a butcher and his son, on their way to St. Quentin, had occasion to pass under the cliff. "See there, father," said the boy, with some alarm, "what is that man doing upon the hill?" The butcher looked, and with surprise perceived it was Antoine Mingrat the priest. His gestures, too, amazed them, for themselves unseen, they saw him distinctly; his eye wandered in all directions—he ran hastily from place to place—now stooped staring into a bush—then, upon his knees, seemed to be peering into the earth—then stood erect and glared wildly about him—and at length, with a frantic gesture of despair, fled down the hill.

The unsuspected witnesses of so strange a

scene were naturally desirous of knowing what it meant ; so, when the priest was gone, they ascended the hill, and there found enough to convince them that some fearful crime had been committed ; but whether the agitation of Mingrat arose from his being a party to it, or merely from his horror at the discovery of it, time alone could disclose. Meanwhile, he was their pastor ; if he were innocent, he would know what to do better than they ; if guilty, it might be dangerous to meddle with him. So they kept their own counsel, and said nothing of what they had seen.

But the excitement of the public continued to increase. The anxious husband, seeking his wife in all directions, and visiting the neighbouring villages, spread the intelligence. Their inhabitants, eager to investigate the mystery, flocked into St. Quentin ; the hill was covered with people.

By this time Marie's handkerchief being



found upon the thorn-bush, and blood stains traced as far as the river, a warm discussion arose as to whether she had drowned herself, after unsuccessfully attempting some other mode of death, or whether she had fallen by the hand of another. Mingrat, who, for appearance sake, had been obliged to accompany some of her friends to the scene of the murder, and was the unwilling auditor of the dispute, evinced the most violent anguish; wringing his hands and convulsively casting up his eyes to heaven. But man's eye as well as God's eye was upon him; there was in his whole appearance and demeanour something so unnatural, that in spite of their superstitious reverence for the Church, they began to suspect him; and now Michon came forward with the knife, and placed it in the hands of the magistrate. Charnelot declared it had not belonged to his wife. Was it the priest's? Still fettered by their veneration, they durst not ask him the ques-



tion ; so under pretence of an ordinary visit, the adjunct or substitute called on him, and adroitly led the conversation to the subject which then formed the theme of inquiry. Mingrat as adroitly changed it ; the adjunct brought it back again to Marie ; Mingrat said he was suffering extremely from the state of his blood, which was much disordered ; and, indeed, at the moment he spoke, his visitor describes his face to have been almost black ; gradually, the adjunct spoke of the knife—he wondered that Marie should have had recourse to such a weapon ; Mingrat, sitting with his eyes fixed upon the table before him, requested the loan of a certain work on geometry which the adjunct possessed ; the latter promised it and took his leave, confirmed in his suspicions. He knew that the priest had a copy of the book in his own library.

Meanwhile an aunt of Mingrat's, who had been absent on a journey, arrived at St.

Quentin, and learned the fatal rumour. Alarmed, she took the opportunity of the adjunct's visit to her nephew to call on his wife, and turning the conversation on the murder, she requested to see the knife ; the lady produced it. For some moments the poor woman remained motionless, staring at it with a fixed gaze of horror, then clasping her hands, she murmured, with quivering lips : " That then is the instrument of this dreadful crime !" Unable to utter another syllable, she rose and quitted the house.

Scarcely had the adjunct reached home when Mingrat himself arrived, under the pretext of fetching the book he wanted ; his real motive was supposed to be a faint hope of possessing himself of the knife. His conversation was confused and unconnected, whilst his eye wandered anxiously over the room. This visit produced a very unfavourable impression against him ; but still, always considering his office, there was

nothing that in the magistrate's opinion authorized him to lay hands on the priest. It was not till the remains of the poor victim were found in the river, by some boys who were fishing on its banks, that the higher authorities interfered, and despatched some *gensd'armes* to his house to keep him under *surveillance*. Mingrat now exerted himself to the utmost to appear composed, and to perform the various offices of the Church, from which, under the pretext of indisposition, he had since the murder excused himself; but his frightful complexion, his features distorted by anguish, and the blundering manner in which he stumbled through what was so familiar to him, only confirmed the now universal persuasion.

It was on the eighth day after the death of Marie Charnelot, whilst the *gensd'armes* were at table, that a stranger, evidently a priest, entered the room, and placing a letter

in Mingrat's hands, desired him instantly to read it, and then disappeared. The letter contained the following words : " You are covered with infamy by the rumours which connect you with that murdered woman. If you are guilty, fly instantly !" The priest was the Vicar of Toulon. Antoine Mingrat followed this advice ; intentionally or otherwise, the gend'armes allowed him to escape, and he fled across the mountains into Piedmont. The aunt also disappeared. It was with much difficulty that the poor maid was brought to confess what she knew ; her vow weighed heavily upon her ; and it was only under the influence of another confessor that she at length gave her evidence.

The guilt of Mingrat was now established, but he was beyond the reach of the law. The bereaved husband and a brother of Marie's went to Paris, and throwing themselves at the King's feet, demanded that the

criminal should be required of the Sardinian Government. But there were difficulties in the way of their satisfaction ; Mingrat was, however, seized and thrown into prison at Chambery. But the family and friends still thirsted for vengeance, and the process was continued till, at length, in 1828, the assassin was formally demanded of the Piedmontese. But this requisition only resulted in his removal to the strong fortress of Fenestrelle, from whence, it is supposed, he was transferred to a penitentiary. May he repent !

To this hour, the inhabitants of St. Quentin and its neighbourhood look with terror on the scene of this dreadful tragedy, never passing over the hill by night, and as rarely as they can by day.



#### IV.

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### ANTOINE DE CHAULIEU'S WEDDING-DAY.

ANTOINE DE CHAULIEU was the son of a poor gentleman of Normandy, with a long genealogy, a short rent-roll, and a large family. Jacques Rollet was the son of a brewer, who did not know who his grandfather was ; but he had a long purse, and only two children. As these youths flourished in the early days of liberty, equality, and fraternity, and were near neighbours, they natu-

rally hated each other. Their enmity commenced at school, where the delicate and refined De Chaulieu being the only *gentilhomme* amongst the scholars, was the favourite of the master (who was a bit of an aristocrat in his heart), although he was about the worst dressed boy in the establishment, and never had a sou to spend; whilst Jacques Rollet, sturdy and rough, with smart clothes and plenty of money, got flogged six days in the week, ostensibly for being stupid, and not learning his lessons—which, indeed, he did not—but, in reality, for constantly quarrelling with and insulting De Chaulieu, who had not strength to cope with him. When they left the academy, the feud continued in all its vigour, and was fostered by a thousand little circumstances, arising out of the state of the times, till a separation ensued, in consequence of an aunt of Antoine de Chaulieu's undertaking the expense of sending him to Paris to study



the law, and of maintaining him there during the necessary period.

With the progress of events, came some degree of reaction in favour of birth and nobility, and then Antoine, who had passed for the Bar, began to hold up his head, and endeavoured to push his fortunes ; but fate seemed against him. He felt certain that if he possessed any gift in the world, it was that of eloquence, but he could get no cause to plead ; and his aunt dying inopportunately, first his resources failed, and then his health. He had no sooner returned to his home, than, to complicate his difficulties completely, he fell in love with Mademoiselle Natalie de Bellefonds, who had just returned from Paris, where she had been completing her education. To expatiate on the perfections of Mademoiselle Natalie, would be a waste of ink and paper ; it is sufficient to say, that she really was a very charming girl, with a fortune which, though not large, would

have been a most desirable acquisition to De Chaulieu, who had nothing. Neither was the fair Natalie indisposed to listen to his addresses; but her father could not be expected to countenance the suit of a gentleman, however well-born, who had not a ten-sous piece in the world, and whose prospects were a blank.

Whilst the ambitious and love-sick young barrister was thus pining in unwelcome obscurity, his old acquaintance, Jacques Rollet, had been acquiring an undesirable notoriety. There was nothing really bad in Jacques' disposition, but having been bred up a democrat, with a hatred of the nobility, he could not easily accommodate his rough humour to treat them with civility when it was no longer safe to insult them. The liberties he allowed himself whenever circumstances brought him into contact with the higher classes of society, had led him into many scrapes, out of which his father's

money had one way or another released him ; but that source of safety had now failed. Old Rollet having been too busy with the affairs of the nation to attend to his business, had died insolvent, leaving his son with nothing but his own wits to help him out of future difficulties, and it was not long before their exercise was called for. Claudine Rollet, his sister, who was a very pretty girl, had attracted the attention of Mademoiselle de Bellefonds' brother, Alphonso; and as he paid her more attention than from such a quarter was agreeable to Jacques, the young men had had more than one quarrel on the subject, on which occasions they had each, characteristically, given vent to their enmity, the one in contemptuous monosyllables, and the other in a volley of insulting words. But Claudine had another lover more nearly of her own condition of life ; this was Claperon, the deputy-governor of the Rouen jail, with

whom she had made acquaintance during one or two compulsory visits paid by her brother to that functionary ; but Claudine, who was a bit of a coquette, though she did not altogether reject his suit, gave him little encouragement, so that betwixt hopes, and fears, and doubts, and jealousies, poor Claperon led a very uneasy kind of life.

Affairs had been for some time in this position, when, one fine morning, Alphonse de Bellefonds was not to be found in his chamber when his servant went to call him ; neither had his bed been slept in. He had been observed to go out rather late on the preceding evening, but whether or not he had returned, nobody could tell. He had not appeared at supper, but that was too ordinary an event to awaken suspicion ; and little alarm was excited till several hours had elapsed, when inquiries were instituted and a search commenced, which terminated in the

discovery of his body, a good deal mangled, lying at the bottom of a pond which had belonged to the old brewery.

Before any investigations had been made, every person had jumped to the conclusion that the young man had been murdered, and that Jacques Rollet was the assassin. There was a strong presumption in favour of that opinion, which further perquisitions tended to confirm. Only the day before, Jacques had been heard to threaten Monsieur de Bellefonds with speedy vengeance. On the fatal evening, Alphonse and Claudine had been seen together in the neighbourhood of the now dismantled brewery ; and as Jacques, betwixt poverty and democracy, was in bad odour with the prudent and respectable part of society, it was not easy for him to bring witnesses to character, or prove an unexceptionable *alibi*. As for the Bellefonds and De Chaulieus, and the aristocracy in general, they entertained no doubt of his guilt ; and finally, the

magistrates coming to the same opinion, Jacques Rollet was committed for trial at the next assizes, and as a testimony of goodwill, Antoine de Chaulieu was selected by the injured family to conduct the prosecution.

Here, at last, was the opportunity he had sighed for ! So interesting a case, too, furnishing such ample occasion for passion, pathos, indignation ! And how eminently fortunate that the speech which he set himself with ardour to prepare, would be delivered in the presence of the father and brother of his mistress, and perhaps of the lady herself ! The evidence against Jacques, it is true, was altogether presumptive ; there was no proof whatever that he had committed the crime ; and for his own part he stoutly denied it. But Antoine de Chaulieu entertained no doubt of his guilt, and the speech he composed was certainly well calculated to carry that conviction into the

bosom of others. It was of the highest importance to his own reputation that he should procure a verdict, and he confidently assured the afflicted and enraged family of the victim that their vengeance should be satisfied. Under these circumstances, could anything be more unwelcome than a piece of intelligence that was privately conveyed to him late on the evening before the trial was to come on, which tended strongly to exculpate the prisoner, without indicating any other person as the criminal! Here was an opportunity lost! The first step of the ladder on which he was to rise to fame, fortune, and a wife, was slipping from under his feet!

Of course, so interesting a trial was anticipated with great eagerness by the public, the court was crowded with all the beauty and fashion of Rouen, and amongst the rest, doubly interesting in her mourning, sat the fair Natalie, accompanied by her



family. The young advocate's heart beat high ; he felt himself inspired by the occasion ; and although Jacques Rollet persisted in asserting his innocence, founding his defence chiefly on circumstances which were strongly corroborated by the information that had reached De Chaulieu the preceding evening, — he was nevertheless convicted.

In spite of the very strong doubts he privately entertained respecting the justice of the verdict, even De Chaulieu himself, in the first flush of success, amidst a crowd of congratulating friends, and the approving smiles of his mistress, felt gratified and happy ; his speech had, for the time being, not only convinced others, but himself : warmed with his own eloquence, he believed what he said. But when the glow was over, and he found himself alone, he did not feel so comfortable. A latent doubt of Rollet's guilt now prest strongly on his mind, and he felt that the blood of the innocent would be on his head.



It is true there was yet time to save the life of the prisoner, but to admit Jacques innocent, was to take the glory out of his own speech, and turn the sting of his argument against himself. Besides, if he produced the witness who had secretly given him the information, he should be self-condemned, for he could not conceal that he had been aware of the circumstance before the trial.

Matters having gone so far, therefore, it was necessary that Jacques Rollet should die; so the affair took its course; and early one morning the guillotine was erected in the court-yard of the gaol, three criminals ascended the scaffold, and three heads fell into the basket, which were presently afterwards, with the trunks that had been attached to them, buried in a corner of the cemetery.

Antoine de Chaulieu was now fairly started in his career, and his success was as rapid as the first step towards it had been tardy. He took a pretty apartment in the Hôtel Mar-

bœuf, Rue Grange-Batelière, and in a short time was looked upon as one of the most rising young advocates in Paris. His success in one line brought him success in another ; he was soon a favourite in society, and an object of interest to speculating mothers ; but his affections, still adhered to his old love, Natalie de Bellefonds, whose family now gave their assent to the match—at least prospectively—a circumstance which furnished such an additional incentive to his exertions, that in about two years from the date of his first brilliant speech, he was in a sufficiently flourishing condition to offer the young lady a suitable home. In anticipation of the happy event, he engaged and furnished a suite of apartments in the Rue du Helder ; and, as it was necessary that the bride should come to Paris to provide her trousseau, it was agreed that the wedding should take place there, instead of at Bellefonds', as had been first projected, an arrangement the more desirable,

that a press of business rendered Monsieur de Chaulieu's absence from Paris inconvenient.

Brides and bridegrooms in France, except of the very high classes, are not much in the habit of making those honeymoon excursions so universal in this country. A day spent in visiting Versailles, or St. Cloud, or even the public places of the city, is generally all that precedes the settling down into the habits of daily life. In the present instance, St. Denis was selected, from the circumstance of Natalie's having a younger sister at school there, and also because she had a particular desire to see the Abbey.

The wedding was to take place on a Thursday ; and on the Wednesday evening, having spent some hours most agreeably with Natalie, Antoine de Chaulieu returned to spend his last night in his bachelor apartments. His wardrobe and other small possessions had already been packed up, and sent to his future home ; and there was nothing left in

his room now, but his new wedding suit, which he inspected with considerable satisfaction before he undressed and lay down to sleep. Sleep, however, was somewhat slow to visit him, and the clock had struck one before he closed his eyes. When he opened them again, it was broad daylight; and his first thought was, had he overslept himself? He sat up in bed to look at the clock, which was exactly opposite; and as he did so, in the large mirror over the fireplace, he perceived a figure standing behind him. As the dilated eyes met his own, he saw it was the face of Jacques Rollet. Overcome with horror, he sank back on his pillow, and it was some minutes before he ventured to look again in that direction; when he did so, the figure had disappeared.

The sudden revulsion of feeling such a vision was calculated to occasion in a man elate with joy, may be conceived! For some time after the death of his former foe, he had

been visited by not unfrequent twinges of conscience ; but of late, borne along by success, and the hurry of Parisian life, these unpleasant remembrances had grown rarer, till at length they had faded away altogether. Nothing had been further from his thoughts than Jacques Rollet, when he closed his eyes on the preceding night, nor when he opened them to that sun which was to shine on what he expected to be the happiest day of his life ! Where were the high-strung nerves now ! the elastic frame ! the bounding heart !

Heavily and slowly he arose from his bed, for it was time to do so ; and with a trembling hand and quivering knees, he went through the processes of the toilet, gashing his cheek with the razor, and spilling the water over his well-polished boots. When he was dressed, scarcely venturing to cast a glance in the mirror as he passed it, he quitted the room, and descended the stairs,

taking the key of the door with him, for the purpose of leaving it with the porter ; the man, however, being absent, he laid it on the table in his lodge, and with a relaxed and languid step he proceeded to the carriage, which quickly conveyed him to the church, where he was met by Natalie and her friends. How difficult it was now to look happy, with that pallid face and extinguished eye !

“ How pale you are ! Has anything happened ? You are surely ill ? ” were the exclamations that assailed him on all sides. He tried to carry the thing off as well as he could, but he felt that the movements he would have wished to appear alert were only convulsive, and that the smiles with which he attempted to relax his features were but distorted grimaces. However, the church was not the place for further inquiries ; and whilst Natalie gently pressed his hand in token of sympathy, they advanced to the altar, and the ceremony was performed ;

after which, they stepped into the carriages waiting at the door, and drove to the apartments of Madame de Bellefonds, where an elegant *déjeuner* was prepared.

“What ails you, my dear husband?” inquired Natalie, as soon as they were alone.

“Nothing, love,” he replied; “nothing, I assure you, but a restless night and a little overwork, in order that I might have to-day free to enjoy my happiness!”

“Are you quite sure? Is there nothing else?”

“Nothing, indeed; and pray don’t take notice of it: it only makes me worse!”

Natalie was not deceived, but she saw that what he said was true—notice made him worse; so she contented herself with observing him quietly, and saying nothing; but, as he *felt* she was observing him, she might



almost better have spoken ; words are often less embarrassing things than too curious eyes.

When they reached Madame de Bellefonds' he had the same sort of questioning and scrutiny to undergo, till he grew quite impatient under it, and betrayed a degree of temper altogether unusual with him. Then everybody looked astonished ; some whispered their remarks, and others expressed them by their wondering eyes, till his brow knit, and his pallid cheeks became flushed with anger. Neither could he divert attention by eating ; his parched mouth would not allow him to swallow anything but liquids, of which, however, he indulged in copious libations ; and it was an exceeding relief to him when the carriage which was to convey them to St. Denis, being announced, furnished an excuse for hastily leaving the table. Looking at his watch he declared it was late ; and



Natalie, who saw how eager he was to be gone, threw her shawl over her shoulders, and bidding her friends *good morning*, they hurried away.

It was a fine sunny day in June; and as they drove along the crowded boulevards, and through the Porte St. Denis, the young bride and bridegroom, to avoid each other's eyes, affected to be gazing out of the windows; but when they reached that part of the road where there was nothing but trees on each side, they felt it necessary to draw in their heads, and make an attempt at conversation.

De Chaulieu put his arm round his wife's waist, and tried to rouse himself from his depression; but it had by this time so reacted upon her, that she could not respond to his efforts; and thus the conversation languished, till both felt glad when they reached their destination, which would, at

all events, furnish them something to talk about.

Having quitted the carriage, and ordered a dinner at the Hôtel de l'Abbaye, the young couple proceeded to visit Mademoiselle Hortense de Bellefonds, who was overjoyed to see her sister and new brother-in-law, and doubly so when she found that they had obtained permission to take her out to spend the afternoon with them. As there is little to be seen at St. Denis but the Abbey, on quitting that part of it devoted to education, they proceeded to visit the church, with its various objects of interest; and as De Chaulieu's thoughts were now forced into another direction, his cheerfulness began insensibly to return. Natalie looked so beautiful, too, and the affection betwixt the two young sisters was so pleasant to behold! And they spent a couple of hours wandering about with Hortense, who was almost as well informed

as the Suisse, till the brazen doors were open which admitted them to the Royal vault. Satisfied, at length, with what they had seen, they began to think of returning to the inn, the more especially as De Chaulieu, who had not eaten a morsel of food since the previous evening, confessed to being hungry ; so they directed their steps to the door, lingering here and there as they went, to inspect a monument or a painting, when, happening to turn his head aside to see if his wife, who had stopt to take a last look at the tomb of King Dagobert, was following, he beheld with horror the face of Jacques Rollet appearing from behind a column ! At the same instant, his wife joined him, and took his arm, inquiring if he was not very much delighted with what he had seen. He attempted to say yes, but the word died on his lips ; and staggering out of the door, he alleged that a sudden faintness had overcome him.

They conducted him to the Hôtel, but Natalie now became seriously alarmed ; and well she might. His complexion looked ghastly, his limbs shook, and his features bore an expression of indescribable horror and anguish. What could be the meaning of so extraordinary a change in the gay, witty, prosperous De Chaulieu, who, till that morning, seemed not to have a care in the world ? For, plead illness as he might, she felt certain, from the expression of his features, that his sufferings were not of the body but of the mind ; and unable to imagine any reason for such extraordinary manifestations, of which she had never before seen a symptom, but a sudden aversion to herself, and regret for the step he had taken, her pride took the alarm, and, concealing the distress she really felt, she began to assume a haughty and reserved manner towards him, which he naturally interpreted into an evidence of

anger and contempt. The dinner was placed upon the table, but De Chaulieu's appetite of which he had lately boasted, was quite gone, nor was his wife better able to eat. The young sister alone did justice to the repast; but although the bridegroom could not eat, he could swallow champagne in such copious draughts, that ere long the terror and remorse that the apparition of Jacques Rollet had awakened in his breast were drowned in intoxication. Amazed and indignant, poor Natalie sat silently observing this elect of her heart, till overcome with disappointment and grief, she quitted the room, with her sister, and retired to another apartment, where she gave free vent to her feelings in tears.

After passing a couple of hours in confidences and lamentations, they recollected that the hours of liberty, granted as an especial favour to Mademoiselle Hortense, had ex-

pired: but ashamed to exhibit her husband in his present condition to the eyes of strangers, Natalie prepared to re-conduct her to the *Maison Royale* herself. Looking into the dining-room as they passed, they saw De Chaulieu lying on a sofa fast asleep, in which state he continued when his wife returned. At length, however, the driver of their carriage begged to know if Monsieur and Madame were ready to return to Paris, and it became necessary to arouse him.

The transitory effects of the champagne had now subsided; but when De Chaulieu recollected what had happened, nothing could exceed his shame and mortification. So engrossing indeed were these sensations that they quite overpowered his previous ones, and, in his present vexation, he, for the moment, forgot his fears. He knelt at his wife's feet, begged her pardon a thousand

times, swore that he adored her, and declared that the illness and the effect of the wine had been purely the consequences of fasting and over-work. It was not the easiest thing in the world to reassure a woman whose pride, affection, and taste, had been so severely wounded; but Natalie tried to believe, or to appear to do so, and a sort of reconciliation ensued, not quite sincere on the part of the wife, and very humbling on the part of the husband. Under these circumstances it was impossible that he should recover his spirits or facility of manner; his gaiety was forced, his tenderness constrained; his heart was heavy within him; and ever and anon the source whence all this disappointment and woe had sprung would recur to his perplexed and tortured mind.

Thus mutually pained and distrustful, they returned to Paris, which they reached about



nine o'clock. In spite of her depression, Natalie, who had not seen her new apartments, felt some curiosity about them, whilst De Chaulieu anticipated a triumph in exhibiting the elegant home he had prepared for her. With some alacrity, therefore, they stepped out of the carriage, the gates of the Hôtel were thrown open, the *concierge* rang the bell which announced to the servants that their master and mistress had arrived, and whilst these domestics appeared above, holding lights over the balusters, Natalie, followed by her husband, ascended the stairs. But when they reached the landing-place of the first flight, they saw the figure of a man standing in a corner as if to make way for them; the flash from above fell upon his face, and again Antoine de Chaulieu recognised the features of Jacques Rollet!

From the circumstance of his wife's pre-



ceding him, the figure was not observed by De Chaulieu till he was lifting his foot to place it on the top stair: the sudden shock caused him to miss the step, and, without uttering a sound, he fell back, and never stopped till he reached the stones at the bottom. The screams of Natalie brought the *concierge* from below and the maids from above, and an attempt was made to raise the unfortunate man from the ground; but with cries of anguish he besought them to desist.

“ Let me,” he said, “ die here! O God! what a fearful vengeance is thine! Natalie, Natalie!” he exclaimed to his wife, who was kneeling beside him, “ to win fame, and fortune, and yourself, I committed a dreadful crime! With lying words I argued away the life of a fellow-creature, whom, whilst I uttered them, I half believed to be innocent; and now, when I have attained all I desired, and reached

the summit of my hopes, the Almighty has sent him back upon the earth to blast me with the sight. Three times this day—three times this day! Again! again! again!”—and as he spoke, his wild and dilated eyes fixed themselves on one of the individuals that surrounded him.

“He is delirious,” said they.

“No!” said the stranger. “What he says is true enough—at least in part;” and, bending over the expiring man, he added: “May Heaven forgive you, Antoine de Chaulieu! I am no apparition, but the veritable Jacques Rollet, who was saved by one who well knew my innocence. I may name him, for he is beyond the reach of the law now: it was Claperon, the gaoler, who, in a fit of jealousy, had himself killed Alphonse de Bellefond.”

“But—but there were three!” gasped Antoine.

“Yes; a miserable idiot, who had been so

long in confinement for a murder that he was forgotten by the authorities, was substituted for me. Immediately after the execution, Claperon resigned his situation, and fled to America, and I have been a vagabond on the face of the earth ever since that time. At length I obtained, through the assistance of my sister, the situation of *concierger* in the Hôtel Marbœuf, in the Rue Grange-Batelière. I entered on my new place yesterday evening, and was desired to awaken the gentleman on the third floor at seven o'clock. When I entered the room to do so, you were asleep, but before I had time to speak you awoke, and I recognised your features in the glass. Knowing that I could not vindicate my innocence if you chose to seize me, I fled, and seeing an omnibus starting for St. Denis, I got on it with a vague idea of getting on to Calais, and crossing the Channel to England. But having only a franc or two in my pocket,

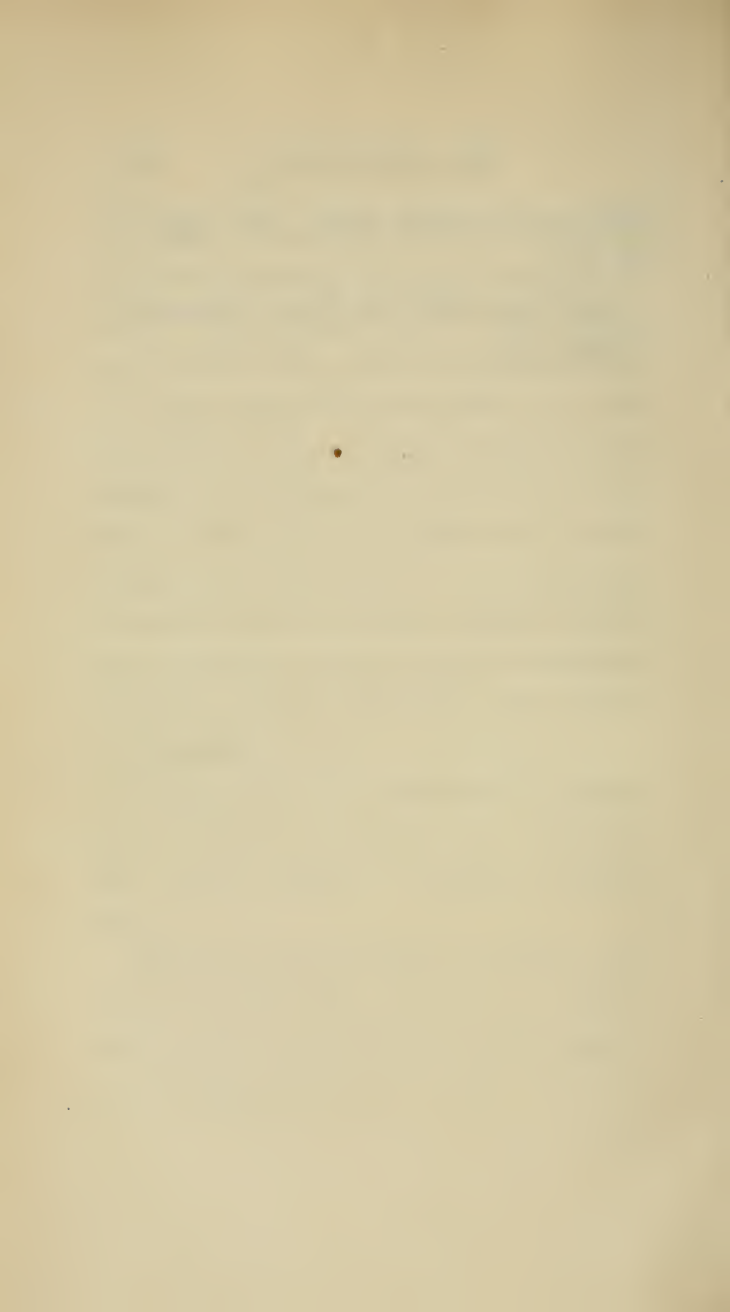
or, indeed, in the world, I did not know how to procure the means of going forward ; and whilst I was lounging about the place, forming first one plan, and then another, I saw you in the church, and, concluding you were in pursuit of me, I thought the best way of eluding your vigilance was to make my way back to Paris as fast as I could ; so I set off instantly, and walked all the way ; but having no money to pay my night's lodging, I came here to borrow a couple of livres of my sister Claudine, who is, a *brodeuse*, and resides *au cinquième*."

"Thank Heaven !" exclaimed the dying man, "that sin is off my soul ! Natalie, dear wife, farewell ! Forgive, — forgive all !"

These were the last words he uttered ; the priest, who had been summoned in haste, held up the cross before his failing sight ; a few strong convulsions shook the poor

bruised and mangled frame, and then all was still.

And thus ended the Young Advocate's Wedding Day.



## V.

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# THE MONK'S STORY.

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## CHAPTER I.

ONE evening on which a merry Christmas party was assembled in an hospitable country mansion in the north of England, one of the company, a young man named Charles Lisle, called the host aside, as they were standing in the drawing-room before dinner, and whispered, "I say, Graham, I wish you'd put me into a room that has either a bolt or a key."

“They have all keys, or should have,” returned Mr. Graham.

“The key of my room is lost,” returned the other. “I asked the housemaid. It is always the first thing I look to when I enter a strange bed-chamber. I can’t sleep unless the door is locked.”

“How very odd! I never locked my door in my life,” said Mr. Graham. “I say, Letitia,” continued he, addressing his wife, “here’s Charlie Lisle can’t sleep unless his door’s locked, and the room you’ve put him into has no key.”

At this announcement all the ladies looked with surprise at Charlie Lisle, and all the gentlemen laughed; and “how odd!” and “what a strange fancy!” was echoed among them.

“I daresay you think it very odd, and indeed it must appear rather a lady-like particularity,” responded Lisle, who was a fine active young man, and did not look as if he



were much troubled with superfluous fears ; “ but a circumstance that occurred to me when I was on the continent last summer has given me a nervous horror of sleeping in a room with an unlocked door, and I have never been able to overcome it. This is perhaps owing to my having been ill at the time, and I can scarcely say I have recovered from the effects of that illness yet.”

