## DIGBY GRAND

CHAPTER XX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

In fact, I gathered from his looks that very small encouragement on my part would have induced him to show fight-and had we been breaking up of my establishment, and the concerned with only the two boarders, the abandonment of my Indian appointment probability is we should have thrown them both into the Channel. Fortunately, however, for these myrmutons of the law, the bout which had waited them to their prey, and was now ranged alongside of our crazy dinzy, contained, in addition to a Portsmouth constable, four stout fellows at the oars, a glance at whose determined weatherbeaten faces and stalwart forms convinced me that resistance would be hopeless, and that the wisest course under the circumstances would be to bow to the storm, and give myse fup peaceably to those gentle-men, who evidently possessed the power, as they had the will, of bringing me bodily into captivity. In less time than it takes to relate it, I had been presented with just such a shp of paper as I had sped from Canter-bury to avoid, and found myself sitting quietly down between two bailiffs, in the stern of a four oared gig, for the first time in my life a prisoner to the law.

The feeling was by no means a pleasant one although its keenness was to a certain degree adapted by the fact that I had often of late contemplated the possibility of such a catastrophe, which, which, like most other afflictions, loses much of its horror when divested of the exaggerating effect of distance. The first consideration was, 'What must immediately bedone?' It was no use to sit in an open boat, wet to the skin, and repine at the nufortunate chance which had seized on the captive when so near his haven—at the bad look out k pt by myself and faithful Charon, owing in a great measure to the fondness for parrative indulged in by the latter-or at the accurate information and keen-scented vigilance which had enabled Mr. Shadrach to place in operation two effective forces simultaneously, the one to besiege the barracks at Canterbury, the other to effect a spirited coup de main in the British Channel. No. first thing to be done, doubtless, was breakfast, a't r which some arrangement must be entered upon to restore liberty to the captive, at whatever sacrifice. With a coolness which I owe more to education than to natural strength of mind, I civilly requested my captors to allow me a few minutes to communicate with a friend ere I returne I to terra firma, and on the blank leaf of a packet book I scribbled a few lines to Cartouch, beging him immediately to come ashore, and present himself without delay at The George, who re he would find me in durance vile. This missive, devoutly hoping that the Colonel might have already entered upon his duties on board the Hyderabad, I intrusted to my hump backed boat to deliver without fail, and as the request was not uuaccompanied by a douceur that would pay handsomely for the damage done to his craft. I had a lively faith that it would be punctually attended to; and the old sailor. vidently sympathising with a gentleman in difficulties, r addy volunteered to fulfil my commission, and as he rowed off in an opposite direction, and ever and anon dropping his oar f r a moment, waved his unoccupied hand, as though in necouragement, I felt, foolish as it may appear, almost as if I had lost my last remaining friend.

I flatter myself that I rather did create a sensation in the George Hotel, Portsmouth, as I walk d into that most comfortable caravanserat, in the pocular costume recorded above, the starting effect of my attire much enhanced by travelling all night and sub stituting a bracy sail on the Channel for the usual morning toilette of a gentleman; and I thought the box in landlady and the quality-loving wait roast glances of uninistakable sympathy and they all diperson and in

ing of ourselves, Mr. Shadrach, and Levanter, heretoforr met with, the foreman's tape reto whom, for want of a better friend, I had sent on my arrival in London, were assem-bled in the aclite's parlour, to discuss ways and means, and come to terms that should at all events, set me at liberty for the present Business details are proverbially interesting; it is, therefore, sufficient to say that, upon a close investigation of the state of my affairs, they were found to be so hopelessly involved as to entail an immediate sale of the com-mission I held in the Dragoons, a total Nor wou dall these sacrifices have been sufficient to satisfy Mr. Shadrach's demand, had it not been for the liberal use of his name with which Levanter favored me, and for which, by an understood agreement. I was to return him all the advantages which as I walked out of the shop, I confess that my own signature might be supposed to con- for the first time in my life, I did feel wofully er. 'I'll back your bill if you'll back mine! What a number of rained speculators, dis tressed dependents, and distracted families may trace their musfortunes to this plausible and apparently simple arrangement?

