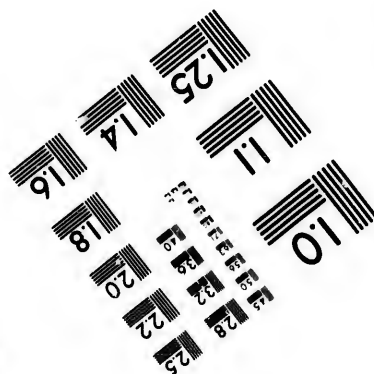
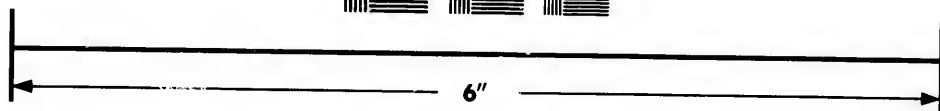
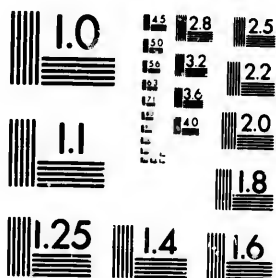


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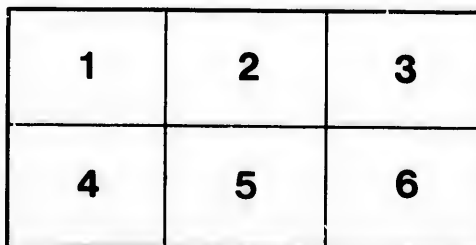
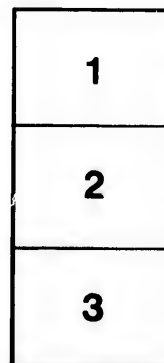
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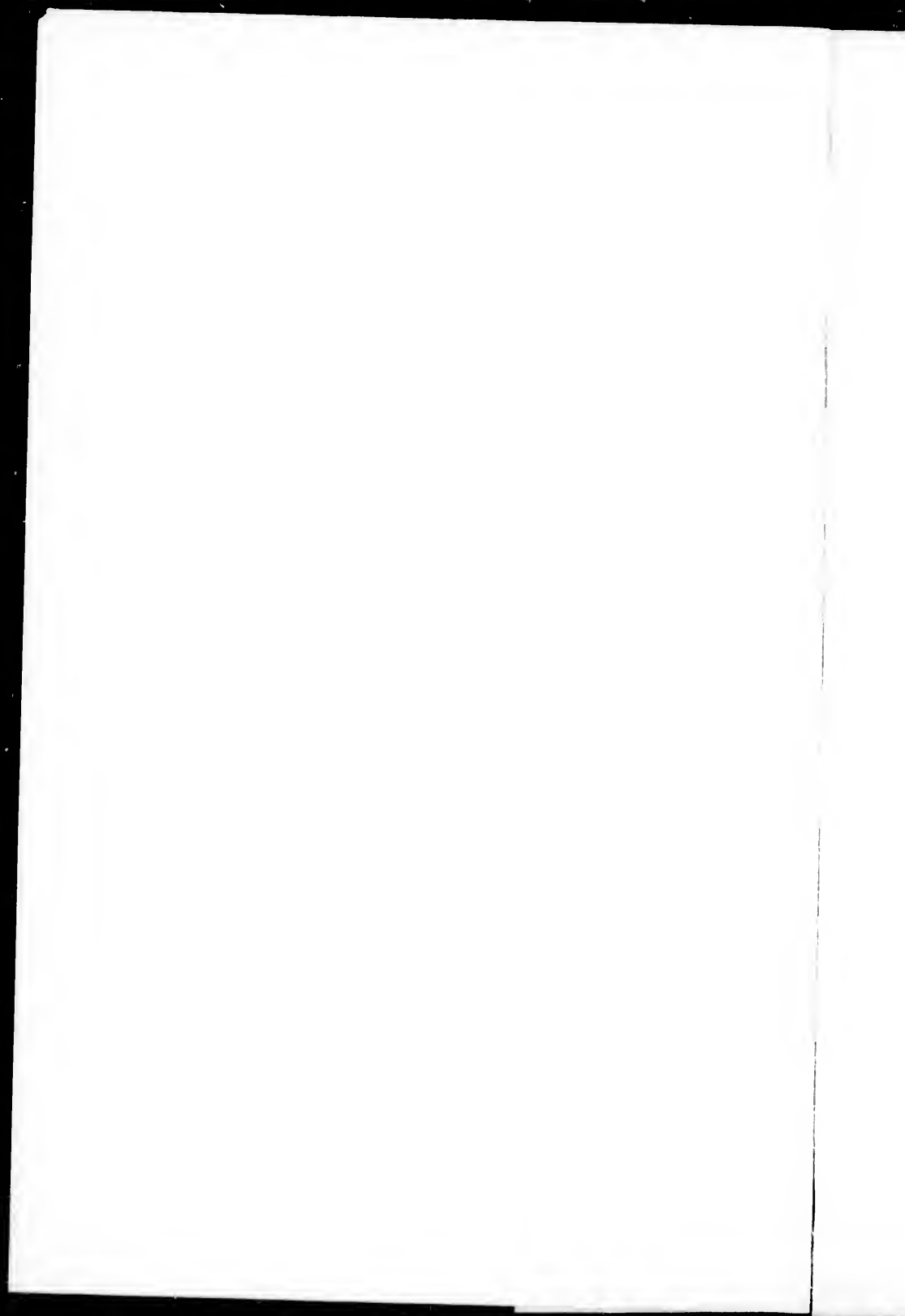
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WORKS OF JOHN GALT

SIR ANDREW WYLIE.

First Edition published
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Heard him say to a girl

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE
OF THAT ILK

WITH INTRODUCTION
By S. R. CROCKETT

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN WALLACE

VOLUME I

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
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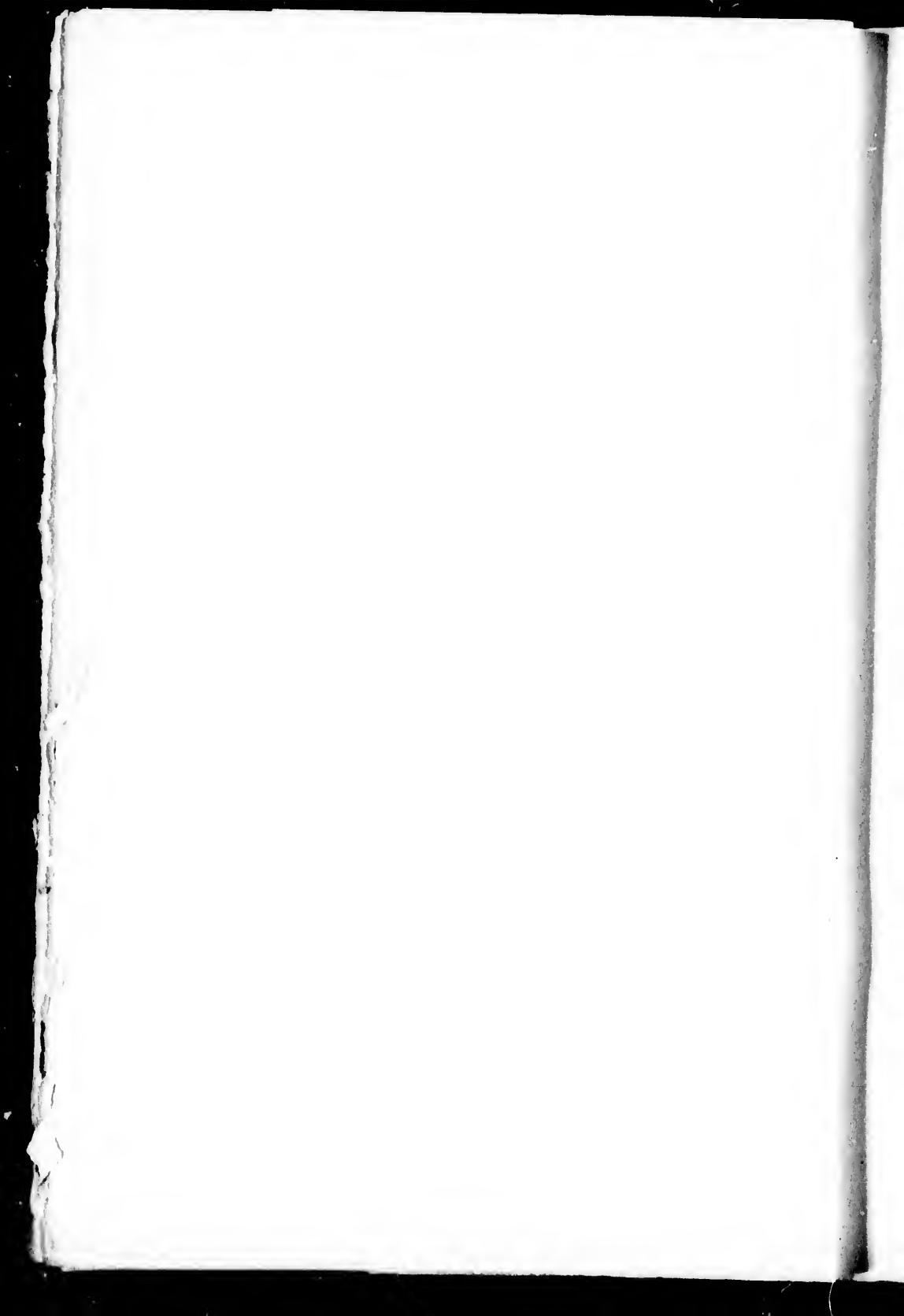
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"HONEST WOMAN, YE'RE IN A MIS-
TAKE" *Frontispiece*

"HE WAS SURPRISED TO FIND THEM
SEATED TOGETHER" . . . *to face page 284*

INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

IT has been generally said that "Sir Andrew Wylie," was, at the time of its publication, the most popular of Galt's works in England. Probably this popularity never meant very much. But if it had been much more extensive than it was, and if the knowledge of the hero of Galt's story had been widespread, we might, I think, have safely indicated Sir Andrew Wylie as the original of the Scot of low comedy and popular jest—in fact, the Bangwent-Saxpence Scotchman.

But the conception is likely far older than Galt, probably at least as old as the Union of the crowns, and the japes that were made then upon the penuriousness of the crowd of hungry adventurers, who accompanied King James southward from Holyrood in 1603.

Never, however, has the type been clothed

with such kindly flesh and blood as in the adventures of the quaint "auld-farrant" boy, the uncouth, keen-witted lad, the pushing, provident, kindly man, whose progress Galt has so sympathetically described in Andrew "Wheelie." It is no slight merit to have plumbed the inwardness of such a conception. It is a service not slight to have interpreted the careful, determined architect of a man's own fortunes, who never lets slip a chance, who ever takes the tide of affairs at the flood, who leaps to embrace Fortune when she stands a-tiptoe; and yet at the same time to have succeeded in preserving withal, through all the prosperity and success, the simplicity of the boy who kept the sweetie-stall at the fair, and who carried his grandmother's Testament to the kirk, done up in a white napkin with a piece of "sidder-wood."

In some ways "Sir Andrew Wylie" appears to me little short of a triumph. In others it falls immeasurably below the steady sweetness of placid dignity which characterises "The Annals of the Parish." In "Sir Andrew," the

author has tried for more. He has achieved less. Indeed, to tell the truth, plot, counter-plot, and the involution of society are not in his way. The fine fury evolved out of the tangled relations of the Earl and Countess of Sandyford seems to me like the mimicry of puppets strung on wires. Galt had perhaps better have left all this sort of thing alone. The Earl's character reflects accurately the contemporary Byronic conceptions of the reckless spendthrift peer, with the languid manners and the excellent heart. The quarrel with the Countess also has Byronic suggestions, and much of the fine society is a pale reflection of the justly forgotten society novels of the earlier part of the century. These things are wholly out of key with the time of the American War to which the Scottish portions belong.

But all the early part of the book is in the author's finest vein. The description of the cottage and fittings belonging to Martha Docken, the hero's grandmother, the incidents of the hero's schooling, and very especially the "awful-like thing"—the vengeance taken by

the boys for the death of Wheelie's parrot, are of the intimate essence of Scotland as it was at the end of the eighteenth century.

It is true that only those who have themselves smarted under the black-thonged taws, who have climbed the braes sparsely wooded with birch and hazel, on Saturday afternoons free and golden, who have sweated over the learning of "fifty psalms," and suffered for their costiveness with "Effectual Calling" are really capable of knowing how superexcellent these early chapters of "Sir Andrew Wylie" are.

It may be some consolation to the unfortunates who were born under other and less friendly stars, and whose experiences have not the ragged edge of enjoyment which comes by contrast with bygone stern realities, to know that the impressions of life which Galt gives are entirely faithful, both in their general impression and in the very abundant detail with which he supports them. There never was a more veracious chronicler than John Galt, or one better qualified for the task.

No doubt the same sleet, pawky, well-con-

sidered straightforwardness, which the keen and not over-indulgent eyes of Thomas Carlyle discerned in Galt, found its way into the adventures of "Sir Andrew Wylie." His hero early makes the discovery that the finest manners are composed in equal parts of good feeling, naturalness, and care for the sensibilities of others. He is aware that to attempt to assimilate himself with the distinguished society in the midst of which he moves would be fatal to his plans for his own advancement. So he is constrained to be himself.

For instance, in an admirable passage his master is conveying to him the news that by the generosity of Lord Sandyford, Andrew is assured of the income of seven hundred and fifty pounds a year for seven years. Mr. Vellum thinks that the time is a suitable one for giving a little advice to his lucky apprentice.

"I hope," he says, "that you will set in seriously to your profession and throw off your ridiculous manners for the future."

"That would be a doing indeed!" exclaimed

our hero, "when you are just at this precious moment telling me that they have already brought me in seven hundred and fifty pounds a year."

This answer puzzled the lawyer, who laughed as he said, "Well, well, take your own way; but it is no longer necessary for you to be so penurious."

"That's very true," replied Andrew, "and I'm thankfu' that it is sae; but if I dinna save now, where, in the lang run, will I be better for my lord's bountiful patronage? No, sir, ye maun juist let me ride my ain horse wi' my ain hauding."

It is quite true that Andrew, while engaged in engineering his fortune, looks on everything with a clear eye to his own advantage, and plainly declares that he means to utilise aill his favour with the great. But the meanness, if not the smallness, of such a declaration is largely atoned for by the transparent simplicity and sincerity of his character—as well as by the fact that he never forgets an early friend. He rejoices the heart of his grandmother, and

finally returns full of his original and unspoiled simplicity to his own village.

Truth to tell, we occasionally get a little tired of "Caliban" in the gay society of the day. The oaf wears his oafdom a trifle too obviously. Also, there are lapses from good taste which increase as the political and other intrigues thicken. We feel instinctively that the author is not at home here. He is playing upon an instrument of which he does not know the strings.

We get, it is true, the continuous impression of the forceful man of affairs. We learn that honest and homely common sense, reinforced by natural shrewdness and some lack of rose-water scruples as to meddling with tar, is an excellent working equipment wherewith to face the world and erect the edifice of fortune. But there is, it seems to me, a little too much of the "Successful Merchant" about this part of the book, somewhat too obvious a dwelling upon the fruits of monetary and social success.

The reason of this is obvious enough. These were the sorts of success which during part of

his life Galt himself aspired to ; but which he did not, in any great measure, succeed in achieving. And he failed largely for the lack of that very suppleness in speech and demeanour with which he has credited "Wheelie." Galt was ever ready to put forward his own opinion, and if it were not precisely acceptable to his superiors, he was just as ready to back his judgment by sending in his resignation. He had no judicious suppleness of neck. He could bide the buffet, but he had no idea of "jooking to let the jaw go by."

As soon, however, as the "Sir Andrew" leaves London behind, with all the quirks and smirks of political society, and sets foot again on the beloved land, we have our own rich, simple, gracious John Galt.

Each unstudied line runs rippling in the heart of every Scottish lad who has ventured afield, and after long years has returned to find the old order unchanged indeed, yet strangely new because of the eyes full of experience that now look upon the scene. "All things, as he approached the hamlet, had become smaller and

meaner; the trees appeared stunted, the hedges more rude and irregular, and the distance between each well-known object greatly abridged." The houses had other occupants, the kenned faces are few and far between—only the river sung the same well-remembered tune and the ash-trees stood out against the sky in the summer twilight as when he was a boy.

All the latter part of "Sir Andrew Wylic" is full of these delightful things. Galt seems exceedingly glad (as no doubt he was in reality) to get quit of London and his romantic plot. On his own ground he is like a "China pourie fu' o' cream." Every line is a picture. The kindly nature of the man wins a hundred ways out. For Sir Bountiful, coming home with his long purse and his long head—never bestowing in the wrong place, never grudging in the right, is precisely the figure John Galt would have liked to make upon his own return from Canada.

Alas, that in a sentence of his own we should read the picture of what his actual return was

like. "There are but two situations in which the adventurer, returning home, can duly appreciate the delightful influences of such an hour of holiness and beauty and rest.

"The one, when he is retreating from an unsuccessful contest with fortune—when, baffled and mortified by the effects either of his integrity or of his friendlessness, he abandons the struggle, and retires to his native shades as to the embrace of a parent, to be lulled by sounds that were dear to his childhood, and which he fondly hopes will appease his sorrows and soothe him asleep for ever."

Yet who shall say that John Galt, when he turned his face to the wall, made not a better end, neglected by the great ones of the earth whom he had so faithfully served, but dignified by his own honour and sincerity, than even the wholly successful baronet and kindly adventurer whom, in this book, he has so excellently portrayed.

S. R. CROCKETT.

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SIR ANDREW WYLIE

SIR ANDREW WYLIE

CHAPTER I

The Cottage.

SIR ANDREW WYLIE, like the generality of great geniuses, was born and bred in very humble circumstances. By the early death of both his parents he was consigned in infancy to the care of his maternal grandmother, Martha Docken, one of those clachan carlins who keep alive among the Scottish peasantry the traditions and sentiments which constitute so much of the national character. This old woman resided in the hamlet of Stoneyholm, in the shire of Ayr. Her sole breadwinner was her spinning-wheel; and yet she was cheerfully contented with her lot, for it had pleased Heaven to bless her with a blithe spirit and a religious trust in the goodness of Providence. The furniture of her cottage, in addition to Andrew's cradle (and that was borrowed), consisted of one venerable elbow-chair, with a tall perpendicular back — curiously carved,—a

VOL. I.

family relic of better days, enjoyed by her own or her husband's ancestors; two buffet-stools, one a little larger than the other; a small oaken claw-foot table; her wheel, a hand-reel, a kail-pot, and a skillet,¹ together with a scanty providing of bedding, and a chest that was at once coffer, wardrobe, and ambry.² Behind the house she had a patch of some five or six falls³ of ground for a garden, which she delved and planted herself; and the rent she paid for the whole was ten shillings per annum.

The gathering of this sum, after she received the heavy handful of Andrew, a weak and ailing baby, required no little care. But, instead of repining at the burden, she often declared to the neighbours that he was "great company; and, though at times a wee fashious,⁴ he's an auld-farand⁵ bairn, and kent a raisin frae a black clock⁶ before he had a tooth: putting the taen in his mouth wi' a smirk, but skreighing⁷ like desperation at the sight o' the ither." During the summer of the first year after Andrew had been brought home to her, she was generally seen sitting with her wheel, basking in the sun, at the gable of her cottage, with her grandson at

¹ *Skillet*. A hand-bell.

² *Ambry* (*Almerie*). Cupboard.

³ *Fall*. A measure equal nearly to an English rood.

⁴ *Fashious*. Troublesome.

⁵ *Auld-farand*. Sagacious.

⁶ *Black clock*. Black-beetle. ⁷ *Skreighing*. Screeching.

her side in her biggest stool, turned upside down, amusing himself with the cat.

Andrew was a small and delicate child ; but he grew apace, and every day, in the opinion of his grandmother, improved in his looks. " His een," as she said to her kimmers ¹ while she dandled him at the door as they stopped to speak to her in passing, " are like gowans in a May morning, and his laugh's as blithe as the lilt o' the linty."

Philosophers, in these expressions, may discover the fond anticipations of hopeful affection looking forward to a prosperous fortune for the child ; but Andrew for a long time showed no indication of possessing anything in common with the talents that are usually supposed requisite to ensure distinction or riches. In his boyhood, however, Martha frequently observed " That he was a pawkie laddie, and if he wasna a deacon at book lair, he kent as weel as the maister himsel' how mony blue beans it taks to mak five." The " maister " here spoken of was Dominie Tannyhill, one of those meek and modest novices of the Scottish priesthood, who, never happening to meet with any such stroke of good fortune as the lot of a tutor in a laird's family, wear out the even tenor of their blameless days in the little troubles of a village school. At the time when Andrew was placed under his care, the master seemed to be about forty, but he was probably two or three years younger. He was pale and

¹ *Kimmers.* Neighbours, gossips.

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thin, and under the middle size, and stooped a little, as if his head had been set on somewhat awry. It proceeded, however, from a habit which he had acquired, in consequence of being short-sighted, and accustomed to write and read with his ear almost touching the paper. At times he would erect himself even into something like an air of dignity, and change his lowly and diffident tone into the voice and accent of an earnest and impassioned eloquence.

Everything in his appearance indicated a moderate spirit, in perfect accordance with the mildness of his manners, and his few and humble acquirements; but there was an apostolic energy in his thoughts, when his own feelings were roused, or when he addressed himself to move those of others, by which nature at times showed how willing she was, if fortune had so pleased, to make him a pathetic and impressive preacher. Whether he ever felt the longings of ambition, or, rather, whether he ever repined at the unheeded and unknown estate in which he was left to pass away,—like a sequestered spring, whose pure and gentle course is only seen in the meadows by a little narrow edging of richer verdure,—could never be discovered in the still sobriety of his placid temper; but if all other passions were hushed in his quiet bosom, the kindly disposition which he showed towards every living thing begat in the minds of his pupils an affectionate respect, of far greater power in the

little state and commonwealth of his school than would have been yielded to the authority of more arrogant abilities, backed by the taws, that dreaded satrap of Scottish didactic discipline.

In his dress, the master was as remarkable as in his mind and manners. His linen was always uncommonly neat, and his coat and vest of raven grey, though long threadbare, never showed a broken thread or the smallest stationary speck of dust. His breeches, of olive thickset, were no less carefully preserved from stains; and his dark blue worsted gamashins,¹ reaching above the knees in winter, not only added to the comfort of his legs, but protected his stockings. Between his cottage and the church, or in the still evenings when he was seen walking solitary along the untrodden parts of the neighbouring moor, he wore a small cocked-hat, and, as his eyes were weak and tender, in bright weather he commonly slackened the loops, and, turning the point round, converted the upright gable of the back into a shade.

If the master, like other potentates, had a favourite, it was certainly our hero, at whose droll and whimsical remarks he was sometimes observed almost to smile. For Andrew was not long at school till he showed that he was, at least with respect to his sayings, destined to attract notice. Indeed, on the very first day when his grandmother herself led him to the door with his

¹ *Gamashins*. Leg-protectors. A *gameson*, as described in authorities on ancient armour, was little different from the jack.

A B board in his hand, he got a name that he never lost. After the dismissal of the school, as he was playing with the other boys on the high-road, a carriage and four horses, with outriders, happened to pass, whirling along with the speed and pride of nobility. The school-boys, exhilarated by the splendour of a phenomenon rare in those days in Stoneyholm, shouted with gladness as it passed, and our hero animated the shout into laughter by calling out, "Weel dune, wee wheelie: the muckle ane canna catch you." From that time he was called "Wheelie;" but, instead of being offended by it, as boys commonly are by their nicknames, he bore it with the greatest good-humour, and afterwards, when he had learned to write, marked his books and copies with "Andrew Wheelie, his book." Even the master in time used to call him Wheelie, and insensibly fostered his taste for the odd and droll by sometimes inviting him on a Saturday afternoon to partake of his pale and economical tea. Andrew, who was naturally shrewd and observant, perceiving that the master was diverted by his humour, exerted himself on these occasions, by which exercise he gradually acquired a degree of readiness and self-possession in conversation unusual among Scottish boys, and a happy vernacular phraseology which he retained through life, and, with those who had a true relish of character, was enjoyed as something as rare and original as the more elegant endowment of genius.