Naturally, everybody wanted to hear what this adventure was—the programme being certainly exciting—and so one of the visitors offered to exchange rooms with Charlie Lisle, provided he would tell them his story ; which accordingly, when assembled round the fire in the evening, he began in the following words :—

“ You must know, then, that last year, when I was wandering over the continent partly in search of the picturesque, and partly to remedy the effects of too much study, or

rather too hasty study—for I believe a man may study as much as he pleases, if he will only take it easy, as the Irish say—I was surprised one evening by a violent storm of hail, and it became so suddenly dark, that I could scarcely see my horse's head. I had twelve miles to go to the town at which I intended to pass the night, and I knew that there was no desirable shelter nearer, unless I chose to throw myself on the hospitality of the monastery of Pierre Châtel, which lay embosomed amongst the hills a little to the east of the road I was travelling. There is something romantic and interesting in a residence at a convent, but of that I need not now say anything. After a short mental debate, I resolved to present myself at the convent gate, and ask them to give me a night's shelter. So I turned off the road, and rang the heavy bell, which was answered by a burly, rosy-cheeked lay brother, and he

forthwith conducted me to the Prior, who was called the Père Jolivet. He received me very kindly, and we chatted away for some time on politics and the affairs of the world; and when the brothers were summoned to the refectory, I begged leave to join them, and share their simple repast, instead of eating the solitary supper prepared for me.

“ There were two tables in the hall, and I was seated next the Prior, in a situation that gave me a pretty good view of the whole company; and as I cast my eyes round to take a survey of the various countenances, they were suddenly arrested by one that struck me as about the most remarkable I had ever beheld. From the height of its owner as he sat, I judged he must be a very tall man, and the high round shoulders gave an idea of great physical strength; though at the same time the whole mass seemed composed of bone, for there was very little

muscle to cover it. The colour of his great coarse face was of an unnatural whiteness, and the rigid immobility of his features favoured the idea that the man was more dead than alive. There was altogether something so remarkable in his looks, that I could with difficulty turn my eyes from him. My fixed gaze, I imagine, roused some emotions within him, for he returned my scrutiny with a determined and terrific glare. If I forced myself to turn away my head for a moment, round it would come again, and there were his two great mysterious eyes upon me; and that stiff jaw, slowly and mechanically moving from side to side, as he ate his supper, like something acted on by a pendulum. It was really dreadful: we seemed both bewitched to stare at each other; and I longed for the signal to rise, that I might be released from the strange fascination. This came at length; and<sup>]</sup> though I had

promised myself to make some inquiries of the Prior concerning the owner of the eyes, yet not finding myself alone with him during the evening, I forbore, and in due time retired to my chamber, intending to proceed on my journey the following day. But when the morning came, I found myself very unwell, and the hospitable Prior recommended me not to leave my bed; and finally, I was obliged to remain there not only that day, but many days; in short, it was nearly a month before I was well enough to quit the convent.

“ In the meantime, however, I had learnt the story of Brother Lazarus, for so I found the object of my curiosity was called; and had thereby acquired some idea of the kind of influence he had exercised over me. The window of the little room I occupied looked into the burying-place of the monastery; and on the day I first left my bed, I perceived a

monk below digging a grave. He was stooping forward, with his spade in his hand, and with his back towards me; and as my room was a good way from the ground, and the brothers were all habited alike, I could not distinguish which of them it was.

“ ‘ You have a death amongst you ? ’ said I to the Prior when he visited me.

“ ‘ No,’ returned he; ‘ we have even no serious sickness at present.’

“ ‘ I see one of the brothers below, digging a grave,’ I replied.

“ ‘ Oh ! ’ said he, looking out, ‘ that is Brother Lazarus—he is digging his own grave.’

“ ‘ What an extraordinary fancy ! ’ said I. ‘ But perhaps it’s a penance ? ’

“ ‘ Not a penance imposed by me,’ replied the Prior, ‘ but by himself. Brother Lazarus is a very strange person. Perhaps you may have observed him at the refectory

—he sat nearly opposite you at the other table?’

“ ‘ Bless me ! is that he ? Oh, yes, I observed him indeed. Who could help observing him ? He has the most extraordinary countenance I ever beheld.’

“ ‘ Brother Lazarus is a somnambulist,’ returned the Prior ; ‘ a natural somnambulist ; and is altogether, as I said before, a very extraordinary character.’

“ ‘ What !’ said I, my curiosity being a good deal awakened, ‘ does he walk in his sleep ? I never saw a somnambulist before, and should like to hear some particulars about him, if you have no objection to tell them me.’

“ ‘ They are not desirable inmates, I assure you,’ answered the Prior. ‘ I could tell you some very odd adventures connected with this disease of Brother Lazarus.’

“ ‘ I should be very much obliged to you,

if you would,' said I, with no little eagerness.

“ ‘Somnambulists are sometimes subject to strange hallucinations,’ he replied ; ‘their dream is to them as real as our actual daily life is to us, and they not unfrequently act out the scenes of the drama with a terrible determination. I will just give you one instance of the danger that may accrue from a delusion of this nature. At the last monastery I inhabited, before I became Prior of Pierre Châtel, we had a monk who was known to be a somnambulist. He was a man of a sombre character and gloomy temperament ; but it was rather supposed that his melancholy proceeded from physical causes, than from any particular source of mental uneasiness. His nightly wanderings were very irregular: sometimes they were frequent, sometimes there were long intermissions. Occasionally he would leave his cell, and after being ab-



sent from it several hours, would return of his own accord, still fast asleep, and lay himself in his bed : at other times he would wander so far away, that we had to send in search of him ; and sometimes he would be met by the messengers on his way back, either awake or asleep, as it might happen.

“ ‘ This strange malady had caused us some anxiety, and we had not neglected to seek the best advice we could obtain with respect to its treatment ; and at length the remedies applied seemed to have taken effect ; the paroxysms became more rare, and the disease so far subsided, that it ceased to be a subject of observation amongst us. Several months had elapsed since I had heard anything of the nocturnal excursions of Brother Dominique, when one night that I had some business of importance in hand, instead of going to bed when the rest of the brotherhood retired to their cells, I seated myself at

my desk, for the purpose of reading and answering certain letters concerning the affair in question. I had been some time thus occupied, and had just finished my work, and had already locked my desk preparatory to going to bed, when I heard the closing of a distant door, and immediately afterwards a foot in the long gallery that separated my room from the cells of the brotherhood. What could be the matter? Somebody must be ill, and was coming to seek assistance; and I was confirmed in this persuasion when I perceived that the foot was approaching my door, the key of which I had not turned. In a moment more it opened, and Fra Dominique entered, asleep. His eyes were wide open, but there was evidently no speculation in them; they were fixed and glassy, like the eyes of a corpse. He had nothing on but the tunic which he was in the habit of wearing at night, and in his hand he held a

large knife. At this strange apparition I stood transfixed. From the cautious manner in which he had opened the door, and the stealthy pace with which he advanced into the room, I could not doubt that he was bent upon mischief; but aware of the dangerous effects that frequently result from the too sudden awakening of a sleep-walker, I thought it better to watch in silence the acting out of this fearful drama, than venture to disturb him. With all the precautions he would have used not to arouse me had he been awake, he moved towards the bed, and in so doing he had occasion to pass quite close to where I stood, and as the light of the lamps fell upon his face, I saw that his brows were knit, and his features contracted into an expression of resolute malignity. When he reached the bed, he bent over it, felt with his hand in the place where I should have been, and then, apparently satisfied, he lifted up his arm, and struck

successively three heavy blows—so heavy, that, having pierced the bed-clothes, the blade of the knife entered far into the mattress, or rather into the mat that served me for one. Suddenly, however, whilst his arm was raised for another blow, he started, and turning round, hastened towards the window, which he opened, and had it been large enough, I think would have thrown himself out. But finding the aperture too small, he changed his direction. Again he passed close to me, and I felt myself shrink back as he almost touched me with his tunic. The two lamps that stood on my table made no impression on his eyes; he opened and closed the door as before; and I heard him proceed rapidly along the gallery, and retire to his own cell. It would be vain to attempt to describe the amazement with which I had witnessed this terrible scene. I had been, as it were, the spectator of my own murder, and I was overcome by the horrors of this visionary

assassination. Grateful to Providence for the danger I had escaped, I yet could not brace my nerves to look at it with calmness, and I passed the remainder of the night in a state of painful agitation. On the following morning, as soon as breakfast was over, I summoned Fra Dominique to my room. As he entered, I saw his eye glance at the bed, which was now, however, covered by other linen, so that there were no traces visible of his nocturnal visit. His countenance was sad, but expressed no confusion, till I inquired what had been the subject of his dreams the preceding night. Then he started, and changed colour.

“Reverend father,” said he, “why do you ask me this?”

“Never mind,” said I; “I have my reasons.”

“I do not like to repeat my dream,” returned he; “it was too frightful; and I fear

that it must have been Satan himself that inspired it."

"Nevertheless let me hear it."

"Well, reverend father, if you will have it so, what I dreamt was this—but that you may the better comprehend my dream, I must give you a short sketch of the circumstances in which it originated."

"Do so," said I; "and that we may not be interrupted, I'll lock the door." So having turned the key, and bade him seat himself on a stool opposite me, I prepared to listen to the story of his life.

END OF VOL. II.

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# LIGHT AND DARKNESS;

OR,

## MYSTERIES OF LIFE.

BY

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

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## THE MONK'S STORY.

(CONTINUED.)

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### CHAPTER II.

“ I WAS a child,” said he, “ of eight years old when the event occurred in which my unhappy malady originated. My father had died, leaving my mother in tolerable circumstances and with two children, myself and a sister of marriageable years. This sister, as I have since understood, had become attached to an Italian stranger of very questionable character who had appeared in the

town we inhabited, under the character of an itinerant artist. My father had discovered the connexion, and had forbidden him the house ; but when he died, the stranger's influence prevailed over my mother's authority, and one morning Adèle was missing. As the Italian disappeared at the same time, no doubt was entertained that they had gone off together, and a few weeks confirmed these apprehensions. They came back, declaring themselves married, and petitioning my mother's forgiveness and assistance. She granted them both ; but finding her so easy to deal with, Ripa, the Italian, began to make such frequent demands upon her purse, and indulged in such violence when his drafts were not responded to, that she found it necessary to forbid him the house. I believe he had some talent, but he was idle and dissipated, and the habit of living upon us had so far augmented these vices, that he could no longer bring himself to work. The consequence

was, that he soon fell into distress, and, finding my mother, whose resolution was sustained by her brother, inexorable, he had recourse to more desperate means of supplying his necessities. Many evil reports were circulated about him, and, at length, so much suspicion was excited, that, to my mother's great relief, they quitted the place, and several months elapsed without any tidings of their proceedings reaching her.

“For my part, with the usual volatility of childhood, I had totally ceased to think either of Ripa or of my sister, of whom I had formerly been exceedingly fond, and I was wholly occupied with the prospect of going to school, a prospect which, as I had no companions of my own age at home, delighted me. My mother, on the contrary, suffered considerably from the idea of the impending separation ; and the last night I was to sleep under her roof, she took me to lie in her bed.

“ ‘ I cannot part with you to-night, my child ! ’ said she, as she kissed me, and led me to her chamber. ‘ You don’t know what parting is yet, Dominique. You think only of the playfellows you are going to ; you know not what you are about to lose ! ’

“ Little I dreamt of all I was going to lose, —nor she either.

“ I suppose I fell asleep directly, for I have no recollection of my mother’s coming to bed, nor of anything else, till I was awakened by the pressure of a heavy hand on my breast, and, by the faint light of a lantern which stood on a table, I discovered my brother-in-law, Ripa, the Italian, hanging over me. But it was not at me he was looking, but at my mother, who, fast asleep, was lying on the other side of the bed. An instinctive terror kept me silent and motionless ; and presently, having ascertained the position in which his victim was lying, he raised a large knife he held in his hand, and struck it repeatedly into

her breast. At the third blow, my horror and anguish overcame my fears, and I uttered a cry which seems first to have revealed to him my presence; or perhaps he did not know it was me, but was only startled by the sudden noise, for, as his purpose was undoubtedly robbery, I do not see why he should not have despatched so insignificant an obstacle, and fulfilled his intentions. However this may be, he took fright and fled, first to the window,—for he seemed to have lost all presence of mind,—but finding no egress there, he turned and retreated by the door.

“I was afraid he would return, and, almost dead with terror and grief, I lay still the rest of the night, without courage to rise, or to call the servant who slept in the kitchen. When she entered the room in the morning, she found my mother dead, and myself bathed in her blood. Ripa was pursued and taken, my testimony was fatal to him, and my poor sister died of a broken heart a few

months after he had expiated his crime on the scaffold.

“ A long and fearful malady was the consequence to me of this dreadful event, and I have ever since been subject to these dreams !”

“ What dreams ?” I asked.

“ ‘ Such as I had last night,’ he answered ; ‘ wherein I feel myself constrained to act over again the frightful scene I witnessed.’ ”

“ ‘ And pray,’ I inquired, ‘ do you select any particular person as your victim in those dreams ?’

“ ‘ Always.’

“ ‘ And what does this selection depend upon ? Is it enmity ?’

“ ‘ No,’ returned Dominique ; ‘ it is a peculiar influence that I cannot explain. Perhaps,’ added he, after some hesitation, ‘ you may have observed my eyes frequently fixed on you of late ?’ I remembered that I had observed this ; and he then told me that



whoever he looked at in that manner was the person he dreamt of.' ”

“Such,” said Charlie Lisle, “was the Prior’s account of this strange personage. I confess, when I had heard his explanation, I began to feel particularly queer, for I was already satisfied that Fra Dominique and Brother Lazarus were one and the same person ; and I perceived that I was in considerable danger of being the selected victim of his next dream ; and so I told Père Jolivet.

“Never fear,” said he ; “we lock him up every night, and have done so ever since my adventure. Added to which, he is now very unwell ; he was taken with a fit yesterday, and we have been obliged to bleed him.’

“ ‘ But he is digging there below,’ said I.

“ ‘ Yes,’ replied the Prior ; ‘ he has a notion he is going to die, and entreated permission to prepare his grave. It is, however, a mere fancy I daresay. He had the same notion during the indisposition that

succeeded the dream I have just related. I forgot to tell you, however, though you seem to have penetrated the secret, that this Fra Dominique changed his name to Lazarus when he accompanied me here, which he was allowed to do at his own urgent entreaty ; why, I cannot tell, but ever after that conversation, he seemed to have imbibed a strong attachment to me ; perhaps because I exhibited none of the distrust or aversion towards him which some persons might have been apt to entertain under the same circumstances.'

"A week after this I was informed that Brother Lazarus was dead," continued Lisle ; "and I confess I did not much regret his decease. I thought a man subject to such dangerous dreams was better out of the world than in it ; more especially as by all account he had no enjoyment in life. On the day I quitted the monastery, I saw from my window one of the brothers completing the already partly-made grave, and learnt that

he was to be buried that evening ; and as I descended the stairs, I passed some monks who were carrying his coffin to his cell. ‘Rest his soul!’ said I, as I buckled on my spurs ; and having heartily thanked the good prior for his hospitality, I mounted my horse and rode away.”

Here Charlie Lisle rang the bell and asked for a glass of water.

“Is that all?” inquired Lady Araminta.

“Not quite,” said Charlie ; “the sequel is to come. My visit to the monastery of Pierre Châtel had occurred in the month of June. During the ensuing months I travelled over a considerable part of the south of France ; and at length I crossed the Pyrenees, intending to proceed as far as Madrid, and winter there. Amongst the lions I had been recommended to visit was a monastery of Franciscans in the neighbourhood of Burgos, and I turned somewhat out of my road for the purpose of inspecting some

curious manuscripts which the monks were reputed to possess. It was in the month of October, and a bright moonlight night, when I rang the bell, and requested to see the Padre Pachorra, to whom I had letters of introduction. I found him a dark, grave, sombre-looking man, not very unlike my old friend Brother Lazarus; and although he received me civilly enough, there was something in his demeanour that affected my spirits. The whole air of the convent, too, was melancholy; convents, like other establishments, taking their tone very much from the character of their superiors.

“As the monks had already supped when I arrived, I was served with some refreshment in the parlour; and the whole internal arrangements here being exceedingly strict, I immediately afterwards retired to my chamber, firmly resolved to take my departure the next day. I am not in the habit of going to bed early, and when I do, I never can sleep.

By the time my usual sleeping hour is arrived, I have generally got so restless and nervous from lying awake, that slumber is banished altogether. Consequently, whenever I am under circumstances that oblige me to retire early to my room, I make a practice of reading till I find my eyelids heavy. But the dormitory assigned me in this Franciscan convent was so chilly, and the lamp gave so little light, that either remaining out of bed or reading in it was out of the question ; so I yielded to necessity, and stretched myself on Padre Pachorra's hard couch ; and a very hard one it was, I assure you. I was very cold too. There were not coverings enough on the bed to keep in my animal heat ; and although I spread my own clothes over me also, still I lay shivering in a very uncomfortable manner, and, I am afraid, uttering sundry harsh remarks on the Padre's niggardly hospitality.

“ In this agreeable occupation, as you may

suppose, the flight of time was somewhat of the slowest. I do not know how many hours I had been there, but I had begun to think it never would be morning, when I heard something stirring in the gallery outside my door. The silence of a convent at night is the silence of the grave. Too far removed from the busy world without for external sounds to penetrate the thick walls, whilst within no slamming door, nor wandering foot, nor sacrilegious voice breaks in upon the stillness, the slightest noise strikes upon the ear with a fearful distinctness. I had no shutters to my window, so that I was aware it was still pitch-dark without, though, within, the feeble light of my lamp enabled me to see a little about me. I knew that the inmates of monasteries not only rise before daylight, but also that they perform midnight masses, and so forth; but then I had always observed that on these occasions they were summoned by a bell. Now, there

was no bell ; on the contrary, all was still as death, except the cautious foot which seemed to be approaching my room. ‘ What on earth can it be ? ’ thought I, sitting up in bed with an indescribable feeling of apprehension. At that moment a hand was laid upon the latch of my door. I cannot tell why, but instinctively I jumped out of bed—the door opened, and in walked what appeared to me to be Brother Lazarus, exactly as the Prior of Pierre Châtel had described him to me on the occasion of his nocturnal visit to his chamber. His eyes were open, but glazed, as of one dead ; his face was of a ghastly paleness ; he had nothing on but the grey tunic in which he slept ; and in his hand he held a knife, such an one as was used by the monks to cut their large loaves with.

“ You may conceive my amazement,” continued Charlie Lisle, whilst amongst his auditors every eye was firmly riveted. “ I rubbed my eyes, and asked myself if I were



dreaming. Too surely I was awake—I had never even slumbered for an instant. Was I mad? I did not think I was; but certainly that was no proof to the contrary; and I almost began to doubt that Brother Lazarus was dead and buried on the other side of the Pyrenees. The Prior of Pierre Châtel had told me he was dead, and I had heard several others of the brotherhood alluding to his decease. I had seen his grave made ready, and I had passed his coffin as I descended to the hall; yet here he was in Spain, again rehearsing the frightful scene that Jolivet had described to me! Whilst all this was fleeting through my mind, I was standing *en chemise* betwixt the bed and the wall, on which side I had happened to leap out. In the meantime the apparition advanced with bare feet, and with the greatest caution, towards the other side of the bed; and as there were of course no curtains, I had a full view of his diabolical features, which appeared contracted



with rage and malignity. As Jolivet had described to me, he first felt the bed, as if to ascertain if I were there; and I confess I was frightened out of my senses lest he should discover that I was not, and possibly detect me where I was. What could I have done, unarmed, and in my shirt, against this preternatural-looking monster? And to wake him—provided always it was really Brother Lazarus, and not his double, a point about which I felt exceedingly uncertain—I had learnt from Jolivet was extremely perilous. However, he did not discover that the bed was empty—his dream no doubt supplying a visionary victim for the occasion—and raising his arm, he plunged the knife into the mattress with a fierce determination that convinced me I should have had very little chance of surviving the blow had I been where he imagined me. Again and again he struck, I looking on with a horror that words could but feebly paint; and then he

suddenly started — the uplifted arm was arrested—the pursuer was at hand: he first rushed to the window, and opened it, but being only a small lattice, there was no egress there, so he turned to the door, making his escape that way; and I could hear his foot distinctly flying along the gallery till he reached his own cell. By this time I was perfectly satisfied that it was no spirit I had seen, but the veritable Brother Lazarus, or Dominique, or whatever his name was—for he might have half a dozen *aliases* for aught I knew—though how he had contrived to come to life again, if he were dead, or by what means, or for what purpose, he could have persuaded the monks of Pierre Châtel of his decease, if the fact were not so, I could not conceive. There was no fastening to my door, and the first question that occurred to me was, whether this diabolical dream of his was ever repeated twice in one night. I had often heard that the magic

number of *three* is apt to prevail on these occasions ; and if so, he might come back again. I confess I was horridly afraid that he would. In the meantime I found myself shivering with cold, and was, perforce, obliged to creep into the bed, where indeed I was not much warmer. Sleep was of course out of the question. I lay listening anxiously, expecting either the stealthy foot of Brother Lazarus, or the glad sound of the matin bell, that would summon the monks from their cells, and wondering which I should hear first. Fortunately for my nerves it was the latter ; and with alacrity I jumped out of bed, dressed myself, and descended to the chapel.

“When I reached it, the monks were on their knees, and their cowls being over their heads, I could not, as I ran my eye over them, distinguish my friend the somnambulist ; but when they rose to their feet, his

tall gaunt figure and high shoulders were easily discernible, and I had identified him before I saw his face. As they passed out of the chapel, I drew near and saluted him, observing that I believed I had had the pleasure of seeing him before at Pierre Châtel; but he only shook his head, as if in token of denial; and as I could obtain no other answer to my further attempts at conversation, I left him, and proceeded to pay my respects to the prior. Of course I felt it my duty to mention my adventure of the previous night, for Brother Lazarus might on some occasion chance to act out his dream more effectually than he had had the opportunity of doing with me and Père Jolivet.

“ ‘I am extremely sorry indeed,’ said Padre Pachorra, when he had heard my story; ‘they must have omitted to lock him into his cell last night. I must speak about it,

for the consequences might have been very serious.'

" 'Very serious to me certainly,' said I. 'But how is it I see this man here alive? When I quitted Pierre Châtel I was told he was dead, and I saw the preparations for his burial.'

" 'They believed him dead,' returned the prior; 'but he was only in a trance; and after he was screwed down in his coffin, just as they were about to lower it into the grave, they felt something was moving within. They opened it, and Fra Dominique was found alive. It appeared, from his own account, that he had been suffering extremely from his dreadful dream, on occasion of the visit of some young stranger—an Englishman, I think.'

" 'Myself, I have no doubt,' said I.

" 'Probably,' returned the prior; 'and this was either the cause, or the consequence

of his illness, for it is difficult to decide which.'

" 'But how came he here?' I inquired.

" 'It was in this monastery he commenced his vocation,' answered the padre. 'He was only at Pierre Châtel by indulgence, and after this accident they did not wish to retain him.'

" 'I do not wonder at that, I am sure,' said I. "But why did he deny having been there? When I spoke of it to him just now, he only shook his head.'

" 'He did not mean to deny it, I daresay,' said the prior; "but he never speaks. Fra Dominique has taken a vow of eternal silence.' "

Here Charles Lisle brought his story to a conclusion. "How extremely shocking!" exclaimed Lady Araminta; whilst the whole company agreed that he had made out an

excellent excuse for wishing to sleep with his door locked, and that he had very satisfactorily entitled himself to the promised exchange.





# I.

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## THE POISONERS.

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### CHAPTER I.

WE have heard and read a great deal lately of Madame de Brinvilliers and the poisoners of the seventeenth century; but there have been some similar cases in the nineteenth, quite as extraordinary, though much less known; and amongst the most remarkable are those of Frau Gottfried, Madame Ursinus, and Margareta Zwanziger.

It is true, that at the former period, owing to the facilities furnished by La Voisin, there was a panic abroad that has never since been revived. No man in France, who had had a quarrel with his wife, or who had seen her smile with unusual tenderness on her lover, could go home very comfortably to his dinner, whilst he was aware that there existed a professional agent in Paris, who, for a moderate fee, would drop poison into his soup, with as much certainty and as little remorse as his cook dropped salt; and, doubtless, many a woman who was neither sufficiently bold nor sufficiently depraved to have administered the mortal draughts herself, was seduced into crime by this fatal facility. There was not, for example, a more contented couple in Paris than Monsieur and Madame Brunet, till Monsieur B., unfortunately captivated by the eloquent music of Philibert's flute, took it into his head that no remuneration could

be adequate to such merit but the hand of his own daughter, accompanied by a handsome dowry. Philibert did not care much for the young lady, whose attractions seem not to have been of the highest order; but her fortune was too large to be rejected; so he commenced a regular course of love, whilst the enamoured Monsieur Brunet, carried away by his enthusiasm, never ceased singing the praises of his future son-in-law. As such an alliance was in direct opposition to the aristocratic prejudices of that age, Madame Brunet did not like the match, till the extraordinary commendations of the husband opened the wife's eyes to the merits of Monsieur Philibert, and induced her to pay a visit to La Voisin, for the innocent purpose of ascertaining how soon the worthy Monsieur Brunet might be expected to exchange the troubles of this world for the rewards of a better. La Voisin said nothing that could alarm the most delicate mind—she only

smiled significantly ; and in a few weeks Madame Brunet was a buxom widow of forty, who found no difficulty in persuading the flute-player that she was a much more desirable wife than her pale, sickly daughter, who was easily disposed of in a cloister.

Philibert married the mother, and they lived together very happily for several years, and might possibly have done so till their deaths, had not Madame Brunet's name been unfortunately found on La Voisin's books. She was arrested, tried, and hanged. Even Philibert was suspected, and his friends advised him to fly ; but, relying on his good conscience, he refused ; and, after an investigation, was fully acquitted of any participation in, or knowledge of, the crime.

The executions of Madame de Brinvilliers and La Voisin took place in 1676 ; but the rage for husband-killing did not die with them, although the modes adopted for putting these obnoxious individuals out of

the world became more varied. So rife was the propensity, however, that when interest was made with Louis XIV. to save the life of the beautiful Madame Tiquet, in 1699, the Archbishop of Paris interfered; representing that if she were saved, no husband would be safe—such was the universal opinion of those who had the best means of judging—the professors of the polite world in Paris.

With respect to Angelique Carlier, who married Monsieur Tiquet, there was not, even in these strange times, a case that caused a more extraordinary sensation. Her beauty and accomplishments were so remarkable, that she is pronounced in the records of the period in which she lived, to have been “a masterpiece of nature;” but one quality, at least, she must have wanted, and that is common sense; for she appears to have been induced to marry Monsieur

Tiquet by the present of a bouquet of diamonds, worth fifteen thousand francs.

She was very fond of pleasure, and she conceived that a man who could afford to make such a magnificent *don d'amour*, must necessarily be very rich. But this was not the case: like Madame Lafarge, Madame Tiquet was disappointed. For a few years, however, the husband contrived to keep up appearances, and to conceal from his young wife the real state of his affairs; but when she discovered the truth, and found that even the diamond bouquet had yet to be paid for, her previous indifference was quickly converted into aversion. She insisted on a separation *de biens*, as it is called in France; and he avenged himself by obtaining from the court an order for her confinement, on the plea that she was carrying on a criminal intimacy with the Chevalier de Mongeorge; but when he summoned her to his presence,

and exhibited the order in triumph, she snatched it from his hand ; and, in defiance of the royal seal it bore, flung it into the fire. This was a declaration of war on both sides ; and from that moment she determined to release herself from the bonds that became daily more insupportable ; whilst he confirmed her resolution by forbidding Mongeorge the house, and keeping the keys of the gates himself, when he found that the porter would not shut them against his wife's inamorato.

These tyrannical proceedings, as they were considered, seem to have procured her very general sympathy amongst the ladies ; for, on the very night the attack on his life was made, the Countess de Semonville, who was spending the evening with Madame Tiquet, sat till a late hour, in hopes that he would come home and go to bed, in order that she might have the satisfaction of forcing him to get up again to let her out.



She was obliged to go away, however, without enjoying this gratification; and by-and-by, when he did come, he was shot by an unseen hand near his own door. He would have been killed on the spot, were it not, as the doctors affirmed, that his heart had so contracted on the sudden alarm, that it had not filled its usual space, and the ball had just missed it. He was carried into the house, and on being asked by the police what enemy he could point to as most likely to have sought his life, he answered that he had no enemy but his wife. An investigation was set on foot, of which she was fully aware; but she asserted her innocence, and refused to fly. On the contrary, she visited and received her friends, apparently with a mind quite disengaged; and when the Countess d'Aunoy observed to her that Monsieur Tiquet could not be sure who was the assassin, she answered, that if he *were* sure, he would take care not to tell it.



“It is me they want to kill,” said she.

She received numerous warnings and offers of assistance, all of which she rejected; and when at length she was arrested, nine days after the attempted murder, she displayed a haughty composure, that, combined with the insufficient evidence they had, might have puzzled the authorities, had not a certain *laquais de place*, called Auguste Catelain, voluntarily come forward, and confessed, that, three years before, he, Moura, the porter, and several others, had been engaged by Madame Tiquet to murder her husband. The plot failed at that time; but with this indication, there was little difficulty in bringing home the crime to Madame Tiquet and Moura, who were both condemned to die.

Monsieur Tiquet, scarcely recovered from his wounds, proceeded to Versailles, and, with his son and daughter, threw himself at the feet of Louis XIV., to beg for her life; which being, at the instance of the

Archbishop, refused, he proceeded to request that he might be appointed heir to her property—a petition which seems to have afforded much diversion to the lively Parisians ; and the King himself, in granting it, observed, that the second petition had effaced the merit of the first.

Since, according to the law of that period, Madame Tiquet's property was liable to confiscation, we cannot altogether see the justice of the stricture. Monsieur Tiquet was in embarrassed circumstances ; and, after the injury he had received, was fairly entitled to such a compensation.

The Chevalier de Mongeorge, and her own family also, made every effort to obtain the commutation of her sentence ; but with equal ill success. On being asked whether the former was privy to her guilty intent, she said, “ Not for the world would I have dared to hint such a thing to him. I should have lost him for ever, if I had ! ”

The publication and execution of the sentence were appointed to take place on the same day; and when she was conducted to the chamber of torture, ignorant of what awaited her, she inquired "If her affair would soon be decided?"

"Soon enough," replied the jailer.

And here a strange scene ensued. The judge who had read her sentence, which was to the effect that she should lose her head on the scaffold, after first undergoing the rack, in order to force her to a confession and the betrayal of her accomplices, had formerly been her lover. Howbeit, he had his duty to perform, and bidding her place herself on her knees before him, he fulfilled it. Proceeding afterwards, as was then the custom, to pronounce an exhortation, wherein he contrasted, in the most pathetic terms, her former with her present condition—"She who was once the idol of the world around her, blest with beauty, youth, talents, rank, and affluence;

now a criminal on her way to the scaffold!" —he entreated her to spend in repentance the short time that remained to her, and by an ample confession, to relieve him from the pain of seeing her placed on the rack.

