

'By this light, thou art mad, answered Lambourne, and just described rather the gentleman-usher to a parson's wife, than the follower of an ambitious courtier! Yes, such a thing as thou wouldst make of me, should wear a book at his girdle, instead of a pointed and might just be suspected of manhood enough to squint a proud dame-citizen to the lecture at Saint Antholin's, and quarrel in her cause with any flat-capped thread-maker that would take the wall of her. He must rattle it in another sort that would walk to court in a nobleman's train.'

'O, content you, sir,' replied Foster, 'there is a change since you knew the English world; and there are those who can hold their way through the boldest courses, and the most secret, and yet never a swaggering word, or an oath, or a profane word in their conversation.'

'That is to say,' replied Lambourne, 'they are in a trading company, to do the devil's business without mentioning his name in the firm?—Well, I will do my best to counterfeit rather than lose ground in this new world, since thou sayest it is grown so precise. But, Anthony, what is the name of this nobleman, in whose service I am to turn hypocrite?'

'Alas! Master Michael, are you there with your bears?' said Foster, with a grim smile; 'and this is the knowledge you pretend of my concerns?—How know you now there is such a person in *rerum natura*, and that I have not been putting a jape upon you all this time?'

'Thou put a jape upon me, thou sodden-brained gull!' answered Lambourne, nothing daunted; 'why, dark and muddy as thou think'st thyself, I would engage in a day's space to see as clear through thee and thy concerns, as thou call'st them, as through the filthy horn of an old stable lantern.'

At this moment their conversation was interrupted by a scream from the next apartment.

'By the holy Cross of Abingdon,' exclaimed Anthony Foster, forgetting his Protestantism in his alarm, 'I am a ruined man!'

So saying, he rushed into the apartment whence the scream issued, followed by Michael Lambourne. But to account for the sounds which interrupted their conversation, it is necessary to recede a little way in our narrative.

It has been already observed, that when Lambourne accompanied Foster into the library, they left Tressilian alone in the ancient parlour. His dark eye followed them forth of the apartment with a glance of contempt, a part of which his mind instantly transferred to himself for having stooped to be even for a moment their familiar companion. 'These are the associates, Amy,'—it was thus he communed with himself,—'to which thy cruel Levi—thine unthinking and most unmerited false—has condemned him of whom his friends once loved, and other things, and who now scorns himself. He will be scorned by others, for the baseness he stoops to for the love of thee! But I will not leave the pursuit of thee, once the object of my purest and most devoted affection, though to me thou canst henceforth be nothing but a thing to weep over—I will save thee from thy betrayer, and from thyself—I will restore thee to thy parents—to

thy God. I cannot bid the bright star again sparkle in the sphere it has shot from, but—'

A slight noise in the apartment interrupted his reverie; he looked round, and in the beautiful and richly-attired female who entered at that instant by a side-door, he recognised the object of his search. The first impulse arising from this discovery urged him to conceal his face with the collar of his cloak, until he should find a favourable moment of making himself known. But his purpose was disconcerted by the young lady (she was not above eighteen years old), who ran joyfully towards him, and, pulling him by the cloak, said playfully, 'Nay, my sweet friend, after I have waited for you so long, you come not to my bowler to play the masquer—You are arraigned of treason to true love and fond affection; and you must stand up at the bar, and answer it with face uncovered—how say you, guilty or not?'

'Alas, Amy!' said Tressilian, in a low and melancholy tone, as he suffered her to draw the mantle from his face. The sound of his voice, and still more the unexpected sight of his face, changed in an instant the lady's playful mood—She staggered back, turned as pale as death, and put her hands before her face. Tressilian was himself for a moment much overcome, but seeming suddenly to remember the necessity of using an opportunity which might not again occur, he said in a low tone, 'Amy, fear me not.' 'Why should I fear you?' said the lady, withdrawing her hands from her beautiful face, which was now covered with crimson,—'why should I fear you, Mr. Tressilian?—or wherefore have you intruded yourself into my dwelling, uninvited, sir, and unwished for?'

'Your dwelling, Amy!' said Tressilian. 'Alas! is a prison your dwelling!—a prison guarded by one of the most sordid of men, but not a greater wretch than his employer!'

'This house is mine,' said Amy, 'mine while I choose to inhabit it!—If it is my pleasure to live in seclusion, who shall gainsay me?'

'Your father, maiden,' answered Tressilian, 'your broken-hearted father; who despatched me in quest of you with that authority which he cannot exert in person. Here is his letter, written while he blessed his pain of body, which somewhat stunned the agony of his mind.'

'The pain!—is my father then ill?' said the lady.

'So ill,' answered Tressilian, 'that even your utmost haste may not restore him to health, but all shall be instantly prepared for your departure the instant you yourself will give consent.'

'Tressilian,' answered the lady, 'I cannot, I must not, I dare not leave this place. Go back to my father—tell him I will obtain leave to see him within twelve hours from hence. Go back, Tressilian—tell him I am well, I am happy—happy could I think he was so—tell him not to fear that I will come, and in such a manner that all the grief Amy has given him shall be forgotten—the poor Amy is now greater than she dare name.—Go, good Tressilian—I have injured thee too, but believe me I have power to heal the wounds I have caused—I robbed you of a childish heart, which was not worthy of you, and I can repay the loss with honours and advancement.'