CHAPTER II

The Magpie.

ANDREW was not distinguished among his school-fellows by any particular predilection for those amusements in which the boys of a country school are so adventurous ; yet he was always a desired member of their nesting parties in the spring and nutting excursions in the autumn : for his drollery and good-humour knit their hearts to him, and if he seldom strung an egg of his own herrying, and absolutely, at all times, refused to risk his neck on the boughs of the hazel, he still brought home his full share of the holiday plunder.

On an occasion when a pyet's¹ nest was scaled, only a single young one was found ; and it was so strong and cunning that it almost escaped from the grasp of Willy Cunningham, the boy who was sent up the tree. Some debate ensued, on the division of the day's spoil, as to who should get the magpie. Andrew thought that it ought to be given to Willy ; but Cunningham, a frank and generous fellow, insisted that it should be

¹ *Pyet's.* 7 *Magpie's.*

Wheelie's, assigning as a reason that Maggy (as Andrew had called it on the spot) "was an auld-farand thing like himsel', and would learn mair wi' him than wi' ony other laddie at the school." Cunningham's proposal was ratified with a unanimous shout; and, certainly, no bird was ever more appropriately disposed of, for Andrew not only taught it to fetch and carry, and to filch with surprising address, but to speak several words with the most diverting distinctness. Maggy herself seemed to be right well pleased with her master; and, according to tradition, knew every word he said, with the discernment of a fairy. When his companions, in the winter evenings, assembled round his grandmother's hearth, Maggy placed herself between his legs; and as often as he said anything that tickled their young fancies turned up her cunning eye, and then jocundly chattered with her bill, as if she participated in their laughter.

The natural knavery of the magpie being cultivated by education, she sometimes took it into her head to pilfer a little on her own account, and among others who suffered by her depredations was the master. Between the school hours he always opened the windows to ventilate the room; and Maggy, as often as she could, availed herself of the opportunity to steal the boys' pens. It happened, however, that she went once too often, and was caught in the fact, with a new pen in her neb. The master's own kindly humour

induced him to pardon the bird; but as quarrels had arisen among the boys, occasioned by the loss of their pens, one accusing the other of the theft, he deemed it incumbent on him to rebuke the owner of the depredator. Accordingly, when the school assembled in the afternoon, he proclaimed silence; and, taking up Maggy from under a basket where he had imprisoned her, he addressed the boys to the following effect,—

“Wha’ amang you is guilty of keeping this misleart¹ and unprincipled pyet, which is in the practice, whenever I leave the windows open to air the school, of coming in and stealing the pens from off the desks—carrying them awa’ in its neb, without ony regard for the consequence?”

“It’s mine,” cried Andrew.

“Yours!” said the master. “Then, Wheelie, come ye here, for I maun point out to you the great error of such conduct. It is, as ye maun surely hae often heard, an auld and a true saying, that ‘They wha begin wi’ stealing needles and prins, may end wi’ horned knout.’² I’m no saying, so ye needna nicher,³ that ever this pyet will steal either horse or black cattle; but I would exhort you, nevertheless, to put it away, for it is a wicked bird, and may, by its pranks, entice you to do evil yoursel. I dinna, however, recommend that ye should put the poor creature to death:—that would be a cruelty, and, besides, ye ken it’s

¹ *Misleart*. Unmannerly; then mischievous.

² *Knout (Nolt)*. Black cattle. *Nicher*. Snigger.

but a feathered fowl, and no endowed wi' ony natural understanding of good and evil. It kens nae better, like the other beasts that perish, than to mak its living in a dishonest manner. Therefore, I counsel you just to take it to the woods, and set it at liberty, where it may fall out in some other's hand."

To this Andrew replied, with one of his pawkie glances, "It's but the first fault o' poor Maggy, master, and ye shouldna be overly severe, for she doesna ken, as ye say, that theeving's a sin; so I hope ye'll allow me to gie her an opportunity to tak up the steik¹ in her stocking, and I'll admonish her weel when I get her hame. O! ye sinfu' bird. Are ye no ashamed of yoursel, to bring such disgrace on me?"

Maggy instantly testified her contrition and her thankfulness for the advocacy of her master by hopping from the relaxed grasp of the good-natured dominie, and nestling in his bosom.

"It's really a droll beast: I maun alloo that, and I'll forgie you for this ae time," said the master; "but I would advise you to tie a string to its leg, and keep it in the house, for there's no telling what it may commit."

Andrew having thus obtained pardon for the magpie, she became a greater favourite than ever with the boys, and produced precisely the effects which the master had feared. Nothing portable at open window was safe from her thievish bill,

¹ *Steik.* Stitch.

least of all the thread-papers of Miss Mizy Cunningham, the maiden aunt of the boy by whose good-nature our hero became master of the bird. Miss Mizy lived in the mansion-house of Craiglands, close to the village, and had under her dominion Willy and his sister Mary; for their mother was dead, and the laird, their father, troubled himself very little with any earthly thing. He was, as Andrew described him, "a carle that daunered¹ about the doors wi' his hands in his pouches, and took them out at meal-time." As for Miss Mizy herself, she was a perfect paragon of gentility and precision. However slovenly the grounds about the house were kept, the interior of the mansion was always in the trimmest order; and nothing could exceed the nun-like purity of the worthy lady's own cambric-clad person.

It happened that, by the death of a relation, it was necessary the family should be put into mourning; and Miss Mizy, for this purpose, had bought herself a suit of sable, as well as a due portion of crape, and the other requisites of funereal sorrow. She was sitting, busy with her needle, making up the dress at the parlour window, which was open, when Andrew, one afternoon, with his pyet, came to ask Willy to go out with him. Maggy had so often teased Miss Mizy by pilfering her thread-papers that justice and vengeance were sworn against her. This the

¹ *Daunered*. Loafed.

boys were well aware of, but could not resist the temptation of "setting up the birses¹ of aunty." Maggy, accordingly, was set loose. In a moment she was in at the window, and had seized a thread-case. Miss Mizy, however, before the pyet could escape, darted at her like a cat on a mouse; and almost in the same instant poor Maggy, with her neck twisted, was flung out with such fury at Andrew that it almost knocked him down.

This was a dreadful outrage on the part of Miss Mizy, and the whole school participated in the revenge which was vowed against the murderer of Maggy. Nor was ever revenge more complete. Next day, the principal companions of Andrew provided themselves with a large tub, which they filled with water from the laird's stable-yard; and Andrew, going up to the window where Miss Mizy was again sitting at her seam, while the other conspirators were secretly bringing the tub under the window, cried, "Ye auld rudons,² what gart you kill my pyet? Odd, I'll mak you rue that. Nae wonder ye ne'er got a man, ye cankery runt,³ wi' your red neb and your tinkler tongue."

This was enough. Miss Mizy rose like a tempest; the same moment, souse came the unsavoury deluge from the tub, full in her face, to the total wreck and destruction of all the unfinished bravery of mournings which lay scattered around!

¹ *Birses*. Wrath. ² *Rudons*. Wrinkled woman.

³ *Cankery*. Cross-grained. *Runt* means an old cow, and is used contemptuously of an old woman.

CHAPTER III

The Task.

THE awfu'-like thing,"—so Miss Mizy ever afterwards spoke of the schoolboys' conspiracy,—was attended with the most important consequences. The first result was a formal complaint to Mr Tannyhill, to whom the indignant plaintiff stated her wrongs with an eloquence to which we cannot do justice, demanding the immediate punishment of the offenders. The master's affectionate bosom was deeply afflicted with the account that Miss Mizy gave of "the deevilry," which, in her narrative, certainly suffered no diminution, either in the sins of the perpetration, or in the cunning with which it had been planned. In his way back to the school, he meditated on the sort of punishment which he ought to inflict, for hitherto the rod had been unknown in his discipline; and he came to the strange conclusion that, as the end of all punishment ought to be the reformation of the delinquent, he would oblige the culprits in this case to apply with more than ordinary assiduity to their tasks, and require them, for the remainder of the summer, to attend

the school two additional hours a day. Some governors might have thought this a punishment to themselves ; but it never occurred to his honest and ingenuous bosom that it was any hardship. On the contrary, he felt it a duty which he was called to perform in order to correct the effects of the evil spirit which had been so audaciously manifested. Accordingly, when the boys assembled next day, he called the conspirators before him, and made them mount a form in presence of their companions.

"I told you," said he, casting his eyes towards our hero, "that the ill-deedy pyet would bring you into baith scaith¹ and scorn ; and now ye see my prophecy has come to pass, for there ye stand, five a' in a row, like so many evil-doers as ye surely are, that I ought to make an example of, by letting you fin' the weight o' my hand. But it's no my way to chastise with stripes on the body : no, unless the heart is made to feel, a bite o' the taws in the loof, or on the back, will soon heal. In truth, my bairns, I'm wae for you ; for gin ye gang on at this rate, what's to become of you when ye enter the world to mak your bread ? Wha, Wheelie, will hae ony regard for you, if ye gie yoursel up to mischief ? Others here hae friens that may guide them, but ye hae only your auld feckless² grannie, that wi' mickle hard labour has ettled,³ with a blessed constancy, to breed

¹ *Scaith.* Hurt.

² *Feckless.* Feeble.

³ *Ettled.* Endeavoured.

you up in the fear o' God. O man, it will be a sore return for a' her love and kindness if ye break her heart at last!—I speak to you mair than to the rest, because in this matter ye are the most to blame, and stand in the greatest peril."

"Weel, weel," cried our hero, half sobbingly, half angrily, "ye need nae fash¹ me ony mair about it, but tell me at ance what ye're ga'n to do wi' me."

The master was so astonished at this interruption that he stepped back, and sat down in his chair for some time, silent. The culprits became all pale, and the rest of the boys stood aghast: so daring a defiance (as it seemed to them) of all authority, could not, it was supposed, but be followed by some tremendous display of power.

Mr Tannyhill, however, read Wylie's character in the expression, and by some happy or benevolent interpretation of his petulance took the only way with him that could be attended with any benefit.—"I will fash you nae mair," said he, addressing him emphatically, "as ye seem to be contrite for your fault; but, in order to try whether ye have the right leaven o' repentance in you, I will task you to a task that will do you good for a' the remainder of your days."—He then ordered him to get the first fifty psalms by heart, and interdicted him from all play and pastime till he had learned them.

From that moment Andrew applied himself to

¹ *Fash*. Trouble vexatiously.

learn the psalms with a perseverance that quite surprised the master, who had hitherto regarded him but as a droll and curious creature. The shortness of the time in which he performed the task was not, however, remarkable, for his memory was not well adapted to literature; but his singular abstraction from all his playfellows, and the earnestness with which he adhered determinately to his task, astonished every one. During the intervals of the school hours, he was seen sitting by himself in the lee of a headstone in the churchyard, muttering verse after verse from the Psalm-book which he held in his hand.

While he was in this situation, Mary Cunningham, the sister of Willy, happened to pass, and seeing him said, "What are ye doing there, Wheelie?"

He looked up, but, without answering her question, repeated in a loud monotonous voice,—

"My heart inditing is
Good matter in a song."

"O! hae ye no got your psalms yet?" exclaimed Mary, for she had heard from her brother of his particular additional punishment; and, going up close to him, inquired how many he had learned.

"I can say ane-and-forty a' through, Miss Mary, without missing a word."

"What a lee that is, Wheelie!" said Mary:

"naebody could ever say so many psalms straight through."

"Will ye hearken me?" said Andrew; and she took the book which he at the same time offered, and, leaning over the headstone behind him, bade him begin.

"That man hath perfect blessedness
Who walketh not astray,"

he immediately repeated in one unvaried stream of voice,

"But dwelleth in the scorner's chair,
And stands in sinner's way."

"O, Wheelie, Wheelie! ye canna say the first verse o' the vera first psalm: a pretty-like story that ye hae gotten ane-and-forty by heart!" exclaimed Mary.

Reference was, in consequence, made to the book; and after some further parley, Andrew resumed, and went on as far as the twelfth Psalm without missing a single word, to the delighted surprise of his fair auditor. By this time, however, it was necessary that he should go to school and Mary return home; but, before parting, she agreed to visit him again at the same place next day to hear the remainder, and she kept her word. Again the book was in her hand, and leaning over the tombstone, with Andrew sitting below, she listened with unwearied pleasure to the undeviating and inflexible continuance of his monotonous strain, till

he had reached the thirty-first Psalm, when the same causes that occasioned the former interruption again obliged them to separate, after a renewal of the compact. On the third day, Andrew completed not only the forty-one, but two more that he had learned in the meantime. Mary confessed her admiration of his wonderful genius, and from thenceforth, till he had completed his task, she was his regular visitor.

Out of this circumstance a greater degree of intimacy arose between them than is usual among boys and girls of their age. She admired him as a prodigy of talent, and he was pleased when he met her, on account of the interest she had taken in his task. From the attack on her aunt, however, he had been prohibited from approaching "The Place" (as the Craigland mansion-house was called by the villagers); and as she was educated by Miss Mizy herself, preparatory to being in due time sent to an Edinburgh boarding-school, they had few opportunities of meeting. But on Sunday he always took care to stand in the path by which the laird's family crossed the churchyard, and a smile was as regularly exchanged between them in passing. As often, also, as the minister read out to be sung any one of the fifty psalms, Mary would peep over the front of the laird's loft to where Andrew sat beside his grandmother in the area below; and on these occa-

sions she never missed his eye, which seemed to be instinctively turned up in expectation of meeting hers. In this way, the germ of a mutual affection was implanted, before either was awakened by nature to the sense of love and beauty, or informed by the world of the disparity of their condition. They were themselves unconscious of the tie with which simplicity had innocently linked them together; and being as yet both free from the impulses of passion, they felt not the impediments which birth and fortune had placed between them.

The Craigland family was one of the most ancient in the county. The estate was large; but by the indolence of the laird it was much neglected, and the rental was in consequence small. The woods, however, were valuable, and the old tacks, or leases, were drawing to a close; so that, while in a state of comparative penury, it seemed probable that both Cunningham and his sister would inherit a very ample patrimony. Of this their aunt, Miss Mizy, was fully sensible, and frequently complained to her brother that he should allow his son, with such an inheritance in view, to be brought up among the children of the tenants. But her complaints were long unavailing. The laird had been educated in the same school with the fathers of these children, and he could discover nothing in his sister's remonstrances to make him wish to see his son a

finer gentleman than himself. "The awfu'-like thing," however, had a more impressive effect than her lectures. It was an exploit of mischief far surpassing all the easy pranks of his soft youth; and upon the minister, at Miss Mizy's instigation, representing to him the disgrace and dishonour that would ensue to the family if the heir was permitted to associate long with such unmeet playmates as the boys of Mr Tannyhill's school, he consented that Willy should be sent from home, and placed at an academy suitable to his rank and prospects. This was done accordingly, and, like other boys that drop away from among their school-fellows, Cunningham was soon forgotten.

CHAPTER IV

The Fair.

AFTER Cunningham was removed from Mr Tannyhill's school, a considerable change took place among our hero's playmates. The fraternity to which the two boys belonged was, in fact, in the course of that summer, broken up, and, for some time, Andrew was without any particular companion. These temporary intermissions of friendship are, however, common to men as well as to boys; but the cares of our riper years make us less sensible of the blank left by the removal of a neighbour than the loss we suffered when a school-fellow was taken away.

The nickname of Wheelie, in consequence of this change, was gradually forgotten, or, rather, ceased to be any longer in use; while the strippling himself seemed daily in quest of something that he could not find, either on the moorlands or along the hedge-rows and the belts of planting that skirted the hills and farms of the Craighlands. He was (as his grandmother said) for some time "like a tynt¹ creature;" and, for

¹ *Tynt.* Lost.

lack of other company, often on the road-side fell into discourse with travelling tinklers, blue-gowns, or old soldiers, who had acquired a sufficient stock of wounds and scars to set them up in beggary. Poor Andrew, however, had nothing to give them; nevertheless, it was remarked that they always left him seemingly better pleased than they ever quitted the laird's yett,¹ even when Miss Mizy, after the term-day, allowed an extra neaveful to their wonted weekly almous.²

In the evenings, Andrew had recourse to the firesides of the gash and knacky carles and carlins³ of the village. Still, even in their queerest stories he found a deficiency, for he had no friend of his own age to share his remarks afterwards. About Hallowe'en, however, this want was supplied. At the distance of a mile from Stoneyholm lay the small estate of Woods, a mailing,⁴ as it was called, with a house somewhat better than the common farm-steadings. The proprietor happened to die, and the lands were rented by his heirs to a neighbouring farmer. The house and garden, being in consequence to let, were taken by a Mrs Pierston, the widow of a Glasgow merchant, who at the Martinmas term took possession.

This matron had but one child, a fine smart

¹ *Yett*. Gato.

² *Neaveful* . . . *almous*. Handful . . . alms.

³ *Gash* . . . *carlins*. Intelligent and shrewd old men and women.

⁴ *Mailing*. A farm that is rented.

rattling boy of the name of Charles, who was sent to the master's school, where he and Andrew soon became inseparable. The distance of his mother's house from the village occasioned him, as is usual in such circumstances, to bring his dinner in his pocket at first; he was afterwards allowed to dine with Andrew—an arrangement of some advantage to old Martha—, for Mrs Pierston was in good circumstances, and indulgent to her only son. Thus commenced one of those attachments which are formed but at school, and are generally supposed to weather the changes of fortune, and the blasts of adversity, better than the friendships of more considerate years.

The buoyancy of Pierston's spirits gave him a seeming ascendancy over Wylie; but it was soon observed by the neighbours that, in reality, Andrew was the master, and that, by submitting to the pranks and whims of Charles in small affairs, he uniformly obtained the management of things of greater moment, if such language may be applied to the disinterested concerns of schoolboys. Pierston had also, as it might have been supposed from its early effects, another advantage over his rustic companion. He had spent his boyhood in Glasgow, and had been several years at the grammar-school of that city before his mother removed to the Woodside house. He was in consequence, for his time, pretty well accomplished in many tricks. He

stood much less in awe of the municipal dignitaries of the neighbouring towns; and, accordingly, at the different fairs, to which he constantly induced Andrew to accompany him, he not only kept his part better among the town boys, but even went further than most of them in the frolics customary on such occasions. But although it was said of Charles that he was a perfect devil's limb, he had a generous warmth of heart and a lively good-humour that bespoke a favourable interpretation to his worst and wildest stratagems. Many an old apple-woman at the fairs, however, on seeing the gowk and the titling¹ approach, (as the two boys were called), watched their tempting piles of toys and delectables with gleg² een, and staff grasped to repel some pawkie aggression; while, at the same time, the boys were always merrily welcomed, for Charles had plenty of pocket-money, and spent it freely.

If, in those excursions to the fairs, Pierston found fun and frolic, Andrew reaped some experience of the world. He soon saw that the money his companion spent was sufficient to set up any old woman with a stand; and the thought occurred to him that if he could get Charles, on the next fair-day, to give his money to Janet Pirn, a sly and droll old lame widow, with whose tales and ballads they had been often entertained during the winter, they might be able to

¹ *Gowk* . . . *titling*. Cuckoo, and its attendant hedge-sparrow.

² *Gleg*. Keen.

pay Janet a shilling for her trouble, and make a great deal of money by the speculation. The idea was most delightful; but Charles justly dreaded that if the existence of the copartnery should become known to the other boys, especially to those belonging to the towns, the consequences would be ruinous, as Janet would assuredly be plundered without mercy. This consideration, however, was soon got over by Andrew saying that if they kept their own secret it could never be known.

Terms accordingly were proposed to Janet, who readily acceded to them; and when the Kilwinning fair-day came round, she made her appearance at the corner of the bridge, seated in an arm-chair, dressed in her red cloak and black Sunday bonnet, with a table before her, covered with a cloth secretly borrowed by Charles from his mother's napery-chest, and temptingly adorned with a competent stock of the requisite allurements. The boys themselves also had accompanied Janet into Irvine to buy them, and they assisted her to set them out to the best advantage. The muscalmonds were declared to be as big as doos'¹ eggs; the sweeties and corianders were of all sizes and colours, intermingled with the smallest and fairest Mistress Nanse; the rock of Gibraltar was laid forth with all its best veins particularly turned towards the view; parliament-cakes, and gingerbread watches,

¹ *Doos'*. Pigeons'.

richly gilded ; piles of raisins and of figs, gems of sugar-candy, and amber lumps of barley-sugar, constituted this garden of Hesperides, round which a formidable array of idolatries of all descriptions, from ogres with a currant in the forehead instead of an eye, to game-cocks with bits of cinnamon for spurs, were exhibited to the greatest advantage. Such another stand was not in the whole fair. Janet had a great run ; and the two boys, each with a stick in his hand, stood sentinels at the ends of the table. All went on for some time in the most prosperous way. Andrew counted the gains that were flowing in, and Charles enticed customers by the bravado of his eulogium on the articles for sale. But this display of goods, and of the interest which the gowk and the titling had in the concern, excited the envy and jealousy of their less successful competitors ; and when, about noon, Janet and another earlin adjourned to one of the public-houses to get a bottle of ale to their dinner of bread and cheese, the secret was divulged that she was but an agent and a hireling. We shall not attempt to describe the speed with which the story spread, or the indignation of all the rival sweetie-wives. The juvenile customers, who had dealt with Janet merely because her sweets were the best at the fair, thought themselves cheated, and opened an incessant fire of the small-shot of pips, while a tremendous battery of twenty mouths, every now and then, roared from the

adjacent stands. Andrew advised Janet to pack up her things quietly; but Charles insisted she should not budge a step: they had as good a right to sell things at the fair as any other body, and he was prepared to defend it. The attack continued; the crowd gathered; Charles lost his temper, and struck a great heavy lumbering country lout, that was laughing at him, over the fingers. The fellow retaliated. Some of the spectators took part with Charles. A battle-royal ensued, in the midst of which the table was overset, and all its treasures trodden in the mire, amidst the acclamations and the clapping of hands of all the rival dealers.

The two boys seeing their golden dream thus dissipated, retired from the scene, and left those who had been involved in their cause to fight the battle out. But they did not retire to bewail their misfortune: they were more heroic. Charles saw, and indeed felt, that he was no match for the country lad who had thrashed him; but his ire did not burn the less fiercely. On the contrary, he went with Andrew in quest of some of their school-fellows, to assist in revenging the wrong which he had himself provoked.

CHAPTER V

Common-Sense.

WHEN the two boys had walked up the street and passed through the gate of the masons' lodge into the churchyard without meeting with any of their companions, Andrew halted and said, "Od, Charlie, I'm thinking we had as weel bide as we are: yon's a horned stot, in comparison to us, wha hae but banes o' gristle; and a solid chap o' his nieve would be as deadly as Coomy the smith's forehammer. Od, I'm no for meddling ony mair wi' the muckle brute."

Pierston reprobated the pusillanimity of this prudent sentiment, and became more and more resolute for revenge.

"Vera weel," cried Wylie: "tak your ain gait, and get your een steekit and your nose smash'd, and see what ye'll mak o't. A pretty pirlit¹ ye'll be: me leading you hame, blind and bleeding, wi' a napkin or an auld stocking tied round your head. Eh! what a skreighing at the sight o' you, Charlie, there will be!—your

¹ *Pirlit.* An expression for a contemptible figure.

mother running out and in, clapping her hands for her murder't bairn."

"I dinna care though he were to kill me!" exclaimed Charles; "if I had but my will o' him beforehand."

"Ay, that's sense," said Andrew. "Gin ye could but get your will o' him first; but the fear is that he may get the will o' us;—and what's to be done then?"

Pierston was a little puzzled with this, and, hesitating, said, after a moment's reflection,—
"We might watch for him and stane him frae behind the dyke when he's gaun hame in the gloaming."

"It's a cowardly thing to waylay a defenceless man. Od, Charlie, I thought ye had mair spunk!" replied Andrew, in perfect sincerity; but still only anxious to pacify the resentment of his friend. "Touch my honour touch my life," was a sentiment that Pierston had learned among the youths of his own kidney at the grammar-school of Glasgow; and the implied unworthiness of taking his enemy unprepared affected him in his most vulnerable feelings.

"What am I do, Andrew? It's a dreadful thing to gi'e up my satisfaction. Look at my lug whar the brute struck me: it's birzed¹ black and blue,—deevil's in him; but I'll gar him rue't."