But he was mistaken if he thought to move that iron heart. Cold, motionless, with an unshaken voice, and without even changing colour, she answered him—"You are right. The past and the present are strangely different ; for then you were at *my* feet, now I am at *yours* ! But I have done with such recollections. So far from fearing, I desire the moment that is to terminate my wretched life, and release me from my misfortunes. I hope to meet my death with as much firmness as I have listened to its announcement ; and be assured that neither fear nor pain shall induce me to confess myself guilty of a crime which I have never committed."

The rack, however, soon forced her to

break this resolution ; she confessed her own guilt, and that of Moura, but, as we have said above, exonerated Mongeorge.

Never, before or since, did any execution in Paris, unless it were that of the Royal Family of France, excite so extraordinary an interest. Persons even of rank and distinction rushed from all quarters into the city ; and every window on the way she was to pass, and in the Place de Grève, were let at high prices, and crowded with spectators.

She declared herself penitent to her confessor, begged pardon of Moura, who sat in the same carriage with her ; sent her tender remembrances to her children, and a prayer to her husband, that he would cherish them, and forgive her.

She died with an unshaken courage and self-possession that enchanted the Parisians. Mounting the scaffold with a light step, contemplating the multitude with unmoved composure, and baring her fair neck with as

much alacrity as if it were to welcome a carcanet of jewels rather than an axe.

The executioner was so amazed and confounded by the wondrous beauty of the head he was about to sever, that he was rendered incapable of his office, and put her to much needless pain. Even after death, the features remained unchanged ; and although she was in her forty-second year at the period of her execution, many people affirmed that she was more beautiful in death than she had been in life.

Her husband buried her with much honour ; the Chevalier de Mongeorge, who, quite inconsolable, had wandered about the park at Versailles during the sad ceremony, quitted France, and travelled for several months ; the Parisian ladies sighed over the fair victim, smiled with contempt at the name of Monsieur Tiquet, and pitying the faithful lover, “wished that Heaven had made them such a man !”

Such were the morals of France in 1699, yet a century later, when Donna Maria de Mendieta contrived the death of her husband under somewhat similar circumstances, in Madrid, the crime was pronounced to be without a parallel; and the horror and amazement the event awakened in Spain, was in proportion to its strangeness. Her lover, Don Santiago San Juan, did the deed at her instigation, when the unfortunate victim, who appears to have been both an amiable man and an indulgent husband, was lying sick in bed; whilst she made a diversion in another part of the house, for the purpose of drawing off the attention of her servants. Santiago escaped, whilst she was arrested on suspicion, and thrown into prison.

That she had not committed the murder with her own hand was certain; to that fact her whole household could testify; and at the time it occurred Santiago was supposed to be absent from Madrid. He had some weeks



before taken leave of Mendieta and his wife, and was believed by everybody but her to be gone. He had, however, passed the interval in moving from one hotel to another, under feigned names, waiting for the signal she had promised to send him.

He was suspected, but no trace could be found, till she herself involuntarily betrayed him, by a letter she wrote from the prison, addressed to “ Don Thaddeo Santisa, Madrid.”

It was at that period the custom in Spain, on the arrival of the post, to hang out a list of all letters, the addresses of which were not sufficiently explicit. Santiago saw the letter, and, by asking for it, threw himself into the coils that were spread for him.

They were both condemned to die by the Garotta—that is, to be strangled by a cord; and the execution drew spectators from all parts of Spain. They left directions that a great many masses should be said for the



repose of their souls ; and it was observed that Donna Maria ate and slept well till the last—indeed, so well, that her counsel ventured to make use of the circumstance in her defence, maintaining that such good appetite and peaceful rest were certain signs of innocence. But the full confession of both criminals disproved the assertion, and justified the law.

About the same period, a case of husband-killing occurred in Hamburgh, which is almost unique in its details.

One morning, in the month of February, 1786, two labourers found, on the road between Hamburgh and Lubeck, a large package, wrapped in matting, which they imagined must have fallen from some of the carriers' carts, which are in the habit of passing that way. They lifted it up, and conveyed it to the nearest house, where, whether from curiosity or suspicion does not appear, it was opened, and in it, to the amaze-

ment and horror of the bystanders, was found a human body, without head, arms, or hands.

As the authorities, on being informed of the circumstance, refused to interfere, and as nobody could be found who would open their doors to so frightful a guest, although the labourers for some time bore their hideous burthen from house to house to seek a resting-place for it, the first finders thought it better to carry it back, and leave it where they had discovered it.

This event occurred on Friday, the 24th, and on the evening of the same day, as the post-waggon, from Lubeck, was passing the spot, the attention of the postilions was attracted by the horses shying at a bundle lying on the road, which, on examination, proved to contain two hands and a human head, wrapped in a handkerchief, and a little way further they came upon the body which the labourers had left there.

The affair now became public ; the authorities stept forward ; announcements of the fact were inserted in the public journals, and investigations set on foot for the discovery of the murderer.

The body appeared to be that of a man about fifty years of age, in good health ; and, from the articles of dress he wore, in a respectable condition of life. The sack which contained it was marked P. R. W., and the shirt, which was of rather fine linen, bore the letters J. M. H. Enclosing the body, within the sack, was a well-stuffed pillow.

The first link found in the chain of evidence was, that on the same 24th of February, about ten o'clock in the morning, the labourers had observed a carriage, drawn by four black horses, with a coachman and postilion, standing in front of the New Inn, at a spot called the Fleishgaffel ; whether anybody was within it they could not say. It started on the Lubeck road whilst they were near, the

horses going at such a considerable pace, that when it reached the Hogenberg, where the road is steep, they lost sight of it. It was exactly at that spot they afterwards found the body. Later in the day, they observed the same carriage pass through Lutzen, on the way back to Hamburg.

When the news reached the latter city, a suspicion arose, partly founded on the letters P. R. W. observed on the sack, that the murdered person was a certain tobacco merchant, called Wächtler, who, according to his wife's report, had left home for a journey, on Wednesday, the 22nd. It was remarked, however, that nobody whatever had either seen him depart, or was aware of his intention to do so ; and it was well known that the husband and wife had frequent disagreements.

The suspicions were considerably augmented when, on the 29th, a person called Hennigs, who let out horses and carriages by the job, came forward to say that he had been

applied to by Frau Wächtler, whose neighbour he was, and with whom he was well acquainted, to convey her as far as Lubeck, where she expected to meet her husband. She was extremely urgent with him to set out on Thursday evening ; but he refused to travel by night, on account of the time of year, and they had agreed to start at an early hour on Friday. She was so impatient to depart, that even before that hour arrived, she had sent a messenger to hasten him. As she had mentioned that she should have rather a cumbersome package to carry with her, he had recommended that she should allow him to fetch it and arrange it on the carriage beforehand ; but she said it was not necessary ; she would see to that herself. Even in the morning he had not seen the package, for it was carried out whilst he was up stairs taking a cup of coffee, by her invitation.

When they reached the Hogenberg, Frau Wächtler called to him to stop, and saying she

felt poorly, she requested him and the driver to walk forwards a little way, taking the child who accompanied her with them. They did so ; but in a few minutes rejoined the carriage, and found the lady apparently quite recovered, and already preparing to lead the horses forwards.

When they had proceeded a little further, the same thing recurred ; she complained again of illness, and requested Hennigs to return to Hamburgh, as she found herself unable to go forward. He complied, having first proceeded as far as Schöneberg, for the purpose of baiting his horses. They had reached Hamburgh on the same evening. He had no suspicion of anything wrong at the time, but on hearing that a body had been found exactly on the spot where the lady had descended from the carriage, he had thought it his duty to come forward.

Upon this disclosure, persons acquainted with Wächtler were ordered to visit Lubeck,

for the purpose of identifying the remains. Their report confirmed the worst surmises ; the murdered person was, beyond a doubt, the tobacco merchant !

It seems strange, that on such presumptive evidence as this, Frau Wächtler should not have been arrested ; however, she was not. They only placed a guard before her house, to prevent her communicating with persons from without ; whilst crowds of excited and curious people assembled before her door, gratuitously performing the same office.

A variety of circumstances now came to light that strongly tended to inculcate her. As the house was very small, it seemed almost impossible that Wächtler could have left it, as she asserted, at three o'clock in the morning, unheard by the servants ; nor could she assign any reasonable motive for his going at all. He had taken neither trunk nor portmanteau ; and his boots, knee-



buckles, straps, and a black kerchief, he wore round his throat, were left behind. Early in the morning of the 22nd, she had sent for a laundress, called Newmann, and given her a blood-stained bed to wash, with strict injunctions to bring it back clean on the following Saturday. Newmann said that she found Frau Wächtler "sitting on her husband's bed, as white as a corpse." And when the laundress left her, she shut herself up in the chamber, having first ordered a large pitcher of water to be brought to the door; which pitcher was afterwards found empty.

An idea prevailed at first that the servants had been privy to, if not concerned in, the murder; but investigation proved this suspicion to be groundless. Their report of the matter, as far as they knew, tended also to exonerate a young hair-dresser, for whom Frau Wächtler seems to have entertained an undue partiality; and who was a subject of



frequent altercation betwixt this unfortunate couple.

The servants deposed that on the evening previous to the murder, a dispute on this subject had arisen, in which the husband threatened to be revenged on the object of his jealousy; and that he had gone to his room, brandishing the kitchen hatchet, which he declared was to be the instrument of his vengeance; and that Frau Wächtler had desired them to hide it under the child's bed, that it might be out of her husband's way, as she feared for her life.

About half-past two, Frau Wächtler awoke the servants, and ordered coffee to be immediately prepared for her husband, who was about to start on a journey. The cook went below to get it ready; but she desired the waiting-maid to stay beside her; and when it was brought up they drank it together, the wife sitting the while on the side of her husband's bed, and looking very pale. She said

she had been disturbed and had no sleep, on account of her husband's early departure. The bed-clothes were drawn up, and the servants supposed their master to be lying there asleep ; but, after some time, as he did not stir, they inquired for him, and were told that he had just stepped to a neighbour's to see to the packing of some wares he intended to take away with him, and would be back immediately. She asserted in her own defence that he did return while the servants were below ; however they did not see him ; and it appears clearly, that whilst she was sitting on the side of the bed drinking coffee with her maid, and talking, as they said, of indifferent matters, the murdered man was lying under the bed-clothes—a scene altogether worthy of a French melo-drama.

It was after this that she sent for the laundress, and then shut herself up for some hours. When the servants were again admitted to her room, she appeared to have

been washing linen ; the water was red, and there were some stains of blood upon the floor. One of these seemed to point to a neighbouring room, and the cook, whose curiosity was somewhat aroused, went there. She saw three sacks standing together ; two contained foul linen, but in the middle one she thought she felt a human head. Horror-struck, she hastily quitted the room, but she could not resist the feeling that urged her to return, and now she was sure of it ; she felt not only the head, but the knees, and calves of the legs.

Overcome with terror, she rushed out of the room, and went below to the kitchen, where her mistress presently came, and forbade anybody to enter that particular chamber, “ as there were some trifles there that she did not wish disturbed.” When she was gone, the cook however crept up stairs again ; but now the door was fastened. The woman said in her evidence that it occurred

to her that it must be her master; but on the other hand she had thought it impossible that her mistress could have contrived and executed such a deed alone.

At five o'clock in the afternoon it was customary to light a fire in the now mysterious chamber; and when that hour arrived the cook inquired if she might enter it for that purpose. Her mistress bade her go, and she now found it open; but where the sack had stood she saw a large piece of wood that belonged to Wächtler; the floor was wet, and appeared to have been lately washed.

During the whole of the day Frau Wächtler pretended to be expecting her husband's return; and seeing the hair-dresser pass beneath the window, she called him in, told him Wächtler would be back presently, and talked to him for half an hour without betraying the slightest confusion. In the evening she gave up all expectations of seeing her husband that day. She said he had doubt-

less gone to Lubeck, and she desired the waiting-maid to bid her mother come and pass the night with her—a significant circumstance. However long her husband had been absent, she had never made such a request before. Her guilty conscience feared the night.

On the following day, which was Thursday, she made arrangements with Hennigs about the journey, and invited Scheely, the young hair-dresser, to accompany her, which he declined. She also employed a porter to pack up a variety of wares, which she said she was going to carry to her husband. In the middle of the night the old woman, who still slept with her, expressed some apprehension with respect to the safety of Herr Wächtler. Not that she suspected he had been murdered; but she represented to the lady that she should not have allowed him to leave home after so serious a disagreement as they had on Tuesday evening; “who could

tell but he might make away with himself?" But Frau Wächtler bade her fear nothing; she knew him better!

When the carriage arrived on Friday morning, she invited Hennigs and the postilion to come up stairs to drink coffee; at the same time bidding the servant to remain above with the children. During this interval it was, that with the porter's assistance, the mysterious sack, now sewed in matting, was carried below, and placed in the carriage, "leaning against the opposite door." Then, all being ready, she took her youngest daughter by the hand; they stepped in, Hennigs mounted the box, and they drove away.

There was one more witness against her—this very daughter, a child of seven years old. She was accustomed to sleep with her father; and she related that on the night in question, just as the clock was striking two, her mother had lifted her out of the father's

bed, and had placed her in the other with her brothers. The suddenness of the action seems thoroughly to have awakened the child, for although she was bade go to sleep again directly, she found it impossible to do so ; and as she lay feigning sleep to satisfy her mother, she observed her leave the room, and presently return with a hatchet, with which she struck the father ; “ Father stirred a little ; and there was blood upon the sheet. Then mother sat down on father’s bed and drew the clothes up over him, and I went to sleep.”

At a second examination, this little girl said that the young hair-dresser had been present, and assisted at the murder ; and that she had also witnessed the dismembering of the body. The barber’s *alibi*, however, was clearly proved, although the other particulars of her relation were correct ; for Frau Wächtler made a full confession before she died ; which, strange to say, was not till



three years after the murder, so long did the trial continue in spite of her evident guilt. In the course of it, she accused a dyer called Kühn of having committed the crime, at her instigation. Kühn had no great difficulty in proving his innocence; but he said that although he had not done it himself, and indeed had no acquaintance with Frau Wächtler, that he nevertheless knew very well who had done it; it was a person called Jauché, a manufacturer of varnish. Yet, was Jauché as innocent as his accuser; the grounds of whose impeachment were, that a voice from heaven had informed him of Jauché's guilt, whilst he was in prison; and that though very poor before, Jauché had exhibited symptoms of affluence since the tobacco merchant's death.

Frau Wächtler was executed on the 14th of November, 1788, after having been several times submitted to the torture; a custom which we are rather surprised to find exist-



ing at Hamburgh at so late a period. Though pain extorted various contradictory confessions from her, she only avowed the truth on the day of her death; and then upon conditions that it should not be disclosed whilst she was alive. She said that she had committed the murder herself without any assistance; and that the act had been prompted by revenge against her husband for having affronted her in the presence of others.

How this extraordinary and wretched woman died, the records do not inform us; but during the course of the proceedings, she frequently boasted of her invincible character; and indeed, except the fear that caused her to send for the old woman to sleep with her, and which on some following nights prevailed so far, as to make her request her maids not only to bring their bed into her chamber, but to watch by her whilst she slept, she seems scarcely to have exhi-

bited any characteristic of humanity. She deliberately murdered and dismembered her husband, in the presence of her children, the eldest of whom was eleven years of age, and who might or might not be asleep—one of them, as it was proved, was awake: she drank coffee with half a dozen people, her maids, Shultz, Grüner, the schoolmaster, &c., seated on the bed, where lay her victim, covered by the bed-clothes. She conversed cheerfully on the journey to Lubeck, in spite of her fearful travelling companion, and ate heartily, where they stopped to bait, of provisions which had been placed in the carriage, under the mysterious package!

How her physical strength sufficed to make such arrangements and contrivances for concealment, in the course of the fatal morning after the murder, without any assistance, was so great a matter of wonder at the time, that it was the main cause of the protracted trial. The authorities could

not, for a long time, be convinced that she had neither aiders nor abettors.

But to return to the poisoners of the present century.

Madame Ursinus was a woman of rank, the widow of a man who held a distinguished office under government; and who, from her own personal endowments, as well as her fortune and condition, lived beloved, admired, and respected, in the first circles of Berlin. Her manners were peculiarly fascinating and endearing, her reputation was unblemished, and her universal charity and benevolence caused her to be as much beloved by the poor, as she was respected by the rich.

Her husband, the Privy Councillor Ursinus, had died in the year 1800; and the usual period of mourning and retirement having expired, the lady had opened her door again to her friends, and was in the habit of seeing a great deal of company. On the

5th of March, 1803, there was an assembly at her house, and she was sitting at the whist-table, when one of her footmen entered with evident signs of terror in his countenance, saying that several officers of police were in the ante-chamber, and desired to speak with her. Madame Ursinus rose from her seat, without betraying the smallest agitation; gracefully apologized to her friends for the interruption, and quitted the room, with the remark, that it must be some mistake; and she would just speak to the officers, and return immediately.

But she came not: the brilliant company sat still, with their cards in their hands; several minutes elapsed—a quarter of an hour—still no Madame Ursinus. They looked at each other—what could it mean? Presently, a liveried servant, with his face pale as ashes, appeared at the door, and a whisper ran round the room that Madame Ursinus had been arrested, for administering

poison to one of her servants, and had been carried to prison. If a volcano had suddenly arisen, and spouted flames in the middle of the city, it could not have created greater amazement. The excitement was indescribable.

The earliest particulars that reached the public were as follows :

One of her servants, called Benjamin Klein, who apparently acted as butler, had complained, some time in the month of February, of being unwell; and Madame Ursinus had recommended him to take some broth, which she herself administered. Instead of being the better for it, he found himself worse; and on the 28th, she gave him some raisins, which were to act as an emetic. He became, in fact, very sick, and suffered such extreme pain, that he thought he must vomit more before he should be relieved. She then gave him some rice-milk; and finally, on the 3rd of March, some plums; but these last,

instead of eating, he carried to an apothecary, who found them stuffed with arsenic. The man grew worse and worse; and the physicians declared his sufferings were the effect of poison; upon this, Madame Ursinus was arrested.

These rumours were soon followed by others. It was remembered that a certain Dutch officer, named Ragay, to whom Madame Ursinus had been much attached, had died of a strange and lingering disease; that the Privy Councillor, her husband, had been seized with a violent vomiting in the night, during which time no one had attended him but herself, and that he had died on the following morning, shortly after the arrival of his medical attendants: and, thirdly, that a maiden aunt of the lady's had died in a somewhat like manner, in the year 1801. It was asserted that she had poisoned them all, and the bodies of the two latter were disinterred and examined. With respect to the

husband, nothing could be made out; but the presumption that she had poisoned the aunt was very strong, both from the state of the intestines, and the clearly established fact that she had arsenic in her possession whilst she was with the deceased in her last illness. As for Ragay, the doctors who had attended him, said that he had died of consumption. Certain it was, however, that for years she had been in the habit of carrying a provision of poison about her. She declared, on her trial, that she kept it with the intention of destroying her own life; and that she had poisoned Klein, in order to have an opportunity of observing the effects of arsenic, and ascertaining the requisite dose; but nobody had ever seen any symptoms of her entertaining such a design.

The servant Klein did not die, but after much suffering recovered, and lived for twenty-eight years on a pension assigned to him out of the property of his mistress.



In reference to this, people used to point him out to strangers as “the man who lived by poison.” Neither, however much appearances were against her, could Madame Ursinus be convicted of the two first crimes laid to her charge ; but she was found guilty of poisoning her aunt, and for that and the attempt on the life of Klein, she was sentenced to perpetual imprisonment. She was confined in the fortress of Glatz, where she was allowed a well-furnished room, with a great many conveniences, and a female companion to cheer her solitude. She was also visited by a vast number of strangers, whom she very willingly received ; and if they were influential persons she never failed to solicit their interference in her favour. She wore satins and fine linen ; and seems, in consideration of her rank and connexions, to have been treated with a degree of indulgence she little deserved. She lived in this confinement for thirty years ; and then,



being seventy years of age, she received some further mitigation of her penalty ; being permitted to live freely within certain precincts of the city. Here she received company, and was visited, not only by foreigners, but by her own country people ; and it is related that a lady, at one of her evening parties, having evinced some uneasiness at seeing grains of a white substance sprinkled over a salad she was about to eat, Madame Ursinus said, sarcastically : “ Don’t be afraid ; it’s not arsenic.”

Indeed, on the very day she was set free, she invited a party to take coffee with her ; and the next morning it was currently reported that every one of the company had been poisoned. Very ill they were ; but the cause of their indisposition proved to be the waggery of some thoughtless person, who, for the purpose of giving them a fright, had contrived to mix some drugs with the coffee.

Madame Ursinus lived to a great age, and at length died in the year 1836, in the odour of sanctity. Five carriages, full of friends and acquaintances, followed the hearse that bore her to her last home ; the churchyard could not contain the crowds that assembled to witness the interment ; twelve poor orphans sang hymns of gratitude over her grave ; and friendly hands strewed the earth that covered her with flowers. Yet Madame Ursinus died without having ever confessed her crimes, nor, as far as could be judged by appearances, ever repented of them ; neither was the motive for their commission ever clearly made out.

The story we next turn to relates to a person in a different rank of life.

In the year 1809, there resided in a part of Prussia, called the Oberland, a respectable middle-aged female, who supported herself by knitting. She was a widow, who had evidently seen and suffered much. Her

deportment was particularly quiet, and her manner pleasing and friendly. The fear of God and the love of her neighbour appeared to be the ruling principles of her life ; and she was looked upon as a worthy, excellent person ; who however, in spite of her industry, found some difficulty in keeping herself above want. She went by the name of Nannette Schönleben. She was a native of Nuremberg, and her maiden name was Steinacker. After the vicissitudes of a varied life, she had settled down to this obscure and humble mode of existence ; but it was understood, that if an opportunity offered of improving her condition, she would be glad to avail herself of it. Her excellent reputation soon procured her such a situation as she desired.

In the month of March, 1808, a person of the name of Glaser, who resided at Kasendorf engaged her in the capacity of housekeeper, at the recommendation of his own son, who

had some small dealings with her, and had formed a very favourable opinion of her character. Her conduct soon procured her not only the approbation but the confidence of her master ; and the use she made of her influence was one that obtained her universal commendation. Glaser, a man of fifty years of age, had for several years been living apart from his wife. It was said that there was no fault on the part of the lady to justify this separation ; and in spite of the injury it was likely to do herself, Nannette undertook to bring about a reconciliation. She wrote letters to the wife ; she engaged the friends on both sides to aid her in this pious work ; and even, though a Protestant herself, sent money to a Roman Catholic priest, with a request that he would say a mass for the success of her enterprise.

It did succeed ; Frau Glaser allowed herself to be persuaded—the husband declared himself prepared to receive her with open

arms ; and the lady, who was at a distance, started for Kasendorf ; but, as it appears, with a heavy heart and strange presentiments. In a letter, afterwards produced, which she wrote to her relations at the time, she said, “ I cannot describe what I feel ; there is a struggle within my heart that I am unable to account for ! can it be a forewarning of evil ? ”

The husband went some distance on the road to meet the wife ; and Nannette prepared a fête for their reception, which was not very consistent with the circumstances of the case. The whole village assembled to welcome them ; the house was decorated with garlands ; the bed of this second bridal was strewn with flowers, and the following couplet was appended to the hangings :—

“ The widow’s hand  
Has wove the band.”

These ill-judged and indelicate arrange-

ments appear to have excited no displeasure amongst the parties concerned.

Glaser seemed disposed to treat his wife with great kindness, and the lady was becoming quite reconciled to the re-union, when, unfortunately, she was taken ill and died on the 26th of August; exactly four weeks after her arrival at Kasendorf.

Shortly after this unfortunate event, Nannette transferred herself to the service of a gentleman called Grohmann, who resided at Sanspareil. Glaser gave her the best of characters. Grohmann was a fine young man, only twenty-eight years of age; but he suffered from frequent fits of gout; and the devotion with which Nannette nursed him on these occasions, was truly admirable.

In spite of her tender care, however, the young man thought he would rather be nursed by a wife, and he accordingly made advances to a lady who accepted his proposals; and everything being arranged, the

marriage was about to be solemnized, when Grohmann was taken suddenly ill. Nannette never quitted the bedside during the progress of his sufferings, which were fearful ; but he died, and she was inconsolable. Her tears and cries rent the hearts of all beholders. She was, however, under the necessity of seeking another situation ; and the manner in which she had conducted herself in the two former places recommended her so strongly, that a lady of the name of Gebhard, who was about to be confined, thought herself particularly fortunate in obtaining her services. Accordingly, Nannette attended her during her indisposition, and the child was happily born ; but on the third day things took an ill turn ; the lady was seized with vomitings, and, after enduring much pain, she died. The infant was committed to the care of Nannette, who nursed it with the greatest tenderness.

Some people were certainly silly enough



to advise Mr. Gebhard not to keep in his service so unlucky a person. Doubtless, she was an excellent woman, a clever servant ; but misfortune seemed to follow her footsteps. Mr. Gebhard, however, had no belief in such fatalities, and, for several months, she remained in this house, at the head of his establishment ; and although certainly, there *were* very frequent indispositions amongst the servants, and even amongst the visitors who frequented the house, no suspicions were awakened ; and Nannette remained high in the esteem and confidence of her employer, till on the 1st of September, 1809, a large party having assembled at Mr. Gebhard's, to play at bowls, the whole company were taken ill after drinking some beer which Nannette had brought from the cellar.

Strange thoughts now seemed to have found their way into the minds of the sufferers. Nobody, however, ventured to denounce Nannette ; they only urged Mr.



Gebhard to part with her, she was so unlucky! To oblige them, he consented to do so; but he gave her excellent testimonials, and behaved to her in the most liberal manner.

Nannette did not conceal that she was very much pained by this dismissal, and expressed extreme grief at leaving her beloved little charge; but she showed no temper. She was diligent, active, and obliging to the last moment—nay, even sportive; for it being remarked that she took the trouble of filling the salt-cellars with her own hands just before she departed, she said she did it “to bring luck to those she left behind.” So kind was her master, that when the coach which was to carry her away came to the door, he invited her to take a cup of chocolate with him before she went. She took a tender leave of the child, and gave it some milk and biscuit, lamenting how much he would miss his kind nurse. This done

she bade adieu to her fellow-servants, and drove away.

She had not, however, been gone a quarter of an hour, when the whole family, at least the child, and several persons who had partaken of the chocolate, were seized with violent pains and vomitings; whereupon the servants declared their suspicions of Nannette. Many circumstances were recalled that rendered it scarcely possible to doubt her guilt; but so much difficulty had Gebhard in altering his opinion of her, that though on examination a quantity of arsenic was found in the salt barrel, he allowed a month to pass before he took any measures for her apprehension.

In the meantime, quite at her ease, and with a degree of confidence that long impunity can alone account for, Nannette Schönleben pursued her journey. On the road she wrote a letter to Mr. Gebhard, expressing her conviction that the infant

would be so unhappy without her, that he would be under the necessity of recalling her; and she remained for some days within such a distance as would have rendered her return easy. However, no summons reaching her, it became necessary to look for a residence elsewhere; but she now found that wherever she was known, people objected to receive her under their roof.

At length, being driven from house to house, she resolved to seek refuge with her own daughter, who was married, and inhabited a small house in Franconia. When she reached the spot she found her son-in-law gaily dressed, surrounded by a party of his friends; but, alas! there was no part in their rejoicings for her. Her daughter was in jail, and the husband, who had divorced her, was about to marry again.

It was not till October, 1809, that Mr. Gebhard made up his mind to have Nannette apprehended. It was then found that she

was the widow of a notary, whose name was Zwanziger, but that she had very good reasons for dropping this appellation and assuming another. She, of course, professed to be the most innocent creature in the world ; but the bodies of the persons she had murdered were disinterred, and presented ample evidence of her guilt. Innumerable circumstances were also recalled, showing that she had repeatedly administered poison in greater or less quantities to the servants and visitors of her previous employers.

Her trial commenced on the 16th April, 1810. She at first denied everything ; but when she learned that poison had been found in the stomachs of her victims, she confessed to have twice administered arsenic to the deceased Frau Glaser. She had no sooner made this avowal, than she dropped to the earth as if she were shot ; and fell into such violent convulsions that they were obliged to remove her from the court.

In the interval that elapsed between her trial and execution, she wrote a sketch of her own biography, from which we learn that she was at this period about fifty years of age. She declared that she had been handsome in her youth, but no remains of beauty could be traced in her meagre, cadaverous features, the expression of which, in spite of the constrained smile that sat ever upon her lips, appears to have been odious and repelling, a circumstance which renders her successful deceptions the more extraordinary.

She was born at Nuremberg, where her father kept an inn, with the inauspicious sign of the Black Cross. Her parents died when she was very young, and she had been twice married. Her early life had been busy and cheerful. Zwanziger seems to have been both a poor and an austere man. It was as she said, "still im hause;" no stir,—no bustle; and "she feared her husband as the child fears the rod." In order to dissipate her melan-

choly, she had recourse to books. "My first book," she writes, "was 'The Sorrows of Werter.' The impression it made on me was so great, that for some time I could do nothing but weep. Had I had a pistol, I should certainly have shot myself. I next read 'Pamela,' and 'Emilia Galotte.' "

The fruits of these studies seem to have been a diseased sentimentality, that soon extinguished any germs of real feeling that nature had implanted in her, together with a great desire to render herself an object of interest, and to rise out of the humble situation in which fortune had placed her. At the age of twenty-one, she inherited some property that her parents had bequeathed her. On this accession of wealth, her husband seems for a time to have flung aside his moroseness. At all events, he helped her to spend the money in balls and carousals ; and when they came to the end of it, their former mode of life was resumed. He lived in the

wine-houses, and she alone ; but as he constantly pressed her for supplies, which she had not the means of furnishing, she seems to have found a mode of raising funds as discreditable to herself, as dishonourable to him.

Fortune, however, once more smiled upon this well-matched pair. Zwanziger obtained a prize in the lottery ; and again the house resounded with the song and the dance. When this supply was exhausted, the lady eloped with an officer, but returned at the request of her husband. He, however, applied for a divorce, and obtained it, but it was no sooner published, than they were re-married ; and she declared that after this they had lived very happily together, “ she having remarked that Zwanziger had noble sentiments, and an affectionate heart !”

The notary died suddenly in 1796, and it is by no means clear that she did not help him out of the world before his time. From



that period her fortune gradually declined, till she became a servant. She lived with a variety of people in different capacities, and, amongst the rest, as nursery-maid in some English families.

At this degradation her pride seems to have been dreadfully wounded. She “laughed and cried in one breath ; and, when her employers issued their orders, she smiled, and left their presence respectfully, but made a point of neglecting their commands.” Naturally, she had soon no commands to obey.

She had next recourse to one of her former lovers. He received her for a time ; but as he soon became cold and neglectful, she resolved to open a vein in her arm and die. In this project, however, she failed, at least as far as regards the dying. She only lost a cupful of blood ; and the unfeeling man, instead of exhibiting any alarm, “turned away and laughed when she showed it him.”



