

### *The Guest of Quesnay*

the face and head which put me in supreme doubt of my surroundings, for I seemed to have plunged, eyes foremost, into the Milky Way. But I had my left arm round his neck, which probably saved me from a *coup de grâce*, as he was forced to pommel me at half-length. Pommel it was; to use so gentle a word for what to me was crash, bang, smash, battle, murder, earthquake and tornado. I was conscious of some one screaming, and it seemed a consoling part of my delirium that the cheek of Miss Anne Elliott should be jammed tight against mine through one phase of the explosion. My arms were wrenched, my fingers twisted and tortured, and, when it was all too clear to me that I could not possibly bear one added iota of physical pain, the ingenious fiend began to kick my shins and knees with feet like crowbars.

Conflict of any sort was never my vocation. I had not been an accessory-during-the-fact to a fight since I passed the truculent age of fourteen; and it is a marvel that I was able to hang to that dynamic bundle of trained muscles—which defines Mr. Earl Percy well enough—for more than ten seconds. Yet I did hang to him, as Père Baudry testifies, for a