Andrew examined the wounded part, and de-

¹ *Birzed.* Bruised.

clared it was just a flea-bite. "It's a wee red," said he, "and before half-an-hour's by ye'll ne'er fin't. Man, Charlie, it's bairnly to mak sic a warl' for a bit tig on the haffet.¹ A' ye gottin's no the tae half o' what ye gied,—for ye're a deevil at a paik, when your birses are up—I would na come in your reverence² then for something."

Pierston was flattered by the compliment to his strength and valour; his pride also was touched at the idea of exaggerating the effects of the blow he had received, which Andrew, in fact, adroitly undervalued; and he said, "As for the thump on the side o' the head, I hae thole't twenty times mair before noo; and I think I would be content if I was sure he had gotten as nuckle frae me."

"Ye need hae na doubt o' that, Charlie, for he got twa for ane. Ye ken, ye were the first aggressor: ye struck him first wi' the stick, and he gied you but a gentle slaik wi's paw,—I dinna think he was very wud for a' that,—and then ye birl'd at him. Od! but ye're a terrier when in a passion, Charlie; and when a's considered, I think we ought to be thankfu' that we came off wi' hale banes, and nae blood spilt."

"But the stan' was coupit, and a' our merchandise lost: wha's to mak up that?" replied

¹ *Bit tig on the haffet.* Light touch on the side of the head.

² *Reverence.* Power.

Pierston, fairly at a loss for a sufficient reason to nurse his rage any longer.

"I hae had my thoughts o' that too," said our hero; "and I jealousy that it was nae a right thing o' us to be marrows¹ in ony sic trade wi' cripple Janet. It was interloping wi' the auld sweetie-wives,—ye saw what a stoor raise amang them when the truth came out; there were nae ither callants at the fair keeping stands."

"That's weel frae you, Andrew," said Charles, "for it was a' your own doing. I didna care a bawbee for the stand, and a' the profit."

"I'll mak nae denial," was Wylie's discreet answer, "for I kent nae better; but I hae got insight by the upshot, and I wish the whole story were weel hidden, for gin that lassie Mary Cunningham hears that we were keeping a stand, like twa sweetie-wives at the fair, she'll herry² my seven senses wi' her jeering. A' ye hae gotten will be naething to what I maun thole: so let's keep a calm sough and close tongues."

Charles was now not only fully persuaded of the propriety of stifling his revenge, but also convinced that they had not been engaged in any very honourable adventure; and said, with some degree of mortification and chagrin, "I hope Janet has ta'en care o' the table-cloth, for sic a rippit³ there will be about it if it's lost!"

¹ *Marrows*. Partners. ² *Herry*. Rob.

³ *Rippit*. Hubbub.

Andrew, perceiving that he had gained a complete victory, proposed that they should return to cripple Janet; and they found her replacing the stand with such of the articles as she had been able to pick up, selling the damaged at great bargains to the children, who, hovering round her, deplored the wreck of such delicious commodities. The moment, however, that the gowk and the titling were again seen on the spot, the auld wives around immediately broke out on them a second time; and such had been the effect of Andrew's representation of the unworthy nature of their copartnery that Charles was quite daunted by their banter, and slunk away. Our hero, however, was none dismayed; but with great address turned the scale in their favour by telling Janet that he and Charles gave up to her all the merchandise and profit, on condition that she took good care of the table-cloth. Never was generosity better timed: the gift was a little fortune to old Janet, and she so loudly expressed her thanks and gratitude that the other women, to whom the boys had been good customers on other occasions, joined instantly in praising them to the skies, and long before the evening the gowk and the titling were in as high favour as ever.

But the consequences of this adventure did not stop here. It reached the ears of Mrs Pierston, who had, indeed, previously begun to suspect that the school at Stoneyholm was not

exactly the fittest place for a boy of her son's prospects; and Charles soon after was removed, and sent to complete his education in one of the neighbouring towns, where he continued till he was summoned to London by an uncle, a great city merchant. A second time thus Andrew was left to himself; but the friendship between him and Charles was not entirely broken by their separation. For, at the vacation and holidays, Pierston regularly visited his mother at the Woodside House, and his intimacy with Andrew was on those occasions as uniformly renewed. The difference of the spheres in which they moved was, however, gradually operating a change on the characters of both. Charles, destined for the mercantile profession, and amidst genteel companions, educated in the hopes and prospects of opulence, was every year developing more and more into a spruce and tonish gallant; while Andrew, bred up in rustic poverty, and without any definite views as to his future life, settled into a little gash carlie, remarkable chiefly for a straightforward simplicity. His drollery and good-humour, however, rendered him a familiar and prodigious favourite with everybody; and although few in the parish were, perhaps, more destitute of any visible means of rising in the world, a confident belief was entertained among all who knew him that he was destined to become a rich man :—a great

one none ever ventured to anticipate ; nothing, indeed, could be more opposite to any idea of personal grandeur than his small, short, round-headed figure, smooth apple-cheeks, and little twinkling eyes.

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CHAPTER VI

The Consultation.

AT the period of which we are now treating, neither the commerce nor the manufactures of Scotland had risen to that height which has since not only wrought such changes in the appearance of the country, but affected the very depths and principles of the national character. The youth having few means of advancement, and but a narrow field of enterprise at home, sought their fortunes abroad; and good schooling (as it was called) constituted the common patrimony of the Scottish adventurer. As Andrew was rendered unfit by his feeble frame for the drudgery of a farmer, his grandmother, actuated in her humble sphere by the national spirit, resolved to spare no cost on his education. But whether to breed him for a divine, a doctor, or a lawyer, was a point not easily determined. It presented even more difficulties to her imagination than any apprehension which she entertained of procuring the means; for, with respect to the latter, her trust in the care of Providence was unbounded, and she had heard of many gospel ministers, come of

no better stock, who bravely upheld the banner of the testimony, even unto the death. She had heard also of doctors who had returned nabobs from India that began as shop-boys to druggists; and of lawyers on the freehold-roll of the county that had commenced their career by running errands for town-officers.

As she could not determine for herself, she resolved to consult the master. Accordingly, one afternoon, when the school had been dismissed, she went to his house, and found him at his tea, listening, with a faint smile that played among his features like sunshine through the hedgerow, to some little comic occurrence in the village which Andrew was describing, while sitting at his side as a companion, but not at that time a participating guest.

The small room where they were seated was in the back part of the school-house. Behind the door, in a recess, stood a humble bed, covered with a patched and quilted coverlet, which at night was carefully removed, being only used for show by day. Fronting the entrance, a mahogany scrutoire was placed, somewhat of an incongruous degree of splendour compared with the general style of the apartment, and over it hung a Dutch looking-glass, in a gaudy frame of flowers and gilding, a considerable margin of the plate being adorned with birds and foliage painted on the surface. The top of the scrutoire, under the glass, was covered with a damask towel, and

occupied by several volumes neatly bound, a tall wine-goblet with a white spiral line up the stalk, filled with flowers, and a mahogany tea-chest with an inlaid likeness of a clam-shell in front. The window was between the scrutoire and the wall facing the bed. It consisted of four panes, and looked into a small garden, rank with apple-rinky,¹ and other fragrant herbs and stately flowers. The sole of the window was occupied with a flower-pot containing a geranium, round which lay scattered several books, a shaving-box, a razor-case, and a hone. Opposite to the window, and near the door, stood an eight-day clock, with a black bust between the volutes on the top, bearing the well-known inscription of *the cloud-capped towers*, indicating that the image was meant for Shakespeare. Between the clock and the corner, Andrew and the master were sitting when his grandmother entered, and she was in consequence requested to take a seat in an angular elbow-chair, which occupied the corner opposite to them.

"I'm come," said Martha, "to hae a crack wi' you about this get."² It's time, noo, that he were thinking o' doing something for himsel'. He's weel through his fifteen, and I would fain hae an inkling gin he be o' ony capacity."

Mr Tannyhill, foreseeing that the conversation would turn on particulars which might be as well discussed in Andrew's absence, suggested that it would be proper for him to retire.

¹ *Apple-rinky*. Southernwood.

² *Get*. Bairn.

"Ay," said his grandmother: "tak the door on your back, and play yoursel' till me and the maister hae come to an understanding."

Our hero on this hint immediately withdrew; but, although he took the door on his back by shutting it after him, he placed himself close to it in the kitchen from which the room entered, and overheard all that passed within.

"Poor laddie," resumed Martha, when he had retired, "he's no strong; hard wark's no for him, and saft's ill to get. Noo, Mr Tannyhill, what's your conceit? I doubt he has nae got the cast o' grace needful to a gospel-minister. James Sinney, the droggest in Kilwinning, would tak him for a word o' my mouth, if ye thought he's o' a physical turn; and John Gledd, the messenger, wha was sib to his mother, ance promised as muckle; but I canna say I hae ony broo o' the law, for it's a deadly distemper amang friens; and Andra, though baith pawkie and slee, is a warm-hearted creature, and would be o'er scrimp in the severities of justice, especially in pleas amang kith and kin."

The master replied that, of all the learned professions, he really thought Wheelie was best disposed by nature for the law; "for although," said he, "the crow thinks its ain bird the whitest, ye're no, Martha, sae misled by your affection as to imagine that Andrew's qualified to make a soun' frae the pulpit; and even if he were, noo-a-days a' things o' religion hae settled into a

method that gies the patronless preacher but little chance o' a kirk. Wi' your oye's¹ ordinar looks, I fear, though he were to grow as learned as Matthew Henry himsel', he would hae but a cauld coal to blaw at."

"For the bairn's looks, Mr Tannyhill, I think they're weel eneugh. There may be brawer; but a hantle are far waur," said Martha, a little tartly; "howsomever, if it's your notion that he wouldna make a sincere divine, I would rather see him gaun about the farms wi' Thomas Steek, the tailor, clouting at saxpence a day, than walking the dyke-sides between hope and starvation, wi' a thin white face, and his forefinger atween the leaves o' some auld kittle Latin buke."

"Your description o' a luckless probationer is ower true," said the master with a sigh. "It's a state without pleasure to the man himsel', and a sorrow to a' that see him. I would be wae to think that Andrew's blithe spirit was quenched wi' the tear of mortification; and therefore, Martha, if ye would follow my advice, a' I can say is, Let him choose between Mr Sinney and John Gledde."

"I jealousy, sir," replied Martha, "that he has but a sma' stomach for the drog trade, and I fancy he'll tak to the law."

"In that," said Mr Tannyhill, "I doubt not, wi' a portion of perseverance, he may grow a topping character. I hae seen at Edinburgh,

¹ Oye's. Grandchild's.

when I was at the College, advocates proudly before the Courts that could reckon no higher parentage. He has only to join care to industry, and I have no doubt, by a decent use o' the means that Providence may place in his power, he'll reap both riches and honour."

While Martha was thus drawing out, in the pursuit of her object, the latent and slumbering mind of the master, our hero was listening with a throbbing heart. At the mention of the ministry, a dim vision floated before him, in which the fair form of Mary Cunningham was blended with the interior of a church, and the remembrance of fifty psalms. It was, however, but the passionless association of feelings and recollections that dissolved away and were lost in disagreeable images of the green and yellow gallipots, sores and salves, odious stuffs and bottled reptiles, with which the name of James Sinney, the druggist, was associated. The chances, by prudence and industry, of attaining riches and honours through the legal profession determined his choice; and he put an end to the consultation by opening the door, and looking in, at the same time saying, "I'm for John Gledde's, grannie."

CHAPTER VII

The Outfit.

THERE are few things in the world more wonderful to philosophy than the means by which the honest poor of Scotland are enabled, from day to day, with light hearts, strong arms, and brave spirits, to face the ills of life with what they call "sma' families"—that is, at least half-a-dozen children. But their general condition is comparative opulence to the lot of old Martha Docken; and yet she was one of a class that would have spurned the gifts of charity—of that class to whom the country still points with pride, and, we hope, long will, in spite of all the improvements in agriculture, manufactures, and commerce.

As soon as it was determined that Andrew should be sent to John Gledd's, the writer, to learn the law, various important considerations required to be well weighed by his grandmother. In the first place, John lived in Kilwinning, a town three miles at least from Stoneyholm; and, in the second, according to custom, it was requisite that Andrew, as a lawyer's clerk, should

be a little better dressed than formerly,—although Martha assured him that the ragged coat o' the callant was ne'er a mot in the man's marriage.

In a long prospective contemplation of the era which had now arrived, Martha had carefully preserved the Sunday clothes of his father; but, in order to fit him, they required considerable alterations, and a consultation was held with Thomas Steek, the tailor, on the subject, the result of which was that on a day set for the purpose Thomas, with his laddie, Clipping Jock, arrived betimes at Martha's cottage-door, with all the requisite implements of their profession. The tailor himself, being a lamiter, with a drawn-up leg, and using a stilt, carried the shears in his left hand; and Jock, a little hump-backed creature, brought the goose behind him, bearing the law-board over his shoulder. By their art and contrivance, Andrew was properly equipped to take his place at John Gledd's desk—John having, on the first application, immediately agreed to lighten Martha's hand of the boy; for however strict in the harsh offices of caption and horning,¹ he had the friendly spirit of the poor man among the poor, and was ever ready, to the utmost stretch of his narrow means, to help a neighbour in need.

The day fixed for our hero to enter the world by the clachan of Kilwinning was the first Monday of May. On the Sunday before, he made

¹ *Caption and horning.* Note A.

his appearance at church in his new garb. As the young bird lingers about the nest, and is timid and reluctant to trust its untried wing, the fancy of the schoolboy, when he is on the point of first leaving home, hovers amidst the scenes of his childhood, and wistfully looks back on a thousand little objects which, till then, he had never thought were dear to him. In the calm still evening of that Sabbath, this sentiment pervaded the bosom of our youthful adventurer, insomuch that, when the master invited him, as a testimony of his regard, to take tea with him, he declined it, saying, "I am vera mickle obliged, sir; but I'm thinking o' just taking a dauner round the Craigland parks."

The good and simple Tannyhill was so deeply sensible of the feeling which dictated this refusal that he said nothing, but followed Andrew with his eye, as he saw him moving away towards the fields. "That laddie," said he to one of the neighbours who happened at the time to come up, "has mair in him than we gie him credit for. I would na be surprised to hear of him being something yet."

Andrew, after parting from the master, strayed into the Craigland plantations, and kept his course along a path that ran beneath the south side of the garden wall attached to the mansion-house, until he had entered the ancient policy¹ of the domain. Everything about the

¹ *Policy*. Pleasure-grounds round the mansion.

Craiglands betokened the disposition of the laird. The house was large, and built at different times. About eighty years before, an addition had been made, in such a manner as to convert the end of the original mansion, or fortalice, into the principal front; by which a fine old avenue of plane-trees was thrown, as it were, aside, and another approach was formed towards the new front, which looked into what, in the improver's time, had been an enclosed parterre, or flower-garden—a low hewn-stone wall, with square columns at intervals, surrounding the same; in the front of which, and at each side, was a gateway, formed by stately square pillars, crowned with sculptured pine-apples. The plan and architecture, though in a formal, were certainly in something of a grand, style, if not in a good taste; but all was in a state of ruinous neglect: the parterre was overgrown with weeds; vast bunches of nettles and docks filled the corners, and rose above the enclosing wall; the pine-apple heads of several of the pillars lay among them as they had fallen; and washing-tubs, and coals, and peats were piled against the house, under the very windows of the dining-room. But if the mansion and grounds were neglected, the woods suffered little from sharing the same carelessness. The trees, left to themselves, had grown into every possible shape of picturesque luxuriance; and, fortunately for both the admirer of the spot and the heir, the laird would not suffer

them to be touched, and, in consequence, the Craigland groves were among the most beautiful in the West of Scotland.

As Andrew sauntered alone into the checkered gloom of those old avenues, the hopes of his young imagination in some degree partook of the sober colouring that was settling on the distant vista of the landscape beyond, as the evening twilight gradually faded. He was still, it is true, a mere boy; but he was entering on that epoch of life when all the affectionate feelings of the bosom begin to concentrate into passion, and for some time, by the gradual removal of his school-fellows, he had been, in a manner, left alone in the village—a situation calculated to nourish his sensibility for the beauties of nature.

At the bottom of the avenue ran a small stream, over which in the gayer days of the Craiglands a wooden bridge had been thrown; but it was long destroyed, and a plank supplied its place. On this plank Andrew seated himself, and for some time, in idleness, continued turning the pebbles with his toe in the channel. Mary Cunningham, who was out walking with one of the maids, happened, in returning home, to see him; and stepping softly up behind him, covered his eyes suddenly with her hands.

"It's you, Mary!" cried he instinctively; and the lively girl, unclosing his eyes, began to laugh and jeer at his new appearance. "You may tak

your fill o't the night, Mary," said he, "but it winna be lang ye'll hae't in your power."

"Eh!" cried Mary seriously, "whar are ye gaun?"

"I'm boun' the morn's morning to John Gledd's, in Kilwinning."

"And what are ye to do there, Wheelie?"

"I'm thinking o' making a forton."

By this time the maid had joined them, and she interposed laughingly, saying, "And when he's a grand man, he'll come and marry you, Miss Mary."

"Oh, that will be sic a while!" said Mary.

What more might have ensued, we cannot presume to conjecture; but the conversation was interrupted by the shrill voice of Miss Mizy, heard echoing from within the garden, "Mary Cunningham, whar are ye? Come into the house, and tak your book immediately:" at the sound of which Mary skipped away, followed by the maid; and Andrew, rising from the bridge, returned home to his grandmother's cottage.

CHAPTER VIII

Changes.

SOON after this little incident, a lease of one of the Craigland farms fell in ; and the augmentation which the laird received in the rent at the renewal fully justified his sister, Miss Mizy, to urge him to send Mary, as he had originally designed, to an Edinburgh boarding-school, to learn genteel manners, and to sew satin-pieces and play on the spinnet : the indispensable accomplishments at that period of an Ayrshire laird's daughter ; and we do not know that any essential improvement has been made in the order of their education since.

By this arrangement, Andrew, during his apprenticeship with the messenger, saw Mary no more. Meanwhile, his assiduity at the desk was quite exemplary, as well as the determination with which he was actuated to acquire a knowledge of his profession—if knowledge it might be called of the law, which consisted merely in being able to copy with fidelity that circuitous and perplexing verbosity which is professedly intended to be clearer and plainer than the language of

common-sense. He was also distinguished from all the lads of his own age by the preference which he gave to the knacky conversation of old and original characters. It signified not to him whether the parties with whom he enjoyed his leisure were deemed *douce*¹ or *daft*: it was enough that their talk was cast in queer phrases, and their minds ran among the odds and ends of things. By this peculiar humour, he was preserved in his clachan simplicity; while he made, as he often afterwards said himself, "his memory, like a wisdom-pock, a fouth² of auld knick-knacketies—clues of experience and shapings of matter that might serve to clout the rents in the knees and elbows o' straits and difficulties."

An event happened, however, which changed the prospects of his professional career. John Gledd had a shock of the palsy, and was obliged to give up his business, by which Andrew was thrown on the world. He had begun to acquire some confidence in himself, however; and this event did not depress him so much on his own account as on that of his master. He had by this time also some suspicion that Kilwinning was not exactly the best place for becoming that grand man he was determined to be. The illness of John Gledd, therefore, decided his fate and fortune. At first it was proposed that, as he had got the pen of a ready writer, he should try to obtain a place in the clerk's chamber of Irvine or

¹ *Douce*. Sensible.

² *A fouth*. An abundance.

Ayr, from which, like others of the legal fry, he might in time migrate to Edinburgh for a season, and then come back to Kilwinning, and endeavour to gather custom among the clients of his old master. But, after much deliberation, it was agreed between him and his grandmother that he should "try his luck in London, that great city."

This apparently singular and bold resolution occurred to Martha from the great good fortune that had attended a niece of her own who was settled there. The young woman had gone to the metropolis as a servant with the Eaglesham family, and had the good luck to attract the affections of Mr Ipsey, an old solicitor of high reputation and great connections, who, finding he could not obtain her love on easier terms, had the good sense to make her his wife. Between Martha and her kinswoman no literary correspondence subsisted; but from time to time they heard of each other, and the old woman rejoiced at the prosperity of her niece, but without thinking, till John Gledd's misfortune, that it would ever be of any avail to her grandson. That event, however, directed her eyes towards Mrs Ipsey, and it was determined to solicit her influence with her husband on our hero's behalf. A letter was accordingly written by Andrew to that effect; and, by return of the post, a kind and considerate reply was received, honourable alike to Mrs Ipsey's spirit as a Scotchwoman and to her husband's generosity as an Englishman. She

informed Martha that Mr Ipsey had retired from business several years; but that his successor, Mr Vellum, would receive Andrew whenever it was convenient for him to come to London; and that, as his outfit would probably cost more than her aunt could well afford, she enclosed a bill for twenty pounds,—not as a gift, but as a loan to be repaid by Andrew whenever he could do so.

The receipt of this friendly and considerate letter was an auspicious omen which every one in Stoneyholm regarded as a sure token of something grand in the future fortunes of Andrew; and to none did it give more pleasure than to the master, whom our hero himself was the first to inform of his great good luck.

"I'm glad to hear it, Wheelie," said the kind and good Tannyhill; "but neither in this, nor in anything else, be either overly lifted up or cast down. Take some honest and honourable purpose in your mind, and make all your endeavours bend to the attainment thereof; by that ye'll not only get forward in life, but your steps will be steady and respected, though your passaging be slow. But, my bairn, set not your thought on riches as an end, but only as a means for something more solid to yoursel', and pleasing in the sight of Him, who, in this favour, has given you *erlis*¹ of the servitude He claims from you—the which is to be kindly and generous, but neither to be inconsiderate nor lavish."

¹ *Erlis. Arles.* Note B.

Andrew was fully sensible of the force of this advice ; and, perhaps, he was the more impressed with its practicable wisdom, inasmuch as it was in unison with the natural and habitual course of his own reflections. For, although he was not a Sir Isaac Newton, to reason in his boyhood about anything so well as that philosopher's meditations on the cause which occasioned the fall of an apple, he was nevertheless, in his way, endowed with a peculiar genius, and had formed, even at this early period, a scheme of life and conduct in which he was resolved to persevere.

CHAPTER IX

Preparations.

IN some respects, the parish of Stoneyholm was, at the period of Andrew's departure, not so fortunate in its pastor as its neighbour Dalmailing, of which the meek and pious Mr Balwhidder was then the incumbent; nor could it even be compared with the well-watered vineyard of Garnock, where the much-celebrated Doctor Zachariah Pringle had, some years before, been appointed helper and successor. For the Reverend Doctor Dozadeal was a town-bred clergyman; and, having been a tutor in the family of an Edinburgh advocate, had of course more genteel manners and less warmth of heart than is usually found among the genuine presbyters of the Scottish Church. In his address he was dry and grave, and measured out his sentences as apothegms of impressive wisdom. He preferred the formal dinners of the heritors to the sick-beds of the lowlier members of his flock. This was natural; but he also, it was alleged, studied, a little too earnestly, the advancement of his interests in this world, and it was under-

stood that he had only accepted the cure of the parish in the hope, and under the promise, of one more suited to his habits. He took no pains to ingratiate himself with his parishioners : he knew few of them by name ; and they seldom troubled him with their little cares and anxieties, the tempering of which by advice and consolation is perhaps the best, as it is the most amiable, of all a pastor's duties. His deportment and manners were, however, spotless and irreproachable ; and the habitual respect with which the Scottish peasantry regard their ministers secured him all the external deference that is commonly paid by the people to a character which religion, tradition, and patriotism, have hallowed to the national affections.

To a being constituted with the peculiar humours of our hero, such a man as Doctor Dozadeal could not fail to appear in the most unfavourable light. The whole of the framed and set-up manners which the doctor had assumed as particularly dignified were disagreeable to Andrew ; and his shrewdness detected, beneath the solemn cloak of his consequentiality, a character which, on account of its own endowments and merits, was really entitled to no extraordinary respect. Instead, therefore, of being impressed with those sentiments of awe and admiration which the doctor constantly, on all occasions, endeavoured to inspire, and, from a few of the parishioners, certainly sometimes

obtained, Andrew was in the practice, even before he went to John Gledd's, of mocking his pomposity; and this irreverent disposition was none weakened at the time when the preparations were making for his departure for London. His grandmother, however, deemed it necessary that he should pay the doctor a formal visit prior to his departure, in order to receive his advice, according to a good old custom that had prevailed from time immemorial, and ever will be preserved while the intercourse between the minister and his parishioners is maintained on true Christian and Presbyterian principles. The doctor himself would, perhaps, have been as willing as our hero to have dispensed with the performance of this ancient homage,—at least if we may judge by the result.