Determined to convince him of her sincerity, she next proceeded to the river to drown herself. "She took her maid-servant with her, and a volume of poems, which she read by the way. When she arrived at the fatal line :

‘ My life’s so sad that I must end it,’

she precipitated herself into the water. Two fishermen, however, who happened to be at hand, dragged her out again, and she received no damage but the wetting of her clothes. As soon as they were sufficiently dry, she sent them by the maid to her hard-hearted lover, as a convincing proof of her inexorable determination to quit a world in which she was so little appreciated. He returned them by the bearer, with a small sum of money, and a strong recommendation to quit the place without delay ; and the farther she went, the better he should be pleased.”

To the want of compassion exhibited by

this person she principally attributed her embittered and revengeful spirit. In short, it would seem as if a devil had entered into her ! “ When I opened the vein in my arm,” she writes, “ he laughed. And when I reminded him that I was not the first woman that had killed herself on his account, he laughed too ! Henceforth, whenever I did anybody a mischief, I said to myself, nobody shows me mercy, and I will show none to others.”

After this she entered into various services at Vienna and other places. Her last situation was in the family of a Mr. Von S—— ; but as the work was fatiguing and the wages low, she resolved to quit it ; “ but her guardian angel whispered to her not to go without insuring herself some compensation. On the same day, as one of the children was playing with his mother’s jewels, he offered her a ring. It seemed as if a voice within her bade her accept it.” She took the hint

and departed. But this treacherous spirit having also prompted her to possess herself of the contents of an escrutoire, she was advertised, by name, in the public journals ; and her son-in-law happening to see the paragraph, turned her out of doors. Upon this she wrote to reproach Mr. Von S. for his want of delicacy in thus exposing her ; and then changing her name to Schönleben, she established herself in a small town called Neumarkt, as an instructor of young females in needle-work, &c. For some time she conducted herself prudently, and might have prospered had she not admitted the visits of an antiquated military debauchee, whom she hoped to inveigle into marriage, and thus to recover her position in life, and to hear herself called “ Your Excellency,” before she died !

Her project failed ; and having lost both her lover and her newly-acquired reputation, she was obliged again to set out upon her

travels. Then it was she settled in the Oberland, where we first introduced her; and by her quiet demeanour, piety, and humility, contrived to establish herself once more in the good opinion of her neighbours. But whilst her outward bearing was that of a saint, her heart was full of hatred and revenge; and she longed to retaliate upon mankind the misery she fancied they had inflicted upon her.

She seems to have had two projects—vengeance and her own reintegration. For twenty years she had been driven about the world, subject to all sorts of insults and indignities. She was now fifty years of age; but she did not despair of repairing her fortunes by marriage. The servile condition was hateful to her. To be once more a lady, and command others as she had been commanded, was her hope and her object. But now difficult an enterprise! What road was open to her? She wanted power—and after

seeking in all directions for the weapon that was to acquire it, she fixed upon poison as the means of her worldly advancement and the instrument of her hoarded vengeance.

It was with this view that she brought about the reconciliation between Glaser and his wife. The victim's path was strewn with flowers—garlands wreathed the bed of this second bridal, and pæans welcomed her to her husband's home; but the mortal poison was already in her cup.

By her assiduous attention during his fits of sickness, she hoped to win the heart of her next master, Grohman; but when she found he was about to marry another, she compensated herself for her disappointment by the gratification of her revenge.

With the same object she poisoned Gebhard's wife; she gave arsenic to the child when she quitted him, in the hope that his consequent uneasiness and cries would occasion her recall; and for the innumerable

other persons to whom she administered smaller doses, slight offences, and her unmitigable hatred to mankind, were the impelling motives.

By her own confession, it is evident that she revelled in the sense of power she enjoyed from the possession of this secret and murderous weapon. From the gratification it afforded her, she grew actually to love it for its own sake. When, in prison, a parcel of arsenic was placed before her, her eyes glistened with the passionate desire to possess it ; and when she was about to be executed, she avowed that her death would be a happy event for mankind, as she was sure she never could have renounced the pleasure of using it.

She took a great liking to the advocate that defended her ; and exhibited her regard by requesting that, if it were permitted, she might be allowed to visit him from the other world, in order to give him demonstrative evidence of a future life.

She died without repentance ; and took leave of the sheriff and executioner on the scaffold with as courteous a bow as if she were retiring from a morning visit.

We shall close our accounts of these female enormities with the case of Gesche Margaretta Gottfried, which we must, however, reserve for our next chapter.

## CHAPTER II.

IN the year 1825, a gentleman, named Rumpff, established himself in a house in Bremen, which belonged to and was also inhabited by a widow lady named Gottfried. She was by universal consent a charming woman ; her manners were fascinating, and her person, which in her youth was said to have been extremely beautiful, was still very attractive and agreeable.

She was, however, unfortunate. Two husbands, her father, her mother, her



brother, and several children had all died within a very short period of time. She had actually had the pain of herself ordering thirteen coffins of the undertaker who lived opposite to her—and these for her nearest and dearest friends. She had, it is true, had the consolation of nursing them all during their last sicknesses—a duty which she had discharged with the most exemplary assiduity and tenderness. Every body pitied her; religion was her refuge, and a pious resignation to the inscrutable decrees of Providence alone supported her under these multiplied calamities. Her case, in short, excited so much commiseration, that she was publicly prayed for in church by a minister of high reputation and signal piety.

She was not only received in good society, but although originally born and wedded in the burgher class, her company was courted by persons of high rank and consideration. She had had many suitors; had been twice

married, and was now forty years of age; still she was by no means without claimants for her hand. Her personal *agrémens*, elegantly furnished house, and easy fortune, rendered her a desirable match; and the parents of the enamoured youths wished nothing better than to have Madame Gottfried for a daughter-in-law. But she declined their proposals. On his death-bed she had promised her dear Gottfried, of blessed memory, never to give that hand to another; and she intended to keep her word.

Still, with all these extraordinary advantages and recommendations, her ill-fortune was undeniable; every body connected with her died. Some people looked upon her as a sort of Job, a monument of suffering and patience; one whom the Lord had selected to chastise for the good of her soul, and to furnish a lesson of resignation and submission to mankind. She herself took this view of the case; whilst others secretly hinted that

they had heard there was something poisonous in her breath, which was fatal to those who inhaled it.

It was not without many expostulations from his friends, that Mr. Rumpff established himself in the house of this amiable but ill-starred lady. He, however, was no believer in stars, good or ill; and had no idea of resigning a residence that suited him, on such absurd grounds; and for some little time he certainly felt he had every reason to congratulate himself on his decision. The most gratifying relations established themselves betwixt his family and the friendly widow, who seemed to have nothing in the world to do but to make herself agreeable to them. Her kindness to the young people was quite remarkable; but, unfortunately, at the end of eight weeks, this general joy was interrupted, by the death of Madame Rumpff, who was seized with a vomiting shortly after

her confinement, which carried her off in a few hours.

Nothing could exceed the attentions of Madame Gottfried; she never quitted the bedside of the dying woman, whose best consolation, in her last moments, was, that she left behind her so kind a friend to protect her orphans and comfort her bereaved husband. The hopes and wishes of the departed mother were, in this respect, fulfilled to the letter. Madame Gottfried managed the house, overlooked the servants, cherished the children, and, by her pious exhortations, allayed the anguish of the father. In the family she always went by the appellation of aunt Gottfried.

But ill-fortune still clung to her. The maid, and the nurse who had been engaged to take care of the child, became extremely ill; and the latter finally quitted the house, declaring that she saw clearly that she never

should be well whilst she remained in it.

Presently, Mr. Rumpff's journeymen and apprentices began to vomit; and some months after his wife's death he was himself seized with a similar indisposition. A healthy and strong-minded man, he exerted himself to struggle against the malady; and even fancied that the boys who worked in his manufactory, but ate their meals in the house, were merely diverting themselves by aping him, when he heard them straining and vomiting too.

But resistance was vain; he could keep nothing on his stomach; every thing he ate caused him the most excruciating agonies, and his formerly blooming health declined from day to day. Neither the remedies he had recourse to himself, nor those of the physician, were of the least avail. He grew worse and worse; he lost the use of his fingers and toes; his body was as weak as

an infant's; and his mind seemed to be threatened with a similar degree of imbecility. He racked his imagination to discover the cause of these extraordinary inflictions, and, like a man seeking for some hidden treasure, he ransacked every corner of his house from top to bottom. He never thought of poison; but he fancied there must be some decaying substance about the house, that exhaled a vapour fatal to the health of all who inhabited it. He had the boards lifted, and the walls examined; but in vain; nothing could be discovered.

At length the strong mind so far gave way, as to admit a doubt, whether there might not indeed be some unknown and invisible influences—some spirits of ill, that pursued mankind to their destruction; wasting their bodies and withering their minds. But here again aunt Gottfried came to his aid; she watched over him like a mother; bade him trust in God; and when he de-

scribed to her his sleepless nights of anguish, she earnestly wished him such sweet rest as blessed her own pillow.

This state of things had continued for upwards of a year, and nobody believed Mr. Rumpff would be long an inhabitant of this world, when, having ordered a pig to be killed for the use of his family, the butcher sent him a small choice bit of the animal to taste, by way of specimen. As the pork was not only very good, but sat more easily on his stomach than anything he had lately taken, he deposited the remains of it in a closet, for his next day's luncheon. He was rather surprised, however, on going to take it from the cupboard, to find it was not as he had left it. He had placed the rind underneath, but it had since been turned; and, on looking more closely, he was startled by perceiving some grains of a white powder sprinkled over it; the more so, that he immediately remembered to have remarked the



same appearance on a salad, and on some broth which had been lately served to him.

On the former occasions, he had applied to his good housekeeper, aunt Gottfried, to know what it was ; and she had declared it to be grease. But now, for the first time, a dreadful suspicion possessed him ; could it be poison ? He said nothing ; but secretly sent for his physician ; a chemical investigation soon revealed the mystery—the white powder was arsenic.

The discovery was made on the 5th of March ; on the 6th, after a cursory examination, Madame Gottfried was arrested. She was found in bed, and said she was ill ; but they carried her away to prison, nevertheless.

The tidings of this most unexpected catastrophe soon spread over the city, and the dismay of its inhabitants was past all expression. A lady so beloved, so respected ! So amiable, so friendly, so pious ! Then came



dark suspicions relative to the past—the strange mortality, the singular similarity of the symptoms that had attended the last illnesses of all who had died in that house. People scarcely dared whisper their thoughts—but the reality far exceeded their imaginations, and the proceedings against Madame Gottfried disclosed a tissue of horrors, which, all circumstances considered, seems to surpass those of any case on record. Her crimes, combined with her successful hypocrisy, and powers of fascination, were so terrific, that in the orderly and pious city of Bremen, to this day, strange rumours and superstitions survive amongst the people, connected with the history of “Aunt Gottfried.” They believe that she tickled her children to death, in order to make a poisonous broth of their flesh; that there was a vault under the house, unknown to all but herself, where she prepared her poisons, and performed all sorts of devilish deeds; that she had the evil eye, and

had slain innumerable children by merely looking at them ; and they were, moreover, thoroughly convinced that she was born a murderess from her mother's womb, and inherited from her parent two books, which contained instructions for all sorts of demoniacal practices.

It is not to be wondered at that the ignorant should have sought in the supernatural an explanation of a phenomenon which confounded the experience of the most enlightened.

On being conducted to the city prison, Madame Gottfried denied all knowledge of the crime she was accused of ; but a secret here came to light that astonished the beholders little less than the previous disclosures. Before being conducted to the cell in which she was to be confined, she was, according to established regulations, placed in the hands of the female attendants to be examined ; and then, to their amazement, it was discovered

that the lovely and admired Madame Gottfried was nothing but a hideous skeleton. Her fine complexion was artificial—her graceful *embonpoint* was made up of thirteen pairs of corsets, which she wore one over the other; in short, everything was false about her; and when stripped of her factitious attractions, she stood before the amazed spectators an object no less frightful from her physical deformities than from her moral obliquity.

The effects of this exposure upon her own mind was curious; her powers of deception failed her; the astonishment and indignation she had assumed vanished: she attempted no further denials, but avowed her guilt at once, not in all its fearful details,—it took two years to do that. She gave the narrative of her crimes piecemeal, as they recurred to her memory; for she had committed so many, that one had effaced the other from her mind. Even at the last, she admitted that she was

by no means certain of having mentioned everybody to whom she had administered poison.

She was the daughter of a lady's tailor, or man-milliner, called Timm—a man of the most industrious and orderly habits, an assiduous reader of the Scriptures, and regular attendant at church. She and a brother, who entered the world at the same moment as herself, were born on the 6th of May, 1785. The young man was wild, and joined the army of Napoleon; but Gesche was a model of perfection. Her person was delicate—almost ethereal, her countenance open and attractive, with a smile of benignity ever on her lips, her movements were graceful, her manner bewitching, her demeanour modest, and her conduct unexceptionable. She was held up as a pattern to the young, and Father Timm, as he was called, was considered blest in the possession of such a daughter.

One thing, however, seems pretty clear,

namely, that although the parents led unexceptionable lives, and were what is commonly called *highly respectable people*, and though the daughter received what is ordinarily considered a virtuous education, the whole was the result of mere worldly motives. There was no foundation of principle,—no sense of the beauty of virtue, nor delight in its practice for its own sake. The only object recognized was to gain the approbation and good-will of mankind; and when Gesche Timm found she could attain that end as well by the simulation as by the reality of virtue, she chose the former as the easier of the two.

Her first initiation into crime seems to have been by the way of petty thefts, which she practised on her parents, and of which she allowed her brother, whose frequent misdemeanors laid him more open to suspicion, to bear the blame. Five years of impunity at length emboldened her to purloin a con-

siderable sum belonging to a lady who lodged in the house. Father Timm, as usual, fell upon his son; but the mother, who appears by this time to have got an inkling of the truth, bade him hold his hand, and she would presently tell him who was the thief. Accordingly she went out, and, returning in about half-an-hour, said she had been to a wise woman, who had shown her the face of the real delinquent in a mirror. Whilst she spoke, she fixed her eyes significantly on the "angel of a daughter," who, finding she was discovered, had the prudence to discontinue her practices. The affair, however, was hushed up, and Gesche's character remained as fair in the eyes of the world as before.

At twelve years of age, her school education being completed, she was retained at home to do the house-work and help her father. She also kept his books; and made herself so useful by her diligence and her readiness as an accountant, that he was more

than ever delighted with her, and was induced to commit his affairs more and more to her management ; an advantage of which she did not fail to avail herself after her own peculiar fashion : meantime, she was cheerful, obedient, pious, and charitable. She was her parent's almoner, and was taught to believe that the prayers and blessings of the poor were the sure passport to Heaven—a persuasion that influenced her whole subsequent life ; for whilst she administered poison with one hand, she administered charity with the other, secure in the belief that the good she did would efface the evil. She had tears, too, ready upon all occasions ; she wept when her father prayed and sang his morning hymn ; and she wept when her victims, writhing in anguish, called on God to pity them and release them from their pains.

Yet, was she a woman of no violent passions. She was neither avaricious, luxurious, nor even sensual ; although later in life



her lapses from chastity might have given colour to the suspicion. She was cold, calm, and self-possessing. Her ruling passion was vanity, and an inordinate desire to be admired and respected in the small and humble sphere that surrounded her.

Her amusements were dancing, in which her parents allowed her to take lessons, and acting plays wherein she greatly distinguished herself. As she was the prettiest, and also the cleverest amongst the young people, the best parts were assigned to her, as well as the most ornamental attire the theatrical wardrobe could produce; so that each representation became to her a triumph, and was anticipated with the most eager delight. However, the truth was, that Gesche's whole life was acting; and there have been very few such consummate comedians seen, either on the boards, or the larger stage of the world. For forty-three years she maintained her part to such perfection,



that no suspicion had ever entered into men's minds that she had any other character than the one she appeared in.

In order to augment her attractions and powers of pleasing, she was desirous of learning music ; but Father Timm not only thought this expense beyond his means, but considered so refined an accomplishment ill adapted to a girl who had to do the work of a house-servant, and daily appear before the door with a broom in her hand. He, however, proposed that she should learn French, and she made an apparent progress that delighted her master ; but like everything else about her, it was only apparent. She had considerable aptness, but no application. Study wearied her, so she employed an acquaintance to prepare her lessons for her, desiring him to be careful to leave an error or two, to avoid suspicion. The little she picked up of the language, however, helped

her to play her<sup>t</sup> part in life, when she had risen into another grade of society.

Gesche, or Gesina, as she now called herself, had rejected several offers of marriage, when being one evening at the theatre with her friend Marie Heckendorf, she was persecuted by the too obtrusive attentions of a stranger, who appeared by his air to be a person of some distinction. A young neighbour of the Timm's family, whose name was Miltenburg, stepped forward to protect her, and see her home; and from that occasion an intimacy sprung up between them which terminated in marriage.

Though the son of a man in exceedingly good circumstances, and in point of condition a very advantageous match for Gesina, young Miltenburg's reputation was not quite *intacte*. He had been drawn in at an early age to marry a woman of very indifferent character, who had introduced him into a good deal of

dissipation and loose company. The wife was dead, but the vices she had encouraged had not died with her. The young man's health, as well as his morals and his father's fortune, were injured by the life he led ; and in spite of her humble station, old Miltenburg was delighted to accept so virtuous and exemplary a daughter-in-law as Gesina. He testified his approval by a handsome settlement ; and whilst the young lady and her parents exulted in this unexpected stroke of fortune, the world in general lamented that so lovely and incomparable a creature should be thrown away on an exhausted debauchee.

The marriage ceremony was performed in Mr. Miltenburg's picture-gallery. Over Gesina's head hung a fine Madonna and Child by one of the old masters ; on one side of it, Jesus distributing the bread and wine ; on the other, a head of St. Peter :—it was exactly on that spot that she afterwards poisoned her mother.

The young bride had no regard for her husband ; but the circumstances of the marriage gratified her vanity and self-love to the utmost. She brought peace into a house where there had been nothing but strife and contention. Her virtues shone the brighter from the dark ground of her predecessor's vices. She was exalted into a goddess ; father and son worshipped her, and power and dominion were given to her over the whole household. Her husband made her superb presents, and sought by all manner of pleasures and indulgences to make her amends for those imperfections which he was conscious his dissolute life had entailed upon him, and which incapacitated him from winning the affections of a young bride.

In the present case, however, it is extremely problematical whether there were any affections to win ; but her vanity soon found a suitor, if not her heart. A young wine-merchant, of the name of Gottfried, whom

she met at a ball, took her fancy, and an intimacy sprang up between them, which seems to have met with no opposition on the part of the husband. A second lover, named Karnov, was equally well received. Previous, however, to these lapses from duty, she had several confinements, the results of which appear to have been an extraordinary degree of leanness; a defect which she remedied by putting on an additional pair of corsets, as occasion required. The seventeen pairs which were found in her wardrobe at her death, were sold in Bremen for so small a sum as two groschen; people being unwilling to have any thing to do with them. It was supposed they were endowed with some magical properties. They had certainly done a great deal of harm to their possessor; for she had materially injured her health, and aggravated the defect she was so anxious to conceal, by compressing her waist with them.

Gottfried appears to have been a good-looking, agreeable, light-hearted, and rather accomplished man. He had a well-selected library, played the guitar, and published two volumes of songs. Her inclination for him seems to have approached more nearly to a passion than any she ever entertained ; whilst his assiduities appear to have been chiefly prompted by his flattered vanity, and a desire to enjoy the comforts and pleasures of Miltenburg's house.

These comforts and pleasures, however, were in some jeopardy, from young Miltenburg's improvidence and inattention to his business ; and his wife began to question with herself seriously, what was the value of his life ; and what was the use of his living at all, with a constitution so ruined as to be incapable of any enjoyment. About this period, namely, in 1813, old Miltenburg, the father, died, as it was afterwards established, from natural causes ; but this was

her first introduction to the grim tyrant, and she seems to have been determined to make herself thoroughly familiar with his features at once. She astonished everybody by her constant visits to the chamber of death, and the manner in which she contemplated the features, and pressed the hands of the deceased.

From this time the idea of getting rid of her husband gradually ripened into an uncontrollable desire ; but she was at a loss how to set about it. In the meanwhile, in order to augment the interest felt for herself, and reconcile the world to his loss, she maligned him on all hands ; whilst she supplied herself with money, by robbing both him and other persons who lived under the roof with her, and exercised her extraordinary powers of dissimulation, by averting all suspicion from herself. She was still, in the eyes of the world, the most charming and exemplary of women.



Her resolution to despatch her husband, who, whatever his faults were, was only too kind and indulgent to her, was confirmed by a fortune-teller, whom, about this time, she consulted. The woman told her that everybody belonging to her would die off; and that she would then spend the remainder of her life in prosperity and happiness. She afterwards said that her choice of the means was decided by seeing a play of Kotzebue's, in which some very amiable and interesting hero attains his objects by poisoning everybody who stands in the way of them. She, however, from a remarkable degree of delicacy towards her own conscience, always avoided the use of the offensive words *murder* or *poison*—she had recourse to the dainty paraphrase of “giving a person something.”

She now recollected that her mother used to combat the rats and mice, with which her house was infested, by arsenic; and, under pretence that she wanted it for the same pur-



pose, she asked for some. The mother gave it her, bidding her be very cautious to keep it from the children. After an interval, during which her heart seems to have failed her, she administered the first dose to her husband, at breakfast. When he had finished his repast, the poor man went out, whilst she “ascended the stairs, and looked out of the window after him, wondering whether he would be brought home dead.”

He was not brought home, but returned of his own accord, and took to his bed; where she continued to “give him something,” as occasion required. The sufferings of the unfortunate victim were frightful, and for the last four days she kept out of his room; not, as she admitted, from any conscientious pangs, but from an apprehension that he would suspect her; but she stood at the door, listening to his cries and groans. Unhappily for the many she afterwards conducted through the same path of anguish, to the

grave, she was not suspected. On the contrary, he died, committing his wife and children to the care of Gottfried.

She was very apprehensive that the appearance of the body might have suggested some unpleasant ideas to the mother, who had so lately supplied her with arsenic; and when they were nailing down the coffin, she thought "Miltenburg would surely awake with the knocking!"

But no such unfortunate events interfered with her plans. Her father undertook to settle her affairs, and, when all was arranged, she found herself a rich widow. She had suitors too, and offers of marriage, but her preference for Gottfried, who, before her husband's death, had become an inmate of the house, and still remained so, continued undiminished. He, however, made no proposals; and her parents having openly declared that she should never marry him with their consent, she began to entertain serious thoughts

of removing that obstacle, "by giving them something too."

Remorse of conscience she had never felt ; the only feeling that occasionally clouded her satisfaction in the success of her schemes, was the fear of discovery. As time advanced, and impunity gave her confidence, the apprehension in a great degree subsided. The extraordinary strength of her nerves is evinced by the following circumstance. She related, whilst in confinement, that shortly after the death of Miltenburg, as she was standing, in the dusk of the evening, in her drawing-room, she suddenly saw a bright light hovering at no great distance above the floor. It advanced towards her bed-room door, and then disappeared. This recurred on three successive evenings. On another occasion, she saw a shadowy appearance hovering near her : " Ach ! denke ich, das ist Miltenburg seine Erscheinung !" " Alas !

thought I, that is the ghost of Miltenburg !”

Yet did not this impression stay her murderous hand. During the rest of her life, and especially when in prison, she declared she was visited by the apparitions of those she had poisoned ; indeed, it was at last the terror these spectres inspired her with, that won her to confession.

It is a very remarkable fact, that for several years Madame Gottfried had a servant girl, called Beta Cornelius, who was herself one of the most honest, industrious, innocent, and pure-minded creatures that ever existed, living in intimate and close communion with her, who yet continued to believe her an angel of goodness. So exalted, indeed, was the girl’s opinion of her mistress, that she became occasionally the unconscious instrument of her crimes ; and so great was her respect, that she was silent about whatever she saw ;

and whatever she was desired to do, she did without question or suspicion.

In the meantime, Gottfried's proposals were not forthcoming; and, believing him to be withheld by the objections her parents made to the match, on the one hand, and by the consideration of her having a family of children on the other, she thought it was time to remove these obstacles out of his way. She said that her resolution, with respect to her parents, had been fortified by the pious and frequently-expressed wishes of the old people, that neither might long survive the other. She also consulted several other fortune-tellers, who all predicted the mortality that was to ensue amongst her connexions. She made no secret of this prophecy, but, on the contrary, frequently lamented that she knew she was doomed to lose her children and all her relations. She always concluded these communications by pious ejaculations, expressing a most perfect

resignation to the will of Providence. "God's will be done! The ways of the Lord are inscrutable, and we must bow to His decrees," &c.

About this time, Frau Timm, the mother, was seized with an indisposition, which continued for a fortnight, and inspired the daughter with lively hopes that the good woman was going to save her the trouble of helping her out of the world. She did not die, however; and, as this illness occurred just as the old couple were changing their residence, the invalid took shelter in her daughter's house, to get out of the way of the bustle. Here she was lodged in a finely-furnished apartment, which she remarked was much too grand for a humble body like her; but Madame Miltenburg, smiling, bade her fancy herself in childbed, a jest which so took the old lady's fancy, that "she shook her sides with laughter."

Three days after this, Frau Timm, having

requested her daughter to step home, for the purpose of fetching some little article she wanted, Madame Miltenburg discovered, amongst her mother's household goods, a small packet of ratsbane, "which, it appeared to her, Providence had lain in her way." She carried it away with her ; and on the ensuing night she could not sleep for the thoughts this acquisition suggested.

However, the mother had a relapse, and again the daughter hoped she would leave the world without her aid ; but again she was disappointed ; and, becoming impatient, she mixed some arsenic in a glass of lemonade, the favourite beverage of the invalid. Just as she was about to administer it, her own little boy, Heinrich, came into the room with a book he had been reading, and asked his grandmother if it were true "that the hand of the undutiful child would grow out of the grave." Gesina said that the boy's innocent question had cut her to the soul ; but it did



not stay her hand. As she presented the fatal draught to the old woman, three swallows flew into the room, and settled on the bed; the mother, smiling, said: "See the three pretty birds!" But the knees of the murderess shook, and her heart beat, for she thought they were the harbingers of death! She declared that such a thing had never happened before or since; that no swallows built about the house, or frequented the neighbourhood.

The poison did its work; the dying woman took the sacrament, and bade a tender adieu to her husband and daughter, committing her absent son to the care of the latter. She bade the old man rejoin her quickly in heaven; and he, pressing her hand affectionately, answered: "That in two months he would follow her."

Gesina related that, whilst she was mixing the poison for her mother, she was seized with such a violent fit of laughter, that she



was almost frightened at herself; but she comforted herself with the idea that "her mother would soon so laugh in heaven." By the body, she felt neither pity nor remorse; she was, on the contrary, cheerful, and fortified in the resolution to remove all obstacles out of the way of her desires. Accordingly, on the day of the interment, which was the 10th of May, she gave her youngest girl, Johanna, some arsenic on a bit of the funeral cake. The child fell ill immediately. Mr. Gottfried quieted it with some wine and water, and put it to bed. An hour afterwards, when the mother looked into the cradle, the child was dead. A few days had only elapsed when she despatched her eldest daughter, Adeline, in the same manner. The little girl died in her arms; she was a beautiful child; and when she was gone, the mother had a picture, which happened to resemble her, handsomely framed, and hung in her own room, calling it "her beloved Adeline."

The poor old grandfather was greatly affected by the death of the children, and he daily visited the grave where they and his wife were laid ; but his daughter comforted him with her filial attentions. One day, about a fortnight after the death of Johanna, she gave him, when he called on her, a nice basin of soup. He relished it exceedingly ; and told her that her tender care would prolong his life. When he had taken the soup, she accompanied him to his own house, and left him. That night she did not undress, or go to bed, for she knew she should be sent for.

In the morning, about four o'clock, the expected message came. Father Timm was very ill, and wished to see his beloved daughter. She went, and remained with him till he died. Several witnesses, who recalled the circumstances of the old man's death, declared that whilst she attended him, she was not only calm, but cheerful. She

remembered that wine and water had relieved the sufferings of Johanna, and went to fetch some for her father. When she returned, he was sitting on the ground, talking of his blessed wife, whom he said he saw sitting on the bed waiting for him. He died on the 28th of June.

These deaths caused neither suspicion nor surprise. Her little son Henry alone asked her why God took all her children from her. She said this question was a dagger in her heart, for Henry was her favourite child. This did not, however, prevent her poisoning him also in the ensuing month of September. He seems to have been a remarkably interesting boy, and his sufferings were so intense, that, monster as she was, she relented for a moment as she stood by his bedside. She sent for milk, which she believed to be an antidote; but the child died in inexpressible agonies. He also said he saw those waiting for him that had gone

before. "Oh, mother!" cried he, "see Adeline there! She is standing by the stove. How she smiles on me. There is my father too! I shall soon be with them in heaven!" Was there any fiction so tragic as this!

The rapidity with which all these members of her family had descended to the grave, at length began to excite some notice, and her friends recommended a *post-mortem* examination of the last sufferer. The doctor declared the child had died from intorsusception of the bowels; nobody thought of disputing his judgment; and no more was thought of the matter, except that the amiable Madame Miltenburg was the most unfortunate of women.

These events were followed by a very severe illness which attacked herself, and brought her also to the brink of the grave; without, however, producing any moral effect in her character. The only influence it had

on her conduct was, that from this time she endeavoured to set up a balance of good works, that should outweigh her crimes. She not only relieved the poor that applied to her for aid ; but she sought them out in all directions. Amongst other beneficent acts, she presented a sister of her father's with a bit of land that had fallen to her with the rest of the old man's property.

Her next victim was her brother, who returned very inopportunately from the wars, an invalid and a cripple. There were several powerful motives for putting him out of the way. She was ashamed of him in every point of view. He was not a creditable relation for so elegant a person as Madame Miltenburg ; he would be an impediment to her marriage with Gottfried ; and he would doubtless claim a share of the inheritance.

He arrived on the Friday ; and on the Sunday following she poisoned him. He died, raving about his horse and his mistress ;

and crying "Vive l'Empereur!" This was on the 1st of June, 1816, a year after the decease of her former victims.

All obstacles were now removed, and yet Gottfried made no proposals, although she nursed him through a severe sickness, and her attentions to him were unremitting. At length, however, she became in the family-way, and her honour was at stake. Once and again he promised to marry her, and still drew back; whether influenced by aversion, or an indistinct presentiment of evil, does not appear. For her part, passion was satisfied, and love extinct; but she wanted his name, rank and inheritance. She got her friends to interfere, and the backward lover, at length, gave his word. When they had been asked twice in church, however, she reflected that as he married her on compulsion, they never would be happy together; and that it would be advisable "to give him something too;" nay, that it would be better to do it at once.

When he found himself at the point of death, he would assuredly marry her, and she thus secured the name and the fortune, without the burthen attached to them.