Contrary to the advice of Cartouch, and against my own better sense. I entered into one of these reciprocal arrangements with Levanter, who was now concerned in a bubble scheme, of which the shares were to be unheard of fortunes, and the public the dupes; but, in the meantime, Mr. Shadrach content to take, for the bills of mine which he held, all the ready money I could muster in the world, in addition to such security as I had to offer; and I walked out of the gaudy little drawing-room in which I had first made the Israelite's acquaintance, a free man certainly, as far as corporal emancipation was concerned, but to all intents and purposes a beggar. Cartouch was obliged to return to Portsmouth, so I had not even his assistance in the final arrangement of my affairs; and when I had written to Colonel Bold, requesting leave 'to retire from the service by the sale of my commission, and had arranged with Tattersall for the disposal of the few horses and carriages I possessed, I felt quite at a loss as to my future proceedings, and could not for a time realise my forlorn position—the effect of my having no profession, no occupation, no one on whom I could depend, and, above all, not

a farthing in the world. True, I was a beggar; yet I did not find much difference in my daily life, nor any want of those little luxuries which become necessaries to the exotic offspring of civilization. I ate as good a dinner every day as formerly, and with the same people; though I was obliged to substitute a back cab for the high-stepping grey horse and the well-hung vehicle on which I once so piqued myself. I went to the same parties that in my palmly days I had voted so great a bore, but that uow, when I was living as though every day don would put me in the way of at least w re my last, acquired a charm they had earning a respectable livelihood—Hillingdon never before possessed. My wardrobe was well replenished with fashionable garments, that lost none of their gloss by the fact of their being unneid for and amid the selection of their being unneid for and amid the selection. their being unpaid for, and amid the sale of betake myself whilst I was yet at liberty to all my other personalities there was always guide my own steps. But even this cost me for my daily expenses; so that any one to could not bear to appear as a suppliant; the have seen me swaggering down St. James's idea was too galling that he who in former Street, well dressed and carefully booted. bowing to my Lady this, and offering an arm to my Lord that, while a dinner with one or a whist-party with the other was arranged and discussed, would have been somewhat staggered to be informed that the fashionable looking gentleman, whose exterior betokened all that was affluent and expensive, who looked as if he lived on the fat of the land amongst her proudest and noblest, was destitute of any tangible property save his whiskers, and had no certain guarantee that, er a week should clapse, he might not be compelled to occupy airy lodgings under the such accommodation should not eventually lead to the bed of the river itself. London was emptying fast—fortunately, as I then thought, for I still clung tenaciously to the shadow of that fashionable reputation for which I had sacrificed so much; and day by day those greetings became fewer which I

mained suspended between finger and thumb, and a grave 'Step this way, sir,' ushered me into the sanctum of the proprietor himself, whose usually urbane countenance was now gathered into a frown betokening uncom-promising firmness and defiance. 'Very sorry, Captain.' said Mr. Strides. becoming, like all men of weak nerves, more agitated as he got depor into his subject- very sorry, sir; but quite contrary to our rules to supply any further articles, with such a large outstanding account-money very scarce good many gents leaving town-bill delivered-lawyer's letter totally unattended toscandalous usage—legal messures, ' &c., &c., &c., &c. of abuse and recrimination ensued, to which I ought never to have subjected myself; and thoroughly, despicably small! And to this I had arrived!—I, the descendant of a chivalrous family, the heir of an ancient name, never yet sullied by the breath of dishonor—with opportunities enjoyed by few, with a good education, a glorious profession. and a fair start in life! To what had I come at last? -- My commission was gonethe doors of my father's house were shut in my face—and I was actually a prisoner at large, enjoying my freedom only on suffer-ance, dependent for my very right of breathing the open air on the liberality of a trades man, the forbearance of a Jew! The world might sneer and laugh, dandies in possession might vote I had mismanaged my affairs, whilst dandies in expectation might consider my present strait as the normal condition of man, a lot which sooner or later must overtake themselves, but which they devoutly hope may be long and indefinitely postponed. St Heliers doubtless would say something be ter than usual anent my discomfiture, as he settled himself comfortably in the great arm chair, in the great bow window, and dispensed the pearls and rubies of his conversation am ngst a listless throng, who could scarce condescend to laugh even at his witticisms whom they had raised to the exalted posision of their jester in ordinary. Jack Lavish, whose constitutional good-