Andrew crept slowly and reluctantly to the manse door, and on asking for the minister was shown into the parlour, where the doctor was sitting at a table slumbering in his elbow-chair. A new book, with a few of the early leaves cut, lay before him; and an ivory folder which had dropped from his hand was lying on the floor at his foot. His age might be near fifty. In his person he was inclined to corpulency; and there was a certain degree of sallow lethargy in the cast and complexion of his features,—the effect of habitual, rather than of constitutional, indolence. Like most country

clergymen, in the forenoon he was slovenly dressed. His breeches' knees were only half buttoned, his stockings ill drawn up, his shoes unfastened and down in the heel, his neckcloth lax and dirty : his whole appearance betokening a man little liable to be disturbed by visitors.

Andrew, on entering the room, made a bob with his head for a bow, and stood for about a minute swinging his hat in his hand, and looking round the walls and towards the ceiling, casting a momentary glance towards the doctor, who, roused by his entrance, seemed to wait in expectation of some communication. Seeing, however, that Andrew was not inclined to speak, the doctor said, "Well, Andrew, what is your business with me?"

"My grannie sent me to tell you, sir, that I'm ~~going~~ to London to learn the law there," was the reply, uttered at; but ~~not~~ to, the doctor; for by this time his eyes had settled on the dial-plate of the minister's watch, which hung over the mantelpiece.

"And when do you go?" inquired the doctor.

"As soon as my grannie can get my bit pack o' duds¹ ready," said Andrew, in the same careless and awkward manner. The doctor then requested him to sit down, and Andrew seated himself on the chair nearest the door.

"I hope," said the minister, "you will do your endeavour to give satisfaction to your employers."

¹ *Duds.* Clothes.

"An I dinna do that, what will come o' me?" was the answer.

"You must study to acquire respectful manners, and to behave properly towards your superiors."

Andrew made no reply to this; but raising his eyes, which, on taking his seat, he had cast downward, he looked for a moment at the doctor, who continued, "For you must have often heard it remarked that a man's manners commonly make his fortune."

"Atweel I should ken that," said Andrew, in the most indifferent manner; "for it was aye the first copy-line that the maister set when he put us in sma' write."

The doctor's countenance was a little troubled by this reply, on account not only of the words, but of the manner in which it was said; and he resumed, with an accent somewhat approaching to severity—

"I have heard that you have good friends to take you by the hand in London; and it is well you are so fortunate, for I doubt, young man, you will need all their assistance."

The cheeks of Andrew flushed for a moment at this observation, and again he darted a glance from under his brows towards the doctor, who continued speaking, his voice gradually rising into the tone of a lecture.

"Hitherto, you have been but on the threshold of the world, and you have experienced none of its difficulties; you will find now that mankind

are, in general, an unfriendly race, and that in London they are very different from your rustic friends here in Stoneyholm. There, the successful look proudly down on the poor, bestriding the path to prevent new candidates from sharing with them the vantage-ground of fortune."

"Gin they'll no let me by, I maun try to run through ancaith their legs," said Andrew, interrupting the oration with a sly indifferency, which effectually disconcerted the reverend doctor, who, taking up the book from the table, said, in a tone equivalent to a dismissal, "I wish you, young man, all manner of success; and may the blessing of Heaven prosper your undertakings."

"I'm very mickle obliged to you," replied Andrew drily; and opening the door at the same time bobbed his head as carelessly as when he entered, and immediately retired.

"What did the minister say to you?" inquired Martha, when Andrew went home a little sulkily.

"I fancy he gied me his benison," said Andrew.

"But I'm thinking he's no that weel versed in the folk o' London, mair than mysel'; for he would hae gart me trow¹ that they hae horns on their head to dish the like o' me, and hooves to tread upon us when doon. For a' that, I'm no fear't."

During the short remainder of the time he spent at Stoneyholm, he seemed, as the period of his departure drew near, to attach himself more

¹ *Gart me trow.* Caused me to believe.

and more to the different gaffers and goodies¹ of the village, and to enjoy their peculiarities with a keener relish than ever. His little attentions, in this respect, gave a degree of *éclat* to the event of his removal which could hardly have been expected to attend the transit of one so young and so slenderly connected in the parish. On the evening immediately before he set out on his journey, a number of the farmer-lads who had been at the master's school with him came into the clachan to bid him farewell, and a little dance was, in consequence, struck up in Saunders Chappin's public. With the friendliness and the good-humour of the party he was evidently much delighted; but an old man, who happened to look in upon the ploy, said, "Wheelie took it a' as ane of some degree,"—a remark which was afterwards remembered much to the credit of the sagacious observer, and (although there could be as yet no particular change in Andrew's demeanour) would imply that he felt himself no longer belonging to the same class as his youthful associates. It is for philosophers, however, to assign the proper source of that which the village sage so early discovered as an omen of success.

¹ *Gaffers and goodies.* Old gossips, men and women.

CHAPTER X

Departure.

IN the morning on which our hero was to bid a long adieu to his native village, he was awake and stirring with the lark. It was the eye of summer, and the weather was clear and beautiful. The smoke rose from his grandmother's chimney as straight as a column, and stood over it like a high-spreading tree, long before the symptoms of housewifery appeared in any other cottage in the hamlet; for the Glasgow carrier was to pass at sunrise, and Andrew was requested to be in readiness by that time to go with him. When the carrier stopped to call him, he came instantly out alone, with his box on his shoulder, and the door was immediately closed behind: no one saw Martha till long after he was out of sight. The master, who was abroad to convoy him a part on his way, was the first who visited her, and he found her sitting with the Bible on her knee, wiping her spectacles:—there were drops on the page which showed what had dimmed the glasses.

In going along the road, several of the lads

with whom Andrew had spent the preceding evening were standing at the end of the loans which led to the farms where they were as herds or as ploughmen, and they blithely shook hands with him as he passed, hoping he would return with gold in goupens.¹ But the cart soon drove beyond the limits of the circle which contained all his school-fellows, and reached the head of a rising ground, where, the road diverging behind the hills, Stoneyholm, and the woods and fields of the Craiglands, were hidden from the view. At this spot our young adventurer paused and looked back: no presentiment of evil overcast his hopes at that moment, but a number of gay and cheerful recollections endeared the scene to him; and he said to the carrier, "It's a blithesome place yon, and I'm thinking it may be a while before I'll see sic bonny trees and green braes as the woods and lands o' the Craiglands."

After this, he continued to walk beside the carrier for some time in silence; and, indeed, nothing is remembered of the remainder of his journey to Glasgow, nor did he himself recollect anything he passed till the High Church steeples were in sight,—which the carrier pointed out, by touching him on the back; for he was then seated on the cart, and had been for some time, in a state of drowsy reverie that seemed almost like sleep.

At Glasgow he was conducted to his relation,

¹ *Goupens.* Handfuls.

Mr Treddles, the manufacturer. It was about three o'clock when he arrived at the house; and (as the worthy fabricator of muslins told ourselves at the last circuit) "There never was surely a droller-like thummert o' a creature seen entering a biggit land.¹ He had on a pair o' dark-blue pat-dyed rig-and-fur muckle-wheel worsted stockings,² though it was a day in which dogs lay panting wi' their tongues out, and his coat was cut wi' an eye to a considerable increase in baith his bulk and stature. We were just gaun to tak our kail, and the gudewife bade Andrew sit in and partake; but he said, 'Od, Mistress Treddles, ye're far in the day wi' your meal-time. I thought ye would hae had that o'er by twal hours, and as I hae ate the piece on the road that grannie gied me, I'm no that ready yet for ony mair. So wi' your will, I'll e'en gae out and look at the ferlies and uncoss³ o' Glasgow.'

"Wi' that," quo' Mr Treddles, "he whiskit like a whitteret⁴ out o' the door, and we saw naething o' him till mair than twa hours after, when he came home, and just confounded us, for he had been to see King William, and was up at the Hie Kirk. I'll never forget the laugh we got, at what he said o' the college. It's been a

¹ *Thummert* (*Foumart*) is a pole-cat: "The thummert, wil' cat, brock, and tod." (Burns, *Twa Herds*.) *Biggit land* is land built on: a town.

² *Rig-and-fur stockings*. Ribbed stockings.

³ *Ferlies and uncoss*. The "lions,"

⁴ *Whitteret*. Weasel.

sprose¹ amang us ever sin syne. 'Heh!' quo' he, 'but yon's a gruesome-like place; the very winnocs² are like the peering een and bent brows of auld Philosophorum.' "

"It happened that night," continued the manufacturer in his narration, "that we had some neighbours in to their tea, and the mistress had provided shortbread and seed-cake, wi' some o' her jelly and marmolet, according to the use and wont o' such occasions. When the tea was filled out, our friend drew in his chair to the table, and wasna slack either wi' teeth or wi' claw on the dainties. 'Ye seem to like that kind o' bread, Andrew,' said the mistress.—'Atweel,' quo' he, 'it's no ill to tak;' and wi' that he continued to work awa' at it wi' the greatest industry; and when he was satisfied, he set back his chair, and took the chumla-lug, in afore Mrs M'Vicar, the major's widow, a perjink³ elderly woman that never forgot it, till about nine o'clock, when he rose, and lifting one of the candles, said, 'Mistress Treddles, I'll awa' to my bed; for I maun be up to get the Edinburgh carrier the morn's morning by skreigh o' day.⁴ Whar am I to cuddle?'—I thought we would have a' deet at this. But when the lass took him wi' another light to the strangers' room, Mr Plank, that was o' the company, a deep and

¹ *Sprose*. By-word.

² *Winnocs*. *Windocks*. Windows.

³ *Perjink*. Precise.

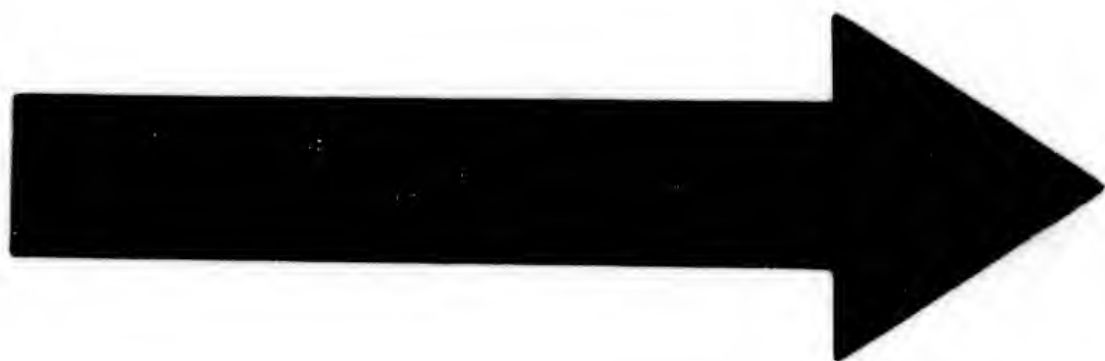
⁴ *Skreigh o' day*. Break of day.

observant man, said, 'Yon lad's no to be laughed at. He'll learn mair havins belyve;¹ and if he pursues his ain end wi' honesty, and as little in the awe o' the world as he seems to feel at present, he'll thrive in London, or any other place wherein his lot may be cast.'"

By this account, it would really seem that Andrew, in his outset, had produced a sensation even in Glasgow. It was certainly, however, not such as would have led any one to suppose he would ever become a favourite with the elegant and fashionable.

On the following morning, as he said himself, by "the skreigh o' day," he was mounted with his "pack of duds" on the top of one of the Edinburgh carts; and in due time, in the afternoon, reached Linlithgow, where the carriers stopped. "Lithgow for wells, and Glasgow for bells," is a saying that few schoolboys in Scotland have not heard; and Andrew was deeply versed in those honourable traditions which exalt the affections of Scottish patriotism so highly that, even with the eyes of manhood, the Scotchman is rarely to be found who, with all that travel and experience teach to the contrary, will not contend for the superiority of the national monuments of his native land—to say nothing whatever of the superior excellence of her institutions. In Andrew, this partiality was deeply impressed; and, with mingled sentiments of ad-

¹ *Havins belyve.* Manners by-and-by.



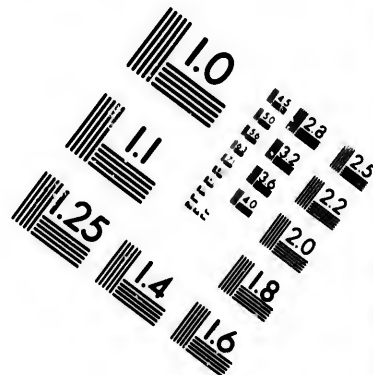
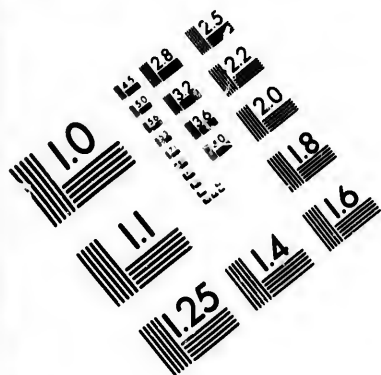
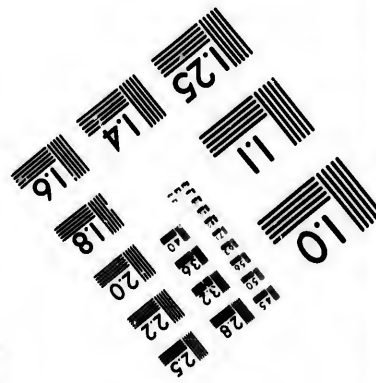
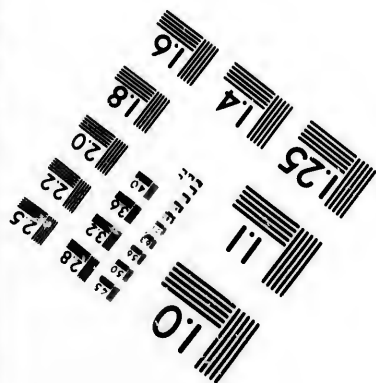
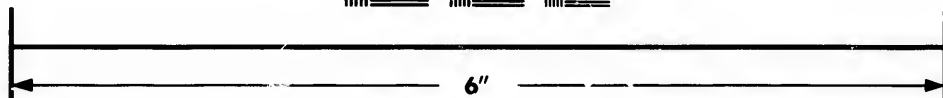
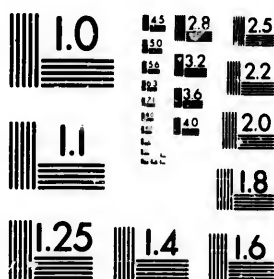


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miration and sorrow, he contemplated the ruins of the royal palace, and inspected the dilapidated fountains which gave rise to the rhyme quoted. Linlithgow, in its day, was the Versailles of Scotland; and the Court which resided there prior to the Reformation was justly esteemed at the time one of the gayest in Europe. Holyrood and Stirling stand more dignified, in the prejudices of the country, by tales of dark conspiracies and bold adventures; but the courtesies of chivalry and song are associated with Linlithgow.

While Andrew was hovering round the skirts of the palace, an old woman who happened at the time to be passing, with a large key, and a smaller tied to it, dangling in her hand, said, "Hey, lad, would you like to see the Queen and the King's seat?" This was a temptation that Andrew was not then in a humour to resist; but before indulging himself he inquired what the sight would cost.

"Ye maun gie me twopence, I'se warrant," said the woman.

"'Deed no, lucky," replied Andrew; "fools and their siller are soon parted. I'll gie you twal pennies¹ gin ye like to tak it, and ye had better do; for I'm gaun out o' the kintra, and ye'll hae nae chance to get either plack or bawbee² frae me a' your days."

¹ *Twal pennies*, Scots, or one penny sterling.

² *Fiack or bawbee*. Four or six pennies Scots.

After some altercation Andrew was admitted, and sat himself in the very seat where the gallant and unfortunate James of Flodden Field used to hear mass; and he saw also, with as sincere a faith in the truth of the story as any boy of his age did in the age when it happened, the chapel-aisle where the apparition of St Andrew warned the King from that fatal campaign, which the muses of Scotland have never ceased to deplore, and never more impressively than in our own time, converting (as it were, by a beautiful alchemy) the memory of national disgrace and misfortunes into motives of national pride that tend to add vigour to the energies of patriotism.

CHAPTER XI

Edinburgh.

THE feelings with which the relics of regal grandeur at Linlithgow had inspired our hero were greatly augmented when, at an early hour next day, he beheld the Castle of Edinburgh rising above the mists that floated round its rocky base. But instead of indulging his curiosity when he reached the carriers' quarters, he immediately engaged a porter to carry his box, and to conduct him to Leith, where he was that day to embark in a London trader. Fortunately, the vessel was not to sail till the evening, and this allowed him several hours to inspect the curiosities of the city. The porter who had carried his trunk, on understanding his intention, offered his services; but they were declined,—and for two reasons: the principal was that he would expect payment for his pains; and the other, because he was a Highlandman, that thought Macallam More a greater man than Nebuchadnezzar.

Considering Andrew's intuitive perception of character, it is not probable from this opinion (for we quote his own words) that he sustained any

loss by refusing the Highlander's guidance. But in visiting the different parts of the Old Town, the Castle, and Holyrood House, he sometimes wandered; and, as the Edinburgh boys are not less inclined to mischief than their contemporaries elsewhere, his inquiries were not always answered with a strict adherence to truth, or the most benevolent wish to set him in the right. However, he nevertheless contrived to see all the most remarkable objects to which history has attached any importance; and having satisfied himself in that respect, he dined on "parliaments" and "quality," by which he both saved money and time, for he ate his dinner as he walked along.

As the time approached when it was requisite he should go back again to Leith, he met two ladies. One of them was a tall elegant girl, with a sprightly fashionable air; the other, considerably older, and of a more sedate demeanour. It was Mary Cunningham, and one of the governesses of the boarding-school where she had so long been.

"Wheelie!" exclaimed Mary with delight, the moment she saw him. "What's brought you here?"

Andrew for an instant stood aghast, to be so addressed by a lady so fine and fashionable; but, seeing who it was, recovered himself (as it were) with an elastic bound, and said, in his familiar manner, "I cam frae the Stoneyholm to Glasgow

on Johnny Gottera's cart, and syne here wi' the Edinburgh carrier."

"Did ye ever see such a modiwart¹ like thing?" said Mary laughingly, turning to the governess; "but he's as pawkie as a fairy. Can ye say a' your fifty psalms yet, Wheelie?"

"Maybe I might, an' ye would hearken me again," was his answer,—a little curiously, however. But to this Mary made no direct reply, saying only—

"What are ye come to Edinburgh for?"

"I'm on my way to London."

"To London, Wheelie!" exclaimed Mary with astonishment; and then she added, briskly, "And so ye haena made your fortune at Kilwinning?"

Andrew blushed, and looked his reply.

"Miss Cunningham," interposed the governess, "this is a very improper conversation."

With these words they parted, Mary laughing gaily as Andrew, pleased and sheepishly, moved forward also in the opposite direction. When he had walked about twenty paces, he paused, and looked back; Mary also, at the same time, looked behind, and, seeing him, kissed her hand in a gay and triumphant manner.

Andrew, although strangely affected by the sight of the towering lily that Mary had grown, and overborne by her sprightliness, was delighted at the vivid recollection which she seemed to retain of the principal incidents with which her

¹ *Modiwart*. Mole.

image, as a lassie, was associated in his recollection. It did not appear to him that her banter was embittered with any scorn; on the contrary, it had a flavour of kindness in it, which a youth of seventeen could not but enjoy with something allied to hope and pleasure. With a buoyant bosom, and a light step, he pursued his way to Leith, where he immediately went on board the vessel that was to him the bark of destiny.

For the first two days after the trader left Leith, like most of the passengers, he was so dreadfully afflicted with what Dr Pringle calls "the grievous prostration" that he could not raise his head; but still there was something so queer in the manner in which he bore his sufferings that it at once amused and interested his fellow-passengers. They saw by his appearance that he was only a simple country boy; but the self-possession which he evinced in the intervals of the malady showed that, though clad in hodden-grey, he was not entirely made of rustic stuff. He, however, took no part in the conversation; and the opinion of his shrewdness and sagacity was formed from his looks, and the manner in which he set about his little offices, and chiefly by an observation on the biscuit, which was exceedingly hard: "It's very good," said he, "and will eat wi' pains."

On the day before reaching the Thames, his sickness had so much abated that he began to enter into the humours of his companions, and

an opportunity was not long wanting to show the irrepressible drollery of his character. Among the passengers was a spruce young man, who had been a student at the University of Edinburgh : foppish in his dress, stiff and conceited in his manners, and singularly fastidious towards all on board, insomuch that he was generally disliked ; but still he conducted himself so that he had not been exposed to any open ridicule. Andrew perceived how he was considered, and entering into the feelings of the party towards this unfortunate sprig of delicacy and condescension, addressed him after dinner, when the whole party, in consequence of a shower, was seated round the table below.

"I'm thinking," said he, very gravely, but at the same time looking pawkily and peeringly round the table, "that I have seen you before, and that ye hae had a roasted goose mony a day for your dinner. Were na ye 'prentice to Thomas Steek, the tailor in our parish?"

The student looked aghast while the laugh rose universal against him, and he repelled this assault on his gentility with the most vehement indignation.

"Na," said Andrew, "I'm sure ye needna be ashamed o' your trade, although it was thought that ye had fled the country-side for spoiling the cut o' Tammy Daidles's breeks. It's an honest calling a tailor's, and I ne'er heard it said that ye were gien to cabbaging ; but the auld wives

thought ye werena sae gleg wi' your needle as some others that had served their time with the same master, though they said ye dippet your spoon in the parritch deeper than ony o' them."

The unfortunate fop was petrified. Every one but himself perceived the drift of the curious little country boy, and sat in admiration of what might be the issue; at last, the student, no longer able to restrain his rage, threatened to slay Andrew on the spot, who nevertheless, with the most perfect nonchalance, replied, "Ye had better no try that; for gin ye strike me for what I'm saying, I'll gar ye prove before the lords that you're no a tailor, and I'm sure if it be sae that ye're no o' that craft, I'll refer to the present company if ever they saw a creature so like ane. But it's no your faut; and if the han' o' God has made you wi' shanks like ellwands, and sma' fingers to pook needles through claith, we a' ken ye canna help it."

The student, under his foppery, was not destitute of sense, and by the little descriptive touches in this last sentence suspecting that Andrew was not really serious, endeavoured to turn the tables. But our hero was more than his match at banter; and, before the end of the voyage, had so raised himself in the opinion of his fellow-passengers that they were universally of opinion he was calculated to make his way in London with great success, in spite of his little awkward figure, and the droll simplicity of his manners.

CHAPTER XII

London.

IMMEDIATELY on his arrival, Andrew was conducted to the house of his relation, Mrs Ipsey, where, having received a note to Mr Vellum, the solicitor with whom her husband had provided him a situation, he went immediately to deliver it. It was rather adventurous for one so fresh from the country to attempt, on the first day, to find his way in London, with only "a gude Scotch tongue" for his guardian genie. The consequence was what might have been anticipated. He lost his way, and went wandering through the labyrinth of streets in Marylebone, seeking (as it were) an outlet, his heart almost perishing within him. In this dilemma, however, he met with a singular stroke of good fortune. Charles Pierston had, about a year before, been taken into his uncle's counting-house in the City; and happening to be in that part of the town on business, they accidentally met. The joy of this encounter was excessive. It rescued Andrew from despair.

Charles was grown a gay and elegantly-formed youth, dressy and modish even to foppery, for his

uncle was liberal and indulgent to him, perhaps to a fault ; but he was still the same frank, generous, and warm-hearted lad, and although no contrast either in appearance or character could be more striking than that these two schoolfellows presented, he shook hands with Andrew, and welcomed him to London at once with jokes and shouts of gladness.