She poisoned him with some almond milk and arsenic, on the day the marriage was proclaimed, and the final ceremony was performed whilst he was writhing in agony. Before he died, he exacted from her a promise that she would never take a third husband; and she declined all subsequent proposals on the plea of this promise to her "blessed Gottfried."

Nobody suspected her; who could have supposed that she had poisoned this long-desired husband on her wedding-day?

She was now Madame Gottfried, Countess of Orlamünde, and from the year 1819 to 1823 she made no use of her dreadful secret; but although she had removed husbands, children and parents out of her path, was she happy? No; she was alone and wretched.



This she admitted in her confessions ; and also that after the death of her little Heinrich she had often felt remorse. “ She could not bear to see other people happy with their children ; the sight of the joyous young creatures passing her house as they came from school pierced her to the heart ; she would shut herself up in her room and weep ; and when the clear moon shone over her head she would survey the estate of which she was now the sole possessor, and ask herself how she had earned it ! ”

But these glimpses of humanity were of short duration. It appeared that “ the blessed Gottfried,” as she always called him, had debts ; there were claims on his estate, and as she spent a good deal of money, and dispensed considerable sums in charity, she soon found herself in want of funds. At this period she seems to have formed a *liaison* with a certain Mr. X., a gentleman of family and fortune ; but being an influential



person, the particulars of his intimacy with her never transpired. Certain it is, however, that he lent her large sums of money, but fortunately for himself he made no advances without taking her bond for the debt. This precaution saved his life ; she could have poisoned him, but she could not annihilate the papers. He was the only person connected with her who never tasted of her deadly drugs.

Her acquaintance with this gentleman seems to have introduced her to a great many pleasures. He gave her *fêtes* and parties, presented her with opera tickets, and showered on her all manner of gifts and gallantries. To use her own expressions, “she began to live again ; she forgot the past, and thought herself the happiest person in the world !” She had a great many suitors for her hand, and she was surrounded by friends who revered her as a suffering angel. She affected to be very religious ; the poor

blessed her, and the rich respected her. This was in 1819; and she looked upon these as some of the happiest days of her life.

The next person she helped out of the world was a gentleman of the name of Zimmerman. He wished to marry her, but marriage, as she admitted in her confessions, was by this time out of the question. Her whole life was a lie; there was no truth about her, inside or out. Her body was made up of paint and paddings, and her conduct was a tissue of deceit and hypocrisy. She could risk no close communion, nor intimate inspection; but although she could not marry him she could borrow money of him on the strength of his love. This she did, and as he had not the prudence of Mr. X., she poisoned him to get rid of the debt.

She also gave a few doses to her old friend Maria Heckendorf, who offended her by some untimely advice—not enough to kill the poor woman, but sufficient to deprive her

of the use of her hands and feet, which, as she lived by her labour, was almost as bad.

After the death of Zimmerman she made a visit to Hanover, where she seems to have been received in the highest society, and to have been universally *fêted* and admired. She received especial kindnesses from a family of the name of Klein, who were irresistibly fascinated by the charms of her manner. During her residence there she wrote the most affectionate letters to the suffering Maria Heckendorf, offering to pay the expenses of her illness, and recommending her resignation to the inflictions of Providence.

Her return to Bremen, however, was less agreeable. She there found her creditors troublesome, and she administered poison in greater or less quantities to a variety of people. One of the most lamentable cases

was that of a young woman, a teacher of music, called Anna Myerholtz, who, by her industry, supported a blind father, eighty years of age. She attended the poor creature in her last agonies, and when her eyes were closed in death, she opened her desk and carried away all the little savings she had accumulated for the support of her now desolate parent.

About this time, being in company with a friend at the theatre, who shed tears at the tragedy of Hamlet, she bade her "not weep, for, thank God, it was only a play!"

To attempt to enumerate the number of persons whose health she utterly destroyed, without absolutely killing them, would be tedious. Every offence or annoyance, however insignificant, was requited with a dose of arsenic. Scarcely a person that came near her escaped when there was anything to be got by their deaths, though it were only a

few dollars. Thus she despatched her good friend Johann Mosees, who had lent her money and wanted to marry her; her faithful servant Beta Cornelius, who had laid by a little hoard of fifty dollars; and the worthy Mr. Klein of Hanover, who had also assisted her with a loan to some considerable amount. Indeed she poisoned the whole of Mr. Klein's family, but he alone died.

One motive for the crime which ultimately rid the world of this monster of wickedness, appears to have been despair. She began to apprehend that Mr. Rumpff suspected her. Indeed, at this time, she thought heaven and earth were leagued together to betray her, and it was satisfactory to learn that some of the agonies she had inflicted on others came home to herself at last. If a storm raged in the atmosphere, or a fire in the town—if a river overflowed its banks, or the neighbours quarrelled in the

street, she thought she was the object of it all. She declared herself persecuted by the apparitions of her victims ; and strangely enough sought refuge at the graves to which she had sent them.

But all this terror brought no repentance, nor even surcease ; she still administered her fatal drug, and took away the lives of two innocent children ; one, the foster son, and only consolation of her unhappy friend Maria Heckendorf.

She was arrested for administering poison to Mr. Rumpff, on the 6th of March, 1828. On her trial, it was clearly established that she had sent fifteen persons out of the world—how many she had incapacitated for living in it with comfort, it was impossible to ascertain precisely, but at least as many more.

With respect to her means of procuring, without exciting suspicion, so constant a

supply of arsenic as she used, she bought it in jars in the form of ratsbane. On one occasion, some of this deadly mixture being offered for sale, when she was at Mr. Klein's, she affected not to know what it was; and on being informed, she requested young Mr. Klein to purchase some for her, as she could not think of touching it herself.

Still, admitting her to have been the most consummate hypocrite that ever existed, her long impunity, and the success of her deceptions, seems incomprehensible. Not only did death follow upon her footsteps, but everybody died of the same malady and with similar symptoms. The persevering ill-luck that attended her, showing itself, however, in no shape but the mortality of her connexions, was a fact so remarkable that it had attracted general notice, and must have been known to many persons of discernment and intelligence in various grades of life; still no glimmering



of the truth aroused them to the investigation of so inexplicable a circumstance.

The art, too, with which she caused the withered and hideous skeleton which enclosed the demon within her, to assume the appearance of freshness and *embonpoint*, is almost equally extraordinary; knowing, as we do, how extremely difficult it is to make art look like nature; and how easily we discern the fictitious from the real, whether in hair, teeth, form, or complexion. Had London or Paris been the scene of Madame Gottfried's adventures, instead of the staid city of Bremen, we incline to think so valuable a secret would not have been permitted to die with her. Some enterprising artist would assuredly have purchased it by paying her counsel, and have thus secured his own fortune.

Besides the terrors she suffered from the supernatural visitations of her murdered



friends, Madame Gottfried was tortured by all sorts of horrible imaginings. Aware of the universal abhorrence and execration of which she was the object, she feared that some strange and terrible death would be invented for her—as that she would be bound to the bodies of her victims, and laid alive in the grave with them; or that she would be flung as food to some wild beasts that happened to be exhibiting in the town at the time.

One of her most trying moments was when she was shown her picture, painted as she really was, stript of all her rags and patches, in the prison dress. The only comfort she derived was from the observation that her nose was still handsome.

Madame Gottfried was not led to the scaffold till three years after her apprehension. She wished very much to die before the moment of execution arrived, and attempted

to starve herself, but had not resolution to abstain from food long enough for her purpose. She requested the attendants, in case they found her dead "to bind up her mouth and wipe the death damps from her face, that she might not look so hideous."

She was extremely afflicted when she saw the unbecoming dress she was to wear on the scaffold, and put it on with the greatest reluctance. She died a hypocrite, as she had lived, affecting a piety and repentance she evidently did not feel. When her head fell beneath the sword of the executioner thousands of voices from the assembled multitude hailed the triumph of that earthly judgment which sent her to her great account before her Heavenly Judge.

Her head, preserved in spirits, and her skeleton in a case, are still to be seen in the Museum of Bremen.

It is a fact worth remarking, that the predominant passion of these three women, Ursinus, Zwanziger, and Gottfried, was an inordinate vanity.



## II.

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### AN ADVENTURE AT TERNI.

IN the early part of the month of October of the year 1822, having passed the night at Spoleto, which still looks as if the fatal earthquake of 1703 had shaken all the inhabitants out of it, we proceeded, after breakfast, over the mountains to Terni, visiting by the way the curious remains of an ancient aqueduct, and an arch called the Arch of Hannibal, under which he is said to have passed in triumph after the battle of Thrasi-

mene. Though we had but fifteen miles to travel, yet, as we had to creep over the Apennines a great part of them, it was towards the middle of the day when we heard our postilions crying "Via! via!" as we drove up to the door of the hotel at Terni. An odd-looking foreign carriage that impeded our way moved forward upon this summons, and we took its place; and, having alighted, were conducted to a room on the first floor.

"Will there be time enough for us to see the falls to-day?" was our first inquiry; for we were anxious to reach Rome on the following evening, and to do this an early start was necessary.

"Certainly," said the host, "provided your excellencies" (excellencies are cheap there) "do not lose time."

"However, the air of the mountains had given us an appetite, and it was agreed that eat we must before we did anything else;

but it was arranged that, whilst we took our repast, a carriage should be prepared, and that we should set out immediately afterwards. In the meanwhile, we took our seats at the window, and looked abroad to see what was to be seen.

“What is that building opposite?” inquired I of the waiter.

“That is the jail,” he replied.

“And whose carriage is this at the door?” said I; for the odd-looking foreign carriage was still there.

“It belongs to the Count and Countess Z——,” answered he; “they are just going off to the falls.”

Effectively, two minutes afterwards we saw the footman advance to open the door, and presently a gentleman and lady stepped out of the house and entered the vehicle. After handing her in, the Count turned round and said something to the host, which gave us

an opportunity of catching a glimpse of his face. It was a young and handsome one, dark, and somewhat sallow ; his figure, too, was good ; and he was well dressed, in a blue coat, dark trousers, and light waistcoat. Whilst he was speaking, the lady bent forwards to observe him, and as she did so, she caught a view of our English phizzes at the window, and looked up at us.

“ Heavens ! what an Italian face that is ! ”  
I exclaimed to my companion.

“ What do you mean ? ” said he.

“ Why, I mean,” I replied, “ that there is a ready-made romance in it.”

“ What sort of a romance ? ” inquired he.

“ Why,” I answered, “ Vandyke is said to have predicted, on seeing a portrait of Lord Strafford, that he was destined to come to a bad end ; and that lady’s face reminds me of the prediction. There’s surely a very strange expression in those features ! ”



“ She is very handsome,” observed my friend.

“ Very,” I replied ; and so she was—dark complexioned, magnificent full black eyes, a finely formed mouth and nose, though these were rather on the large scale, and with that uniformity of colour, often so beautiful in Spanish and Italian women. She was attired in a pale silk of *ventre de biche*, and wore a delicate pink satin bonnet, and a rich white blond veil. Whilst we were making these observations, the gentleman stepped in, the carriage drove away, and our luncheon being shortly announced, we ceased to think more of the Count and Countess Z——.

As soon, however, as we had satisfied the claims of hunger, we remembered the business that was before us, and calling for our carriage, we proceeded to the foot of Mount St. Angelo, where we alighted, in order to

walk up the hill. There stood the foreign carriage; and I rather hoped that, as its owners were still viewing the falls, we might have another opportunity of inspecting the handsome pair. Some children, who are always in waiting to earn a few pence by showing travellers the way, here joined us, and advancing leisurely on account of the heat, we commenced the ascent.

There were gates at different intervals on the road, at each of which some children were stationed, one or two of whom, after letting us through, generally fell into our train. I think we had passed two or three of these, when we saw several people hastening down the mountain towards us, with a speed that implied they were urged by some more than common motive; and as they drew nearer, we distinguished a clamour, mostly of children, all talking as fast as they could at the top of their voices,

and gesticulating with the utmost violence.

“ *Che sia ?* ” (What is the matter ?) said I to our little guides.

“ *Non so,* ” (We don’t know), said they.

They then carried on a dispute amongst themselves, in which some said “yes,” and others “no;” but we could not understand more of their *patois*. At length one of them, pointing at the advancing group, cried out, with characteristic energy, “ *Si, eccolo !* ” (Yes, there he is) ; and on looking forwards, I descried in the midst of the party, walking so fast that he seemed either under the influence of the highest excitement, or else trying to outwalk his companions, the owner of the carriage, Count Z——.

He was bareheaded, his waistcoat was unbuttoned, and one side of his coat was torn clean off from the lappel to the waist. His face—but no—Fuseli might have painted it—words cannot describe it ; the deadly hue,

the white lips, the staring eyes, the horrid distortion of the whole feature !

“ *Che sia ? che sia ?* ” I exclaimed eagerly, as we reached the party.

But they all dashed past us, whilst the whole of our train fell into theirs ; and if my companion had not laid violent hands on one urchin, and prevented his secession, we should have been left standing on the hillside by ourselves. After straining our eyes after them for some minutes, guessing and wondering, and perplexing ourselves as to what had happened and where the lady could be, we resolved to hasten forwards with all the speed we could, in the hope of having our curiosity satisfied, and of perhaps meeting the Countess at the farm-house, or cottage, which we understood was to be found at the top of the mountain.

When we got in sight of this dwelling, our little guide ran forwards ; and we presently saw him talking to a woman

who was standing at the door, and who ultimately appeared to be the only living soul left upon the hill. The woman gesticulated, the boy held up his hands, and I once more called out "*Che sia? Dov'e la donna?*" (Where is the lady?) "*Morta?*" (Dead!) was the reply. "Dead!" we reiterated in amazement.

"Dead!" repeated the woman; "murdered—drowned—gone over the falls—by this time, you would not find a remnant of her as big as my hand—she must be dashed into a thousand pieces amongst the rocks! When the gentleman ascended the hill," she continued, in answer to our questions, "he drove the children back, and desired them not to follow him; and when they reached this place, he threw money to those who wanted to conduct him, saying he knew the falls as well as they did, and needed no guide. Most of them returned; but two, either from curiosity, or in the hope of getting more sous,

followed at a little distance, hiding themselves amongst the trees that border the river. They had not been out of sight above a quarter of an hour, when the children came running back, all aghast and out of breath, to say that the gentleman had conducted the lady to a spot very near where the river falls over the precipice; and that there they saw him stoop down, and look into the water. He then appeared to invite the lady to do the same, and seemed to be showing her something in the stream. The children averred that she appeared unwilling, and that he rather forced her to comply: be that as it may, however, no sooner did she stoop, than, going behind her, he gave her a sudden thrust, and pushed her into the river. She snatched at his breast as she fell; but he tore himself from her grasp, leaving one side of his coat in her hand; and in another instant she was over the edge of the precipice, whirling in the torrent, tossing amongst the rocks;

one piercing scream alone was heard to testify that she was conscious of her fearful fate.

“ Ere the children had well finished their tale,” the woman added, “ the gentleman had himself appeared in the state we saw him.”

Whether he was so overcome by remorse as to be unable to attempt giving the colour he had intended to the transaction, or whether he saw by the demeanour of the people that it would be useless, remains uncertain ; but, whatever his motive might be, he merely glanced at them as he passed, clasped his hands as if in great agony, and then hurried down the mountain at the pace we met him, followed by all the inhabitants. There, then, was my romance, even to the dire catastrophe, completed already !

It may be imagined with what strange and awe-struck feelings we proceeded to view the falls. The river that flows across the top of the hill is called the Velino. On each



side there are trees—I think the willow and the ash—which droop over its margin, and cast a deep shade on the water. We walked along the bank till we approached the torrent, and, within a few yards of the precipice, we thought we could discover the very spot where the catastrophe had happened. The soil on the edge of the bank had evidently been newly disturbed; the grass, too, was impressed and trodden—we concluded by the Count's feet, in the moment of the struggle. There was something white on the ground; we picked it up; it was a little scollop of very fine blond—a morsel of the veil I had admired! We were dumb with horror; for everything was so vividly present to our imagination, that we felt as if we had actually witnessed the murder.

Our anxiety to learn what was going on below rather precipitated our movements; so we descended the hill, and getting into our carriage, drove round to the bottom of the



falls, to take the other view of them. A river, called the Nera, flows round the foot of the mountain, into which the cascade tumbles; and as the clouds of white spray, tinged here and there with many a gorgeous hue, tossed in graceful wreaths before us, we more than once fancied that we caught shadowy glimpses of the veil, the drapery, or the pink bonnet of the poor victim. But these were the mere tricks of imagination. All must have been whirled away by the rush of water, and carried far from the spot before we reached it.

When we arrived at the inn and eagerly inquired for the Count, "He is there," replied the waiter, pointing to the heavy-looking building on the opposite side of the way—"there, in the jail." "And what will they do to him?" said I. The man shrugged his shoulders—" *E nobile* (He is a noble); most likely nothing."

On the following morning we proceeded

on our way to Rome, but not without making arrangements for the satisfaction of our curiosity as to the causes which had led to this melancholy catastrophe. What follows is the substance of what we heard.

The late Count Z—— had two sons, Giovanni and Alessandro. The family was both noble and ancient, but, owing to a variety of circumstances, the patrimonial estates, which had once been large, had been gradually reduced, till there was scarcely enough left to educate the two young men and support them in the *dolce far niente* that became their birth and station. In this strait, the old Count looked about for an alliance that might patch up their tattered fortunes; and it was not long before he found what he wanted, in the family of a Count Boboli. Boboli had been an adventurer; in short, no one knew very well what he had been, for his early history was a secret. All that was known was, that he

had appeared in Rome at the time of the French occupation, and that he had found some means or other of recommending himself to Napoleon, to whom he owed his patent of nobility. He had also found the means of accumulating immense wealth, the whole of which was designed for his beautiful daughter and only child, Carlotta. The Count of a hundred ancestors found no difficulty in obtaining the acquaintance of the new-made noble; and as each could bestow what the other wanted, they very soon understood each other, and a compact was formed between them, well calculated to satisfy the ambition of both. It was agreed that the beautiful Carlotta should become the wife of the Count's eldest son, and, in exchange for the noble name of Z——, should carry with her the whole of her father's immense fortune.

The wedding was appointed to take place the day after Giovanni came of age, of which

period he wanted six months ; and this interval it was that was the cause of all the woe. Giovanni no sooner saw his intended bride than he became desperately in love with her ; never was wealth purchased at a less sacrifice ; he felt he would rather a thousand times resign every ducat of the fortune than resign the lady. He devoted the whole of his time to attending her pleasures and following her footsteps ; and the consequence was, that Alessandro, the younger brother, to whom he was much attached, and who was generally by his side, was thrown much into her company. It seemed to have been universally admitted that Alessandro was the handsomest man of the two ; some said also that he was the most agreeable, but on this point the world appears to have differed. Unfortunately, the mind of the beautiful Carlotta entertained no doubts on the subject ; she resigned her affections, heart and soul, to Alessandro. Relying on her influence

over her father, when she found that she could not fulfil the engagement he had made for her without disgust, she threw herself at his feet, and implored him either to bestow her hand on the younger brother, or to break the compact altogether, and permit her to go into a convent. Neither proposal, however, accorded with the old man's ambition; and the only effect her entreaties had, was, that he adopted means to keep the object of her attachment out of her way, trusting that, when she no longer saw him by his brother's side, she would cease to make comparisons disadvantageous to her intended, and would be resigned, if not happy, to become the wife of Giovanni.

But Carlotta was a woman of sterner stuff than her father had reckoned upon. Absence had no effect upon her passion; opposition rather increased than diminished it; and, at length, a few days before that appointed for the wedding, she took an opportunity of dis-

closing the truth to her unhappy lover, and entreated him, by the love he bore her, to resign her hand himself, and to use all his influence to procure that she should be married to his brother. The poor young man, desperately in love as he was, could at first scarcely believe his misfortune—so near the consummation of his dearest hopes—within three days of the longed-for happiness—and the cup was dashed from his lips! As soon, however, as he had sufficiently collected his senses to speak, he told her that, from the moment he had first seen her, he had only lived to make her happy; and that he had looked forward to spending his days in that, to him, most blessed vocation; but that, since he found that this was a felicity not designed for him, he had nothing more to do with life. Finally, he promised that she should be obeyed, and should become the wife of his brother. He then went home, and, after writing a letter to Alessandro, de-

tailing what had led to the catastrophe, he stabbed himself to the heart.

The younger brother had now become the elder ; heir to the title, and the legitimate claimant of the lady's hand and fortune. But, alas ! he was no more disposed to marry Carlotta than she had been to marry Giovanni. Old Boboli, by way of separating him from his daughter, had contrived to get him sent to Paris ; and, by his interest there, had managed to place him in some situation about the court, where the young man soon found his heart assailed by the charms of the fair Mademoiselle Coralie de la Rivière, who showed herself not insensible to his admiration, and whom he loved with all the intensity that belonged to his nation and to his peculiarly ardent character.

His brother's letter, therefore, was a *coup de foudre* ; the titled fortune had no charms for him without Coralie ; and, besides, with that instinct that sometimes seems to guide



our loves and our hates, from the very first interview he had with Carlotta, he had taken an aversion to her. However, he obeyed his father's summons to return immediately to the Abruzzi, where stood, frowning amongst the mountains, the old Castle of Z——, but with a firm determination to refuse the hand of Carlotta, in spite of every means that should be used to influence him. But when people make these resolutions they should take care to keep themselves out of the reach of everybody whose interest it is to induce them to break them. We are all apt to think resolutions much less brittle things than they are, till they have been tried in the furnace. Although Alessandro from the first had boldly declared that nothing should ever persuade him to marry a woman whom he had always hated, and whom he now hated infinitely more, since she had been the cause of his brother's cruel death, his father's pertinacity did not give way one inch ; whilst he



found his aversion by no means diminished, his resolutions gradually gave way before the old man's firmness on the one hand, his mother's tears and entreaties on the other, and his own horror at the idea of his ancient house and all its ancestral honours sinking into utter penury and hopeless obscurity, when it was in his power, by marrying the heiress, to restore it to all its original splendour.

Whether, at this time, any fore-falling shadow of the future had passed before his eyes—whether the idea that he might wed Carlotta, secure the fortune, and then find means to be again a free man, had ever presented itself to his mind—whether he had allowed it to dwell there—whether he had given it welcome—hugged it, cherished it, resolved on it—can now never be known; but, certain it is, that he suddenly changed his mind, avowed himself prepared to obey his father's commands, and ready to lead the

daughter of Boboli to the altar. The period for the wedding was then fixed ; but in the meantime he returned to Paris, where he said the duties of his office called him.

When the time arrived that he should have re-appeared, he wrote an excuse, alleging that he was still detained by business ; and this he continued to do, week after week, till the period appointed for the wedding was close at hand. At length, on the evening before that fixed for the ceremony, he reached home. He had travelled, he said, with the greatest speed, having only been able to obtain a certain number of days' leave ; and added, that the very moment the marriage was solemnized, the bride must be prepared to step into his travelling carriage, and accompany him back to Paris. Carlotta, who, with her father and other members of both families, was waiting for him at the Castle of Z——, made no objection to this arrangement. She must have been aware that he did not marry

her from choice; but the amount of his aversion, or that he had another attachment, she did not appear to have even suspected. She probably imagined that the wealth and importance he was attaining by her means, and the compliment she had paid him by her decided preference, were sufficient to expiate the wrong she had done his brother; and trusted to her beauty and her love to accomplish the rest. Or perhaps, under the influence of an uncontrollable passion, she never paused to think of anything but its gratification, at any cost.

However this may be, they met with calm decorum in the presence of the family, and of the society assembled at the castle; but it was afterwards remembered that, after the first salutation, he had never been seen to address her. On the following morning there was a great deal of business to be transacted, many arrangements to be made, and he was so fully occupied till night, that the young

couple scarcely met till the hour appointed for the solemnization of his marriage, when he and his friends entered at one door, whilst the bride and her party advanced by the other. The company were magnificently attired; the chapel blazed with light, the pillars were twined with wreaths of flowers, the air was redolent with the perfumes of the incense; but the bridegroom stood with averted eyes, and it was observed that when the ceremony was concluded, he did not approach his bride, but turned away and addressed his mother.

The whole party now withdrew to the *salle à manger*, and supped; but ere the repast was well over, Alessandro's servant entered to announce that the carriage was at the door, and all was ready; whereupon the bride and bridegroom rose, and after a hasty farewell to their friends and relatives quitted the room.

“You'll reach Terni to breakfast,” said

Boboli, as he conducted his daughter through the hall.

“Yes—to a late breakfast,” replied Alessandro.

“Let us hear of you from thence,” said Boboli.

“You shall hear of us from Terni,” replied Alessandro.

“Adieu, my dear father!” cried Carlotta, waving her handkerchief as they drove off.

“Adieu, my child! adieu! May the Virgin protect you!” cried Boboli, as he turned and re-entered the castle.

Many of the party asserted afterwards that she had appeared agitated and uneasy during the supper; and some declared that they had observed her watching her young husband’s countenance with an eye of terror and perplexity. Her maid, too, affirmed that she was quite certain her lady’s heart had failed, and that she had some misgivings that evil

awaited her. "When I gave my lady her shawl and bonnet," she said, "she shook like an olive leaf; and when I asked her if anything was wrong, all she said was—'*Madre di Dio, pietà ! pietà !*'"

They travelled all night—at least all the remainder of the night, for it was past midnight when they started—only stopping to change horses, and had arrived at Terni to a late breakfast, as Boboli had predicted. Whilst the breakfast was preparing, the young Countess changed her dress; and the maid asserted that she here again betrayed considerable agitation, and that she heard her say to herself, "*Ahi ! mio padre ! ahi ! Giovanni !*" The waiter and the host who had attended them, remarked that she ate nothing, swallowing only a little wine; and that the Count himself appeared to have little appetite. No conversation passed between them, till, suddenly, her husband asked her if she was ready. She started at

the sound of his voice, as if it were something unusual to her; but immediately rose from her seat, and said yes. "Come, then," he said, and giving her his arm, he conducted her down stairs. The horses for the falls had been ordered by the servant immediately on their arrival, and were now waiting at the door; and it was at the precise period our story has now reached, that we had looked out of the window, and saw them enter the carriage and drive away.

"What did he say to you," I inquired of the host, "when he turned to speak to you on the steps?"

"He desired me to have horses ready for Spoleto, as they should start the moment they returned from the falls."

"Your waiter says he will escape because he is noble—is that so?"

"*E possibile*," (It is possible) replied the host, shrugging his shoulders.

But he did not escape: the young Count

Alessandro Z—was condemned and executed ; partly, however, through the strong interest that Boboli made against him. Nothing more of the mystery was ever disclosed, except to his confessor. “ He died, and made no sign.”



### III.

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## THE BURGOMASTER AND THE BEGGAR.

IN the southern part of Holland there are two villages, the one called Hoogvliet, the other Spykenis, separated by a broad stream, over which there is established, at that spot, a ferry. On a gloomy autumn afternoon, about fifty years ago, there arrived at Hoogvliet two travellers, an elderly man and a young one, who, having discharged the vehicle in which they had come, walked down to the ferry,

crossed it, and proceeded to the little inn on the opposite side, where the latter inquired for a carriage to convey them on their way. There was, however, no such thing to be had ; and, having expressed his disappointment rather sharply, he proposed to the other that they should enter the house and take some refreshment. This they did, remaining up stairs about half an hour, at the expiration of which time they came down, paid for what they had taken, and then separated—the elderly man going forwards, and the young one recrossing the ferry to Hoogvliet, where, having called at the inn to inquire if he had left a small portmanteau there, and being answered in the negative, he desired if such an one were found, that they should keep it safe till his return, which would be in about a month or six weeks. He then proceeded on his way, no one knew whither. Shortly afterwards there came on a violent storm of thunder, lightning, and rain, such as had not

occurred in that region for several years. The tempest continued little more than three-quarters of an hour, and then all was calm and still as before.

On that same evening, about three hours later, there came down to the ferry, on the Spykenis side, a blind beggar and his dog ; but as the usual hour for travellers was past, the watermen were gone, and when he called " Ferry !" no one immediately answered to his call. He was just about to turn away and seek the men, when he heard a foot hastily approaching, and a voice bade him stay. " I'll run up to the inn," cried the voice, " and bring down the other man, if you will wait five minutes."

Accordingly the beggar, who was weary with his walk, seated himself on the bank, but nearly twenty minutes had elapsed ere the man returned, accompanied by his comrade, and when they did arrive, the latter, who was evidently out of temper at being sum-

moned from his schnapps, was not at all pleased by finding that his enjoyments had been interrupted for nobody of more consequence than a blind beggar. However, having got so far, they handed the traveller into the boat, and were about to put off, when the beggar cried out, "My dog! my dog! Do not go without my dog!" whilst at the same time he whistled to the animal, and bade him follow him. "Come, Pfiffer, come!" cried he; but Pfiffer made no motion to obey. On the contrary, he stood on the bank, barking and growling, and occasionally howling, with his nose up in the air, as if he smelt mischief.

"What's the matter with him?" inquired the second man—he who had been fetched from the inn. "Is he afraid of water?"

"Not that I know," answered the beggar. "He always comes into a boat after me, ready enough. Come, Pfiffer, come."

"Take him up, Peter, and lift him in,"

said the same man. "We shall be kept here all night with the brute."

But the person addressed, although sitting nearest the shore, not being disposed to a closer acquaintance with Pfiffer's teeth, preferred assisting the beggar to that end of the boat, in order that he might lift the dog himself, which he did, concluding the operation with a slight kick for the trouble he had occasioned, and bidding him at the same time lie down and be quiet.

Pfiffer did lie down, but to be quiet seemed out of his power. He was evidently very uneasy, and although sensible of his master's displeasure, he somewhat suppressed the manifestation of his disturbance, he could not forbear relieving himself by a series of low growls and howls.

"I never knew the dog do so before," observed the beggar. "I think the storm must have frightened him."

"Dogs often foresee danger when we know

nothing about it," said the second boatman. "Take care no mischief befalls you on the other side. Do you remember, Peter," added he, "how that gentleman's dog whined and howled, for all the world like this beast, when he was brought down to the boat?"

"And did anything happen to the gentleman?" inquired the beggar.

"When he was half-way over, he jumped overboard and drowned himself," returned the same speaker. "I believe he'd got leads in his pockets, for he never came up again."

"When did this happen?" asked the beggar.

"About this time last year," answered the man. "For my part, I always feel queer like when I see a dog taking on so for nothing at all. My mind misgives me: he knows something that I don't."

In spite of these ill omens, however, they reached the other side in safety. The beggar and his dog were set on shore, and the boat-

men, without waiting for a fare, as it was so late, returned to their schnapps at Spykenis.

This beggar had a daughter residing at Hoogvleit in no very bad circumstances, and it was to visit her that he had crossed the stream. As begging was the only way he could make money, he preferred wandering over the country with his dog to staying at home, but so managed his peregrinations that he generally contrived to see this, his only connexion, once in two or three years. As was his custom, he remained with her a couple of weeks, and then re-crossed the ferry, on which occasion, to his surprise, the dog evinced exactly the same unwillingness to enter the boat, and the same discontent, when he was in it, as on the previous one. The boatman remarked that it was clear Pfiffer was born to be drowned, and had, therefore, a horror to the water; to which the beggar answered, that it was very strange, since he had crossed not only that ferry, but a hun-



dred others, in his time, and the dog with him, and that he had never seen him behave in that way before.