had once held an honored place in their ranks as an officer and a gentleman?—what would Colonel Grandison say?—what would Maltby, what would Hillingdon?-and as I thought of my true, my early, my real friend, the tears sprang unbidden to my eyes! Hillinga certain quantity of small-change available a severe struggle. Even to Hillingdon I days had known me the proudest of the proud, the gayest of t'e gay, should now find me seeking his presence as a petitioner, dependent upon charity for the very bread I was to eat-and yet there was nothing else for it. At least from him I should meet with no gratuitous censure, no unfeeling rebuft. His generous mind would never conassistance Hillingdon would offer, he was surs to offer in his own frank, manly and

triend's lodgings, and as I turned down the well-known street, brighter hopes seemed to

dance before me, whilst I anticipated the wel-

nature not all the training of all the clubs in

the world could alloy, would pity me; but he too would smile, for Jack has beautiful

teeth, and likes to show them to advantage;

but what would be the opinion entertained

of me by those whom I really valued and

respected?—what would my old comrades think of the broken-down spendthrift, who

four hours had elapsed, a conclave, consist- ready dexterity, the glib intelligence I had dared not pursue the train of my thoughts any further, and it was almost a relief to sit and listen to the poor old domestic's broken narrative of the events which had led to the fatal conclusion we could even now scarcely bring ourselves to believe. One thing I re marked, and one thing only, which might lead me to suppose that a change had come over the habits of my friend. Occupying & prominent situation in his sitting-room, hung portrait, which, ever since I had known him, was carefully veiled by a black curtain. Not one of his triends had ever seen the painting, and to suppose that it was a likeness of the unfortunate Austrian lady, to whom in early life he had been attached, was sufficient to check all curious remarks or ill-timed allusions, as regarded a subject on which he himself preserved an unbroken silence. The curtain was now removed, and as I sat opposite the picture, listening to the dreadful details of her lover's death, I could not keep my eyes from Zwelling on the gentle features of her who had exercised such a baneful influence of my poor friend. She was portrayed as a fair-born-locking girl, of some nineteen summers; but what was most striking in the countenance was that eager, high-souled, and yet suffering expression, which gave such interest to poor Hillingdon's own features—that unearthly look which those who are doomed to an early death seem to bear on their foreheads, as the premonitory seal of the Destroyer-a spiritbeauty which the parit claims to wear in consideration of its premature release: and this was as manifest on the lovely portrait trait. Twelve L urs afterwards ke of his youthful bride as I knew it to be on ceased to exist; an I the beauteons for that glorious countenance which was lying gallant coivalrous suint, the kindly is upstairs fixed and cold in death.

Let me draw a veil over the scene that followed, over the servant's lamentations, and my own unbearable grief. I saw him -I saw the well-belov d face, the admired form—and I shudder to think of the state in which I saw them. Days elapsed ere I could bring myself to make the necessary arrangements which, as his intimate friend, devolved upon myself, and into the de-tails of which it was loathsome to see how Mammon crept, even into the chamber of death. It is sufficient to say, that from the accounts of his servants, and the examination of his papers, which became necessary, I gathered clearly that my poor friend had been decidedly and undoubtedly mane for some time previous to the fatal act, and this was all the consolation, since consolation unquestionably it was, for the loss of the brightest, truest, kindliest spirit that ever chafed within its tenement of clay.