"Lord bless me, but I am blithe to see you," cried our hero, his spirit rebounding up into all its wonted self-possession in finding himself again under the encouraging countenance of "a kent face." "I have been lost amang thir houses, man, for hours, till I believe my head's no right. Od sake, if I wasna ready to lie down an' dee, had it no been for shame !"

"Why didn't you call a coach ?" said Pierston, ready to expire with laughter at the sincerity of Andrew's description of his perplexity.

"O Charlie Pierston !" exclaimed the novice, in the utmost astonishment : "me hire a coach ! Mary Conn in a coach !¹ The folk would hae thought I had gane by mysel'. Na, na, demented as I hae been, I was nae so far left to mysel', to be guilty of ony sic extravagance. Me hire a whole coach ! Ah ! Charlie, Charlie, I maun ca' mair canny ; and ye ken I never had ony turn for gentility like you. But ye maun now show me the way to Lincoln's Inn, whar I'm gaun to learn the law."

¹ An Ayrshire saying.

Charles, delighted as he was to see his old and queer schoolfellow, did not much relish the idea of walking with so singular a figure in the streets. Accordingly, when they reached the first stand, he called a coach ; but, before stepping in, Andrew said, " Now, mind, Charlie, ye're to pay for't a' ; I'll no be a single bawbee ; for I hae laid it down as a rule no to waste a plack on ony sort of pleasure."

" Well, well, never mind that ; I'll settle for the coach this time," said Charles, " and so jump in."

When they were seated, Pierston gathered from him an account of his hopes and prospects, and he was irresistibly tempted to play him an initiatory prank. Accordingly, when the coach reached the door of Mr Vellum's chambers, he leaped briskly out, and slipping the fare into the coachman's hand whispered him to get all he could nare from the other gentleman. The coachman was rogue enough for his own interest to enter into the frolic ; and Charles hurrying away, pretending he was pressed for time, and in his flight calling back to Andrew that he would see him soon again, left him in the paws of the coachman.

" Two shillings, your honour," said the fellow, when he had assisted Andrew to alight.

" What's that for ? Didna the ither lad pay you ? It was him that hired you. Ye needna look to me for ony payment."

There was a degree of tremor and indecision

in the manner in which this answer was given that encouraged the coachman to enforce his demand more resolutely, and he repeated it.

"I tell you, man, that it's no me ye're to apply to. What the deevil, if a frien' hire a chaise, and gie me a hurl, am I to pay the hire? I never heard o' sic extortion; go awa' wi' you, man!"

Jehu had some relish of humour himself, and played still further with the apprehensions of our hero, saying he should pay for his friend and settle it afterwards with him.

"It's ill getting a breek aff a Highlanman. Get twa shillings frae that flea-luggit rinnagate Charlie Pierston, who had ne'er a doit¹ that didna burn a hole in his pouch!—I ken him ouer weel to let his score gang to my lawin.² No, my lad, it's of no use to argol-bargol wi' me. I'll no be bow-wow't out of my shillings ony hoo; and, as I said before, ye maun just gang your ways, for scot nor lot will I pay you, or the like o' you, if I should be damn'd for't,—which is a mickle word for me to say." And with that he walked briskly up the steps that led to Mr Vellum's chambers, while the coachman mounted his box, roaring with laughter, "like the mill-lade at Kilwinning brig in a spait," as Andrew afterwards told Pierston.

Mr Vellum was an able, acute, and intelligent man of business, in the prime of life, active, gentlemanly, and decisive. The moment that he

¹ *Doit.* One penny Scots.

² *Lawin.* A tavern reckoning.

cast his eye on our hero he perceived he was an original, nor did he like him the less for his uncouth appearance. His knowledge of the world indeed had taught him that, in all the secondary and laborious departments of business, such characters are of the most invaluable description; and, in consequence, much to the amazement of several spruce young fellows who were casting contemptuous glances aside on the stranger as they plied their nimble quills, he received him with unusual cordiality.

"I am very glad you have come," said Mr Vellum, "for it is now term-time, and I doubt not you will soon make yourself useful."

"I'll no fail in the endeavour," replied Andrew; "but if I dinna at first come up to your expectation, ye maun just bear wi' me till my han's sooplet¹ at the wark."

"I shall be satisfied with your endeavour, and you may now take your place at the desk."

"No the day, sir," said Andrew; "for I hae tint² sic a time by losing mysel' in coming from Mr Ipsey's that I maun look after the bit pack wi' my claes before dark. I'll be wi' you, however, by break o' day the morn's morning."

Mr Vellum acquiesced, and Andrew, invigorated by the satisfactory reception he had met with, and perhaps unconsciously also by the little experience he had gleaned in his adventure with Pierston, proceeded with confidence to the house

¹ *Sooplet*. Made pliant.

² *Tint*. Lost.

of a Mrs Callender, whom Mrs Ipsey had recommended to him for lodgings.

It was situated in a small court, off one of the streets in the vicinity of Red Lion Square, and in the neatness of all its appearance justified the character which he had received of the landlady. In consequence of coming from Mrs Ipsey, Andrew was shown the first floor; but when informed that the rent was a guinea a week, he turned up his eyes, and gasped as if a load was on his heart. At last he was enabled to articulate, "Ye'll hae ither rooms?" and, being answered in the affirmative, was conducted upstairs, where a bargain was concluded for an attic at the rate of four shillings and sixpence per week. But we must not undertake to describe the details of his household arrangements; we shall, therefore, pass over the conversation which took place at the bargain-making with simply remarking that although Andrew thought Mrs Callender "dreadfu' dear" in the rent of her room, yet he was much satisfied with her orderly house and motherly appearance, and with all expedient haste proceeded to the wharf to get his luggage brought home.

This, however, involved difficulties which he had not anticipated. He guessed from the length of the way, which did not seem abridged by the necessity he was under of inquiring, at every turn, for "the road to Wapping," that the expense of portorage for his trunk would be considerable, and he made up his mind to go the

whole extent of a shilling. But on reaching the wharf, to his inexpressible astonishment, no man could be found who would undertake the task for less than five shillings, the very mention of which brought at once an interjection from the innermost chambers of his soul, and a cold sweat on his brows. The steward of the vessel advised him to take a coach; but this was a suggestion of prodigality still more insurmountable. So that, seeing no other likely way of getting the trunk carried, he manfully resolved to bear it on his own shoulders.

By this time it was almost dark, and there was some risk that the landmarks, which he had observed to guide his way, would be soon obscured from his view if he did not make haste. Having, therefore, shifted his coat and waistcoat for the old ones which he had worn in the passage, he got the trunk on his back, and bravely set forward from Miller's Wharf to find his way to Holborn, knowing that, if he was once there, he would soon discover the road to Mrs Callender's. But to carry a well-packed trunk through the crowded streets of London was no easy task to a stranger; and, long before he reached the Royal Exchange, the shades of darkness had deepened overhead, and the lights and lamps around him shone forth in all their wonted nightly splendour. Still, however, with indefatigable perseverance, winding his toilsome way along, he at length, after many halts, reached St Sepulchre's Church,

where he placed the trunk on the wall of the churchyard, and rested to breathe and to wipe his forehead.

He had not travelled so burdened unnoticed. A gang of street-robbers early marked him for their prey, and dogged him like bloodhounds in the track of their game ; but his wariness had prevented an attack till they saw him at rest. One of those freebooters, a little in advance of the others, passed him a few paces, and, giving a loud shriek, fell down on the pavement, seemingly in convulsions. In the first impulse of the moment, Andrew (as the thieves had calculated) started forward to his assistance ; but, fortunately, in doing so his trunk fell from the railing. The jeopardy in which he saw that it was immediately placed, by the companions of the impostor running towards it, checked his humanity, and he clung to it with the fond anxiety of a mother over her darling in danger. The thieves cursed his inhumanity, and the man in convulsions, instantly recovering, rose, and walked away with an alacrity which at once astonished and alarmed our adventurer, who required no further testimony respecting the character of the parties.

Saving only in this incident, he reached the house of Mrs Callender unmolested ; and nothing could exceed the laud and admiration of that worthy dame when she heard what he had accomplished, and the presence of mind with which he had preserved his trunk from the Philistines.

"I'm sure," said she, "Mr Wylie, that you must stand in need of your tea. Do sit down, and in the parlour I'll get it ready, with a nice comfortable bit of toast."

"I would like that unco weel," replied Andrew; "but it's dainties I mauna think o'. So I'll thank you to get me a mutchkin of strong yill and a cooky, which will baith serve me for four-hours¹ and supper."

Mrs Callender declared that she did not believe any such things could be had in London. But she could get him a slice of ham and a pint of porter.

"The woman's deleerit!" exclaimed Andrew. "Does she think that I'll make a sow o' mysel' wi' drinking a whole pint o' porter?"

Presently, however, recollecting that there was some difference between the Scotch and English measure, he inquired the expense; and, having saved the portorage of his luggage, he adopted her suggestion as to the porter, but would yield to no such seduction as the ham.

Having recruited his strength in Mrs Callender's parlour, he proposed going to bed, as he was much tired. "But," said he, "I needna be laying in ony stores till I see about me in the morning; so that, gin ye hae ony sic thing as a candle-doup about the house, I'll be obliged if ye'll lend me't the night."

This request needed some explanation. In the

¹ *Four hours.* The meal now known as *Tea*.

end, however, a mutual understanding took place on the subject, but without materially tending to exalt the character for liberality of our hero in the opinion of his landlady. Nevertheless, she lent him the candle. Having retired for the night to his chamber, and extinguished the light, he knelt down at the bedside. But the hopes, the wishes, and the anxieties, which the young adventurer communicates to Heaven in such a time, belong to a more holy strain of feeling than we may here venture to unfold.

CHAPTER XIII

First Impressions.

MR VELLUM had for clients several persons of high rank, and, among others, the Earl of Sandysford. His lordship was still on the gay side of thirty, and justly considered one of the most elegant men of the age; but from the date of his marriage with Lady Augusta Spangle, the daughter of the Marquis of Aberside, he had disappointed the expectations of his friends. Instead of taking that splendid part in the deliberations of the kingdom for which he seemed naturally, by his animated temperament and lofty eloquence, peculiarly qualified, he suddenly rushed into the whirlpool of fashionable dissipation, and squandered his estate and talents with a vehemence that not only surprised, but alarmed, while it mortified, his friends and admirers: for it appeared to be the result of some wild, yet voluntary, resolution, as if he sought, by the velocity of a headlong career, to escape the miseries of some mysterious sorrow.

When his lordship first entered the arena of fashion, he was strikingly handsome, and the

expression of his countenance, which was nobly intelligent, indicated great elevation of sentiment, tinged with an urbanity full of playfulness and good-humour. At the period of which we are now speaking, however, he was become pale and slender; an elegant listlessness pervaded his whole frame; and his voice, which naturally was clear and finely modulated, had dwindled into an habitual monotonous simper, suitable, indeed, to the small topics he affected to discuss, but evidently cared as little about as he did for anything else. Occasionally, however, his true character would shine out, and show that his foppery was but assumed, and that he might still be roused to better things, and stand forth in the erect superiority of a genius conscious of its innate strength, and ready, when sufficient cause required, to manifest its incalculable power.

About the time that our hero arrived in London, it had been remarked that the earl went less into company than formerly, and that sometimes he spent the morning in the House of Lords,— yawning, it is true, to the tuneless eloquence and metaphysical distinctions of some litigious advocate from the north, addressing, with equal effect, the Chancellor and the wooolsacks, and no less delighting the attendant solicitors than the faded worthies of Elizabeth's reign in the tapestry, who, in appeal cases, are commonly all the spectators. Once in the evening, when he happened, in the course of that spring, to obey a summons of the

House on an important political question, he was so far excited by the conflict of debate that he actually made a speech of three sentences, so judicious and well expressed that it tingled in the ears of the most experienced senators with a thrill of a new sensation, and was hailed as the symptom of a redeeming spirit that might in time convert him from those pursuits which had injured equally his health, his fortune, and his character.

Some time after this, his lordship had occasion to confer with Mr Vellum, and it happened that when he called at his chambers our hero was the only person within. A brief colloquy, in consequence, took place at the door, which had the effect of interesting his lordship's curiosity ; inso-much that, partly with the intention of resting a few minutes, perhaps more, however, with the design of extracting a little amusement, he was induced to walk into the office, and take a seat on one of the elevated stools at the desk. Andrew had no conception of the rank of the visitor ; and, as he was not altogether satisfied with this freedom, he stood warily holding the inner door open, as an intimation to his lordship that he ought not to remain ; but the oddity of his appearance, and the sly suspicion of his looks, with the simplicity of his manners, diverted the peer, who, after inspecting him through a quizzing-glass from head to foot, said, with an affectation of fashionable inanity, swinging his feet at the same time,

"These stools of yours, young man, are very tall."

"Ay," replied Andrew, "they're gey an' heigh." The assumed indifference of the earl was almost discomposed by the flatness of this answer; and, pulling out his handkerchief to hide the effect, he said at the same time, "Pray, friend, where were you caught?"

"Sir, I never was catched," was the indignant answer.

"Indeed!" said his lordship. "How then came you to London?"

"Hoo should I come?"

"A very satisfactory answer, I must confess," rejoined the earl; "and I have no doubt you had a great deal of pleasure in your travels?"

"Ah, trouth!" quoth our hero, "if the bocking¹ the soul out o' the body be ony pleasure, I had enough o' that pleasure! Gude forgie me! but I was amaist tempted to mak awa' wi' mysel. Eh! I thought if I could hae dee't, it would hae been a satisfaction. Na, na, sir, I would nae advise my sworn enemy to come in a ship by sea frae Scotland."

The earl, still preserving all due seriousness, said, "May I presume to inquire if you are a lawyer?"

"I'm learning," replied Andrew modestly.

"A very judicious answer," was the ironical

¹ *Bocking.* Vomiting.

observation of his lordship. "And how long may you have been in the profession?"

"Before coming here, I was weel on to three years with John Gledd, the messenger, and I hae been three days wi' Mr Vellum."

"It is an honourable profession, and I doubt not you will become a distinguished ornament to it—in time," said his lordship dryly.

"I'm thinking it's a geyan kittle trade though; but I'll ettle my best," replied Andrew, none disconcerted.

"But," resumed the earl, "what do you think of London?"

"Poo!" cried the clerk: "London! a wheen brick houses. O man, if ye could but see Glasgow and Edinburgh! There you would see something. Look at Holyrood House: that's a palace for you; but St James's here,—it's just like an auld to'booth. But, sir, ye'll hae to gae awa', for it's the time for me to gang for my dinner, that I may be back to keep the house;—and I hae a notion your business is no very particular the day."

"It certainly," said his lordship, "will keep to another day. But where do you dine?"

"At a very creditable house, sir: the Caledonian, in a neighbour street."

"And how much may you pay?" inquired his lordship, with unaffected curiosity, prompted by an interest which he began to take in this original.

"Sevenpence, and a bawbee to the laddie," replied Andrew.

"Good heavens!" exclaimed the earl, touched with a sentiment of compassion, never having by any accident before heard at what rates the humble and industrious youth of the vast metropolis are obliged to live.

"Ay, it's awfu' dear," said Andrew, mistaking the cause of his lordship's astonishment, "but the victual's good;" adding, "It's a hard thing, sir, to live in London. Some take a mutchkin of porter to their dinner, but I sloken my drowth¹ wi' Adam's wine."

"I presume, then, that you do not allow yourself much indulgence in public amusements?" said his lordship.

"As to that," replied Andrew, "I take my share; for the singers are far better than ours,—indeed, they hae tunes and voices like leddies and gentlemen. But, sir, it's no canny to gang near them; for nae further gane than yestreen—last night ye ken,—when I was harkening to twa singing like nightingales in Lincoln's Inn Square, a ne'er-do-weel pocket-picker whuppet² the napkin out of my pouch, wi' the slippery hand o' an evil spirit, before I kent whar I was. Od, sir, but there's a terrible power o' ill-doers about London!"

"Oh, I understand! You mean by the public

¹ *Sloken my drowth.* Quench my thirst.

² *Whuppet.* Whipped.

amusements, listening to the ballad-singers in the street," said the earl, drolling.

"I can assure you," replied Andrew, "they werena like ballad-singers at a'; and it's my notion they were playactors out o' bread."

"Have you been at the theatres?" said his lordship.

"No yet; but I'm gaun. Our clerks are to treat me some night soon; and they say—they a' say—that I'll see—Gude kens what I'll no see! But it maun be something vera extraordinar, for they're just out the body about catching the effec, as they ca't. However, effecs here or effecs there, it's no right o' you, sir, to keep me clishma-clavering¹ when I should be taking my pick, that the master's wark mayna gae by."

The earl admitted the justness of the observation; and, perceiving the roguery at the bottom of the intended treat on the part of the other clerks, became desirous himself to enjoy some of the virgin fancies of Andrew. He therefore pretended that, as he had not found Mr Vellum, he would write a note for him.

Being furnished accordingly with the necessary implements, he requested the solicitor that Andrew might be sent to a particular coffee-house at eleven o'clock that evening, with a letter for Servinal, his valet, who would be there to meet him; and (that Mr Vellum might have some idea of the object of this singular request)

¹ *Clishmaclavering*. In idle discourse.

he added, "The countess receives masks; but your clerk can take a part without any disguise."

"Now," said his lordship to Andrew, as he folded up the letter, "this relates to a matter on which my heart is much set, and I rely upon your fidelity in placing it safe in Mr Vellum's own hand."

"That ye may do, and sleep sound upon't," was the answer; "for be he living, or be he dead, I will see him; and I wouldna that a thing gi'en to me in the way of trust was mislippent¹—no, though I was to die on the spot. But, oh, sir, really, I'm growing uneasy; for if I dinna get my dinner noo, thae deevils, our clerks, will be back, and if they fin' out that I'm toom,² they'll fish to famish me. It would, therefore, sir, be very obliging, if ye hae done your pleasure and needs, to gae quietly awa', and let me rin for my bit chack o' dinner."

The good-humour of the earl, perhaps we ought to add his habitual politeness, could not withstand the reiterated urgency of this appeal, and accordingly he withdrew, renewing his injunctions for the careful delivery of the letter. But this was unnecessary: Andrew was fully impressed with the importance of letters addressed by clients to their solicitors, and well aware that his future success in life depended quite as much on his integrity as upon any other quality.

¹ *Mislippent*. Neglected.

² *Toom*. Empty.

CHAPTER XIV

A Masquerade.

WHEN Andrew came back after dining, Mr Vellum, who had been all the forenoon in Westminster Hall, was in the office; and on reading the earl's epistle, which our hero faithfully delivered into his own hands, he was not a little diverted by its contents.

"Did the gentleman," said he, "tell you who he was?"

"I never speert,"¹ replied Andrew; "but surely he would put his name to the letter."

"Oh yes; but I cannot imagine what has induced him to write to me on such a subject."

"He maun answer for that himsel'," said Andrew; "but he seemed very particular. It's surely something very particular, sir, for he stayed so lang, and asked so many questions, that I was obligated to tell him to gang awa'."

"But what sort of man did you find him?"

"I'm thinking," replied Andrew, "that he's something in the perfoomery line, for he had a fine scented pocket-napkin, and was wondrous

¹ *Speert*. Inquired.

perjink in his words—a' on chandler pins; and baith in shape and habit he was a slimmer¹ piece of genteelity."

"I hope," said the solicitor, "that you treated him with all due respect, for he was no other than the Earl of Sandyford."

"Oh, Mr Vellum, what a stupid fool fallow he maun hae thought I was—a yearl! Me speaking in the way I did to him, and he a' the time a yearl! Howsoever, he canna hae't to say that I neglected his business, or didna mind yours, and I'll mak up for't to him in decorum at another time."

"I hope so," said Mr Vellum jocularly. "But I have something particularly for you to do this evening. You will take a letter from me to one Mr Servinal, as directed: he is a civil man, and I have particular reasons for wishing you to become acquainted with him. I need not say more than that you will endeavour to make yourself agreeable to him."

"If it's for your interest, sir," replied Andrew, "ye need hae nae fear o' that. But eleven o'clock is an awful time o' night to be seeking after ony honest business."

"True," said Mr Vellum; "but, in our profession, all hours and times must be at the command of our clients."

"Say nae mair, say nae mair; by night or by day, Mr Vellum, I'll try to do my part,"

¹ *Slimmer*. Delicato (used in some contempt).

replied Andrew ; and in this manner the prelude for the evening was arranged.

At the time appointed, the valet was at his post, and had not to wait long for our hero. Servinal had been duly instructed by his master ; and accordingly, after some conversation, containing a number of apparent facts and evidential circumstances which Andrew was to relate, with all proper fidelity, to Mr Vellum, Servinal proposed an adjournment to the playhouse, under the tempting pretext that, being acquainted with the doorkeepers, he could get them both in free at that hour. To this our hero could make no possible objection ; on the contrary, he considered his assent to the proposal as in strict conformity to the instructions he had received to make himself agreeable to so important a client as the valet appeared to be. A coach was thereupon called, and they were speedily at Sandyford House.

On reaching the precincts of the mansion, Andrew had no reason to doubt that he was approaching one of the principal theatres. The square was thronged with carriages ; a multitude of curious spectators, to see the company as they were set down, occupied the pavement ; and the vestibule was filled with a countless host of servants in livery,—the domestics of the guests, and friends of the domestics.

The earl had instructed Servinal, in order that Andrew might not be exposed to the in-

solent impertinence of the menials, to take care that it should not be known among them he was not in character; so that, when he entered the hall with his rustic garb and awkward manner, they set him down as Free-lance in the character of Jemmy, in the farce of *High Life Below Stairs*, and the sincere astonishment with which he gazed around excited their unanimous admiration and plaudits as an incomparable performer.

Andrew clung to his companion in a degree of delighted alarm, saying involuntarily, as he was conducted up the grand staircase to the state apartments, where the company were assembling, "What a beautiful house this is! Odsake, man, it's as grand as Solomon's temple."

"Were you ever there?" said a mask in a domino in passing. Andrew instantly recognised a voice that he had heard before, and was petrified. It was the earl, at whose appearance Servinal immediately withdrew, telling our hero that he was now free to go everywhere, and pick up what amusement he could for the remainder of the evening.

Notwithstanding all the freedom which the belief that he was in a place of public amusement was calculated to inspire, Andrew shyly entered the central *salon*, from which the drawing-rooms opened. A party in mask, with the earl at their head, followed him. He thought, however, that they were the players—the hirelings

of the entertainment—, and expected them to tumble, and perform other antic feats of corporeal ingenuity.

While under this misconception of his situation, just within the door of the *salon*, with his back leaning on the pedestal of a statue of Terpsichore, the well-fleshed Countess of Gorbilands, in the character of Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt, came up to him. Her ladyship had not the most remote idea that he was not in character. Being herself a Scotchwoman, she imagined from his dress that he had taken the part of a Scottish lad, and addressed him accordingly, imitating the rattle of Lady Rodolpha with considerable humour.

Andrew, however, was disconcerted by what he considered her impudence, and said, "Gang about your business, woman, and no fash me. I'll hae naething to say to you: I tell you, woman, ye may just whistle on your thumb."

"The brute!" exclaimed the countess, forgetting her part. "How can he have got into the house? He has no character."

"I'm thinking," said Andrew, dryly, "that I hae a muckle better character than you."

Her ladyship was amazed, and returned to her party, utterly at a loss to understand the phenomenon.

At this moment, Colonel Coleson, in the character of Moll Flagon, came up, amidst shouts of laughter, exclaiming, "Where is he—where

is the gay deceiver?" presenting Andrew at the same moment with her pocket-pistol, *alias* brandy-bottle.

Our hero looked at Moll for about half a minute with the most unequivocal marks of aversion. At last he said, "I wonder how the door-keepers could let sic a tinkler in!"

"Does he disown me?" exclaimed Moll, in a rapture of desperation. 'Will the perjured wretch cast me off from his tender embraces in the face of the whole world?' And she began to weep bitterly, wiping her eyes with the corner of her tattered shawl, and taking a sip from her bottle with infinite humour.

"The woman's fou," said Andrew coolly to the bystanders; and walked away somewhat anxiously to shun her.

"See how he deserts me," cried the obstreperous Moll; "he abandons me like the rest of his faithless sex—the cruel gay deceiver!"

