

## CHAPTER V.

—He was a man  
versed in the world as pilot in his compass;  
The needle pointed ever to that interest  
Which was his lordstar, and he spread his sails  
With vanage to the gale of others' passion.  
THE DECEIVER—A TRAGEDY.

ANTHONY FOSTER was still engaged in debate with his fair guest, who treated with scorn every entreaty and request that she would retire to her own apartment, when a whistle was heard at the entrance-door of the mansion.

'We are fairly sped now,' said Foster; 'yonder is thy lord's signal, and what to say about the disorder which has happened in this household, by my conscience, I know not. Some evil fortune dogs the heels of that unhanged rogue Lambourne, and he has 'scaped the gallows against every chance, to come back and be the ruin of me!'

'Peace, sir,' said the lady, 'and undo the gate to your master.—My lord! my dear lord!' she then exclaimed, hastening to the entrance of the apartment; then added, with a voice expressive of disappointment,—'Pooh! it is but Richard Varney!'

'Ay, madam,' said Varney, entering and saluting the lady with a respectful obeisance, which she returned with a careless mixture of negligence and of displeasure. 'It is but Richard Varney; but even the first grey cloud should be acceptable, when it lightens in the east, because it announces the approach of the blessed sun.'

'How! comes my lord hither to-night?' said the lady, in joyful, yet startled agitation; and Anthony Foster caught up the word, and echoed the question. Varney replied to the lady, that his lord proposed to attend her, and would have proceeded with some compliment, when, running to the door of the parlour, she called aloud, 'Janet—Janet—come to my tiring-room instantly.' Then turning to Varney, she asked if her lord sent any further commendations to her.

'This letter, honoured madam,' said he, taking from his bosom a small parcel wrapped in scarlet silk, 'and with it a token to the queen of his affections.' With eager speed the lady hastened to undo the silken string which surrounded the little packet, and, failing to unloose readily the knot with which it was secured, she again called loudly on Janet, 'Bring me a knife—scissors—ought that may undo this envious knot!'

'May not my poor poniard serve, honoured madam?' said Varney, presenting a small dagger of exquisite workmanship, which hung in his turkey-leather sword-belt.

'No, sir,' replied the lady, rejecting the instrument which he offered.—'Steel poniard shall cut no true-love knot of mine.'

'It has cut many, however,' said Anthony Foster, half aside, and looking at Varney. By this time the knot was disentangled without any other help than the neat and nimble fingers of Janet, a simply-attired, pretty maiden, the daughter of Anthony Foster, who came running at the repeated call of her mistress. A necklace of orient pearl, the companion of a perfumed

billet, was now hastily produced from the packet. The lady gave the one, after a slight glance, to the charge of her attendant, while she read, or rather devoured, the contents of the other.

'Surely, lady,' said Janet, gazing with admiration at the neck-string of pearls, 'the daughters of Tyre wore no fairer neck-jewels than those—And then the posy, "For a neck is fairer,"—each pearl is worth a freehold.'

'Each word in this dear paper is worth the whole string, my girl—But come to my tiring-room, girl; we must be brave, my lord comes hither to-night.—He bids me grace you, Master Varney, and to me his wish is a law—I bid you to a collation in my bower this afternoon, and you too, Master Foster. Give orders that all is fitting, and that suitable preparations be made for my lord's reception to-night.' With these words she left the apartment.

'She takes state on her already,' said Varney, 'and distributes the favour of her presence, as if she were already the partner of his dignity.—Well—it is wise to practise beforehand the part which fortune prepares us to play—the young eagle must gaze at the sun, ere he soars on strong wing to meet it.'

'If holding her head aloft,' said Foster, 'will keep her eyes from dazling, I warrant you the dame will not stoop her crest. She will presently soar beyond reach of my whistle, Master Varney. I promise you, she holds me already in slight regard.'

'It is thine own fault, thou sullen uninventive companion,' answered Varney, 'who know'st no mode of control, save downright brute force.—Canst thou not make home pleasant to her, with music and toys? Canst thou not make the out-of-doors frightful to her, with tales of goblins? Thou livest here by the churchyard, and hast not even wit enough to raise a ghost, to scare thy females into good discipline.'

'Speak not thus, Master Varney,' said Foster; 'the living I fear not, but I trifle not nor toy with my dead neighbours of the churchyard. I promise you, it requires a good heart to live so near it: worthy Master Holdforth, the afternoon's lecturer of Saint Antholin's, had a sore fright there the last time he came to visit me.'

'Hold thy superstitious tongue!' answered Varney; 'and whilst thou talk'st of visiting, answer me, thou paltering knave, how came Tressilian to be at the postern-door?'

'Tressilian?' answered Foster; 'what know I of Tressilian?—I never heard his name.'

'Why, villain, it was the very Cornish chough to whom old Sir Hugh Robsart destined his pretty Amy, and hither the hot-brained fool has come to look after his fair runaway: there must be some order taken with him, for he thinks he hath wrong, and is not the mean kind that will sit down with it. Luckily he knows not of my lord, but thinks he has only me to deal with. But how, in the fiend's name, came he hither?'

'Why, with Mike Lambourne, an you must know,' answered Foster.

'And who is Mike Lambourne?' demanded Varney. 'By Heaven! thou wert best set up a bush over thy door, and invite every stroller