Being set on shore, the blind man walked up to the inn, where he took a glass of schnapps, and then, with Pfiffer, proceeded on his way, having told the host, who knew him, that he would not see him again till that time two years, at the earliest. Not many hours had elapsed, however, before he returned, in company with the blacksmith of the village, whom he had met on the road. The occasion of his return he related as follows :

“ It is about a fortnight,” said he, “ since I passed this way before. It was the day of the great storm, which had, indeed, detained me, and made me later than I intended to be. I came by the Yssel road, and when I got to the top of the little rise, where there is a wood on one side, my dog became very uneasy, barking and howling in an unusual manner. He even slipped his string out of



my hand, and left me. At the same time I heard a low moaning not far from me, and I called out to know if anything was the matter? whereupon a voice answered:

“ ‘It’s nothing of any consequence. My fellow-traveller is taken rather poorly, and we are resting here a little.’

“Immediately afterwards the dog uttered a cry as if somebody had struck him, and returned to me, and I came on, thinking no more of the matter, till I reached the same spot to-day, when the dog’s uneasiness recurred, and he left me as before; and this time I called him in vain; I could not get him to return. Whilst I was standing still, perplexed what to do, I heard some one approach, and, hailing the stranger, I told him what had happened.”

“Yes,” said the blacksmith, taking up the story at this point. “I came up just as he was at a dead lock; so, misgiving there was something wrong, from his account of the

business, I stepped to where I heard the dog whining, and there, just at the edge of the wood, what should I see but a man lying dead !”

“Dead !” echoed the bystanders.

“Murdered, I’m afraid !” said the blacksmith, with a portentous shake of the head.

As crime was by no means frequent in that neighbourhood, everybody was shocked and surprised, and great was the excitement in the village. The bailiff was informed of the circumstance, and, accompanied by half the population, including the host of the inn he proceeded to the spot indicated by the blacksmith, and there sure enough lay the body of a man apparently belonging to the respectable classes—his clothes at least indicated as much ; but, except a pocket-handkerchief and some letters, nothing was found about him. The natural conclusion was that he had been robbed ; that he had been mur-

dered was, alas ! too evident. He was a stout, elderly man ; and the host, as soon as he got near enough to see the face, announced that he recognised him as one of the two travellers that had called at his house on the day of the storm.

“One of them,” said he “went back directly to Hoogvliet ; the other set off by this road on foot, because our gig was out, and we couldn’t give him a conveyance till next day ; and this is the man, I am sure. He walked a little lame, and I wondered at his going away on foot, but his companion said he had business which obliged him to go forward. He was a foreigner, too, and spoke in a foreign language to his friend, though the latter, from his tongue, was a Dutchman.”

The body was brought down to the village, and investigations were set on foot to discover the assassin. By the letters found in his pocket, it was ascertained that the name of

the victim was Lucchesini, an Italian, who travelled for a great mercantile house at Leghorn; but with regard to the assassin, it was difficult to arrive at even a suspicion. His fellow-traveller had notoriously recrossed the stream, and gone the other road, and no one had been seen abroad that could be open to implication. There lay also great difficulties in the way, from the circumstance of the principal witness being blind. No one had seen the murderer except the dog; but the beggar avowed that his ears would in this instance answer every purpose; "for," said he, "if I ever hear again the voice that answered me from the wood, I shall recognise it at any distance of years."

In due time, no light being thrown on the affair, the body was interred, a letter written to Leghorn to announce the death of a traveller called Lucchesini, and the beggar permitted to proceed on his way. About three months afterwards the companion of the

murdered man—he who had recrossed the ferry, and gone back in search of his port-manteau—arrived, by the same conveyance as formerly, at Hoogvliet; and, being recognised by the innkeeper, was informed of what had occurred—a piece of intelligence at which he seemed little concerned, “for,” said he, “he was no friend of mine, but a mere accidental acquaintance, picked up on the road.” He made some inquiries into the particulars of the assassination and robbery, and also with regard to the name and condition of the victim, of which it appeared he was ignorant, and then went on his way. In process of time a letter arrived from Leghorn, desiring all papers found on the deceased to be forwarded thither; and there the matter ended, and was ere long forgotten.

Five years had elapsed since the occurrence of these events, when a person calling himself Joachim Binder appeared at Leerdam, and established himself there as a druggist. He

was a man yet in the prime of life, but grave, austere, and unsocial. He spent half his time in chapels and conventicles, associated with none but the most rigorous sectarians, and not only abstained from all profane pleasures himself, but uncompromisingly condemned those who indulged in them. Nobody knew who he was, nor whence he came; but as his conduct was unexceptionable, though he was little liked, he was tolerably well respected, and by the profligate members of the community a good deal feared.

There was one exception, however, with regard to his exclusiveness, which astonished everybody. The neighbourhood of Leerdam is famous for the rearing of horses, and the annual fair there is much frequented by dealers in that animal. Amongst these, and certainly not one of the most exemplary, was a person called Peter Clever, who, whenever he came to the fair, took up his residence at Binder's house; and whilst his host was

dilating behind his counter on the sinfulness of all worldly pleasures, the guest was drinking and roaring in the opposite public-house, which he never quitted till he was scarcely able to walk across the way to his bed. It is true that Binder shook his head gravely at these immoral proceedings, but still he put up with them, though the neighbours thought they observed that the departure of Clever was always a great relief to him, as, indeed, it was natural it should be. It was also remarked that the horse-dealer, when in liquor, spoke with considerable contempt of his friend the druggist, and he had been even heard to say, that, in spite of Binder's prayers and church-goings, he would fare no better in the next world than himself; but if, when he was sober, any one ventured to ask the meaning of these insinuations, he evinced so much displeasure and irritation, that the too curious inquirer was quickly silenced.

Binder had resided upwards of three years



in Leerdam, and, being no longer a novelty, had ceased to excite attention, when some political excitement, in which he took a part, brought him again into notice. He even broke through his customary habits on this occasion, and more than once attended public meetings and dinners, for the purpose of declaring his sentiments and supporting the party he had adopted, which was of course that of the Church. It happened that the recurrence of the annual fair at this period brought Clever to Leerdam, and although he, as usual, lived in Binder's house, it was soon perceived that they differed in opinion with regard to the political question then under discussion. The dispute, indeed, occasionally ran rather high between them, till at length one night it amounted actually to a quarrel. Fierce words passed, in the course of which some insinuations were thrown out by the horse-dealer, that visibly shook the soul of his friend, who, livid from suppressed rage,



with clenched teeth and fiery eyes, sat glaring at him like a tiger; whilst Clever, unmercifully pursuing his triumph, carried the company with him, and completed the discomfiture of the druggist, who presently rose and sulkily left the room.

It was now nearly midnight, and at one o'clock the party broke up, by which time Clever was a good deal intoxicated. Two of the company walked with him to the end of the street, and then, their homes lying in different directions, they separated, and he proceeded towards Binder's house alone. But he never reached it. Less than half an hour had elapsed when he was discovered by some revellers of the night, stretched on the pavement, not far from Binder's house, with a fractured skull. He was not quite dead, and had just time to designate his host as his assassin before he expired.

The body of the horse-dealer being disposed of in the police-office, and the autho-

rities made acquainted with the circumstances, they proceeded immediately in search of Binder. On reaching his door they rang and knocked for some time in vain, and they were beginning to conclude he had already made away, when an upstairs window opened, and, putting out his head, he cried, as addressing Clever : “ What are you standing there ringing and knocking for, when the door’s open? Why don’t you come in and go to bed ?” whereupon he angrily closed the window and disappeared ; and they, lifting the latch, found that what he had said was true. There is no doubt that this circumstance created a certain reaction in his favour, and some of those who had before been proposing to break open the door and seize him, now slackened their movements and fell behind, somewhat shaken in their convictions. However, preceded by the constable, they advanced to the door of Binder’s chamber, which they found locked.

“Get along, man, will you, and go to bed!” cried he.

“Open the door,” said the constable.

“I won’t open the door to a drunken rascal like you!” cried the other. “Go to bed, I say, and I’ll talk to you to-morrow.”

Upon this they proceeded to explain that it was not Clever, but the constable, that demanded admittance, on hearing which, he was heard to jump out of bed, and hastily opening the door, he inquired what they wanted.

“Your friend Clever is dead,” said they. “He has just been found in the street, with a fractured skull.”

“No more than he deserves, the drunken rascal!” returned Binder. “I always expected he would come to some such end. Fell down, I suppose.”

“No; murdered,” answered the constable; “knocked on the head with a stone.”

“ God bless me !” exclaimed Binder, “ who can have done that ?”

“ He says you did it,” answered the constable.

“ I do it !” said Binder, in a tone of careless contempt. “ Why, I left him drinking and came home to bed two hours ago. At least, I have been to sleep some time. What o’clock is it ?”

“ Two o’clock,” answered the constable.

“ Well, it was exactly twelve when I reached my own door,” returned the druggist. “ However, I’ll put on my clothes and go with you. Just step up stairs, and wake the servant, will you, and tell her I am going out.”

Upon this, the constable and one or two of the party ascended to the maid’s room, where they found her so fast asleep that it required some exertion to wake her.

“ What do you want ?” cried the girl,

sitting up in evident alarm at seeing three or four men standing by her bedside.

“ We came to tell you that your master is going out.”

“ Going out !” she said, looking puzzled and confused. “ What’s he going out for in the middle of the night ? He hasn’t been long home.”

“ Did you hear him come home ?”

“ Hear him ? Yes, to be sure I did. Didn’t I let him in ?”

“ You let him, did you ? At what o’clock ?”

“ It struck twelve just as he rang at the bell,” said she.

“ Why did you sit up for him ?”

“ Because I always sit up for him, to be sure, to give him his hot water. But what’s the matter ? What is he going out for ?”

When they told her what the matter was, she seemed more surprised than shocked at the death of Clever. “ He was such a drink-

ing, quarrelsome fellow," she said, "there was no wonder he had got knocked on the head." But when they told her that her master was accused of the murder, she appeared both indignant and incredulous, saying, she "would as soon believe she had done it herself."

By this time a perfect revolution had taken place in the minds of the bystanders, and even the constable began to think he was on a wrong scent. However, his orders were to seize Binder, and Binder being perfectly willing to go, they all set off, as soon as he was dressed, to the police-office, where the first thing the accused did was to ask to see the body of his supposed victim, which, on its being shown to him, he contemplated with the most entire indifference. On some surprise being expressed that he was not more moved at the death of his friend, he denied that he had entertained any friendship for Clever. "How could he entertain a friendship for a man of such a character and

such habits?" he said ; adding, that it was simply old acquaintance, and the having known each other as boys, that was the bond between them. "He did not come more than once a year," said he, "and then I put up with him ; but I was always glad when he was gone."

In spite of the growing conviction that Clever's accusation had been the result of error or revenge, Binder remained in custody, and measures were taken to procure evidence against him, but none could be found. That he had actually gone home at twelve o'clock was satisfactorily proved, not only by the testimony of the girl, but also by that of a neighbour, who had walked home with him from the place where they supped, and only left him when he saw him enter his own door. Not to dilate on the details of the investigation, it is sufficient to mention that the result was the acquittal of Binder, the authorities having arrived at the conclusion



that Clever had been killed in a drunken brawl, which at that season of political excitement and festivity was by no means improbable.

The druggist therefore returned to his shop and resumed his former mode of life. If any change was observable in him, it was that he had grown more pious and less austere; he seemed desirous of avoiding offence, and rather charitably lamented than harshly condemned, as he had formerly done, the peccadilloes of his neighbours. Nevertheless, it is difficult for a man who had been once accused of a murder to recover completely his place in society. Acquitted though he be, a cloud still hangs over him, and this was the case with Binder; his former associates did not withdraw from him wholly, but there was a shyness which no man could forbear seeing and feeling; and it was perhaps owing to this alienation of the world that he bethought himself of taking a wife.



He married a very poor but respectable woman, to whom a secure subsistence was a sufficient temptation to induce her to overlook the shadow that darkened her husband's reputation. They appeared to live well together, had in process of time two children, and, by the decency and decorum of their domestic life, had pretty well obliterated the stain on Binder's character, when he was elected, with the full consent of his fellow-townsmen, to the office of burgomaster—a circumstance which seemed to afford him considerable gratification, whilst the manner in which he discharged his duties gave equal satisfaction to his constituents.

It happened that the town of Leerdam had at that period some dispute with its neighbours regarding the settlement of the poor. The inhabitants feeling themselves oppressed, accused Gorcum of easing themselves at their expense, whilst the Gorcumites retorted the charge; and as Binder had

begun to taste the sweets of popularity, he did not neglect to ensure the favour of his fellow-townsmen by a vigorous defence of their rights in this particular. With this view he made an arrangement, which he strictly enforced, that all poor strangers should be reported to him on their arrival within the township, in order that if they had no ostensible means of living he might have them under his eye.

Now, although this zeal for their interests was very agreeable to the people of Leerdam, it was frequently very much the reverse to the poor travellers, who found themselves seized and dragged before the burgomaster, like criminals ; and it was naturally the most decent and well-conducted that took it the worst ; but the magistrate, having the citizens on his side, cared little for their complaints, and, in spite of them, persevered unflinchingly in his scheme. Now and then, some person, more than usually refractory,

got twenty-four hours in the house of correction to teach him submission; and one day the constables having laid hands on a decent-looking, old, blind man, who with a dog, grey with age, had made his appearance in the streets, they threatened, in answer to his objurgation, that if he did not go quietly they would shut him up. Of course, this menace did not soothe the poor stranger's temper, and when he arrived at the town-house it was in a considerable state of irritation.

"I never did any harm," said he; "what am I brought up here for, like a criminal? I've been in this town many a time, but never was served so before; what's your authority for treating me as if I was a thief or a murderer?"

"Hush! it's the burgomaster's orders," answered the officer; "and you are no worse treated than other people."

“ We accuse you of nothing,” said the burgomaster, “ only—”

“ Eh? Who speaks? Be quiet, Pfiffer!” said the beggar, giving the dog’s string a tug.

“ We accuse you of nothing,” reiterated the burgomaster: “ we only question your right to settle yourself in this town. Where were you born?”

“ Where was I born?” repeated the beggar, visibly agitated, whilst his face flushed crimson; “ where was I born?”

“ Ay; don’t you understand the question?” said the burgomaster, authoritatively.

“ Where do you come from?”

“ Where do I come from?” repeated the beggar with a loud voice and excited countenance, whilst he stretched forth his arm and pointed his forefinger to the spot whence Binder’s voice proceeded, “ I come from the hill above Spykenis, on the road to Yssel,

where, on a Thursday night, now thirteen years ago, a traveller, named Lucchesini, was robbed and murdered. I heard the groans of the victim and the voice of the murderer—and that voice is yours! See! the very dog accuses you!”

And certainly the agitation the animal betrayed, seemed to warrant the assertion. But concluding the stranger to be insane or intoxicated, the bystanders were about to seize him, when a sudden noise drew their attention, and on looking round, they perceived that the burgomaster had fallen from the bench to the ground, where he lay as if dead.

“ All that I have said is true,” rejoined the beggar; “ perhaps after so long a time I might have let him alone; but I spoke it out in anger, and, now I have told it, I cannot retract.” He then related all the particulars he knew regarding the death of Lucchesini; and whilst he was detained in order

to give further evidence, the burgomaster was removed to his own house, and there kept under surveillance. The first words he uttered on recovering his senses were these :  
“ The arm of the Lord reacheth afar !”

He never arose from the bed on which he was then laid, and without persuasion or interrogation he confessed the whole of his crimes. He seemed to think himself so visibly struck by the hand of the Almighty, that resistance or subterfuge were vain ; and it is remarkable, that fearful as was the confession he had to make, nobody when they heard it expressed much surprise. The gloss of good opinion he had won reached no further than the surface ; a strange instinct, almost unknown to themselves, lay deep in the hearts of his fellow-citizens, and bade them mistrust him.

“ I was born at the Hague,” said he, “ of decent parents, and early became a clerk in a merchant’s house ; but, being found not trust-

worthy, I was discharged, and went to service. The master with whom I lived was an architect, and with him I travelled to Italy, where remaining two years, I learned to speak the Italian language. Shortly after our return he died, and I was living at Amsterdam, as occasional waiter at an inn, when Lucchesini came to it. He could not speak a word of either German or Dutch, and, as I could speak Italian, he found me extremely useful to him; and after living a week in the house, he proposed my accompanying him in his tour through Germany. I accepted the proposal, and the people of the inn, who knew nothing against me, giving me a good character, we started together.

“ I had no baggage but a knapsack; for the truth is, I had nothing to carry, having been reduced by my own profligacy to the extremity of distress before I took the situation at the inn in which Lucchesini found



me. He had a small portmanteau, in which I knew he carried money, and about which I observed he was always extremely anxious ; notwithstanding which, he one day left it behind, and never discovered his loss till we had crossed a ferry, and reached a village called Spykenis. For my part, I was well aware that we were leaving the portmanteau behind ; but as I had been for some days plotting how to get possession of it myself, I said nothing till we had crossed the ferry, expecting that he would send me back for it ; and so it happened. His first proposal was to wait at Spykenis for my return ; but, finding there was no carriage to be had, he resolved to walk forward, sure, that as he was lame and a bad walker, I could overtake him if I pleased, or at all events rejoin him at Yssel.

“ I accordingly left him to go on alone, whilst I recrossed the ferry without the slightest intention of returning. When I



reached Hoogvliet, seeing a small cart at the door of the inn, it occurred to me that the portmanteau might have been sent after us, and I went in to inquire—a proceeding which afterwards served me extremely well, since it established the fact of my recrossing the ferry and setting off in another direction.

“I soon found the portmanteau, which, having no address on it, the people willingly resigned to me, supposing it to be mine ; but now the demon of avarice seized me, and I began to think myself a fool to be contented with part, when I might have the whole ; for Lucchesini had not only a well-filled purse in his pocket, but carried about him a gold watch and a handsome silver snuff-box.

“I determined therefore not to rejoin him till he reached Yssel ; and as I knew the house he was to put up at, I made my arrangements to arrive there at night after he was

gone to bed, and having possessed myself of his property, to make off at once. With this view, I started on my way back to the ferry, in spite of a violent storm which drenched me to the skin. Indeed the storm rather favoured my scheme than otherwise, as it drove everybody from the road, and I had a better chance of passing unobserved. I drew my hat over my face, and tied a handkerchief across my chin, wishing, if possible, to escape recognition at the ferry ; but when I arrived there, I found no boatmen, the tempest having driven them to shelter. There was, however, a small boat with a couple of sailors in it, belonging to a ship that was lying on the other side of the river, and as they were just going across, they offered to take me with them. I accepted, and, being landed at Spykenis, I started on the road to Yssel.

“ I had allowed plenty of time for Lucchesini to get the start of me, bad walker as he was ; but, unhappily overtaken by the storm,

he had sought shelter and been delayed, so that when I little thought he was so near, I came suddenly upon him. He was sitting by the side of the road, on the borders of a little wood, tying his shoe. Whether he heard my foot I cannot say; probably not; for I was walking on the grass, but he did not look up. The loneliness of the place, his stooping attitude, which gave me such an advantage over him, together with the demon of cupidity that was in me, urged my hand, and I struck him on the head with a heavy stick I carried with me; but what was my dismay to find myself at the same moment seized by a strong arm from behind! ‘Hallo! what are you at there?’ cried a voice, and on looking round I recognised one of the ferrymen who had rowed Lucchesini and myself across the river. He had had a few hours’ leave to visit his mother, who was ill, and was returning through the wood, from which he happened to emerge at that critical moment.”

Not to dwell on painful details, let it suffice to say, that by allowing him to share in the spoils, Binder succeeded in purchasing the silence of the boatman, who, as will be readily understood, was no other than Peter Clever. It was at this juncture that the blind man came up, and whilst Binder answered his inquiry, Peter gave a kick to the too curious dog, which it was clear the animal did not forget when he was desired to get into the boat.

When the guilty pair parted, Binder flattered himself that Clever would not recognise him should they meet at any future period ; but in this hope he was disappointed. As soon as the investigations were terminated, alarmed lest they should be renewed, Clever quitted Spykenis, and, as chance would have it, ere long found himself in a canal boat with his companion in crime, both on their way to Rotterdam. A recognition and a sort of partnership, in which fear on Binder's side

was the only bond, ensued, and lasted for some time, till Clever taking to horse-dealing, the other seized the occasion to break from him, and settle himself in a more reputable mode of life. It was then he came to Leerdam, and appeared as the grave and pious citizen we there found him; nor were the gravity and piety altogether assumed. The blood he had spilt haunted his conscience, and he sought more, perhaps, by austerity and external forms than by inward purification, to reconcile himself to Heaven. But Clever was his evil genius still; disgracing him by his disorderly visits, and terrifying him with threats or sarcasms, according to the humour he was in, till his patience was exhausted, and under the influence of fear and hatred he slew him. It had been his intention on that fatal night to wait his guest in the street, but the circumstance of his neighbour accompanying him, forced him to go home first. When the maid had retired to bed, he went quietly

out, waylaid his victim, accomplished his purpose, and was at home again, and in his chamber, time enough to receive the visit of the constable.

Joachim Binder paid the penalty of his crime, eminently illustrating his own words, *that the arm of the Lord reacheth afar !*

## IV.

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### THE SURGEON'S ADVENTURE.

IN the year 1836, as a young surgeon of Florence, called Alberto Riquetti, was returning at a late hour to his own house, he stumbled over the body of a person who was lying near his door, and crying feebly for help. Ever anxious to succour the distressed, Riquetti, with the assistance of his servant, lifted the stranger into his surgery, where he dressed several very dangerous wounds which he found about his person; and then, as the

night was too far advanced to carry him anywhere else, he put him to bed.

On the following morning he found the patient so ill, that he entertained very little hopes of his recovery ; and as to remove him would have been indisputably fatal, he allowed him to remain where he was. On the second day he was so bad that Riquetti doubted his surviving four-and-twenty hours longer ; and having acquainted him with his situation, he proceeded to inquire his name and station, and sought to ascertain if he had any friends, or relations whom he would desire to see, or to whom, should his death ensue, he would wish the event to be communicated. The man answered that, with respect to his name he was called Gasparo ; but for the rest, he requested that a confessor might be sent for, to whom he would make known whatever was necessary.

This desire was complied with, and what passed between the patient and the priest,



of course remained unknown. But when the holy man came forth from the stranger's chamber, his whole demeanour denoted awe and terror; his cheeks and lips were bloodless; his hands trembled; and ever and anon he lifted them up to heaven, as if praying for the soul of a great sinner. The only words he uttered were, to desire that, when the man he had confessed was dead, he should be immediately informed of the circumstance.

However, Gasparo did not die. He was in the prime of life; and a good constitution, and the constant care of the surgeon, saved him. As soon as he was well enough to walk away, he left his benefactor's house, expressing the most ardent gratitude for Riquetti's kindness, and calling down blessings on his head for the persevering skill and care which had rescued him from the grave; but he went as he came, unknown; no word had he ever dropped that threw the slightest ray of light on his past history or future where-

about, and in the memory of the young surgeon he lived only as *Gasparo, the wounded stranger*.

In the winter of 1839, Alberto Riquetti was seized with an indisposition, for which, as it had been chiefly induced by too much application to his business, a little recreation was pronounced the best remedy. So, with this view he resolved on an excursion to Rome, where he promised himself much pleasure in inspecting the antiquities, more especially the ancient Etruscan tombs, which had lately excited so much interest amongst the learned, and most of which were within a short distance of the city.

For the sake of those who may yet be unacquainted with the history of these curious relics, it may be as well to mention, that the Etrurians were a celebrated people of Italy, anterior to the Romans, and occupying the country west of the Tiber. The extent of territory which they possessed, though not

great, was nevertheless divided into twelve different states, each of which was governed by its respective king, or, as they called him, *lucumon*; and in spite of the diminutive space they occupied on the globe, they were, relatively to their neighbours, a very powerful people, wealthy, luxurious, and refined. The taste and proficiency they had attained in the fine arts, as well as much of their manners, customs, and modes of living, have been placed before us in a very extraordinary manner, by the discovery of the ancient tombs above alluded to, which are, in fact, small chambers hollowed out of the sides of hills, and which appear to have been the resting-places prepared for the mortal remains of the wealthy and the noble. Although the bodies which reposed in these ancient receptacles have long mouldered into dust, and although the Etrurians, with their kingdoms and their principalities, powers, wars, councils, commerce, luxuries, virtues, superstitions and

vices, have long passed from the earth, and some faint records only remain to tell us of their greatness, yet from their tombs they speak to us again; here, in their “very habits as they lived,” they lift up their voices and cry to us, “Behold! thus did we three thousand years ago!”—for the paintings on the walls of these excavations show us this ancient people in almost every condition of life. We see them at their banquets and their diversions, at their marriages and their funerals, engaged in their athletic games, dancing, playing on various instruments, and even on their death-beds. Numerous curious and valuable specimens of their ornaments, vases, and armour, have also been found in these dwellings of the dead, as well as the sarcophagi in which the body had been deposited. The Etrurians were the most powerful and resolute enemies the rising empire of the Romans had to contend with, and were not conquered till after long wars

and much effusion of blood and treasure had exhausted its strength.

Having given this little sketch of one of the most interesting specimens of antiquity in Italy, we will now return to our hero.

It was on a fine morning of the early spring that Alberto Riquetti started on his expedition to the Etruscan tombs, the first visit he proposed being to the necropolis of the ancient city of Veii—a city, by the way, which it cost the Romans many a hard battle to win, and which, after holding out a siege of ten years, was at length taken by their famous general, Camillus, about four hundred years before the Christian era.

Veii, or rather the spot where Veii once stood, is situated about twelve miles from Rome, on one of the roads to Florence. For the first nine or ten miles the way lies along the high road, but, at a village called Fossa, it diverges, and for about two miles more leads across some fields, till it terminates at a

place called the Isola Farnese, where there is an inn at which travellers put up, and where, although the site of Veii is two miles further still, they are obliged to leave their horses and carriages, as beyond this point there is no practicable road.

The Isola Farnese is a quiet little hamlet, situated on a rising ground, surrounded by cliffs, and streams, and picturesque rocks, and murmuring waterfalls, adorned by this pretty inn and an ancient and venerable fortress. The inhabitants, who are all shepherds and vine-dressers, are extremely civil to travellers, and have an air of innocence and rural simplicity that, to a frequenter of cities like Alberto Riquetti, was quite irresistible.

“Here,” thought he, “must the crimes, and vices, and miseries of a great city be unknown, and probably unsuspected. How few of the dwellers in this little Eden have ever extended their travels even as far as

Rome! Their vines and their flocks are enough for them. Above want, and below ambition, their minds must be pure and their lives happy. It is quite a subject for a poet."

The inn-keeper too, was the most civil and obsequious of inn-keepers—quite a pattern of an inn-keeper; and Alberto Riquetti was so charmed and fascinated by all he saw, that he resolved to make the Isola Farnese his head-quarters, and thence extend his excursions to the different objects of curiosity around.

As the first day was to be devoted to the necropolis of Veii, after refreshing himself with a crust of bread and a glass of wine, he asked for a guide, who, being immediately presented to him, he set forth on his expedition, having informed his host that, as he should be occupied all day in sight-seeing, he should not care to have any dinner, but that he wished a good supper to be provided



against his return at night—a request which the worthy Boniface assured him should be strictly attended to. “Indeed,” he said, “he was generally in the habit of acting as cook himself, and he thought he might venture to promise his guest a ragout, the like of which he had never tasted—he was particularly famous for his ragouts ; indeed,” added he, “most travellers who eat them find them so good, that they are never inclined to taste another.”

“Except of your making, I suppose?” said Riquetti, smiling.

“Of course—that’s understood,” answered the host.

“A tolerably conceited fellow,” thought our traveller, as he followed his guide in the direction of Veii. The guide seemed to be of the same opinion, for he chuckled and laughed, and appeared greatly diverted with this explosion of the host’s self-love.



"I suppose you have a good many travellers here?" said Riquetti.

"Not in the winter," answered the man; "you are the first we have seen for this long time. You come from Florence?"

"Yes, I do," replied Riquetti. "How did you know that?"

"I happened to hear the postilion that drove you tell the inn-keeper so, and that you were making a tour for your health?"

"That's true, too," said Riquetti, rather wondering how the postilion, whom he had never seen before, should have learned so much about him.

"It's dull travelling alone," continued the man; "particularly when a person's sick and out of health; but perhaps you are a bachelor, and have nobody to look much after you?"

"I am a bachelor, certainly," said Riquetti, rather amused at the curiosity the man was exhibiting. "Unsophisticated nature," thought he, "savages, and uncivilized people, are

always inquisitive;" so, without taking offence at the interrogations, he answered as many as the guide chose to put to him.

In the meantime they advanced slowly on the road to Veii, stopping ever and anon to inspect the different points of view, and examine everything that appeared to present a vestige of antiquity; when, in rounding a point of rock, they came suddenly upon a little hovel, before the door of which stood a man scraping and tying up in bundles the sticks which, at another period of the year, are used for training the vines. At the sound of the approaching footsteps the man lifted up his head, and as his eye fell upon the surgeon, he started visibly, and an expression of surprise passed over his countenance. He even parted his lips, as if, upon the impulse of the moment, he was about to speak; but suddenly closing them again, after giving one look at the traveller, he stooped forward, and silently resumed his

previous attitude and occupation ; whilst Riquetti, who had cast but a passing glance at the man, and who attributed his surprise to the suddenness of their appearance, walked on, and thought no more of the matter.

It was drawing towards the afternoon, and our traveller had already spent some hours amongst the tombs, when, on emerging from one of them, he observed the same man, sitting on the ground, near the entrance. He seemed to have wounded his foot, and was stanching the blood with a handkerchief. The guide approached him, and asked him what was the matter.

“ I hurt my foot yesterday,” said he ; “ and being obliged to walk thus far to speak to old Guiseppe, the exercise has set it bleeding again,” saying which he bound the handkerchief round his foot and arose.

As he spoke, there was something in the voice and the play of the features that struck Riquetti as familiar to him ; and that this

approach to recognition was legible in his own face, was evident, for the man instantly frowned, and turned away his head. He, however, seemed inclined to join the party, or at least his way lay in the same direction; for he kept near them, lingering rather behind, as if his lameness impeded his activity. Presently, at a moment when the guide was a few yards in advance, and Riquetti between the two, he felt himself slightly touched upon the back, and on looking round he beheld the vine-dresser with the forefinger of one hand placed upon his lip, as if to enjoin silence, whilst in the other he held a piece of linen stained with blood, which he stretched out towards the traveller, shaking his head the while, and frowning in a manner that Riquetti was at a loss to understand, and which, as the injunction to silence was perfectly intelligible, he forbore to ask. His curiosity, however, being vividly awakened, and indeed his fears somewhat aroused, for

he thought the gestures of the man seemed designed as a warning against some danger that awaited himself, he endeavoured to keep as near him as he could; whilst he kept his eye pretty constantly fixed upon his guide, whom he imagined must be the enemy he was admonished to distrust. "Who is that man with the wounded foot?" he inquired.