Andrew, terrified by the vehemence of Moll's manner, turned back to reason with her, and said, "Honest woman, ye're in a mistake."

The unaffected simplicity of this address was too much even for Coleson, with all his confidence; and, regardless of the proprieties of his part, he joined in the general laughter that it called forth from all present.

Poor Andrew then appealed to the spectators, and assured them, with the most perfect sincerity, that he had never seen the woman before since

he was born. "She's just a randy," said he, "and ought to be set in the joughs."¹

"What's the matter—what's the to-do here?" cried a Justice Woodcock. "What are ye after? Tramp, madam; and as for you, sir, take yourself off."

Andrew would have walked away rebuked, but Moll took hold of the seeming magistrate by the coat-tail, exclaiming, "Is this a proper treatment of the fair sex, Justice Woodcock? I thought you had been a better man in your day than to see a poor innocent girl, that had nothing but her virtue, so wronged by such a cruel, a perfidious, a base, and wicked, wicked man."

"Poor Molly! and what has he done to you?" said the Justice.

"What has he done?" exclaimed Molly, starting from out her tears. "He has undone me?"

Andrew was thunderstruck, and looked around in despair; but saw no friendly visage. In the same moment Moll clasped him in her arms, and, pulling out his watch, cried, "This at least will procure me some comfort." And in putting the watch into her pocket, she took out her bottle, and indulged in another sip.

"Softly, Moll," said Justice Woodcock, "you must give me the watch."

"Oh!" cried Andrew, in a long and vibrating tone of horror; but suddenly mustering courage

¹ *Joughs.* Note C.

he exclaimed, "As sure as death, sir, this is as big a lie as ever Cluty himself cleckit.¹ Only send for my master, Mr Vellum, and he'll testify that I'm a poor honest lad, of creditable parentage, just come frae Scotland. Oh, what had I to do here! Gie me my watch, I tell you—gie me my watch—thieves, thieves!"

The earnest vigour of lungs with which he uttered this exclamation resounded through all the splendid chambers, and the whole music and merriment was in a moment silenced by the alarm. Andrew, in the same instant, snatched the watch from Moll, who was then in the act of handing it to the Justice, and flying off amidst a universal cataract of laughter never looked behind till he was out of breath, and safe in the street.

¹ *Cluty . . . cleckit. Devil . . . hatched.*

CHAPTER XV

An Invitation.

HASTENING home to his lodgings with the expedition of a delinquent flying from justice, Andrew was undressed, and over head and ears among the bed-clothes, before he made any attempt to rally his scattered senses. In this situation he soon became more composed, and began to think that he had perhaps been subjected to the influence of some delusion. He had heard of Johnny Fa and Lord Cassillis' lady, and of mountebanks casting glamour in the eyes of their spectators, by which blue-bottle flies, with pins at their tails, are made to appear in the shape of gamecocks drawing logs of timber; and he was not sure but that some such sleight of magic had been practised by the players on himself. This first effort of returning reason, as his agitation subsided, was succeeded by a still more rational conclusion,—no less than that really he did not know where he had been, and, therefore, it would be as well for him to say nothing of his adventure next morning to the other clerks in the office. And with this

prudent determination, he said his prayers and fell asleep.

But although he had resolved to be silent, he could not divest himself of a certain indescribable feeling of anxiety and apprehension when he went to the desk in the morning. He sat down without saying a word, and wrote on with more than his wonted assiduity, while his companions were recounting to each other their exploits and gallantries, and strong-ale debaucheries at the Coalhole and Finish, after the play.

When Mr Vellum entered the office, the sound of his tread was echoed by the beating of Andrew's heart; and a sensation of fear, almost as painful as the terrors of suspected guilt, took possession of our hero's whole mind as that gentleman said to him dryly, "Well, Wylie, did you see Mr Servinal last night?"

"A genteel man answered to his name," replied Andrew, "and I gave him the letter."

"Had you any conversation with him?" inquired the solicitor, amused at the dexterity of Andrew's evasion, and interested by his evident embarrassment.

"A great deal," said our hero briskly; and then he faithfully recounted the whole of what he conceived to be the business part of the conversation.

Vellum commended his attention and memory, and added, "Did you stop long with him?"

"We were not a great while thegither," replied Andrew with a sigh.

"I hope he did not detain you long; for I do not choose that my young men should keep late hours."

"It will be my endeavour to satisfy you, sir, in that particular, for I'm no fond of late hours mysel': they are very bad things," said our hero, morally.

"Yes," replied his master; "and London is so full of temptations to youth and inexperience."

"It's an awful place," was the emphatic answer.

"But you got safe home after parting from the gentleman?" said Mr Vellum.

"Ay," replied Andrew with a nod, as if he spoke inwardly: "ay, I got safe home."

The solicitor could with difficulty keep his gravity; but, after a momentary pause, he looked sharply at our hero, and then, in a jocular tone, said, "I suspect, Wylie, you were engaged in some adventure last night."

"I fancy everybody may meet wi' as meikle, and do nae wrang either," was the answer to this home question.

"Then you did meet with something?" said his master.

"I canna, without a lie, say I met wi' naething."

"But what was it?" inquired the solicitor, with an affected tone of impatience.

"I'm sure, sir, that's no an easy question to

answer; for ye ken I'm but a new-come stranger in London, and a's no ill that's ill-like."

"Then I presume that what you met with was something you thought strange?"

"I dare say," replied Andrew, "it may no be strange here."

"It is very extraordinary that you refuse to tell me what it was."

"Me refuse, sir!" exclaimed Andrew; "I'm sure I never refused."

"Then why don't you satisfy me?"

"It's baith my earnest wish and interest, sir, to gie you the fullest satisfaction in my power," replied our hero; and he looked at his master with such an air of simplicity that Vellum was utterly at a loss whether to set him down as a knave or a fool. At this moment one of Lord Sandyford's servants entered, with a card from his lordship, requesting Mr Wylie's company to dinner that day. Andrew was petrified: he grew as pale as ashes, and trembled from head to foot, totally incapable of comprehending the mystery of this device. Vellum smiled, and said, "I hope you are not engaged, and that you can oblige his lordship."

"Oh, I'm sure," cried our hero, panting, "I'll do anything in the world to oblige my lord!"

The footman was accordingly dismissed with a card to the earl, accepting of the invitation. "You are a fortunate youth," said Mr Vellum, "to have made so early such an enviable acquaintance."

"But, sir," interrupted Andrew, "what will I do, for I hae na claes fit for my lord's company?"

"Take my advice," said his master gravely, and with sincerity; "make no change in your appearance, but only be careful that you are particularly clean and neat."

Mr Vellum was more in the secret of his adventure the preceding evening than he pretended. In fact, the solicitor himself had been at the masquerade, and partook of the merriment which "the incomparable unknown" occasioned (as *The Morning Post* called Andrew in describing the entertainment, for the purpose of advertising the savoury merits of the cook and confectioner who provided the supper).

In resuming his duty at the desk, Andrew marvelled, as he copied, on the singularity of having received an invitation to dine with an earl; and he was shrewd enough to guess that it could neither be on account of his learning, his rank, nor the fashion of his appearance.

The invitation which Andrew had received from the earl was soon known among the other clerks, and their first notion led them to fancy that he was related to his lordship; they began, in consequence, to think he was not, after all, the mean sort of half-witted creature which they had hitherto thought him, but an eccentric and original character. This idea received something like confirmation when, one

of them inquiring in what degree of relationship he stood with the earl, Andrew dryly replied, "Really I canna say; but I believe we're sprung of the same stock." Some of the more knowing, however, began to suspect that it possibly might be on account of his odd and singular appearance, and that his lordship, in conferring the honour of the invitation, slyly intended to amuse his own friends by showing off the curiosity,—a shrewd suspicion, characteristic of that precocious knowledge of the world which is one of the chief, if not the very chief itself, of all the peculiarities of the metropolitan youth, especially of that sharp and pert tribe of them who, like the imps that infest the road leading to Paradise, chatter, frisk, and flutter in the avenues to the tribunals of justice.

CHAPTER XVI

A Dinner-Party.

ANDREW, having provided himself with the address of Sandyford House, was at the door as punctually as the clock went the hour. The knocker, at that moment, seemed to him too ponderous for his hands to raise, and, after pausing for about half a minute to recover courage, he tapped with his knuckle to announce his claim for admission. The porter, a saucy corpulent fellow, opened, and demanded what he wanted. "I am come to get my dinner with my lord," was the reply. The corner of John Swell's lips crooked of their own accord downward into an expression of ineffable contempt and exclusion, when, fortunately, the footman who had carried the invitation to Vellum's happened to come into the hall, and, recognising our hero, conducted him upstairs to the drawing-room where the other guests, with the earl and countess, were waiting in expectation of his approach.

Andrew was agitated and confused; but in ascending the stairs he recovered sufficient pre-

sence of mind to enable him to observe that the house was the same which on the preceding night he had believed was one of the theatres; and the idea suddenly flashed upon him that he owed the honour of the invitation to the simplicity of his Scottish manners and appearance. The servant who showed him the way had observed his confusion, and when Andrew paused, as this notion came across his mind, he conceived him to be overwhelmed with diffidence, and stopped also, with a sneer, being aware of the motives which had induced his master to invite him to dinner. But a moment's reflection set all things right with our hero, and he seemed, to the saucy valet, to undergo a marvellous transmutation from an awkward vulgar boy into an easy and confident gentleman. He advanced towards the door of the drawing-room with as light a step and as cheerful a countenance as he ever wore approaching the cottage of his schoolmaster with the chat and jokes of the village, and was ushered into the splendid company without feeling the slightest embarrassment; on the contrary, he went forward in that agreeable state of self-possession which a man feels when he knows it is in his power to dispense pleasure. Lord Sandyford, who possessed an acute perception of the latent powers of character, perceived, by the change, on the instant he threw his eyes on him as the door opened, that he was not the entire simple oddity

which he had at first imagined, and immediately went towards him and shook him by the hand in a manner that raised him at once, as it were, into the equality and footing of a friend.

"Mr Wylie," said his lordship, "I ought to apologise for the freedom which I have taken with you."

"Say nae mair about it, my lord," interrupted Andrew: "I maun pay for my experience of the world as weel as my betters; but it was an awfu' thing though."

This simple reply was received as original humour, and much amused the high-bred assemblage, by both its gusto and familiarity. Sir Timothy Knicketty, the connoisseur, who was of the party, declared it was truly *à la Teniers*.

When they had descended to the dining-room, the ladies were particularly anxious to share our hero among them; but he put an end to the controversy by taking the seat of honour between the Duchess of Dashingwell and the countess, who, independent of their rank, were the two finest women in the room. Her grace was a blithe, open-tempered character, that could carry a joke as great a length as any lady of her class.

During dinner, nothing for some time particularly occurred. Andrew, with a quick and cunning eye, observed the etiquettes of the table as they were performed by others, and acquitted himself without committing any extraordinary breach of the wonted ceremonials: in this re-

spect he was, indeed, superior to many a scion of nobility from Eton or Oxford. The Duchess of D—— led him on in conversation, and he said a number of droll and naïf things, which were received as *bon-mots* of the most racy flavour. Peals of laughter bore testimony to all the house with what success he sustained his character, and as the wine mounted his confidence rose. Before the end of the second course he was in high glee, and perfectly at his ease; insomuch that the very servants in attendance could with difficulty maintain the requisite taciturn decorum of their office. But all restraint of duty, place, and circumstance, were in the end overwhelmed when, in reply to an invitation from her grace to take wine with her, he exclaimed, "Na, leddies, if ye gar me drink at this rate, the wine will be running in my head, and I'll be kittling you till ye keckle¹ or a's done; so look to the consequences."

Lord Sandyford enjoyed the scene with a relish to which he had long been a stranger; but the countess was the least affected of the whole party by the simplicity or the art of Andrew. Her ladyship, however, maintained throughout the evening a graceful propriety that admirably became her station. She seldom condescended to laugh; still, at times, a pleasant, ringing, cheerful sound came from her heart, that showed

¹ *Kittling you till ye keckle.* Tickling you until you laugh aloud.

she could enjoy the pleasantries of life as jocundly as her neighbours. On these occasions her lord would look at her as if startled by some unexpected note of pleasure ; but in a moment her hilarity was suppressed, and she was as cold and formal as before.

The evening's entertainment had, however, generally the effect of inspiring the earl with a grateful feeling towards Andrew ; for it is one of the blessed consequences of hearty laughter to stir into action all the kindly humours of the mind ; and his lordship determined to have him for his frequent guest. The rest of the company, particularly the Duchess of D——, was scarcely less delighted with his eccentricities ; and when, after returning to the drawing-room, she persuaded him to sing, he fairly won her heart, and was chosen a regular invitant to all her parties for the winter. Indeed, to do him justice, in the choice of his song he displayed equal taste and judgment, and the execution was worthy of the choice. His song was that ludicrous enumeration of goods and chattels, beginning with "My father wi' his deeing breath," in the performance of which, flushed with the Tuscan, he addressed himself so eagerly to her grace, snapping his fingers with exultation, and nodding and winking, that she was obliged to throw herself on a sofa, holding both her sides, exclaiming, "For the love of heaven, stop him—stop him, or I shall die !"

The sagacity with which Andrew had thus

improved the first impression of his peculiarities taught him instinctively to choose that happy moment for taking leave when the effect he had produced was liveliest. At the end of his song he accordingly sprang away, as if he had suddenly recollected himself, crying, "Megsty me, what am I about; daffing¹ till this time here, when I hae got a codicil to copy to a dying man's last will and testament!" And with that, giving a ludicrous nod for a bow, he ran downstairs, and hastened home.

¹ *Daffing*. Frolicking.

CHAPTER XVII

Borrowing.

THE first winter thus passed with our hero in a manner that most young men would have deemed enviable, and the prudent regarded as fraught with danger to his future fortune ; but his simplicity remained invincible to the blandishments of pleasure, and the sterling worth of his innate character raised him more and more in the estimation of Lord Sandysford.

One morning, on going to chambers, he found Mr Vellum thoughtful and vexed. He had been, on the preceding evening, engaged with money-lenders, relative to an additional mortgage which was immediately required for the earl, and the negotiation had not been satisfactory. The money was obtained ; but on such terms that he was almost afraid to communicate them to his lordship : not that he had any reason, from his experience of the earl's disposition and temper, to apprehend that his lordship would trouble himself for a moment on the subject ; but he felt, as a man of business, that he had not been so happy in his management as on other similar occasions.

After sitting some time, turning over the memoranda of the transaction, and casting about in his thoughts for what he should say to the earl, he happened to look towards the desk where Andrew was earnestly employed at his vocation, his little round smooth-haired head following his pen as if it was slowly rolling on the paper; and it occurred to him that perhaps no fitter envoy could be employed in the business than the droll and uncouth oddity before him. From what had already taken place between him and the earl, the humour and peculiarities of Andrew seemed likely to render the communication less disagreeable to his lordship than his own dry and regular method of explaining the circumstances, and he summoned him at once from the desk.

"You must go, Wylie," said he, "to Lord Sandyford with these papers. They contain some matters respecting the loan of twenty thousand pounds that I have procured for his lordship."

"Twenty thousand pounds!—barro't money!" exclaimed Andrew. But his master, without noticing the exclamation, continued, "And you will tell him that it really could not be obtained on better terms; that, in fact, at present everything in the City is drained by an instalment of the Government loan; and money can only be raised with the utmost difficulty, and on terms I am almost ashamed to state."

"I wish—I wish," said Andrew, "that my lord may haud thegither twenty thousand pounds

a' at ance ; and wasting baith at heck and manger wi' bardie leddies and whirligig fool-fellows at yon gait !"

Vellum was folding up the papers while our hero made this observation ; and, a little relieved from his anxiety by having selected him for his minister, said jocularly, "You may as well give his lordship a word of advice on the subject, Wylie, if you find him in the humour."

"Atweel I'll no grudge to do that," replied Andrew, seriously ; "for he's a fine man, and his leddy a most discreet¹ woman—only a wee thought ouer muckle ta'en up wi' hersel'. It's a pity that my lord and her dinna draw thegither so weel as could be wished."

Vellum was startled by this remark, and, looking earnestly and inquisitively at Andrew, said, "Have you heard anything about them ?"

"Me hear about them ! What could I hear about them ? I ken nobody that's acquaint wi' ony o' them save yoursel' ; but I have twa holes in my head, and as many windows, and I can hearken at the ane, and keek out at the ither, and learn what's gaun on in the warld just as weel as ither folk. My leddy, Mr Vellum, is mair weel-bred in the parleyvoo style to her gudeman than a kindly wife should be, and my lord fashes² at her formality."

"You are a strange creature, or I am mistaken," said Vellum, as he handed him the

¹ *Discreet.* Polite.

² *Fashes.* Vexes himself.

papers; "and I hope you will not blunder in this business."

Andrew, as he received them, assured his master that he might depend he would do his best endeavours to give both him and the earl satisfaction, and, taking his hat, hastened to Sandyford House, where he was immediately admitted.

"What! Wylie, are you sent?" cried his lordship, somewhat surprised when our hero entered.

"For lack o' a better hand, my lord, the master bade me tak thir papers to your lordship, and to tell you that he was vera sorry he couldna get the siller on onything like Christian terms at this time."

His lordship smiled, saying, "I thought he knew that I never expected it on anything like Christian terms."

"It's a great soom, my lord," resumed Andrew, looking at the earl from under his brows, "and maun hae ta'en a hantle o' gathering and gripping to make it up; and it's a sair pity that it winna last lang wi' your lordship."

The earl, at this address, laid the papers on the table, and begged Andrew to be seated.

"What were you observing, Mr Wylie, about the money?" said his lordship, when Andrew had seated himself aloof from the table.

"I was just saying, sir, my lord, that twenty thousand pounds is a dreadful soom of money. It's a thousand pounds a year, my lord, at merchant's rate, o' dead loss."

"It is so, Wylie; but what then?"

"Nae: as to the what then o' the business," cried Andrew, in some degree lightened in his spirit, "that's your lordship's look-out. But I canna bear to see an honest gentleman riding helter-skelter straight on to a broken brig, and no gie him warning."

"This is at least something new," said the earl to himself, a little interested, and with a kindly excitement of sensibility towards his friend; and he then added, "I am certainly obliged to you, Wylie."

"Ye're nane obligated to me," cried Andrew; "it's the part o' honesty to let you ken the road ye're in; but (as Burns says to the de'il), 'O would ye tak a thought and men', for really, my lord, I'm wae for you. A man o' your degree can neither work nor want, and what will become o' you when a's gane to a'? I'll tell you what it is, my lord, before I would be hinging ae mill-stone about my neck after anither in this gait, I would take a rung,¹ and thrash every ane o' your het and fu' flunkies out o' the house. Devil do me gude o' them, and o' the other clam-jamphrey² that are eating you out of house and hall, but I would let them ken what twenty thousand pounds are in as many paiks!³ Sir, my lord, if ye'll believe me, there was no ae single ane o' a' that fool antic mob of latherons⁴

¹ *Rung*. Thick stick.

² *Clamjamphrey*. Worthless crew.

³ *Paiks*. Blows.

⁴ *Latherons*. Lazy "characters."

and merry-andrews, devouring the mains more here the ither night wi' their gallanting, that would gie your lordship a bawbee for auld langsyne, if ye were seeking your meat frae door to door in a cauld winter's day, wi' the drap at your neb, and the tear in your e'e, and no ae handfu',—no even a cauld potato,—in your meal-pock."

"The picture is strong," said the earl emphatically; "but it is not without some true portraiture. What would you advise me to do?"

"It would be out of a' bounds o' discretion for me to advise your lordship," replied our hero. "I'm only speaking o' what I would do mysel'; but then I'm neither a lord nor a married man."

"Yes, Wylie, yes; you are right. The lord and the married man are two serious considerations," said the earl a little pensively.

"Ane of them," cried Andrew, briskly, "is bad enough; but the twa make a case that would puzzle Solomon himsel'. Howsomever, sir, my lord, I can tell you ae thing, and that is, redde the ravelled skein¹ wi' my leddy, and aiblins baith you and her will can spare some o' the cost and outlay that ye're at for living furniture, the eating dishes and drinking decanters that ouer often garnish your table."

The earl's colour went and came during this speech; his eyes, at the freedom of the allusion

¹ *Redde the ravelled skein.* To disentangle the twisted business.

to Lady Sandyford, flashed with indignation, but it was only for a moment. When Andrew paused, his countenance was settled, and he said in an easy tone, "You have, I think, Wylie, but a poor opinion of my guests."

"The folk are weel enough; but, as your lordship cares sae little about them, I wonder how ye can be fashed wi' siclike."

"How do you know that I care little about them?" said the earl, half amused, but surprised, at the remark.

"As the auld sang sings," said Andrew,

" ' Them that gant
Something want,
Sleep, meat, or making o'."

And ye'll excuse my freedom, sir, my lord; 't I have seen, mair than once or twice, that your lordship was no in a vera satisfied situation, notwithstanding the merriment and daffing around you."

"How?" cried the earl, and bit his lips. "But, Wylie, what makes you suppose that there is what you call a ravelled skein between me and Lady Sandyford?"

The jocular tone in which his lordship uttered this sentence, was calculated to throw Andrew off his guard; but it produced no change in the earnest simplicity with which he was endeavouring to fulfil the orders he had received from his master, with respect to recommending economy to the earl.

"I meant no offence," replied Andrew respectfully; "but I thought the best way for your lordship to begin to retrench would be by trying to do with as little company as possible; and, if my leddy might be brought to the same way of thinking, it would be a blithe thing for you baith."

Andrew paused, for he observed a cloud passing over the earl's expressive countenance; and a mutual silence for some time ensued, during which his lordship rose and walked towards the window. Our hero also left his chair, and was standing on the floor to make his bow of leave, when the earl turned round. "Wylie," said his lordship playfully, "can you speak of trees, from the cedar that is in Lebanon even unto the hyssop that springeth out of the wall?"

"It's no right o' your lordship," replied Andrew seriously, "to make a fool o' the Bible, by likening me to King Solomon, the wisest man that ever was in the world; so I wish your lordship a vera good morning. But hae ye onything to say to Mr Vellum anent the twenty thousand pounds?"

"What can I have to say? I wanted the money: he has got it: and I doubt not has made the best bargain in his power. So take back the papers, and tell him to prepare the deeds."

"Sir, my lord," cried Andrew, petrified, "ye hae never lookit at the papers."

The earl smiled, and stepping towards the

table gathered them up and counted them; he then placed them in Andrew's hands, and said, "I have looked quite as much at them as I wish to do."

Andrew shook his head as he received the papers, and for a moment looked compassionately at the earl. There was something in the motion and the look that produced an electrical vibration at the heart of his lordship, and as our hero moved towards the door and retired he followed him with his eye; and even after the door was closed, still he continued for several minutes to gaze in that direction.

"I have hitherto lived among machines," said the earl, in soliloquy, moving from the spot, and throwing himself carelessly on a sofa; "but this is a human being. It has brains, in which thought rises naturally as water wells from the ground, the wholesome element of temperance; it has a heart too; and in this little discourse has shown more of man than all the bearded bipeds I have ever met with. What am I to him that he should take such brotherly interest in my desolation? And how should he know that it is caused by my wife? My wife! What wife? I have no wife: scarcely so much of one as Othello had when he had slain the gentle Desdemona." And in saying these words, his lordship rolled his head over towards the back of the sofa, and covering his face with his handkerchief lay seemingly asleep.

CHAPTER XVIII

An Accident.

THE Earl of Sandycroft was an only child. In his fifth year he had succeeded to the family honours and estates. The countess, his mother, was one of those respectable ladies who, at their exit from the stage of life, are declared in the obituary of the newspapers to have been of the nature of pearls and precious stones—ornaments to their sex. Her husband bequeathed to her the principal direction of his son's education. The young lord was the last of his immediate line; and, in the event of dying without issue, the estates and titles devolved on the remote descendant of some collateral ancestor. The dowager felt it no less her duty, on this account, to cultivate his affections for the domestic virtues (in order that he might be early induced to form a suitable matrimonial connection), than to provide all the proper and requisite means for the development of his talents and the formation of a character, which, she was persuaded, would reflect lustre on his country.

