

uninitiated the genesis of the historical novel. Take Macaulay's History of England, Vol. IV., and read up chap. xxii., so far as it relates to the Earl of Shrewsbury, Sir John Fenwick and Matthew Smith. Add thereto the same author's description of that picturesque Scottish villain, Robert Ferguson, and supplement the story of Shrewsbury with what history has to say regarding his abandoned mother, and you have all your material, save the actual hero and heroine. Mr. Weyman finds his hero in a farmer's son called Richard Price, who had received education enough to be a schoolmaster, and who by mere accident was ludicrously like the Earl of Shrewsbury, save in the quality of his courage. This Richard Price, falling under the spell of an artful Abigail, afterwards the wife of Matthew Smith, becomes a thief, and would have gone to the gallows but for the Earl of Shrewsbury. Gravitating to London, he falls under the power of Ferguson, and Smith, and of the wicked old countess. Yet, abject as he is, he saves Shrewsbury from Ferguson at an interview in the latter's lodgings, and thereafter becomes a dependent of the Duke's household. He is made a tool of by Smith and the countess, in personating his master, whereby accidentally he reaches Dunkirk. There he finds the heroine, Ferguson's niece Mary, whom he had known in London, and whom he had once enabled to escape justice. She puts heart into the craven, who returns to England in time to justify the Duke before King William and his council. Thereafter he lives as the Duke's secretary at Eyford in the country, with Mary Ferguson for his wife. How she, a woman of spirit, came to marry such an abject coward as Richard Price, is among the matrimonial mysteries of the world. Perhaps her uncle Robert's diabolical temper had disgusted her with brawlers, and made her sigh for what a certain masculine literary lady of to-day sought and found, "a mild man." The reader is annoyed with the cowardice of Price, a tall, distinguished-looking, lusty fellow, yet cowering in chattering terror before every new tyrant, bellowing out his lamentations like a bull-calf, and