

"If I were only a worse fellow than I am," he thinks impatiently, as he travels back to town—"if I were as careless as half the fellows that I meet, I should scatter every obstacle to the wind, and make myself happy in my own way; but it would break dad's heart; and on the top of losing dear old Bob, too!"

The question, whether the woman by means of whom he would like to be "happy in his own way" would aid and abet his unholy wishes does not enter into his calculations just then. Had there been any probability of their fulfillment, she might have done so, and Lord Muiraven would have found his level. But it flatters him to think that Irene's virtue and respectability are the magnanimous gifts of his powers of self-control. He forgets that she even forbade his speaking to her on the subject, and feels quite like Sir Galahad, or St. Anthony, or anybody else who was particularly good at resisting temptation (Heaven knows, a place in the Calendar is small enough reward for so rare a virtue!), as he reviews the circumstances of his visit, and willfully consigns poor old Colonel Mordaunt to the realms of eternal frizzling.

How the Shadows of the Past rise up to mock him now, and tell him that, were his wildest speculations realized, there would still remain an obstacle to his asking any woman to become his wife! How he curses that obstacle and his own folly, as he dashes onward to the metropolis! and how many of his fellow-passengers that day may not—had they indulged them—have had similar thoughts to his! It is the misfortune of this miserable, purblind existence that we must either loiter timidly along the road of life, permitting ourselves to be outdistanced at each step, or rush onward with the ruck pell-mell, helter-skelter, stumbling over a stone here, rushing headlong against a dead-wall there—on, on, with scarce a thought to what we have left behind us, and no knowledge as to what lies before—straining, pushing, striving, wrestling—and the devil take the hindmost!

What wonder if we oftener fall than stand, and that the aforesaid gentleman does take a pretty considerable number of us!

Muiraven cannot bear the presence of that Nemesis; and the endeavor to outwit it drives him wild for a few days: after which he runs up to Scotland, startling Lord Norham with his eccentric behavior, until the time arrives for him to cross the Channel with his cousin Stratford and meet the outward-bound steamer at Brindisi. The voyage does him good. There is

no panacea for dispersing miserable thought—like lots of bustle and moving about—and it is very difficult to be lovesick in the company of a set of excellent fellows who will not leave you for a moment to yourself, but keep you smoking, drinking, laughing, and chaffing, from morning till night. There are times, of course, when the remembrance of Irene comes back to him—in his berth, at night, for instance; but Muiraven is no sentimentalist: he loves her dearly, but he feels more disposed to curse than cry when he remembers her—although the only thing he curses is his own fate and hers. He reaches Bengal in safety, and for the next few months his cousin and he are up-country, "pig-sticking," and made much of among those regiments with the members of which they are acquainted. During his absence, Muiraven hears no news except such as is connected with his own family. His brother is married (it was a great cause of offense to the Robertson family that he did not remain in England till the important ceremony was over) and his old father feels lonely without Cecil, and wants his eldest son back again. Muiraven also beginning to feel rather homesick, and, as though he had had enough of India, Christmas finds him once more at Berwick Castle: paler and thinner, perhaps, than he looked on leaving England; but the heat of the climate of Bengal is more than sufficient to account for such trifling changes. He arrives just in time for the anniversary; and a week afterward he wants to return to London, being anxious (so he says) about the fate of certain valuables which he purchased in Calcutta months ago, and sent home round the Cape. Lord Norham suggests that his agent will do all that is necessary concerning them; but Muiraven considers it absolutely important that he should be on the spot himself. The fact is, he is hankering after news of Irene again; the dead silence of the last six months respecting her begins to oppress him like some hideous nightmare; the false excitement is over, and the ruling passion regains its ascendancy. What if any thing should have happened to her in his absence? Notwithstanding her prohibition to the contrary, he sent her a note on his return to England, simply telling the fact, and expressing a hope that they might soon meet again; but in this letter he has received no answer. He becomes restlessly impatient to hear something—any thing, and trusts to the dispatch of a cargo of Indian and Chinese toys, which he has brought home for Tommy, to break again the ice between them. It is this hope that brings him up to