With this view, his education was entirely

domestic; but conducted by masters eminently qualified, till he reached his sixteenth year, when he was sent to college. The countess, at the same time, assiduously preserved an old intimacy with the Avonside family, the daughters of which promised to excel their mother, who had been one of the most celebrated beauties of her day, and whose many amiable qualities were far dearer in the recollection of her friends than the charms of her person or the graces of her manners. She died while her children were all young; but in the marquis, their father, it was thought they had a wise and excellent protector. Unfortunately, however, after her death, he devoted himself, as he said, entirely to public business, and left them in the hands of hired instructors, who were only anxious that they should be distinguished for the elegance of their external acquirements.

In the course of this intimacy, the countess had, in due time, the satisfaction to observe that Lady Augusta, the eldest, began to interest the youthful admiration of her son; and it soon became an understood thing among the respective friends of the two families that, when his lordship came of age, a marriage would, in all probability, take place.

We shall not dwell on intervening circumstances. Lord Sandyford, at college, was allowed to possess talents of a very high order. The most sanguine expectations were formed of him

by his acquaintance ; but some of them differed as to the department in which he was likely to excel. The ambitious, who judged of him by his occasional animation, predicted that he would exalt the political renown of his country ; but those who most esteemed the milder movements of his character cherished the hope that his genius would add to her more permanent glory in the quiet pursuits of a literary life. Both parties were equally disappointed.

Lady Augusta Spangle was in many respects the reflex of her accomplished lover. She was not only endowed with great beauty, but an education, conducted with admirable skill to bring out all the showy portions of her character in their fairest forms and liveliest colours, had adorned her with many elegances, almost as fascinating as that charming simplicity with which Nature delights to set at defiance the graceful endeavours of art. She was not witty, nor did she possess any of that sunniness of mind which beams out in the smiles of good-humour ; but her apothegms had often the force of wisdom, and, sometimes, the brilliancy as well as the barb of satire. It was impossible to see her without admiration ; but there was a systematical decorum in her deportment which diminished the delight that her singular beauty was naturally calculated to inspire. She had, in fact, been educated for the market of fashion ; and, deluded by the sordid maxims of Mrs Harridan, to whom the care of

her youth had been unfortunately entrusted, she believed that the main object in the life of a young woman of rank is to obtain an establishment becoming the dignity of her family. "Men," as that antiquated artificer of manners would often say to her pupils, "are all either mercenary or capricious; and the daughter of a duke, if she is not rich (and few of them are so), has no chance of marrying according to her condition unless she render herself interesting to the vanity of such noblemen as can afford to indulge their fancies in the choice of a wife." Lady Augusta gave credit to her precepts, and was their victim.

It might have been thought, considering how soon it had been determined that Lady Augusta was destined to be the bride of Lord Sandyford, that Mrs Harridan would have relaxed in her efforts to form an artificial character, which, if she had possessed any true judgment of the world, she must have perceived could not fail in the end to excite the aversion of the earl; but her system was to make neither homes happy nor wives amiable. She had an interest of her own to serve; and, actuated by the same mercenary motives as the music-masters whom she employed, was solicitous only about the effect which her pupils might produce on their appearance in society. The *éclat* of a splendid general deportment, she knew, would redound to her own advantage; and for this she neglected to cultivate those gentler graces which constitute the

true strength of female dominion. One thing, however, resulted from her system ; but, perhaps, it depended more on the effect of individual feeling than it was a necessary consequence of the plated virtues which she so assiduously polished. The desire to obtain approbation quickened the sense of shame, and gave it even a morbid acuteness. To this feeling Lady Augusta was nervously alive ; and where there is shame there may yet be virtue.

The day after Lord Sandyford came of age, the marriage was celebrated ; but before the honeymoon had half waned it was evident to the most cursory visitor that his lordship had imbibed some secret cause of distaste against his beautiful bride. By the end of the third month, to the amazement of all the world, he was wildly running the career of dissipation.

The dowager, his mother, was broken-hearted by this unexpected result, and her distress was consoled in the usual manner by a number of sympathising friends,—not all females—, who, in their malicious consolation, often remarked that after all, sooner or later, men will indemnify themselves for the restraints laid upon their youth, and that the good old way of letting young fellows sow their wild oats was evidently the best, as it was doubtless the result of practical wisdom and experience. “We therefore,” said these honourable personages, “do not despair yet of seeing Lord Sandyford pull up, and turn out a very shining

character. Nothing, however, was farther from the charity of their hopes; and several years passed away without anything arising to make them doubt that his ruin was irretrievable.

In the meantime, no apparent change had taken place in the elegant deportment of the countess. She was still radiant with beauty, and the splendour of her accomplishments was acknowledged through all the constellations of fashion. Her prudence, also, received its due share of commendation; for, notwithstanding the enigmatical career of her lord, she still preserved with him the conjugal decorum of living under the same roof. But, except on those occasions when it was necessary to exhibit the plate and hospitality of the family, they seldom met; still maintaining, however, towards the world that well-bred reciprocity of civility which justified their acquaintance in asking them to the same parties on the same card.

One night as her ladyship was returning home from the opera, her carriage, in crossing from Piccadilly into Berkeley Street, ran against a gentleman who happened to be passing at the moment, and seriously hurt him. The stranger was Mr Ferrers, one of the most eccentric orbs then above the horizon of fashion. This gentleman in his youth was ardent and generous, quick in his resentments, easily offended, and frank in his pardons; but there was a versatility of humour about him which prevented him from

making friends, and as he advanced in life the career which he ran tended to impair his best qualities. The succession of anxieties which he suffered from the turf and the hazard-table excited a false appetite for acute sensations, and all pleasures seemed to him vapid that were not flavoured with a mixture of apprehension, and even of danger. His losses sharpened his feelings, and his success was a spur to his infatuation. This distempered state of excitement had, at the period of which we are speaking, attained a degree of frenzy; and, although in manners the unhappy man conducted himself like the generality of the circle in which he moved, he was already touched with madness. His insanity, however, had not manifested itself in any instance of remarkable extravagance; but the currents of his mind and thoughts were troubled and impetuous, and frequently tempestuous gusts and whirlwinds of rage and passion urged him with a headlong rashness in his pursuits, whatever they happened to be. As often, however, as he attained possession of his object, the paroxysm immediately subsided, and he paused, as it were, and looked round, as if he stood wondering at what could have instigated him into such precipitation and violence.

During the period that he was confined to his room by the accident, Lady Sandford (with whom he had no previous acquaintance) frequently sent to inquire for him; and the effect of this

natural,—indeed, under the circumstances, indispensable—politeness, inspired him with a frenetic enthusiasm of gratitude towards her ladyship, insomuch that, when he was in a condition to mix again in society, he sought her out in all places with an impassioned zeal that belonged alike to his mental infirmity and his character. And he was so open and singular in this that he soon attracted the eyes of the world towards him. The countess was a neglected wife; but such had been the pride of her carriage that no man had ever ventured to address her with one improper expression, and such the sustained dignity of her deportment that no circumstance had yet occurred to require the slightest exertion of the latent powers of her own mind. She was, however, struck at last with the assiduities of Ferrers; and, having a distinct perception of the shattered state of his understanding, instead of repelling or rebuking his pertinacity, she stooped (if the term may be allowed) with a compassionate condescension, which, contrasted with her usual cool and collected demeanour, begot surmises prejudicial to her honour. These, for a time, were only to be met with, like rare coins that serve for counters, at the select whist-tables of the fates of reputation; but at last they got into general circulation among the small change of scandal at the club-houses.

CHAPTER XIX

A Paragraph.

ON the morning preceding one of Lady Sandysford's grand winter parties, as the earl was sitting alone in the library, after he had just finished his breakfast, and thrown himself back in his chair with his feet on the fender, nursing such aimless fancies as float in the haze of an imagination clouded by *ennui*, an incident occurred which precipitated the crisis of his conjugal disease. It was the custom of the servants in the hall to dry the wet newspapers with a smoothing-iron, which not only did the business expeditiously, but gave them the lustre of the hot-press. It was, also, as regularly their custom to inform themselves of what was going on in the world, before taking in the papers to their master and mistress. By this, a paragraph that pretty plainly accused the countess of infidelity was discovered. In order to preserve peace in the house, it was suggested by one of the footmen that it would be as well to burn it out, as if by accident, with the smoothing-iron. This was done, and the paper carried in to his lordship.

In this obliterating operation, however, a portion of the parliamentary proceedings was destroyed; and, little interest as the earl took in them, or indeed in any earthly concernment, he could not endure a disappointment. The bell, in consequence, was rung sharply, and another copy of the paper forthwith ordered. The tone in which this command was delivered alarmed the servant who received it, and he communicated his opinion to his companions that their master had certainly, notwithstanding their contrivance, made out some of the defaced paragraph, and that, therefore, it would be as good as their places were worth to equivocate any more in such circumstances; another paper was accordingly procured, and presented to his lordship.

There was an air of embarrassment in the appearance of the footman who carried it in which struck the keen eye of his master. He seemed to hesitate as he laid it on the table, and to linger in the room, insomuch that the earl ordered him to retire.

The interest which had been excited in reading the parliamentary debate had, during this little interruption, subsided. Instead of turning to it again, his lordship carelessly allowed his eyes to wander over the small-talk in the fashionable department, and the first paragraph that caught his attention was the one which alluded to the infidelities of Lady Sandyford.

He read it twice over emphatically; he rose from his seat and walked to the window; he then returned, and read it again. Happening to glance over the page, he saw that it was exactly on the back of the passage in the debate which had been burned out. "These rascals," he exclaimed, "are acquainted with the guilt of their mistress, and it was no accident that occasioned the burning of the other paper."

His first movement was to call in the servants and question them on the subject; but in the same moment he reflected on his own carelessness as a husband, and withdrew his hand as it was stretched towards the bell-pull,—mortified with himself that the sense of honour should make him hesitate to vindicate his conjugal rights. In this crisis the countess entered, and his lordship, rising abruptly, moved towards the door as if he had resolved not to speak to her; but, before turning the bolt, he paused and said with an agitated voice, pointing to the newspaper, "Your ladyship will find an interesting paragraph among the scandalous innuendos of the day;" and in saying these words, he hurried out of the room.

The countess hastily seized the newspaper, and on looking at the paragraph suffered an inexpressible feeling of humiliation: her pride was laid prostrate, and she sat for several minutes in a state of stupefaction, for she was conscious of never having been guilty of any levity, and

had taken no small merit to herself for the dignity with which she had endured, at first the spleen, and subsequently the negligence, of her lord. In the course, however, of a few minutes, she recovered her self-possession, and, ringing the bell, directed cards to be instantly issued to inform her friends that her assembly for that night was deferred. With equal decision she at the same time ordered the carriage and drove to Mrs Harridan's, for the purpose of taking her advice.

On reaching the residence of that lady, she was at once admitted by the servants; but on entering the room where their mistress was sitting she perceived, by the cool ceremony of her reception, that Mrs Harridan was already acquainted with the fatal paragraph. A short preface, in consequence, served to introduce the object of her visit.

"I hope," said Mrs Harridan, calmly, "that there is no real foundation for this slander; but, at all events, my dear Lady Sandyford, it is not an affair in which I can with any propriety interfere. Besides, now that things are so public, it would be highly improper in me, considering my situation, with so many young ladies of rank under my care, to be at all seen in the business. Surely you have other friends, more experienced in such sort of misfortunes, to whom you can apply with more advantage."

The countess looked at her with surprise and

indignation, exclaiming, "You speak as if I were guilty! You throw me from you as if I brought infection with me!"

"Far be it from me," said Mrs Harridan, in the same quiet polite tone, "to suppose any such thing; but I am much too insignificant a person to take the reputation of the Countess of Sandysford under my protection."

"I thought," cried her ladyship, almost bursting into tears, "that I might, in any distress, have applied to you as to a mother."

"I trust," replied Mrs Harridan, "that when your ladyship was under my charge, you always found me such, and your conduct then was certainly irreproachable: but I cannot be responsible for the behaviour of ladies after they have entered the world. In a word, should the result of this unfortunate business prove prejudicial to your ladyship, it will not be the first instance of the kind that has confirmed me in the prudence of a rule I have long laid down,—Never to interfere in the concerns of my pupils after they have once left my house. I shall rejoice if your ladyship is acquitted of the imputation; but I cannot put to hazard the character of my establishment, and it is, therefore, with profound pain that I feel myself constrained to put an end to our intercourse."

The countess was thunderstruck. She had never before been addressed in the plain language of a business mind, sordidly considering its own

interests, and pursuing them in contempt of all the sympathies and charities of social life. She rose from her seat ; but trembled so much that, unable to stand, she sank back in the chair, and gave way to her tears. Her spirits, however, soon rallied, and wiping her eyes, she returned abruptly to her carriage and drove directly home, where she despatched a messenger for the Marquis of Avonside, her father.

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CHAPTER XX

An Explanation.

THE earl, on leaving the countess, walked into the square, with the intention of going down to St James's Street; but for the first time in his life he felt that indescribable embarrassment which is so often mistaken for shame. He shrank at the idea of meeting the eyes of his acquaintance, conscious that they must already have seen the paragraph, and could not determine how he ought to act in circumstances so painful and unexpected. In the hesitation which these reflections caused, he happened to recollect that Mordaunt, a college companion, whom he had not seen for several years, had left his card for him the day before, and he instantly resolved to go to his lodgings, and consult him on the subject. Accordingly, instead of walking down Bond Street, he crossed into Hanover Square, and, by the back of St George's Church, went through the narrow passage leading into Saville Row, thus avoiding the great thoroughfares in his way to Sackville Street, where his friend lodged.

On reaching the house, and being informed that he was at home, he walked upstairs, unannounced, to the first floor. His appearance would have been a sufficient warranty for this liberty to the servant who opened the door, even had his person not been almost universally known throughout the three fashionable parishes, and especially in the vicinity of St James's Street. For, notwithstanding the dexterity and effect of dress and address in the adventurous knights of the order of expedients, there is still an habitual and obvious source of superiority about the unquestioned gentleman which all the various degrees of public servants intuitively recognise, and none more quickly than the landladies and domestics of lodging-houses, even though the stranger should be fresh from the country, and in the newest gloss of a suit made on purpose for the journey to London by some worshipful dignitary in the corporation of the borough nearest his estate.

His lordship, on reaching the landing-place, flung the drawing-room door carelessly open. Mordaunt at the moment was writing, and, being disturbed by the nonchalance of this intrusion, raised his eyes hastily, and did not at the first glance recognise, in the pale attenuated elegance of the man of fashion, the once vigorous and handsome rival of his boldest exercises. In an instant, however, he discovered who he was, and, starting from his seat, took the earl warmly by the hands. His lordship endured

the heartiness of the double shake for a few seconds with evident pleasure; but, ashamed to show the sensibility that he felt, he abruptly pulled his hands away, and shook his fingers as if they were tingling with the squeeze, saying, "I wish the gods had given you dryads' and fauns' hoofs for hands; you have positively bruised my fingers to jelly."

The manner in which this was said had a cadence of affectation in it which struck disagreeably on the ear of Mordaunt, and he looked for a moment at the delicate complexion and elegant emaciation of his friend with a strong feeling of disappointment and compassion; but his kinder disposition turned upon him, and he exclaimed, "Heavens! Sandyford, what an altered being!" His lordship, with a drolling coolness, in the same moment examined Mordaunt curiously from head to foot, and with burlesque gravity said, "These muscles are the growth of nocturnal rest; that hue is gathered from the morning sun, and that strength from many a stubble-field and mile of hill and dale. Upon my honour, Mordaunt, you are the most perfect personification of the blessings of a country life I have ever seen—absolutely a rural allegory—Apollo fresh from the flocks of Peneus." He then paused in his raillery, and taking Mordaunt, with the sincerity of their old friendship, by the hand, added, "I cannot express how delighted I am to see you, and to see you thus."

"And you thus, Sandyford," replied Mordaunt, recollecting the bright expectations which had once been cherished of his friend.

"Indeed I am not surprised that you should be somewhat disconcerted, for I believe that I'm a little spectrish; and it is certain that I have been long thought no more," said his lordship.

There was a degree of sensibility in the manner in which the latter part of this sentence was expressed that vibrated to the generous heart of Mordaunt, and, without answering, he drew the earl to a seat, and resumed his own chair at the table.

"But," said his lordship, gaily, "these things must not be thought of in these ways. What may the business be that has brought you to town, from the peaceful shades and the innocence of the groves?"

Mordaunt, equally desirous to change the conversation, which he saw troubled his lordship, said, "Matrimony."

"You are indeed a bold fellow to venture on a town-bred wife," cried the earl; "I really thought that the simple race of the swains had been extinct; particularly, as the poets have of late given them up, almost even in the way of rhyme. But you surprise me. Who is the Chloe that with ears more used to the sound of bells and the rattling of wheels than to the singing of birds or of falling waters has captivated the gentle Damon?"

"Matters are not quite so pastoral with us as

that," replied Mordaunt. "The nymph is an old acquaintance of your own, Julia Beauchamp."

"The beautiful Julia!" exclaimed his lordship with unaffected emotion, recollecting that he had not seen her since his own ill-fated marriage; but he suppressed the remembrance, and said, with animation, "The faithful loves then do still reside among the sylvan bowers." But this play of fancy memory again interrupted, and presented the image of Lady Sandyford in that glowing beauty which had first charmed his youthful affections when he beheld her in the graces of her virgin years, bounding like the fawn amidst the stately groves that surround the venerable magnificence of her ancestral home, contrasted with the condition into which she had fallen; and he suddenly paused, and remained some time silent.

"You are indisposed, Sandyford—what is the matter?" said Mordaunt anxiously.

"I am only thinking," replied his lordship, "that there cannot be a fitter moment for communicating some notion of the comforts of matrimony than when a man is on the verge of the precipice. Pshaw!—I must speak out. You are here, Mordaunt, at that moment of all my life in which I stand most in need of a friend—a friend such as you are. Have you heard anything about Lady Sandyford?"

"My lord!" cried Mordaunt, in extreme astonishment.

"The lapse of the countess," continued his lordship, "affects me little; but, according to the maxims of that old rascal, the world, the business has become so public that I must interfere. Nothing is bad in London so long as it is unknown, and this affair is so notorious that it is very bad—oh, shockingly bad! But do not listen to me with such a look of strange wonder: astonishment is now quite obsolete; nobody submits to do anything so simple. Do assume a virtue, though you have it not, or I, too, shall forget myself. In a word, Mordaunt, I had not been long married when I discovered that Lady Sandyford was deficient in the most essential quality of a wife—the heart."

"Who is the seducer?" said Mordaunt, emphatically.

"Pray, don't be so tragical: I beg you won't," cried the earl, to disguise his own emotion. "You consider this affair too sentimentally. Believe me, I have been long indifferent about the woman. I wish but for a good reason to be well rid of her society—my respect for her family, as I shall of course say to the world; but, to deal more plainly with you, my own conduct will not allow me to do more. Besides, the disgrace of a public exposure would break the proud heart of her father, nor can I make money by the dishonour of my wife."

His lordship then proceeded to tell his friend that, soon after his marriage, he discovered that

the whole mind of Lady Sandyford was bent on the figure which she herself would make in society, by which she had disgusted his feelings and embittered his existence; that, giving way to the poignancy of disappointment, he had rushed into the follies of the town, which, however, instead of alleviating the irksomeness of his condition, only exasperated his reflections, and drove him, with redoubled frenzy, into a fresh career of dissipation, during which the countess pursued her own triumphant self-exhibition, and reached the summit of her ambitious vanity.

"I thought," said his lordship, "that pride, if not virtue, would, however, have preserved her; but she has fallen, and, as in all similar cases, the husband is among the last that hears the news."

He then related the incident of the burned newspaper, and the paragraph.

Mordaunt agreed that from so public a circumstance there must be some grounds for the suspicion, and recommended that the servants should be examined.

"But," said the earl, "even were she guilty, I do not mean to institute any process for a divorce. Your head, however, is cooler than mine; I will be guided by you."

"Ah, my lord!" cried Mordaunt, "do not say to me that you can regard with indifference the misfortunes, far less the dishonour, of a beautiful woman to whom you were at one time so passionately attached."

After some further conversation, it was arranged that Mordaunt should immediately go to Lady Sandyford, and that the earl should, in the meantime, remain in Sackville Street, and wait the result of the interview.

While Mordaunt was absent on this interesting mission, his lordship sat for some time reviewing, with no favourable construction to himself, the rapid perdition of so many years of the best portion of his life. In the course of this reckoning, he blamed himself still more than in the morning for the precipitancy with which he had, in a temporary fit of spleen, endeavoured to cancel the affection which he had cherished for his lady, and the folly of casting himself so thoroughly away, on account of a disappointment which it would have been more manly to have mastered. "But," said he, "it is never too late to mend, and the sooner I begin the change the better."

In the same moment he seated himself at Mordaunt's table, and wrote a note to Mr Vellum, requesting him to bring, on the following morning, a statement of his affairs. This was requisite in order to enable him to regulate his generosity with respect to a settlement on the countess; and it was also required with a view to his own future conduct, for he was well aware that he had deeply encumbered his estates, and that, before he could enter upon a new course of life, it would be necessary to abridge the prodigality

of his household. The writing of this note to his solicitor was, perhaps, the only decisive step he had taken for a number of years, and he felt, when it was done, something analogous to that glow of satisfaction enjoyed by the strong or the bold after a successful exertion of strength and dexterity.

CHAPTER XXI

An Event.

WHEN the countess, after her return from Mrs Harridan, had sent for the marquis her father, our hero had occasion to call at Sandyford House from Mr Vellum. Her ladyship having inadvertently given no orders to be denied, he was shown into the room where she happened to be then sitting. A visit from Andrew was little in accordance with the state of her feelings; but she received him as usual. He soon, however, discovered that something was the matter, and said, "I'm thinking, my leddy, it's no vera convenient for me to be here, so I'll just go awa' at ance—but I hope my lord's weel, and that it's no onything anent him that's fashing your ladyship."

The publicity of a newspaper paragraph, and the familiarity with which Andrew was treated, removed any delicacy that might otherwise have been felt by the countess on the subject; and she replied, "No; stop where you are," and she then explained the cause of her anxiety.

"Really, I dinna wonder ye're vext," said our

hero; "but everybody kens the newspapers live by the clecking o' lees,¹ and I think, before you or my lord gie them either credit or consequence, it would be as weel to sift the truth o't. I'm, as ye ken, my leddy, but a novice; howsomever, aiblins I may be o' spark o' use in this: so I'll get at the bottom o' the clash,² an it be for nae mair than to show my gratitude for the great ceevilities that I am beholden for, to baith your leddyship and my lord;" and he instantly rose to go away, saying jocularly, "Keep a good heart, my leddy. A foul lie is no so durable as pock-mark: it can be dighted off."³

"True; but the stain it leaves behind," said her ladyship, with a sigh.

"A snuff o' tobacco about stains; your leddyship's character's no a gauze gown or a worm web to be spoilt with a spittle, or any other foul thing out of the mouth of man." And in saying these words he took his leave with that customary bob of the head which served all the purposes of a graceful bow.

The moment that the countess mentioned the paragraph, he had recollected that there was in one of the newspaper offices a young man of the name of Nettle, of whom he had some slight acquaintance; and it occurred to him that by his means he might be able to reach the author of the slander. This Nettle had been

¹ *Clecking o' lees.* Hatching of lies.

² *Clash.* Gossip.

³ *Dighted off.* Wiped off.

educated with a view to the pulpit; but his disposition being loose and satirical, his father sent him to study the law under John Gledde. At the end of his apprenticeship, Nettle, according to the practice of the profession, went to Edinburgh, to complete his studies in the office of a Writer to the Signet,¹ where he mingled with the swarm of minor wits that infest the Parliament House, and, being naturally clever, acquired a taste for polite literature, and sharpened his talent for satire. He possessed an amusing and lively fancy: indeed, so lively that it proved prejudicial to himself; for while it rendered his company exceedingly diverting it made him dislike his business, and in the end threw him upon the streets of London, a mere literary adventurer. In this state he fortunately obtained employment as a reporter; and at the time when our hero came to London he was not only in considerable reputation as such, but was also a general contributor to most of the metropolitan periodical works, particularly the reviews, in which the pungency of his wit was more remarkable than the soundness of his judgment. Our hero had brought an introductory letter to him from their old master; but he soon saw that the habits and disposition of Nettle were not congenial to that sober system of perseverance which he had laid down for the government of his own conduct.

