

How dark this place of yours is!—why don't you thin the trees? And then those crows! There isn't a crow in my place!"

It was always Lord Dalton's fate to engross the conversation. He seldom wanted replies, and therefore it taxed the forbearance rather than the energy of his friends to talk with him. He was satisfied if he was listened to. Had a dummy been set up for his companion, and the deception been undetected by his Lordship, he would have conversed with it, asked it questions, slapped it on the back, poked it in the ribs, and parted from it, as cheerfully as he would have parted from a capable creature! To him, indeed, what was the world but a collection of dummies, with one here and there in which the *vitæ* preponderated to an unpleasant degree over the *lignum*!

The baronet, however, having an innate and hurtful consciousness of this, played dummy very unwillingly. Though silent, he was consumed with rage; and though