"That is Gasparo, the vine-dresser," was the answer.

Riquetti had thought as much, although the appearance of his former guest was very much altered by the restoration of health, and a considerable acquisition of *embonpoint*; but with the conviction that it was Gasparo came also the conviction that the warning had been well intended, and that the danger was real. But it was not easy to know what to do. He was two miles from the inn, in a lonely place, and the evening was drawing on; there was barely light enough to enable them

to see their way back to the Isola Farnese. It is true he saw nobody near him except his guide; but he had himself no weapon, whilst the other might be armed; besides, there might be enemies in ambush that he was not aware of. However, there was nothing to do but to return to the inn as fast as he could, and this he did, taking care to keep the guide in advance of him all the way; and, to his surprise, he arrived there without any alarm, or without perceiving anything in the conduct of his companion that could have excited the slightest suspicion.

“Surely,” thought he, “I must have mistaken Gasparo’s intentions; he must have meant to entreat my silence with respect to himself; and the bloody cloth was for the purpose of recalling my memory to his wounds, and the circumstances under which we formerly met. He is, probably, for some reason or other, afraid of being identified. This must be the true interpretation of his

gestures. It would be absurd to suppose I can have anything to fear amongst this virtuous, unsophisticated people."

Comforted by this conviction, and resolved, in compliance with Gasparo's wishes, to ask no questions about him, Riquetti, having called for his supper, and a bottle of wine, set himself, with a good appetite, to his fare. The first dish consisted of some fresh-water fish, of which he partook sparingly, reserving his appetite for the ragout, of whose merits the landlord had so confidently spoken. The odour it emitted when the cover was lifted appeared to confirm his predictions; the aroma was very savoury indeed.

So the surgeon lifted a spoon, and helped himself to an ample portion of the stew. Then he took up his knife and fork, but, just as he was preparing to put a morsel into his mouth, he suddenly stopt, and, placing his hand on a bottle of wine that stood beside him, he said :



“By the bye, have you any good Bordeaux?”

“I have no Bordeaux,” answered the host, “but I have some good Florence in flasks, if you like that.”

“Bring me some,” said Riquetti. “This ragout of yours deserves a glass of good wine!” And the host left the room.

No sooner had the door closed upon him, than the movements of the surgeon would have extremely puzzled a spectator. Instead of conveying the savoury mess from his plate to his mouth, as might naturally have been expected, he conveyed it with inconceivable speed to his pocket-handkerchief, which, with equal celerity, he deposited in his pocket, so that, by the time the host returned, the plate was empty.

“That is a capital ragout of yours—excellent, indeed!” said he, as he poured out a tumbler of wine, and tossed it off. A suspicious eye might perhaps have observed that



his cheeks and lips were blanched, and that his hand was unsteady ; but the wine brought back the blood to his face, and the host perceived nothing extraordinary. The ragout being removed, some bread and cheese were next produced, of which he slightly partook, and then the table was cleared, and the host retired.

As soon as he was gone, Riquetti, having set a chair against the door, to prevent his being too abruptly disturbed, took out his handkerchief, and very closely examined its contents, after which he restored the whole to his pocket, and began pacing the small room from end to end, with a countenance in which anxiety and apprehension were visibly depicted. He looked at the window, and appeared to be deliberating on the propriety of getting out of it. The thing was practicable enough ; “ but then,” murmured he, “ I could not find my way to Fossa ; I should not know in which direction to turn ;” for, as

we have observed, it was yet but the early season of the year, and it had already been long dark. “Besides,” added he, “who knows whether it would be safe to address myself to any one there, stranger as I am ; it might be running from Scylla to Charybdis. Gasparo ! Gasparo ! where art thou ?” These were but thoughts scarcely formed into words, and yet they seemed to be answered, for at that moment his attention was roused by two slight taps on the window. There was nothing before it but a calico curtain ; this he drew aside, and then, on the taps being repeated, he gently lifted the sash.

“Go to your bed-room as soon as you can,” said a hurried voice ; “put out your light, and when you hear the signal, open your window, and, as quietly as you can, descend a ladder you’ll find ready for you ;” and the speaker, whom the light in the room showed to be Gasparo, turned quickly away, adding, “Shut down the window ; be silent

and cautious!" "Bravo, Gasparo!" whispered the surgeon to himself, as he obeyed his injunctions by closing the window and replacing the curtain—"Bravo! If you're a villain, you're a grateful one, at all events."

Having removed the chair from the door, and seated himself in an attitude of great ease and nonchalance, he drew a book from his pocket, which he placed before him, and then he rang the bell, and ordered some coffee; "and then," said he to the host, "I shall be glad to have my bed got ready, for I am tired with my day's work, and I mean to be off early in the morning."

The coffee was accordingly brought and drunk, and then Riquetti requested to be shown to his bed-room, which proved to be a small apartment up one pair of stairs. As he expected, there was no fastening to the door of any sort; so, having placed the dressing-table before it, and inspected the place

all round, not forgetting to look under the bed, he took his portmanteau under his arm, put out his light, and, with a beating heart, sat down to await the promised signal.

He did not wait long. In less than half an hour, a few small pebbles, thrown against the window, summoned him to open it. He could not see the ladder, but he felt it, and, stepping out, he carefully descended. As soon as his foot touched the ground, Gasparo, who was there to receive him, took him by the hand, and whispering, "Now, run for your life!" he dragged him forwards; and, leading him up hill and down hill, across fields, over hedges and ditches, and through the water, without ever pausing to take breath or to utter a word, he at length, after some hours' flight, suddenly stopped, and Riquetti perceived that they were on the high road.

"Now," said Gasparo, "you are within half an hour's walk of the city—you are safe

—farewell, and God speed you ! I have paid my debt !”

And with that he turned, and walked hastily away ; and, though Riquetti called after him, and begged him to stay and speak to him for a moment, he never so much as turned his head, but, departing as rapidly as he could, was soon out of sight.

The surgeon looked after him as long as he could see him,—for it was now the dawn of day ; and, when he could see him no longer, having breathed a prayer for his preserver, with a grateful heart he took his way to Rome, where, before ever seeking the rest and refreshment he so much needed, he requested an interview with the chief officer of the police.

“ I have,” he said, “ most important communications to make ; but before I say a word, you must obtain for me a promise, that, whatever discoveries may ensue from

my disclosures, the life of one individual shall be spared. He has saved mine, and I cannot endanger his."

This condition being acceded to by the government, Riquetti proceeded to detail his adventures, and to display the contents of his handkerchief; and the consequence of his communications was, that these innocent, virtuous, obliging, and unsophisticated vine-dressers and shepherds were proved, on investigation, to be leagued banditti, of whom the inn-keeper was the chief. In the month of March, 1839, no fewer than forty of them were brought to Rome and condemned to death or other punishments, according to the amount of crime proved against them. The worthy host, so celebrated for his excellent ragouts, expiated his enormities on the scaffold. Besides the evidence of the surgeon, many circumstances combined to show, that, when short of provisions, he had

been in the habit of supplying the deficiency by compounding his dishes of human flesh. Riquetti's apprehensions had been awakened by observing something on his plate, which his anatomical science enabled him to recognise as part of a human hand, thus furnishing the interpretation to Gasparo's warning gestures, and opened his eyes to the danger of his situation. Numerous travellers seem to have fallen victims to this atrocious conspiracy, but these wretches admitted that they never attacked the English, as the investigations that would have been set on foot by their countrymen, had any of them been missing, would infallibly have led to a discovery of their iniquitous proceedings. It was some satisfaction to the surgeon, that Gasparo was not found amongst the troop; he had not been seen at the Isola Farnese since the night they had fled together.

It appears wonderful that within so late a period, and within twelve or fourteen miles

of a great city, such a villanous combination could have subsisted; in England, such a nest of scoundrels would be exposed and extirpated in a month.



## V.

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### THE LYCANTHROPIST.

WHOEVER has read the “Arabian Nights’ Entertainments,” will be acquainted with the words ghoul and vampyre. A ghoul was believed to be a being in the human form, who frequented graveyards and cemeteries, where it disinterred, tore to pieces, and devoured the bodies buried there. A vampyre was a dead person, who came out of his grave at night to suck the blood of the living, and whoever was so sucked became a vampyre in his turn

when he died. Both these persuasions have been rejected by the modern scientific world as altogether unworthy of credence or inquiry, although, about a century ago, the exploits of vampyres created such a sensation in Hungary, that they reached the ears of Louis XV., who directed his minister at Vienna to report upon them.

In a newspaper of that period, there appeared a paragraph to the effect that Arnold Paul, a native of Madveiga, being crushed to death by a waggon, and buried, had since become a vampyre, and that he had himself been previously bitten by one. The authorities being informed of the terror his visits were occasioning, and several persons having died with all the symptoms of vampyrism, his grave was solemnly opened, and, although he had been in it forty days, the body was like that of a living man. To cure his roving propensities, a stake was driven into it, whereupon he uttered a cry ; after which his head

was cut off, and the body burnt. Four other bodies, which had died from the consequences of his bites, and which were found in the same perfectly healthy condition, were served in a similar manner; and it was hoped that these vigorous measures would extinguish the mischief. But no such thing. The evil continued more or less, and, five years afterwards, was so rife, that the authorities determined to make a thorough clearance of these troublesome individuals. On this occasion a vast number of graves were opened, of persons of all ages and both sexes; and, strange to say, the bodies of all those accused of plaguing the living by their nocturnal visits, were found in the vampyre state—full of blood, and free from every symptom of death.

The documents which record these transactions bear the date of June 7, 1732, and are signed and witnessed by three surgeons and other creditable persons. The facts, in

short, are indubitable, though what interpretation to put upon them remains extremely difficult. One that has been suggested is, that all these supposed vampyres were persons who had fallen into a state of catalepsy or trance, and been buried alive. However this may be, the mystery is sufficiently perplexing; and the more so, that through the whole of Eastern Europe innumerable instances of the same kind of thing have occurred, whilst each language has an especial word to designate it.

That which in the East is called 'ghoulism' has in the West been denominated 'lycanthropy,' or 'wolfomania;' and this phenomenon, as well as vampyrism, has been treated of by numerous ancient authors; and though latterly utterly denied and scouted, was once very generally believed.

There are various shades and degrees of lycanthropy. In some cases the lycanthrope declares that he has the power of transform-

ing himself into a wolf, in which disguise—his tastes corresponding to his form—he delights in feeding on human flesh ; and in the public examinations of these unhappy individuals there was no scarcity of witnesses to corroborate their confessions. In other instances there was no transformation, and the lycanthrope appears more closely to resemble a ghoul.

In the year 1603, a case of lycanthropy was brought before the Parliament of Bordeaux. The person accused was a boy of fourteen, called Jean Grenier, who herded cattle. Several witnesses, chiefly young girls, came forward as his accusers, declaring that he had attacked and wounded them in the disguise of a wolf, and would have killed them but for the vigorous defence they made with sticks. Jean Grenier himself avowed the crime, confessing to having killed and eaten several children ; and the father of the children confirmed all he said. Jean Grenier,

however, appears to have been little removed from an idiot.

In the fifteenth century, lycanthropy prevailed extensively amongst the Vaudois, and many persons suffered death for it; but as no similar case seems to have been heard of for a long while, lycanthropy and ghoulistism were set down amongst the superstitions of the East, and the follies and fables of the dark ages. A circumstance, however, has just now come to light in France that throws a strange and unexpected light upon this curious subject. The account we are going to give is drawn from a report of the investigation before a council of war, held on the 10th of the present month (July 1849), Colonel Manselon, president. It is remarked that the court was extremely crowded, and that many ladies were present.

The facts of this mysterious affair, as they came to light in the examinations, are as follow: For some months past the cemeteries

in and around Paris have been the scenes of a frightful profanation, the authors of which had succeeded in eluding all the vigilance that was exerted to detect them. At one time the guardians or keepers of these places of burial were themselves suspected; at others, the odium was thrown on the surviving relations of the dead.

The cemetery of Père la Chaise was the first field of these horrible operations. It appears that for a considerable time the guardians had observed a mysterious figure flitting about by night amongst the tombs, on whom they never could lay their hands. As they approached, he disappeared like a phantom; and even the dogs that were let loose, and urged to seize him, stopped short, and ceased to bark, as if they were transfixed by a charm. When morning broke, the ravages of this strange visitant were but too visible—graves had been opened, coffins forced, and the remains of the dead, fright-

fully torn and mutilated, lay scattered upon the earth. Could the surgeons be the guilty parties? No. A member of the profession being brought to the spot, declared that no scientific knife had been there; but certain parts of the human body might be required for anatomical studies, and the gravediggers might have violated the tombs to obtain money by the sale of them. . . . The watch was doubled; but to no purpose. A young soldier was one night seized in a tomb, but he declared he had gone there to meet his sweetheart, and had fallen asleep; and as he evinced no trepidation, they let him go.

At length these profanations ceased in Père la Chaise, but it was not long before they were renewed in another quarter. A suburban cemetery was the new theatre of operations. A little girl aged seven years, and much loved by her parents, died. With their own hands they laid her in her coffin, attired in the frock she delighted to wear on fête days,



and with her favourite playthings beside her ; and accompanied by numerous relatives and friends, they saw her laid in the earth. On the following morning it was discovered that the grave had been violated, the body torn from the coffin, frightfully mutilated, and the heart extracted. There was no robbery : the sensation in the neighbourhood was tremendous ; and in the general terror and perplexity, suspicion fell on the broken-hearted father, whose innocence, however, was easily proved. Every means were taken to discover the criminal ; but the only result of the increased surveillance was, that the scene of profanation was removed to the cemetery of Mont Parnasse, where the exhumations were carried to such an extent, that the authorities were at their wits' end.

Considering, by the way, that all these cemeteries are surrounded by walls, and have iron gates, which are kept closed, it certainly seems very strange that any ghoul or vampyre

of solid flesh and blood should have been able to pursue his vocation so long undiscovered. However, so it was ; and it was not till they bethought themselves of laying a snare for this mysterious visitor that he was detected. Having remarked a spot where the wall, though nine feet high, appeared to have been frequently scaled, an old officer contrived a sort of *infernal machine*, with a wire attached to it, which he so arranged that it should explode if any one attempted to enter the cemetery at that point. This done, and a watch being set, they thought themselves now secure of their purpose. Accordingly, at midnight an explosion roused the guardians, who perceived a man already in the cemetery ; but before they could seize him, he had leapt the wall with an agility that confounded them ; and although they fired their pieces after him, he succeeded in making his escape. But his footsteps were marked with blood that had flowed from his wounds,

and several scraps of military attire were picked up on the spot. Nevertheless, they seem to have been still uncertain where to seek the offender, till one of the grave-diggers of Mont Parnasse, whilst preparing the last resting-place of two criminals about to be executed, chanced to overhear some sappers of the 74th regiment remarking that one of their sergeants had returned on the preceding night cruelly wounded, nobody knew how, and had been conveyed to Val de Grace, which is a military hospital. A little inquiry now soon cleared up the mystery; and it was ascertained that Sergeant Bertrand was the author of all these profanations, and of many others of the same description previous to his arrival in Paris.

Supported on crutches, wrapped in a grey cloak, pale and feeble, Bertrand was now brought forward for examination; nor was

there anything in the countenance or appearance of this young man indicative of the fearful monomania of which he is the victim ; for the whole tenor of his confession proves that in no other light is his horrible propensity to be considered.

In the first place, he freely acknowledged himself the author of these violations of the dead both in Paris and elsewhere.

“What object did you propose to yourself in committing these acts?” inquired the president.

“I cannot tell,” replied Bertrand : “it was a horrible impulse. I was driven to it against my own will : nothing could stop or deter me. I cannot describe or understand myself what my sensations were in tearing and rending these bodies.”

*President.* And what did you do after one of these visits to a cemetery ?

*Bertrand.* I withdrew, trembling con-

vulsively, feeling a great desire for repose. I fell asleep, no matter where, and slept for several hours ; but during this sleep I *heard everything that passed around me!* I have sometimes exhumed from ten to fifteen bodies in a night. I dug them up with my hands, which were often torn and bleeding with the labour I underwent ; but I minded nothing, so that I could get at them. The guardians fired at me one night and wounded me, but that did not prevent my returning the next. This desire seized me generally about once a fortnight."

He added, that he had had no access of this propensity since he was in the hospital, but that he would not be sure it might not return when his wounds were healed. Still he hoped not. "I think I am cured," said he. "I had never seen any one die ; in the hospital I have seen several of my comrades

expire by my side. I believe I am cured, for now I fear the dead."

The surgeons who attended him were then examined, and one of them read a sort of memoir he had received from Bertrand, which contained the history of his malady as far as his memory served him.

From these notes, it appears that there had been something singular and abnormal about him from the time he was seven or eight years old. It was not so much in acts, as in his love of solitude and his profound melancholy that the aberration was exhibited; and it was not till two years ago that his frightful peculiarity fully developed itself. Passing a cemetery one day, where the grave-diggers were covering a body that had just been interred, he entered to observe them. A violent shower of rain interrupted their labours, which they left unfinished. "At this sight," says Bertrand, "horrible

desires seized me : my head throbbed, my heart palpitated violently ; I excused myself to my companions, and returned hastily into town. No sooner did I find myself alone, than I procured a spade, and returned to the cemetery. I had just succeeded in exhuming the body, when I saw a peasant watching me at the gate. Whilst he went to inform the authorities of what he had seen, I withdrew, and retiring into a neighbouring wood, I laid myself down, and in spite of the torrents of rain that were falling, I remained there in a state of profound insensibility for several hours."

From this period he appears to have given free course to his inclinations ; but as he generally covered the mutilated remains with earth again, it was some time before his proceedings excited observation. He had many narrow escapes of being taken or killed by the pistols of the guardians ; but his



agility seems to have been almost super-human.

To the living he was gentle and kind, and was especially beloved in his regiment for his frankness and gaiety !

The medical men interrogated unanimously gave it as their opinion, that although in all other respects perfectly sane, Bertrand was not responsible for these acts. He was sentenced to a year's imprisonment, during which time measures will doubtless be taken to complete his cure.

In relating this curious case of the *Vampyre*, as he is called in Paris, where the affair has excited considerable attention, especially in the medical world, I have omitted several painful and disgusting particulars ; but I have said enough to prove that, beyond a doubt, there has been some good foundation for the ancient belief in ghouls and lycanthropy ; and that the books



of Dr. Weir and others, in which the existence of this malady is contemptuously denied, have been put forth without due investigation of the subject.



## VI.

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### THE PRISONER OF THE CONCIERGERIE.

AT the period of the French Revolution, there resided in Paris a family called Gerfeuil, consisting of a father, mother, and one son, Edward Gerfeuil, who was about fifteen years of age, a pretty, clever, interesting boy, the darling of his parents' heart, and the pride of their eyes. But at the same time that he was a source of unbounded comfort to them, he was also a subject of the deepest anxiety ; for, at that season of anarchy and

peril, when no one's life or fortune was secure, they trembled at the thoughts of the future that might await their innocent child. They possessed a comfortable, independent fortune, the whole of which was designed for Edward ; but who should promise that he would ever inherit it ? The slightest imprudence on the part of the father or mother might render them objects of suspicion ; indeed, they might become objects of suspicion without any imprudence at all ; they might be accused by an enemy, they might be compromised by a friend, they might be dragged to the scaffold any day without a moment's warning, or they might be obliged to fly their country with nothing but the clothes they had on their backs. And what was to become of their Edward, bred in affluence, nurtured in delicacy, educated in refinement ? Many and many an anxious hour did these reflections cost Monsieur and Madame Gerfeuil.

“I sometimes think,” said Monsieur Ger-

feuil one day to his wife, "that it would not be a bad plan to make Edward learn a trade. In these times, when everybody's fortune is so precarious, and when, without any fault of our own, we may be in affluence to-day, and beggars to-morrow, it would be advisable to have something to fall back upon—some resource by which one might earn one's bread, in case of the worst falling out."

"What could he learn?" said Madame Gerfeuil.

"We must consult him about it," answered the father. "For my own part, I should recommend printing, because the education he has received would there turn to some account, and he would find some occupation for his mind as well as his fingers."

When Edward was consulted, he agreed that he should prefer printing to any other occupation; and, as he promised himself a great deal of diversion from appearing in a part so new to him, he made no objection to

the proposal. A working-dress being therefore prepared for him, and a respectable establishment selected by his father, the youth commenced his apprenticeship, attending at the printing-office a certain number of hours every day, and receiving instruction in the various branches of his art.

The plan seemed to answer very well. Edward Gerfeuil was fast acquiring dexterity ; and the father and mother were comforted to think that they had provided such a resource for their son in case of extremity, when a dreadful calamity befel them. A pamphlet supporting principles very obnoxious to the revolutionary tribunal, which had been circulating amongst the people, was traced to the printing-house of Monsieur Gros, and suddenly himself and all his workmen were arrested and carried off to the Conciergerie, and amongst them poor Edward Gerfeuil, who, although he had never seen the pamphlet, nor was aware of its existence, being at

work in his printer's dress, shared the fate of his companions.

Who shall paint the alarm and distress of the parents on learning this intelligence ; for, alas ! how few were there who, once arrested on suspicion, ever escaped with their lives ! What availed his youth ?—what availed his innocence ? How many, as young and as innocent, perished weekly on the scaffold ! And then, how bitterly they reproached themselves. Their over-anxiety had been his destruction ; and what to do to assist him they did not know. Even to prove his innocence, if innocence would have availed, was next to impossible ; they had no acquaintance with anybody in power ; in all probability their motive for sending him to the printing-office would not be credited, if they told it ; and they almost dreaded to raise a stir about him, lest by drawing attention to his case, and betraying that he was what

would be called *an aristocrat*, they should only accelerate his fate.

In the meantime, poor Edward, after undergoing the form of an examination, in which he was only insulted when he attempted to explain who he was, and account for being found in such a situation, was dragged to the Conciergerie, and flung into a dungeon—a dungeon under ground too, for a French prison under the old *régime* was a dreadful place ; they have since been much improved, as is always the case as countries become more civilized and enlightened. People then learn to know that the loss of liberty and the inevitable hardships of a jail, are punishments enough for slight offences, and all that we are entitled to inflict on unconvicted prisoners. But no such rays of mercy had yet reached the hearts or understandings of Edward's jailers, and he could not have been worse treated if he had robbed a church or com-



mitted murder. The poor boy's feelings may be imagined—torn from his comfortable home and his tender parents, and transferred to the custody of a harsh turnkey, in a miserable cell, without light, without fire, with a wretched pallet to lie on, and dieted on bread and water. And to all these sufferings was added terror—the terror of what remained behind. Though Edward had never seen the guillotine, he had heard too much of it; and although, with the natural thoughtlessness of youth, he had reflected little on the peril in which all men lived, as long as that peril did not approach himself or his parents, yet he had missed too many of his friends and neighbours from their accustomed paths and daily whereabouts, not to comprehend something of his own situation. Poor child! How did the darkness and the silence, too, frighten him! How eagerly he watched for the jailer's visits! how welcome was the gleam of his dull lantern! how he

drank in the tones of his husky voice ! and how he listened to the echo of his receding footsteps, and sighed when he heard them no more ! Then he wondered so much if his father and mother knew where he was, and he trembled with the dreadful apprehension that they might not be able to trace him, and that he might some day be carried to execution without ever seeing or hearing from them again. What, too, if they had been arrested as well as himself ? Then there would be none to interest themselves for him, and he might perish either in the prison or on the scaffold, without an arm being stretched out to save him.

It may well be conceived that all these horrors—the anxiety of mind, the bad living, the confinement, and the unwholesome air of his dungeon—were not long in showing their effects on a boy of fifteen. Poor Edward fell ill ; the medical man that attended the jail had him removed to a cell a degree less

wretched than the one he was in, and having with some difficulty saved his life, he ordered that he should take an hour's exercise every day in the court—a miserable place, surrounded by four high walls, little better than a dungeon open at top. However, such as it was, it was a great comfort to poor Edward, for here he at least caught a glimpse of the sky, and saw the faces of other human beings, although he was not allowed to address them, and many a kind glance cast upon the poor young captive, made him feel that there were yet tender hearts in the world, who could pity though they could not aid him.

It happened that the jailer had a daughter, a girl about a year older than Edward, whose home was with her father at the prison, whither she returned each night, whilst her days were spent in acquiring the art of dress-making at a fashionable establishment in the Palais Royal. She thus very rarely saw any of the prisoners; but one Sunday, as her

father was conducting Edward to take his daily walk in the court, she chanced to meet him, and, struck with his appearance of youth and suffering, she inquired the cause of his being there.

“It’s very hard,” said the jailer’s wife, when she heard the account given by her husband, and who, being a mother, was disposed to feel for one so young. “I dare say he only printed what his master told him, without troubling himself to know the meaning of it. What should a child like that care about politics?”

“It’s no business of ours, wifie,” replied the man, who, though by no means particularly hard-hearted, was afraid to cultivate feelings of compassion, lest they should bring him into trouble. “We have nothing to do but to look after our prisoners, without inquiring into the right and wrong of their cases.”

“That’s true, indeed,” said the wife; “walls

have ears, and the least said is soonest mended."

The impression made upon Annette's mind, however, was not so easily effaced; and the emaciated form, and pallid cheeks of the young prisoner were often remembered when she was plying the needle at her daily toil.

It may be imagined, at a period when so many innocent and virtuous persons were thrown into prisons, and daily perishing upon the scaffold, that it was no uncommon sight to see their anxious friends hovering about the gate, and gazing at the walls which contained objects so dear, whom it was too probable they might never behold again. Annette's eyes were therefore too much accustomed to these melancholy visions to be generally much struck by them; but her attention had been drawn to the constant attendance and careworn countenance of a lady, who, she fancied, not only looked at her as if she had a great desire to address her, but whom she had

observed, more than once, to follow her all the way to her magazine in the Palais Royal. She had also remarked this lady occasionally buying things in the shop ; but, as Annette worked in a back room, and only perceived this circumstance through a glass door, there was no opportunity of communication. At length, however, the lady ordered a dress to be made for her ; but when the mistress of the establishment proposed to wait upon her to try it on, she offered to save her the trouble, by stepping into her back shop and having it done at once. There were several young people at work in the room, but Annette could not but observe that the stranger's eyes sought none but her. When she went away, she gave her name as Madame Rosbeck, and said she lived near the Pont Neuf.

“ And,” continued she, glancing still at the jailer's daughter, “ if any of your young people come from that quarter, I should be

glad if she would call at my house to-morrow morning, on her way here, as I have some lace by me which I will send you to put upon my dress."

"That will be in your road, Ma'amselle Annette," said the mistress of the shop. "Don't forget to call as you come past."

"No, ma'am," replied Annette, involuntarily looking at the lady as she spoke, for she could not help fancying there was some mystery behind this matter of the lace. The lady, too, looked at her, and said: "Pray, do not forget," and then she took her leave.

"Father," said Annette that night at supper, "have you any prisoner here of the name of Rosbeck?"

"No," answered the jailer. "Why do you ask?"

"Oh, nothing particular," said the daughter; "only they were talking at the shop of somebody of that name being arrested."

"They have not been brought here, then,"



answered the man ; “ indeed, we’re quite full; but I suppose the guillotine will take some of them out of our way to-morrow.”

“ Not that poor young boy, I hope,” said Annette.

“ Why, no,” answered the father. “ I don’t think it will be his turn just yet. There are others will go before him.”

On the following morning Annette, not without considerable curiosity, presented herself at the address given by Madame Rosbeck ; and on naming her errand, she was introduced into that lady’s bed-chamber.

“ Pray, sit down,” said Madame Rosbeck. “ I have desired my maid to bring the lace. In the meantime, let me give you a cup of chocolate. I am just going to take my breakfast.”

Annette would have been more surprised at an attention so unusual, had not her previous observations satisfied her that she was wanted to give some information, or to



perform some service, of more importance than fetching the lace; so she accepted the invitation, and seated herself, saying, at the same time, that she could not wait long, as her presence would be required at the magazine.

“Since that is the case,” said Madame Rosbeck, “I had better proceed at once to what I have to say to you. I am aware that you are the daughter of the jailer at the Conciergerie, and I dare say you have observed me in that quarter before this.”

“Yes, ma’am,” said Annette, “I have; and I fancied that perhaps you had some relation or friend there you were anxious about.”

“That is the truth,” said Madame Rosbeck; “there is a person there I would give the world to learn some tidings of. Do you think you could procure me any?—and would you, if you could?”

“I would very willingly, ma’am,” said An-

nette; "but I know very little about the prisoners, and very rarely see any of them. But perhaps I might find out something from my father, though he is not fond of talking about them either. Is it a lady or a gentleman?"

"Oh, it's a child—a mere child!" exclaimed Madame Rosbeck, clasping her hands in agony; "it's my son—my only son!"

"I saw one poor boy there, who is allowed to walk in the court because he is ill," replied Annette; "but my father said his name was Gerfeuil."

"Oh, that is he!" cried the mother—"that is my poor Edward! I am Madame Gerfeuil; but I have taken this lodging in the name of Rosbeck, in order to be near my son, and that I may watch the tumbrils as they pass with the prisoners for execution, that I may be sure he is not amongst them. Then you have seen my poor child, and he is ill?"

“He has been very ill,” said Annette ;  
“but he is now better.”

“Oh, if I could but see him !” exclaimed  
Madame Gerfeuil.

“I fear that is impossible !” replied  
Annette. “Since one or two of the prisoners  
escaped through the assistance of their  
friends, no visitors are admitted.”

“Could you give him a letter or a message  
from me ?” asked Madame Gerfeuil.

“I don’t think I could,” answered Annette ;  
“for the only chance I ever have of seeing  
him is as he is going to and from the court ;  
but then my father is always close beside  
him.”

“And is your father so very strict ?”

“Very,” said Annette ; “he is obliged to  
be so. But if you will give me the letter, I’ll  
keep it always in my bosom, and if any  
opportunity of giving it to him should offer,  
I’ll do it.”

It was arranged that Annette should call

for the letter at night; and after some more conversation, she took her leave, and pursued her way to the Palais Royal. Although a jailer's daughter, she was a girl of tender heart and kind feelings, and all day as she sat at her work her thoughts were upon the poor mother and son; and her young companions laughed at her silence and abstraction, and accused her of thinking of her lover, whilst she was taxing her ingenuity to find some contrivance for delivering the letter. But none could she hit upon. The only chance she ever had of meeting Edward was on a Sunday; but she had no excuse for going into the part of the building occupied by the prisoners, and had she not been sent with a message to her father, she would never have seen him at all; and even if she did contrive to throw herself in the way, the jailer was so watchful, that she feared it would be impossible to accomplish her object. And, accordingly, at the end of four weeks

the letter was still in Annette's bosom, and poor Madame Gerfeuil as miserable and anxious as ever, except that the daily visits of the young girl afforded her some little consolation. It was a slight comfort to her to speak to a person who dwelt under the same roof with her Edward, and to think that she had made a friend for him, powerless as that friend seemed to be.

