

the side of it, with a servant in attendance for the purpose of baiting his hook, or calling upon him to pull, if by chance he was furnished with a bite; happily for his repose this very rarely was the case, though a tradition runs in the family of his having once snapped an officious perch of extraordinary size.

There was a learned practitioner in the law, one *Mr. Driver*, who had a house in his parish, and him Ned appointed manager of his estate; this worthy gentleman was so considerate as seldom or never to give him any trouble about his account, well knowing his aversion from items and particulars and the little turn he had to the drudgery of arithmetic and calculations. By the kind offices of Mr. Driver, Ned was relieved from an infinite deal of disagreeable business, and Mr. Driver himself suddenly became a man of considerable property, and began to take a lead in the county. Ned, together with his estate, had succeeded to a Chancery suit, which was pending at the death of the late possessor. This suit was for a time carried on so prosperously by Mr. Driver, that nothing more seemed necessary to bring it to a favourable issue, than for Ned to make his appearance in court. For some purposes I am not able to explain, this was an undertaking so inurmountable, that he could never be prevailed upon to set about it, and the suit was deferred accordingly. This suit and the circumstance of a copper-mine on his estate, which his agent never could engage him to work, were the only things that ever disturbed his tranquillity, and upon these topics he was rather sore, till Mr. Driver found it convenient to give up both points, and Ned heard no more of his Chancery suit or his copper-mine.

These few traits of my friend's character will suffice to make my readers acquainted with him before I relate the particulars of a visit I paid him about three months ago. It was in compliance with the following letter, which I was favoured with from Mr. Driver.

"SIR,

"These are to inform you that Mr. Drowfsy desires the favour of your company at Poppy-Hall, which he has ordered me to notify to you, not doubting but you will take it in good part, as you well know how his humour stands towards writing. He bids me say that he has something of consequence to consult you upon, of which more when we meet: Wishing you health and a safe journey, I remain in all reasonable service, yours to command,

"DANIEL DRIVER."

In consequence of this summons I set off for Poppy-Hall, and arrived there early in the evening of the second day. I found my friend Drowfsy in company with my correspondent the attorney, the Rev. Mr. Beetle, curate of the parish, and two gentlemen, strangers to me, who, as I understood from Mr. Driver, were Mr. Sparkle, senior, an eminent auctioneer in London, and Billy Sparkle his son, a city beau. My friend was in his easy-chair turned towards the fire; the rest were sitting round the table at some distance, and engaged, as I soon discovered, in a very interesting conversation upon beauty, which my entrance for a while put a stop to. This intermission, however, lasted no longer than whilst Mr. Drowfsy paid his compliments to me, which he performed in a few words, asking me however if I came on horseback, which having answered in the affirmative; he sententially observed, that he never rode. And now the elder Mr. Sparkle resumed the conversation in the following manner:—What I was going to observe to you, when this gentleman came in, upon the article of beauty, is peremptorily and precisely this: Beauty, gentlemen, is in the eye, I aver it to be in the eye of the beholder and not in the object itself; my beauty, for instance, is not your beauty, your's is not mine; it depends upon fancy and taste, fancy and taste are nothing but caprice: A collection of fine women is like a collection of fine pictures; put them up to auction and bidders will be found for every lot.—But all bidders, cries the attorney, are not *bona fide* buyers; I believe you find many an article in your sales sent back upon the owner's hands, and so it is with beauty; all, that is bidden for, is not bought in.—Here the curate interposed, and turning to his lay-brother of the pulpit, reminded him that beauty was like a flower of the field; here to-day, and gone to-morrow; whereas virtue was a hardy plant and defied the scythe of time; virtue was an evergreen and would bloom in the winter of life; virtue would flourish, when beauty was no more.—I believe it seldom makes any shoots till that is the case, cried Billy Sparkle, and followed up his repartee with a laugh, in which he was himself the only performer. It is high time now, says the attorney, directing his discourse to me, to make you acquainted with the business we are upon, and how we came to fall upon this topic of beauty. Your friend, Mr. Drowfsy, does not like the trouble of talking, and therefore with his leave I shall open the case to you, as I know he wishes to take your opinion upon it.

Here the attorney seemed to pause for