And it was play that had brought the en-thusiast to his self-selected grave. Play; first the seductive pastime, then the invincible habit, lastly, the deepest infatuation, from which there is no escape. Deeper and deeper had Hillingdon been drawn into the whirpool, and and this was the result. A pursuit first adopted to deaden the stings of conscience and hush the importunate wailings of remorse, had at length become the one object of existence, the whole being of the man. Lose of course he did, and large-Nor were the chances of the gamingtable sufficient to allay that craving for excitement which indeed too surely grows with what it feeds on. Stock-jobbing, railway shares, mining investments, all and every-thing that promised hazardous ventures and disproportionate returne, were embarked in with an eagerness too much in character with that imaginative disposition which made him at once an artist, a poet, and a speculator. For a time Hillingdon's speculations had met with tolerable success, enough indescend to alloy the sympathy he was sure deed to encourage him to push his ventures to afford with those retrospective strictures up to the verge of all his available fortune, which add another drop of bitterness to the and his master's spirits, as the old subscribed cup already filled to the brim; and whatever them, were higher than he had ever known (for I think I have already mentioned the singular impassiveness of my friend's outdry arches of Westminster Bridge, even if considerate spirit. Revolving such thoughts ward demeanor), but even during this period such accommodation should not eventually as these, I strolled leisurely on towards my of temporary sunshine his eccentric habit of temporary sanshine his eccentric habit was never broken through of sitting undis-turbed for a portion of each day, gazing on dance before me, whilst I anticipated the wel-come I should receive, and could almost he valued and loved upon earth. This was fancy I heard his enthusiastic enunciation an unalterable rule, and day after day his of that sentiment, a favorite one on his lips, check was paler and his eye more haggard

ne was he might, contrary to the usual tice in such offers, have had assistance a ly in the same proportion; but it was this peculiarities to be indebted to no and his was a spirit to chafe above all at well-meant counsels of a worldly and culating friend. But the philosophy ricould smile calmly at the rum of a will fortune should not have been accompa by the sensitive and imaginative ten ment that firmly believed in its pore holding converse with beings of me sphere; and the excitement of poor E don's latter career had, in breaking health and shattering his nerves, same foundations of that mysterious barners separates the shores of reason from the limitable ocean of insanity. Step by a as I read on, I traced the downfall d poor friend's reason; step by step, I is the catastrophe approaching, of which knew too well the terrible result. Fan he had believed in the actual apparate his Austrian love: twice, as he often m me, he had seen her distinctly in the and the conviction was indelibly impute upon his mind that a third appearance be immediately followed by his own de With the peculiar reasoning of insari, belief appeared now to have assume shaps of a stringent obligation, a pur honor, and, as he himself expressed a should be bound to follow when she as ed him away.' Once more the past stood by his side, and from that moment curtain was withd awn from the fath heart, were as though they had never We buried him in named go

Grateful at least for this. The sun s the streets looked gay and crowded. ness knit the brows, or pleasure but the cheeks of the heedless passengers moved to and fro upon their amusens Did that death their occupations. upon the minute-bell thrill to the best one child of Mammon? Did that me procession, as ever and anount supply wound on again in mysterious gravit, its solemn warning to one individuals busy throng? 'We are bearing oned selves to his real home. Yesterday such as ye are, to-morrow shall ye be him. His place shall be your place, is going ye shall go.' I fear me We have indeed authority to believe where all else bath failed, not even the of one from the dead shall prevail.

We buried him. Shall I ever forget dull dead sound of the damp card smote upon his coffin ? Ashes to a dust to dust! Was time the end of all! friend! my brother!

As I turned from the churchyard the bearing in another funeral—so soon! that he was already forgotten. What tered it to me? I was alone in the w

CHAPTER XXI.

WINDING UP.

It was noon when I turned my bed the churchyard which now contained last friend. I was, indeed, in a mod of all fitted to encounter the noise and of the crowded metropolis; and as Ith of the vulgar curiosty, the impertment's ries of the many busybodies in the hor fashion, who would have small so wringing my ! eart to satisfy their own ing for news, I shrank from the clubs other places of resort, where I felt our that even now the fate of my poor friend the topic of the gossip's eloquence and idler's sneer. Little heeding my state walked on immersed in grief, I found insensibly drawing near the outskirted don, and ere long the rapidity of mys (singular how the chasing mind into