Suddenly, however, about this time, a fresh access of fury and rage for executions seemed to seize on the minds of the blood-thirsty revolutionary tribunal; and Madame Gerfeuil was plunged into daily agonies of terror at hearing of the fearful rapidity with which their victims were hurried to the scaffold; and from the hints dropped by her father, even Annette began to tremble for her young *protégé*.

Madame Gerfeuil had a waiting-maid, a young person without father or mother, whom she had taken into her house when a child,

and brought up. This girl, who was now about sixteen, was extremely attached to her mistress, and sympathized warmly with all the mother's anxiety for her son. "If I could but be the means of procuring his release," she often said to herself, "it would be some return for all I owe to Madame Gerfeuil." In the vague hope that some opportunity of being of service might offer, she neglected no means of cultivating the good-will of the jailer's daughter, who at length invited her, one Sunday, to supper; from which time she became a visitor in the family—a privilege she took care to make the most of, frequently contriving to meet her friend as she returned from the Palais Royal, where, having accompanied her as far as the gate of the Conciergerie, the jailer, on opening the door, would invite her in to see his wife; and thus, little by little, Madeleine had got on a footing of intimacy, and was a pretty constant visitor in Maitre

Jacques's parlour. Having accomplished thus much, she next began to hint to Annette how possible it would be to possess themselves some evening of the jailer's keys, at an hour that he was not likely to miss them, and make their way to Edward's dungeon. "If he were only to see me for a moment, it would be such a comfort to him," said Madeleine; "and it might perhaps save the life of his poor mother, whose heart is breaking, and who, I am sure, will not live long if we cannot afford some relief to her anxiety."

Annette was not unwilling to do anything she could for Madame Gerfeuil; but she saw many difficulties in the way, and, above all, she dreaded her father's anger if their attempt were discovered. However, Madeleine contrived to overcome her objections, and the ensuing Sunday night was fixed upon for the enterprise.

The young girls spent a good part of the day together, first attending mass, and then



walking with their friends, till, at the approach of evening, they directed their steps towards the prison, each armed with a bottle of wine, which Madeleine had bought at a guingette, and which they carried under their shawls, wherewith to treat the jailer. "Whilst he is drinking, he will not be so likely to observe what we are doing," said Madeleine; and when she told Maitre Jacques that she had brought him a couple of bottles of good wine to make merry with at supper, he expressed himself extremely obliged for her kindness. "But," said she, "you must do me a favour in return; you must let Annette go home and sleep with me to-night; to-morrow, you know, is a *fête*, and as she has a holiday, we have made a party to go to St. Cloud; and we are to start very early, that we may have a long day of it." To this proposal, fortunately, no objection was made; and, to cut short the narrative of the insidious proceedings of the



two girls, the jailer's senses were lulled, the keys were taken possession of only for a few minutes, and the active pair reached the cell of the unfortunate Gerfeuil. In a moment he was in the arms of his faithful Madeleine, and inquiring for his dear mother. "She is quite well, and living in the next street, in order to be near you," answered the girl; and in a few hurried words she gave him the information which he was most urgent to have. "But there was one thing," continued she, "that your mamma particularly desired me to caution you about, in case you are brought up again for examination;" and as she spoke, she drew him gradually towards the door, whispering as if making some private communication, whilst Annette, whose limbs had almost failed her through fear, seated herself on the side of the bed.

The door was ajar, the key on the outside.

“Now run !” said Madeleine, thrusting him out ; and in a moment more they were both hurrying along the passages by the light of the lantern which she had taken care to carry herself. When they reached a convenient spot, she paused, and taking off a loose upper dress, and a shawl, with which she had provided herself, she disguised Edward in this female attire, and completed it by placing on his head a drawn muslin bonnet, which, being pliable, she had also contrived to conceal about her person. She had too carefully marked the road as she came along to miss it now, and presently they found themselves at the door of the jailer’s parlour. “Now,” said she, to Edward, placing him in a dark corner, “stand there, and, when I come out, take hold of my arm ; but don’t speak, for your life !” and she entered the room.

“Maitre Jacques,” said she, shaking the jailer by the arm, for he was still asleep, “how can you keep us waiting so ? Here

are Annette and I wanting to get out ; and I shall get into trouble if I stay here so late. Pray, do come and open the gate for us."

"Eh !" said Maitre Jacques, rubbing his eyes, and shaking himself awake ; "what do you want?—where are you going?"

"Home to bed, to be sure," replied she. "You know you gave Annette leave to go home with me to-night. Come, do open the gate, will you? We can't wait any longer."

"Annette! Where is Annette?" said Maitre Jacques.

"Here, at the door, waiting for you. Come, do make haste;" and she half dragged the drowsy jailer from his seat, and led him towards the door. "Come, Annette," said she, taking Edward under her other arm ; "your father will let us out now;" and they proceeded towards the gate—the key was at the jailer's belt—he opened it, and in an instant more they were in the street, and the fearful gate locked behind them. Through

cross streets, and at first with a deliberate pace, lest whilst near the prison they might excite suspicion, they traversed a considerable part of the city, till at length Madeleine stopped at the door of a house unknown to Edward. "This is not papa's," said he. "No," said she; "it would not be safe to take you home; you must be concealed here for the present." In that house dwelt an old servant of Monsieur Gerfeuil, to whom the family allowed a pension, and on him Madeleine knew she might rely with confidence. Her reliance was not disappointed. Edward was gladly received; and, continuing to wear the dress of a female, he remained there several weeks, and Madeleine with him; till, favoured by the disguise, it was thought possible to remove them both from Paris; and not till then, so fearful were they of betraying the place of his concealment, did the anxious father and mother permit themselves the happiness of beholding their rescued

child. It is gratifying to be able to add, that, except her father's displeasure and her own terror, poor Annette suffered no ill consequences from the adventure. When Edward's name appeared in the list of those to be sent to the scaffold, Maitre Jacques contrived to persuade the authorities that he had been executed some time before; and as he was not a person of sufficient consequence to excite much inquiry, and as they had plenty of heads to cut off without his, after a little blustering and pretence at investigation, the affair was suffered to die away, and was forgotten.

Edward and his parents escaped to England, where he found the means of putting the knowledge he had acquired in his profession to some use—indeed, the greatest which can be supposed, the support of himself, and an aid to that of his parents. Thus, for several years, did the family remain in London till the Reign of Terror was over, and

refugee emigrants found it safe to return to their native country. One of the first acts of the Gerfeuils, on being restored to their property, was to seek out Madeleine, to whose fidelity they owed so much, and to place her beyond the reach of want for the remainder of her existence.

## VII.

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### MADAME LOUISE.

LOUIS XV. of France had, by his marriage with Maria Leczinska, daughter of Stanislaus, King of Poland, two sons and several daughters. These ladies were the aunts of Louis XVI., of whom we frequently find mention made in the history of that unfortunate monarch.

Madame Louise, the heroine of our story, was one of the youngest, and was also the one that took most after her mother in character.

Maria Leczinska was a pious, amiable, tender-hearted woman, and Louise resembled her in these characteristics ; whilst the sort of education she received, being brought up in the Abbey of Fontrevault, tended very much to increase the seriousness of her natural disposition ; so that, after she lost her mother, though she continued to reside with her father at Versailles, or Paris, or wherever he might be, and so lived *in* the court, she was not *of* it, nor ever imbibed a taste for its splendours or amusements, and still less for its dissipations and vices. Notwithstanding all her virtue and piety, however, Louise was a woman still, and a woman with a tender, loving heart ; and in a court where there were so many gay and accomplished cavaliers it must have been next to impossible for that loving heart to remain untouched. But poor Louise had one safeguard against love, which, pure and pious as she was, she would willingly have dispensed with—she



was deformed. With a lovely and bewitching face, and eyes of inconceivable beauty, her figure was quite distorted, from the consequences of an unfortunate fall in her infancy, Without meaning to derogate from her merit, it is extremely possible that this misfortune may have considerably influenced her character, and led her to seek in Heaven those consolations of the heart that she despaired of enjoying on earth.

Of course each of the princesses had a regular suite of servants, and of ladies and gentlemen in waiting; and amongst these, each had also an *écuyer* and a lady of honour, who were in immediate and constant attendance on their persons. The office of the *écuyer* was one which placed him in a peculiar situation as regarded his mistress: he placed her chair, opened the door for her, handed her up and down stairs, and accompanied her in her drives and walks, and, in short, wherever she went; so that, were it not for the respect due

to royalty, it must have been difficult for a susceptible young man, or a susceptible man of any age, to be in this hourly attendance on a charming Princess and retain his heart entire. The deformity of poor Madame Louise, as well as her piety, however, were perhaps thought sufficient defences against any dangers of this description, as regarded either party; for without some such confidence, it would seem a great oversight of the King to have placed in this necessarily intimate relation with her one of the most fascinating men about the court; for such, by universal admission, was the young Vicomte Anatole de Saint-Phale, who was appointed *écuyer* to the Princess upon the marriage, and consequent resignation, of the Baron de Brignolles.

At the time of his appointment, Saint-Phale was not much more than twenty years of age, the son of a Duke, handsome, accomplished, eminently agreeable, and with a

name already distinguished in arms. He had himself solicited the appointment, and it had been granted to his own wishes, and the influence of his father, without demur; Madame Louise, when the thing was mentioned to her, making no objection. Indeed she had none. The Vicomte was but little known to her; for, avoiding the court festivities as much as her father would permit, and when she did attend them, appearing there rather as a spectator than a partaker—beyond the general characters and the personal appearance of the gay cavaliers of the court, she knew nothing of them. She had always heard Saint-Phale's name coupled with the most flattering epithets; she had also heard that he was brave, generous, honourable, and extravagantly beloved by his father and mother; and her own eyes had informed her that he was extremely handsome. To the latter quality she was indifferent; and the others well

fitting him for his office about her person, she signed his appointment without hesitation, little dreaming at the moment that she was also signing the fiat of her own destiny. In due time the Baron de Brignolles took his leave, and the Vicomte entered on his duties ; and it soon appeared evident to everybody that he had not sued for the situation without a motive. The Princess's lady of honour was the Comtesse de Château-grand, Anatole's cousin ; and with her he was, to all appearance, desperately smitten. He wore her colours, as was the fashion of the gallant world at that period, paid her the most public attentions, and seemed determined not only to be violently in love, but that all the world should know it.

There was, however, nothing very surprising in this. The Comtesse de Château-grand was a widow, with a considerable fortune, and, though nearly ten years older than Anatole, she was still extremely handsome ;

added to which, she was very amiable, much esteemed by her mistress, and she and the young Vicomte had always been on the most friendly terms. His passion, therefore, as we have said, excited no surprise in anybody; but whether the lady returned it, was altogether another affair, and was, indeed, a question that created considerable discussion amongst the curious in these matters.

“But she looks so happy—so calm!” said the young Duchesse de Lange.

“And why not, when she has every reason to be so?” answered the Comtesse de Guiche. “Are not his attentions unremitting? What can she desire more?”

“Ah, true,” replied the other; “happy, if you will, but calm!”

“Well, and why not calm?” repeated Madame de Guiche.

“Ah, one is never calm when one loves!” returned the Duchesse, with a little air of affectation.

“That is so like you !” returned the Comtesse, laughing. “ You are so sentimental, my dear—a real heroine of romance. I maintain that Madame de Châteaugrand is perfectly content, and that she intends, in due time, to reward his devotion with her hand. I am sure he deserves it. Except waiting on the Princess, he never does anything in the world but attend to her caprices ; and I do believe she often affects to be whimsical, for the sake of giving him occupation.”

“ He certainly does not seem to recollect that there is another woman in the world beside the Princess and his cousin,” said the Duchesse, with some little spite.

Many a conversation of this nature was held almost within hearing of one of the parties concerned—namely, the Vicomte—and many a jest besides, amongst his own companions, rendered it quite impossible that he should be ignorant of the observations made upon him and Madame de Châteaugrand ; but

he never showed himself disposed to resent this sort of interference, nor did it cause him to make the slightest attempt at concealing his attachment ; whilst the Comtesse herself, though she could not be more ignorant than he of the court gossip, appeared equally indifferent to it. The consequence was, as is usual in similar cases, that the gossip nobody seemed to care for, and which annoyed nobody, became less interesting, and gradually the *grande passion* of the Vicomte Anatole for his cousin being admitted as an established fact, whilst it was concluded, from the calmness of the lady's demeanour, that she had accepted his proposals, and that they were to be married some day, people began to think little about them ; and, except a hint now and then, that in all probability the true interpretation of the mystery was, that they were privately married already, very little was said.



But now there arose another bit of court gossip.

“Observe, my dear,” said the Duchesse de Lange to her friend the Comtesse, “how fast Madame de Châteaugrand is declining in the Princess’s favour !”

“I am perfectly confounded at it,” returned Madame de Guiche ; “for certainly her attachment to Madame Louise is very great ; in short, it is devotion ; and the Princess herself has always, till lately, appeared to set the greatest value on it. How is it that she, who never in her life showed the slightest tendency to caprice, should begin with such an injustice towards her most faithful friend ?”

“It is inconceivable !” replied the Duchesse. “But what do you think the Duc d’Artois says about it ?”

“Oh, the wicked man !” returned the Comtesse de Guiche, laughing. “But what does he say ?”



“He says it is the attachment between her and Saint-Phale that offends the Princess ; that she is so rigid, that she can neither be in love herself, nor allow anybody else to be so ; and that he has seen her turn quite pale with horror at the sight of the Vicomte’s attentions.”

“Be in love herself—certainly not,” said Madame de Guiche ; “besides, to what purpose, poor thing, with her unfortunate figure ? But I think she is much too kind-hearted to endeavour to cross the loves of other people. However, certain it is, that she is not so fond of Madame de Châteaugrand as she was.”

And so, to her great grief, thought Madame de Châteaugrand herself. Louise, the gentle, the kind, the considerate, was now often peevish, impatient, and irritable ; and what rendered the change infinitely more afflicting to the Comtesse was, that all these ill-humours seemed to be reserved solely for her—to every one else the Princess was as

gentle and forbearing as before. So she was even to her at times still; for there were moments when she appeared to be seized with remorse for her injustice, and on these occasions she would do everything in her power to make amends for it; but as these intervals did not prevent an immediate recurrence of the evil, poor Madame de Châteaugrand began to think very seriously of resigning her situation, and so she told the Vicomte.

“If you do, my dear Hortense,” answered he, turning as pale as if she had pronounced his sentence of death—“if you do, I am undone!”

“Why?” said the Comtesse. “You need not resign because I do.”

“I should not dare to remain,” answered he. “Besides, it would be impossible—I know it would! I have always told you so. But for you, I never could have undertaken the situation, as you well know: I should have been discovered.”

“But, my dear Anatole, you can hardly expect me to remain here to be miserable; and I am really so,” returned Madame de Châteaugrand. “It is not that I would not bear with her humour and caprices; I love her well enough to bear with her a great deal more; but to lose her friendship, her affection, her confidence, breaks my heart.”

“She must be ill,” said the Vicomte. “Some secret malady is preying on her, I am certain. Do you observe how her cheek flushes at times, and how her hand trembles? To-day, when I handed her a glass of water, I thought she would have let it fall.”

“It may be so,” returned Madame de Châteaugrand. “Certain it is, that she does not sleep as she used to do—in short, I believe she is often up half the night walking about her room.”

“I think his Majesty should be informed of it,” said the Vicomte, “that he might send her his physician.”

“ I think so too,” answered the lady ; “ but when I named it to her the other day, she was very angry, and forbade me to make any remarks on her ; and, above all, enjoined me not to trouble her father with such nonsense.”

“ I am afraid her religious austerities injure her health,” said Anatole.

“ Apropos,” returned the Comtesse ; “ she desired me to tell you that she goes to St. Denis to-morrow, immediately after breakfast, and that no one is to accompany her but you and me.”

St. Denis, as is well known, is the burying-place of the royal family of France, and there, consequently, reposed the remains of Maria Leczinska, the Princess's mother ; and it was to her tomb that Madame Louise first proceeded alone, whilst her two attendants remained without. A long hour they waited for her ; and Saint-Phale was beginning to get so alarmed at her absence,

that he was just about to violate her commands by opening the gate of the sanctuary, when she came out pale and exhausted, and with evident traces of tears on her cheeks. She then entered the precincts of the convent, requesting to be conducted to the parlour. Even in a convent of holy nuns, who have abjured the world and its temptations, the *prestige* of royalty is not without its effect ; and on this occasion the Prioress came forth to meet the Princess, whilst the sisters rushed to the corridors to get a peep at her, with as mundane a curiosity as the mob runs after a royal carriage in the streets of Paris or London. Louise looked at them benevolently ; and with tears in her eyes, and a sad smile, told them how much happier they were than those who lived amongst the intrigues and turmoils of a court. “ Ah, my sisters,” she said, “ how happy you should be ! What repose of spirit you may attain to in this holy asylum ! ”

Alas ! could she have looked into some of those hearts, what a different tale they would have told her ! But when we are very miserable ourselves, that situation which presents the greatest contrast to our own is apt to appear the one most desirable.

“ There is amongst you, my sisters—that is, if she be still alive—a Princess, at whose profession I was present when a child, with my mother,” said Madame Louise. “ Is the friend of Maria Leczinska here ? ”

“ I am here,” answered a sweet low voice.

“ Clotilde de Mortemart ? ” said the Princess inquiringly, looking in the direction of the voice.

“ Formerly,” answered the nun, “ now Sœur Marie du Sacré Cœur.”

“ I would speak with you,” said Madame Louise, taking her by the hand : “ lead me to your cell.”

Accordingly, whilst all the others retired,

Sister Marie conducted her royal visitor to her little apartment.

“That stool is too inconvenient for your highness,” said she, as the Princess seated herself. “I will ask the Prioress for a chair.”

“By no means; it is what I wish,” said Madame Louise. “Sit down opposite me—I want to talk to you. Nay, nay, sit!” she added, observing the hesitation of the nun. “Sit, in the name of Heaven! What am I, that you should stand before me? Would to God I was as you are!”

“How, madame!” said the sister, looking surprised. “Are you not happy?”

“Friend of my mother, pity me!” exclaimed the Princess, as she threw herself into the nun’s arms with a burst of passionate tears—for they were the first open demonstration of a long-suppressed grief. “Tell me,” she continued, after an interval, as she raised



her tearful face—"tell me, are you really happy?"

"Yes," replied Sister Marie, "very happy now."

"Would you go back again to the world; would you change, if you could?"

"No, never!" answered the nun.

"I remember your taking the veil," said Madame Louise, after an interval of silence; "and you will remember me, probably, as a child at that time?"

"Oh, yes; well, quite well, I remember you," replied the nun. "Who could forget you that had once seen you?"

"I was pretty, I believe, as a child," said Louise.

"Beautiful! angelic! as you are now, my Princess!" exclaimed Sister Marie, surprised for a moment, by her enthusiasm and admiration, out of her nunlike demeanour.



“ As I am now ?” said Louise, fixing her eyes on the other’s face.

“ Pardon me !” said the nun, falling at her feet, fearing that the familiarity had offended ; “ it was my heart that spoke !”

“ Rise, my sister,” said Louise ; “ I am not offended ; rise, and look at me !” and she threw aside the cloak, which, with its ample hood, had concealed her deformity.

“ Jesu Maria !” exclaimed the sister, clasping her hands.

“ You are a woman—you were once young yourself, and, as I have heard, beautiful also. Judge, now, if I am happy !”

“ But, my Princess,” answered the nun, “ why not ? Is there no happiness on earth, nay, even in a court, but with beauty ? Besides, are you not beautiful ? Ay, and a thousand times more so than hundreds that are not—”

“ Deformed,” rejoined Louise : “ do not fear

to utter the word ; I repeat it to myself a hundred times a-day."

" This amazes me," said Sister Marie, after a pause, whilst her countenance expressed her surprise as eloquently as words could have done. " Madame Louise, the fame of whose devotions and self-imposed austerities has reached even our secluded ears, are they but the refuge of a mortified—"

" Vanity," added the Princess, as respect again caused the nun to hesitate. " Not exactly : I cannot do myself the injustice to admit that altogether, for I was pious before I knew I was deformed. It was my natural disposition to be so ; and my mother, foreseeing how much I should need the consolations of religion, cultivated the feeling as long as she lived ; and when I was old enough to be aware of my misfortune, I felt what a blessing it was that I had not placed my

happiness in what seemed to make the happiness of the women that surrounded me. But it was not to speak of myself that I came here," continued Madame Louise, "but to ask a favour of you. Young as I was when you took the veil, the scene made a great impression upon me; and I well remember my mother's tears as we drove back to Paris after she had bade you farewell. I remember also, when I was older, hearing a motive alleged for your resolution to retire from the world, which, if it would not give you too much pain, I should be glad to learn from your own lips."

The pale cheek of the nun flushed with a faint red, as she said, "What would my Princess wish to hear?"

"Is it true," said Madame Louise, "that it was an unrequited love that brought you to this place?"

"It was," answered the sister, placing her hand before her eyes.

“Excuse me,” said Madame Louise; “you will think me cruel to awaken these recollections; but it must have been a bitter sorrow that could have induced you, so young, so beautiful, so highly-born, to forsake the world, and become a Carmelite?”

“It was,” returned the nun, “so bitter, that I felt it was turning my blood to gall; and it was not so much to flee from the misery I suffered, as from the corruption of my mind and character, that I fled from the sight of that which I could not see without evil thoughts.”

“Ah, there it is! I understand that too well!” said the Princess; “you were jealous!”

“I was,” answered the nun; “and what made it so bitter was, that the person of whom I was jealous was the woman I loved best in the world.”

“You loved Henri de Beaulieu, and he loved your cousin?” said Madame Louise.

The nun covered her face with her hands and was silent. "How cruel you must think me, to rend your heart by recalling these recollections!" continued the Princess.

"It is so long since I heard that name," said Marie. "I did not think I was still so weak."

"But tell me," said Louise, seizing her hand, "did your anguish endure long after you had entered these gates? Did repose come quickly?"

"Slowly, slowly, but surely," returned the nun, with a sigh. "Till I had taken the irrevocable vow, I had a severe struggle; but I never wavered in the conviction that I had done wisely; for it was only by this living death I could have ever conquered myself. Dreadful temptations had sometimes assailed me whilst I saw them together. Here I saw nothing—heard nothing; and my better nature revived and conquered at last."

"I see," said the Princess, rising: "I

comprehend it all !” and then embracing her, she added, “Pardon me the pain I have given you : it has not been without a motive. We shall meet again ere long.”

On the following day, Madame Louise requested a private interview with the King, for the purpose of obtaining his permission to join the Carmelites of St. Denis. Louis was at first extremely unwilling to hear of the proposal. Louise was his favourite daughter; and he not only did not like to part with her, but he feared that her delicate health would soon sink under the austerities of so rigid an order. But her determination was taken ; and at length, by her perseverance, and the repeated assurance that she was not, nor ever could be, happy in the world, she extracted his unwilling consent. She even avowed to him that, besides her own private griefs, the being obliged to witness his irregularities afflicted her severely ; and as she believed that to immure herself in a convent, where she

could devote her life to prayer, was a sacrifice pleasing to the Almighty, she hoped by these means to expiate her father's errors, as well as attain peace for herself. Fearing the opposition she might meet with from the rest of her family, however, she entreated the King's silence, whilst she herself communicated her resolution to nobody except the Archbishop of Paris; and he having obtained his Majesty's consent in form, Madame Louise at length, on the 11th of April, 1770, at eight o'clock in the morning, bade adieu to Versailles for ever. Accompanied by the Vicomte and Madame de Châteaugrand, to whom, since her former visit to the convent, she had been all kindness, she stepped into her carriage, and drove to St. Denis. As by taking the veil she renounced all earthly distinctions, and amongst the rest, that of being buried with the royal family of France, she now visited those vaults for the last time; and having knelt for some minutes at the tomb



of her mother, she repaired to the convent, leaving her two attendants in the carriage. The Abbot, who, having been apprized by the Archbishop, was in waiting to conduct her to the parlour, now addressed several questions to her with respect to her vocation, representing to her the extreme austerity of the order, which was, indeed, a sort of female La Trappe. She answered him with unshaken firmness; and then, without once looking behind her, passed into the cloister, where the Prioress and the sisterhood were informed of the honour that awaited them. She next proceeded to the chapel, where a mass was performed; and having thus, as it were, sealed her determination, she requested that her two attendants might be conducted to the parlour, whilst she, through the grate which now separated her from the world, told them that they were to return to Paris without her.

The effect of this unexpected intelligence



on Madame de Châteaugrand was no more than the Princess had anticipated. She wept, entreated and expostulated ; but the Vicomte de Saint-Phale, after standing for a moment as if transfixed, fell flat upon his face to the ground. Amazed and agitated at so unexpected a result, the Princess was only restrained by the grating which separated them from flying to his assistance ; but before she could sufficiently recollect herself to resolve what to do, the Prioress, fearing the effect of so distressing a scene at such a moment, came and led her away to her own apartments.

It would be difficult to describe the state of the Princess's mind at that moment. The anguish expressed by Saint-Phale's countenance could not be mistaken. He that she had supposed would be utterly indifferent to her loss ! Why should it affect him thus, when he had still with him his love, the

chosen of his heart—Hortense de Château-grand? She did not know what to think; but certain it is, that the resolution which had been so unflinching an hour before, might perhaps, but for *pride*, have been now broken. With a bewildered mind and a heavy heart she retired to her cell, and there kneeling, she prayed to God to help her through this last struggle.

From that time nothing more was known with respect to Madame Louise till six months afterwards, when, her novitiate being completed, she made her profession. On that morning the humble cell inhabited by the Princess exhibited a very unusual appearance: robes of gold and silver brocade, pearls and diamonds, and a splendid lace veil, were spread upon the narrow couch. In this magnificent attire she was for the last time to appear before the world, and for the last time her own women were in attendance to

superintend her toilet. When she was dressed, everybody was struck with her beauty; and as she wore a superb cloak, the only defect of her person was concealed.

Of course the profession of a "daughter of France" was an event to create a great sensation. All Paris turned out to see the show, and the road from thence to St. Denis was one unbroken line of carriages. Mounted officers were to be seen in all directions, the Royal Guard surrounded the abbey, and the Pope's nuncio came from Rome to perform the ceremony.

On this solemn occasion, of course the attendance of the Princess's *écuyer* and lady of honour was considered indispensable, and Louise had prepared to see them both; but instead of Saint-Phale, to her surprise she beheld advancing to offer his arm her former attendant, the Baron de Brignolles. A pang of disappointment shot through her heart:

*he* had not cared, then, to see her for the last time, and she should behold him no more! She felt that she turned pale and trembled, and she could not trust her voice to inquire the cause of his absence; but De Brignolles took an opportunity of saying, that hearing the Vicomte was too ill to attend, he had requested permission to resume his service for this occasion. Louise bowed her head in silence—she durst not speak.

At that solemn ceremony were present Louis XVI., then Dauphin of France; Marie-Antoinette, the queen of beauty, and the idol of the French nation; the Comte de Provence, afterwards Louis XVIII.; and the Comte d'Artois, who subsequently, as Charles X., likewise lost the throne.

After an eloquent discourse by the Bishop of Troyes, which drew tears from every eye, the Princess retired for a few moments, and

presently re-appeared stript of her splendour, shorn of her beautiful hair, and clothed in the habit of the order. She was then stretched on the earth, covered with a pall, and the prayers for the dead pronounced over her. When she arose, the curtain which closed the entrance to the interior of the convent was lifted, and every eye was fixed on it as she passed through the opening, to return to the world no more. As that curtain fell behind her, a fearful cry echoed through the vaulted roof of the abbey, and a gentleman was observed to be carried out of the church by several persons who immediately surrounded him. Every one, however, was too much occupied with his own feelings at the moment to inquire who it was. On the ear of the new-made nun alone the voice struck familiarly ; or perhaps it was not her ear, but her heart that told her it was the voice of Saint-Phale.

Louise was a Carmelite ; the profligacies of the King and the court proceeded as before ; Madame de Châteaugrand, instead of marrying her cousin Saint-Phale, married M. de Rivrement, to whom it appeared she had been long engaged ; and Saint-Phale himself, after a long and severe illness, which endangered his life, quitted France for Italy, whither he was sent for the sake of the climate. At length, in 1777, when Lafayette astonished the world by his expedition to America, the Vicomte astonished his friends no less by returning suddenly from the south, in order to join it ; and in spite of the entreaties of his relations, he executed his design, and there he fell at the battle of Monmouth, in the year 1778.

He did not, however, die in the field, but lingered some days before he expired, during which interval he wrote farewell letters to his father and mother ; and one also, which he

entreated the latter to deliver according to its address, which was to ‘The Sister Thérèse de Saint Augustin, formerly Madame Louise de France.’

As soon as the poor bereaved mother had sufficiently recovered the shock of this sad news, she hastened to St. Denis to fulfil her son’s injunction ; and the Sister Thérèse, having obtained permission of the superior, received and opened the letter. The first words were an entreaty that she would listen to the prayer of a dying man, who could never offend her again, and read the lines that followed. He then went on to say that from his earliest youth, he had loved her ; and that it was to be near her, without exciting observation, that he had solicited the situation of *écuyer* ; but knowing that, from the inequality of their conditions, his love must be for ever hopeless, he had studiously concealed it from its object. No one had



ever penetrated his secret but Madame de Châteaugrand. He concluded by saying, that when that curtain hid her from his view on the day of her profession, he had felt the world contained nothing more for him, and that he had ever since earnestly desired that death which he had at length found on the field of battle, and which he had gone to America on purpose to seek ; and asking her blessing and her prayers, he bade her farewell for ever.

Poor Louise ! poor Thérèse ! poor nun ! poor Carmelite ! For a moment she forgot that she was the three last, to remember only that she had been the first ; and falling on her knees, and clasping those thin transparent hands, wasted by woe and vigils, she exclaimed with a piercing cry, “Then he loved me after all !”

Rigid as were the poor nun’s notions of the duty of self-abnegation, such a feeling as



this was one to be expiated by confession and penance ; but as nuns are still women, it was not in the nature of things that she should not be the happier for the conviction that her love had been returned—nay, more than returned, for Saint-Phale had loved her first ; and if she had forsaken the world for his sake, he had requited the sacrifice by dying for her. It was a balm even to that pious spirit to know that she, the deformed, the *bossue*, as she called herself, who had thought it impossible she could inspire affection, had been the chosen object of this devoted passion.

Madame Louise survived her lover nine years ; and they were much calmer and happier years than those that preceded his death. She could now direct her thoughts wholly to the skies, for there she hoped and believed he was : and since human nature, as we have hinted before, *will* be human nature within the walls of a convent as well as

outside of them, she had infinitely more comfort and consolation in praying for the repose of his soul in heaven, than she could have had in praying for his happiness on earth—provided he had sought that happiness in the arms of Madame de Château-grand, or any other fair lady.

THE END.

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