¹ *Writer to the Signet.* Note D.

On quitting Sandyford House, Andrew went directly to the office where Nettle was employed, and it happened to be that of the very paper in which the mischievous paragraph appeared. In fact, the paragraph had been penned by Nettle himself, who, having accidentally heard something of the rumours in circulation respecting Lord and Lady Sandyford, formed in his own imagination a complete and plausible conception of the whole intrigue in which it is supposed her ladyship had been engaged; and when, from the ordinary channel, he received an account of the preparations for her party, he was in consequence tempted to write the paragraph, in order to anticipate a *dénouement*, which, according to his notions, would necessarily take place soon, perhaps in the course of that evening.

Andrew had some difficulty in gaining access to Nettle, nor was he admitted until he had sent notice that he wished very earnestly and particularly to see him, "on business of the uttermost importance."

"Well, and what's this business of the uttermost importance that you have got with me?" said Nettle, laughingly.

"It's a thing wherein your helping hand, Mr Nettle, can be o' a great sufficiency," replied Andrew, sedately. "My master, Mr Vellum, has one Lord Sandyford for a client, and something has been put out in the papers this morning con-

cerning his leddy, the whilk is like to breed a terrible stramash." ¹

Nettle was instantaneously smitten with the horrors of a prosecution for a libel, and the satirical mirthfulness with which he had received Andrew was turned into anxiety.

"Indeed!" he exclaimed. "What is it? What has it been about? In what paper has it appeared?"

"I can tell you naething o' a' that," said Andrew; "but I would gie a plack and a bawbee ² to ken the author. Noo, Mr Nettle, as ye're acquaint wi' a' the jookery-cookery of news-making, I thought that aiblins ye're in a capacity to throw some light on the subject."

Nettle was alarmed and disconcerted. It was of no less importance to him that the object of our hero's visit should be concealed from his own principals than that the author should remain unknown to the offended parties.

"But are you sure, Mr Wylie," said he, "that the paragraph alluded to applies to Lady Sandford?"

"It surely does that," replied Andrew, "or it wouldna hae been so kenspeckle." ³

Nettle requested Andrew to wait till he could find the paper, to look at it, but in reality to gain a few minutes for consideration.

¹ *Stramash*. Disturbance.

² *A plack and a bawbee*. See page 64.

³ *Kenspeckle*. Easy to recognise.

"The paragraph is, I see, in our paper," said Nettle, returning with the paper in his hand: "but it does not apply to Lady Sandyford. It can only have been supposed to allude to her ladyship by having followed the account of the preparations for her assembly."

Andrew, on looking at it, saw that this explanation was feasible; indeed that, without the context, it was a very harmless pasquinade; and he observed, "But it's been an awfu' mistake, Mr Nettle. Is there no a possibility of an explanation?"

"Oh yes!" cried Nettle gaily, relieved from his apprehensions by perceiving the harmless nature of the paragraph when considered by itself; and aware that, if the matter should ever come to any legal issue, it would be in his power to plead the advertisemental account of the preparations, by producing the original paper from which it was taken, and arguing that the paragraph was a separate and distinct communication. "Oh yes!" he replied, "it is easy to remove entirely the impression produced by this mistake; but, Andrew, ye should know that folks in London cannot afford their time for nothing, and that characters, like other things, when they are bought must be paid for."

"Very true, Mr Nettle," said our hero dryly; "and when they are stown, the thief maun not only make restitution, but may be made to suffer punishment."

Nettle looked at Andrew, incredulous to his own ears, not having previously conceived him possessed of any such acuteness; and his newly recovered self-possession was completely upset when Wylie added, "I fear and doobt, Mr Nettle, that ye ken mair about this than ye let on; and I would counsel you, as a frien', to put your shoulder to the wheel and get out o' the mire and on your way rejoicing wi' a' the speed ye dow.¹ For if there's to be ony compounding about this black job it will hae to come frae your side:—but I say naething. My betters will judge for themselves. If you hae brewed gude yill, ye'll drink the better. A lie's a lie onyhoo, Mr Nettle, and a ledgy o' quality's name is no to be blotted wi' newspapers' ink wi' impunity; so ye'll just comport yoursel', Mr Nettle, as ye think right."

The reporter, finding he had not the simpleton to deal with that he had supposed,—for his first idea was that the countess might be willing to pay handsomely for an effectual contradiction of the slander,—he changed his tune, and said, "You have misunderstood me, Mr Wylie: all I meant was that before this unfortunate mistake gets into the other papers I could by my influence stop it; but, as it must be at some expense to them, and loss of time to me, I trust it will be considered."

"Considered?" cried our hero, indignantly.

¹ *To dow.* To be able.

"A flail to the laitheron's hurdies.¹ Mr Nettle, I suspect and believe that your han's no clear o' the coom² o' this wark. Get it wash't—get it wash't; or it may be dried wi' a hempen towel."

And so saying, he left the office, where the astonished Nettle, who had not deemed him many degrees above idiocy, stood enchained to the spot. No time, however, was to be lost. In the course of the briefest space possible Nettle was round to all the other offices, and got not only the scandal strangled, but even paragraphs inserted which had the effect of turning the suspicion so pointed against Lady Sandyford entirely in another direction. But to her, however, the mischief was done.

The business on which Andrew had been sent to Sandyford House was not of any very pressing importance, and he was sensible that he had already greatly exceeded his time; but, confident that the service in which he was engaged would excuse a much greater trespass, instead of going from the newspaper-office to Mr Vellum's chambers, he went directly back to Sandyford House, and reached the door at the same time with Mordaunt, who, slightly glancing at his insignificant appearance, regarded him as some tradesman's messenger, and was not a little surprised when he was ushered, along with himself, into the library. The countess was upstairs with her father.

¹ *Laitheron's hurdies.* Worthless creature's loins.

² *Coom.* Dust; dirt.

"You belong to the family, I presume?" said the country gentleman, with an accent of interrogation.

"I canna just say that," was Andrew's answer; "but I'm concerned for them."

Mordaunt knew not what to think of his companion, and looked at him for a moment with an expression of the most ineffable scorn; but the oddity of Andrew's appearance almost instantly reversed his feelings.

While they were thus conversing, the Marquis of Avonside's carriage, which had driven round the square, drew up at the door, and immediately after his lordship handed the countess in, and, taking his place beside her, was instantly conveyed home. The servants in the hall were at no loss to guess the motives and complexion of this proceeding; and one of the footmen, as soon as the carriage had left the house, informed Mordaunt of what had taken place. Andrew, on hearing this news, recollected the old proverb, No good was ever got by meddling between man and wife; and prudently resolved to escape immediately from the scene of action.

"Will ye, sir," said he to Mordaunt, "be pleased to tell my lord, that Andrew Wylie was at the newspaper-office, and found out there that the whole tot of the story about my leddy's fox-paw is just the clishmaclaver of a misleart¹

¹ *Clishmaclaver of a misleart reporter.* 'Tittle-tattle of a mischievous reporter.

reporter, and he needna fash himsel' any mair about it."

"May I ask, sir," said Mordaunt, supposing that Andrew belonged to some of the newspapers, which at that time were chiefly in the hands of Scotchmen, "with what paper you are connected?"

"Me connectit with a newspaper! Na, na, sir; I'm of an honest trade: I'm learning to be a writer wi' Mr Vellum, a very respectable solicitor in Lincoln's Inn. Only I hae been doing a bit job between han's for my leddy."

Mordaunt was still more at a loss than ever to comprehend the office and character of our hero, and would have entered into a conversation with him more particularly relative to the newspaper; but Andrew was apprehensive that he had already gone too far with a stranger,—although, by the manner in which Mordaunt conducted himself towards the servants, he perceived that he considered himself on terms of intimacy with their master. Under this impression, therefore, he moved hastily to the door without replying to a question concerning the paragraph; and, with a curious and significant look as he turned the bolt, said, "I wish you a vera gude morning."

CHAPTER XXII

Negotiation.

WHEN the earl was informed by Mordaunt that the countess had left Sandyford House with her father, he immediately returned home, accompanied by his friend. Soon after this Sir Charles Runnington called ; and, on being shown into the library, where they were still standing, he made a low and very formal bow to the earl, and then stated that he was commissioned by his noble friend, the Marquis of Avonside, to inquire what his lordship had to allege against the conduct of Lady Sandyford.

The earl, as well as Mordaunt, was puzzled by the narrow and almost technical ground which the marquis had taken ; but his lordship replied, "The countess herself best knows for what reason she has quitted her home."

"Upon that point," said Sir Charles Runnington, "I have no instructions."

"Then," cried the earl, sharply, "the only answer I can return is, Let her ladyship say what she wishes me to do, and it shall be instantly done."

"If I understood Lord Avonside clearly," answered Sir Charles, "he is averse to any formal separation; and the countess is not in a condition at present to come to any determination."

"Everything rests with herself," said Lord Sandyford with emotion. "I have nothing to desire but that she may find more happiness elsewhere than I fear she has done with me. I cannot at this moment say what it is in my power to allow her for a separate establishment; but to-morrow I shall. Assure her that——" He could say no more, but bowed to Sir Charles and left the room.

"This is a most unfortunate affair," said Mordaunt.

"But not unexpected, I understand," replied Sir Charles. "Her ladyship's family have long been aware of her situation."

"Indeed!" cried Mordaunt; "and how is it that Sandyford was never informed? Who is the paramour?"

"Paramour!" exclaimed Sir Charles, with indignation. "This is adding cruelty and insult to the wrongs which she has already suffered. Lord Sandyford knows that there is no guilt on her part; she has long been the victim of his negligence, and her reputation is blasted by the consequences."

"This is dreadful!" cried Mordaunt. "Do you mean to say that, although the levity of her conduct has been so notorious as to become the

game of a newspaper pasquinade, her husband is entirely to blame?"

"Sir," replied Sir Charles, formally, "I did not come from my noble friend, her father, to enter into any controversy on the subject. The earl agrees to a separation; and, from his known character, I doubt not the arrangement will be completed in a satisfactory manner. I must confess, however, that I have been surprised at his emotion; he seemed much more affected than I could previously have imagined."

"The character of my friend is, I find, not well known," said Mordaunt. "But I hope the separation will not be final."

"After what has taken place, and the experience they have had of each other, it is the best thing that can now happen," replied Sir Charles. "But his lordship will no doubt feel that it is due to his own honour to investigate the newspaper calumny, and to bear testimony to his conviction of his injured lady's innocence."

"Is there no chance of our being able to effect a reconciliation if she is innocent?"

"I will take no part in any proceeding having that for its object," said Sir Charles. "My noble friend the marquis assures me that Lady Sandford is one of the worst-used wives in the world. I rely on his lordship's honour and integrity for the truth of the statement; and with that impression I should deem myself base, indeed, were

I to recommend anything so derogatory as the measure you suggest."

Sir Charles then left the room, and Mordaunt went to the earl in his own apartment.

Sir Charles Runnington was a political adherent of the Marquis of Avonside; and had been employed in several diplomatic missions, in which, it was said, he showed great self-command, and upheld the dignity of his sovereign with all propriety: but none of his missions ever were successful. The parliamentary adversaries of the marquis said that this was owing to his inability to understand the spirit of his instructions; but it could never be shown that in any one instance he did not adhere with a most surprising constancy to the letter. Besides this political connection, he *was* related to the countess by her mother; on which account the *marquis* had requested his interference. But although *no man* could well be really less qualified to manage *any* affair of delicacy to a favourable and conciliatory issue, Sir Charles possessed many external attributes which may be termed the minting of a gentleman—the marks which designate the coin, but convey no idea of the intrinsic value and purity of the metal. He was grave and fair-spoken, precise in his language, erect in his carriage, neat in his dress, and his hair always powdered and arranged exactly in the same manner as he wore it when first introduced at court.

On returning to the marquis, he gave his lordship a very circumstantial account of what had taken place with the earl, and also of what had passed with Mordaunt. Although this report was the precise truth as far as it went, yet it conveyed no idea of the manner in which his lordship had been affected; and even what was said suffered in the repetition by the cold medium through which it was conveyed.

The marquis was, in some points of character, not unlike Sir Charles; but he was older, and what was precision in the one, approaching to pedantry, was sedate pomposity in the other. The accident of happening in the outset of life to be successful in the management of some of those trifling parliamentary matters that the ministers of the day are in the practice of assigning to the hereditary supporters of government, he was taken with the conceit of being a statesman. In the deliberations of the senate he always took a part, and talked long, and said as little to the purpose as any other speaker on either side of the House. But, notwithstanding the prosing inefficacy of his public conduct, he was upon the whole what is called a steady character,—uniformly voting with every successive batch of ministers, and never asking more than a reasonable share of official patronage. In private life he was punctual and honourable; and, although he never said a witty thing nor understood a wise one, he possessed many

of the most respectable traits in the domestic character of an English nobleman. It is needless to add, however, that he was nevertheless not at all fitted to act the prudentest part in the peculiarities of his daughter's situation.

He communicated to the countess a faithful account of what had passed ; but his narrative was still more deficient in conveying a true impression of what had taken place than even that of Sir Charles : insomuch that her ladyship's humiliation was greatly augmented to find that her husband was seemingly (as it appeared to her) so glad to be rid of her on her own terms. She said nothing, however, but requested to be left alone ; and the moment that her father had retired, she gave vent to her feelings in long-continued weeping. This greatly relieved her mind, and she was able afterwards to reflect calmly on her situation. She recalled to mind some of those inadvertent sarcasms in which the earl first manifested his dislike of her passion for what he called self-exhibition, and of the artificial equality of her manners, which he sometimes peevishly derided as hypocrisy ; and she was sensible that there must have been some error in her system, since it had failed to interest, or, rather, since it had served to disgust, the only man whom she really cared to please. The behaviour of Mrs Harridan, too, had taught her an important lesson. In the course of their short interview that morning, the sordid-



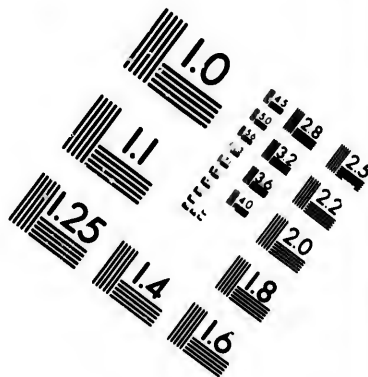
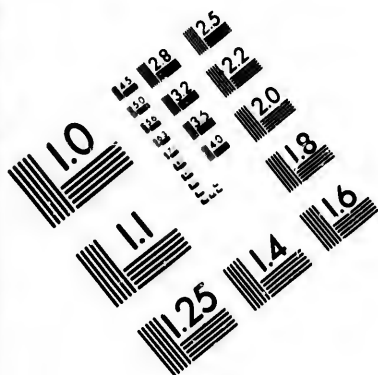
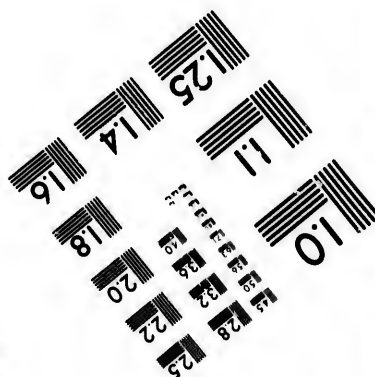
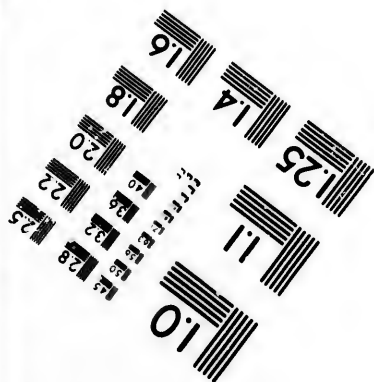
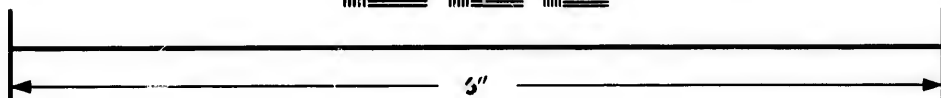
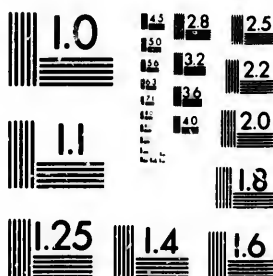


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ness of her art had been so plainly disclosed that it necessarily produced a deep and a resentful impression. Lady Sandylford could not disguise to herself the practical illustration that it afforded of those maxims which she had been instructed to respect as the essential principles of fashionable life,—as if there were anything in fashion that could be at variance with the ties and charms which constitute the cement of society.

The conflict of these reflections had an immediate effect on her ladyship's mind; and from that hour she resolved to act another part, more agreeable to her own original nature and character. The rock was indeed now struck; and the stream that was to spread freshness in the desert of her wedded life began to flow.

Her first inclination was to return home to her husband immediately, and express to him frankly what she thought and suffered; but this a false pride prevented her from doing, even while she confessed to herself that she had been too rashly induced by her father to abandon the conjugal roof.

The marquis was obliged, or, rather, so felt himself, to attend the House of Lords that evening: he was indeed anxious to take a part in the debate, chiefly to show how lightly he considered the derogatory predicament in which his daughter had been placed. Sir Charles Runnington was at the same time instructed by his lordship to go

round the club-houses in St James's Street, in order to inform the most distinguished male gossips of those fraternities, that the separation of the Earl and Countess of Sandlyford, so far from being occasioned by any imputed guilt on the part of her ladyship, was sought by herself, and advised and sanctioned by her father.

When the marquis returned in the evening, he found the countess alone in the drawing-room, comparatively at her ease, and attended by Flounce, her own maid. As he had made what he deemed an able speech (although it contained neither fact nor argument to illustrate the expediency of the measure he endeavoured to advocate), he was on excellent terms with himself, and complimented the countess on the fortitude with which she sustained herself. But instead of replying to him in the same strain of good-humour, she briefly told him that she was arranging with Flounce to quit London next morning; and that it was her intention to go at once to Elderbower, the seat of the dowager Lady Sandlyford, her mother-in-law.

"Is your ladyship of a sound mind in this determination?" exclaimed the marquis, in his oratorical manner. "Do you not expose yourself to a most unwelcome reception? Reception, did I say?—It may be a repulse."

"No matter," replied the countess, in a calm, firm voice, "I will make the attempt. If I stay here, or if I go to any of my own relations, I lend

colouring to the slanders in circulation against me ; but if I take up my abode with the mother of my husband,—and I am sure she will receive me kindly,—the malice of the world will be rebuked and silenced.”

The countess perceived that her father was not satisfied with the resolution she had taken ; but as it was the most expedient, indeed the best, which at the moment she could adopt, this gave her no pain, and she soon after wished him good-night.

CHAPTER XXIII

Perplexities.

DURING the remainder of the day after the countess left Sandyford House, the earl continued uneasy, irritable, and thoughtful. Mordaunt dined with him, and in the evening he began to rally a little; but in the midst of his jocularities, (for naturally he was disposed to indulge his fancy in a humorous play upon the passing topics of the moment), he would suddenly fall into fits of abstraction, from which he as suddenly recovered himself, as if awakening from a trance of which he had been unconscious. His friend saw his mental struggle, and exerted himself in every possible manner to draw him from the pressure of his unhappy thoughts; but all his efforts proved unavailing, and at last he said, "Sandyford, this will not do: you cannot, I perceive plainly, meet this event with that indifference which you have affected, and are so strangely ambitious as to endeavour still to maintain, even before me."

"I confess it," replied his lordship; "and I should have borne it even more weakly had

Augusta been really guilty. But how can I invite a reunion, when that old mandarin, Sir Charles Runnington, declares my own behaviour has been such that her friends, as well as herself, are desirous of the separation? Now, if I had thought she cared half the value of an odd trick for me, or even could but have cared, I would have been a very different sort of a husband. However, the Rubicon is passed; but one thing at least I may still try, and that is to prove that I am not altogether the irreclaimable Don Juan which the world so charitably supposes."

The manner in which this was said, though generally in a tone of freedom and gaiety, had yet an accent of sadness that moved the compassion of Mordaunt; and he contemplated the endeavoured cheerfulness of his friend, as he would have looked upon a sleeping infant covered with a lace veil,—a sight which, notwithstanding the health, the smile, and the bloom that shines through, often suggests melancholy associations to the affectionate heart.

"I think, Sandyford, you would feel yourself better were you to be more communicative," said Mordaunt. "There can be nothing in your situation that a friend may not know."

"True," replied the earl; "but a man seldom chooses his friend to be the confidant of his sins. I have been worse, perhaps, than you imagine, though I believe not quite so bad as the world has represented me. But I have done enough of

ill to know that the task I undertake is, not only to make a character, but to recover one. However, let us bid adieu to the gloomy pile of my concerns for the present, and tell me, Mordaunt, something of your own—the affair with Miss Beauchamp. When is the wedding to be?"

"Why, to say the truth, my lord," replied Mordaunt, laughingly, "although it is a settled point between us, there is yet a great impediment to be overcome. The baronet, her father, it seems, many years ago, when Julia was but a child, made a compact with his neighbour, the late Mr Birchland, that she should be married to Jack Birchland, then quite a boy; and if Birchland will take her, he swears nobody else shall have her."

"Ah, me! for aught that ever I could learn, the course of true love never did run smooth," cried his lordship;—"and Birchland will be a cursed fool if he don't, begging your pardon."

"Ay, but there are two words to a bargain: Julia has something herself to say in the business," replied Mordaunt.

"Then Birchland is really inclined to stand by the compact?" said the earl.

"I'm half afraid he is; and (what is more) Julia herself has some suspicion of the same sort."

"Now, I understand the whole affair," exclaimed the earl, laughing and interrupting him: "you are come to London to meet her, and a stolen match is in contemplation."

"You are mistaken," said Mordaunt, somewhat gravely. "Miss Beauchamp will not submit to anything so derogatory to herself; but it seems that her cousin, Letitia Irby, has taken a fancy for Birchland, and our immediate object is to make them man and wife, and by that means frustrate or defeat the pertinacious designs of Sir Thomas."

"There are no such ingenious nest-builders, after all, as you birds of the bowers," cried the earl, gaily; but, checking himself, added, "The plot is good—very good; but how is it to be brought to a bearing?"

"Julia has persuaded her father to come to town," said Mordaunt, "and Miss Irby is with them. They arrived this morning. Birchland is expected in the course of a few days."

"Were Birchland one of our town-bred sparrows, and not a chaffinch of the grove," replied the earl, "I should advise the pretty Letitia to coo for lovers amidst her native shades; but, as I doubt not he is as guileless as a blackbird, no harm may come of their billing even in a London cage. However, we shall see."

Mordaunt, during this sally, looked seriously at the earl, and said gravely, "Your mind, Sandyford, I am sorry to see, is accustomed to regard lightly some things which you were once in the habit of considering very differently. Birchland were a villain if he could take advantage of a fond girl's innocent affections."

His lordship blushed, and was for a moment out of countenance; but, recovering his usual familiarity, replied, "You John Bulls of the country serve up your morality in the husk; a man of pleasure among you cannot taste a kernel, without being supposed to have cracked the Decalogue. That same word villain, is a whoreson phrase—dowlas, filthy dowlas. But," he added, in a tone so deep and emphatic that it made the heart of Mordaunt vibrate in sympathetic anguish, "the word, however, suits the action, but, in using it, I suppose you forgot at the moment what my wife and her friends think of me."

Mordaunt for several seconds was unable to make any answer, and then he added, "Your whole life, Sandyford, has been a riddle. The town term of it has distressed all those who esteemed you, and who cherished expectations which you were once able to realise."

"I am still able," cried the earl, with a generous confidence in his own powers; "but the jade must go to grass. I intend, with all convenient speed, to settle my townly affairs, and then begin another course of being at Chastington Hall—an elysium, as my mother has often told me, where the manes of my ancestors (in the shape, I suppose, of old portraits) would scowl their brave encouragement on my emulous endeavours to revive the faded lustre of their blood. But to that, as to many other of the good old dowager's saws and sayings, I have been no better than the infidel. However,

I am resolved for a time to take up my abode at Chastington, and by the post to-day I sent orders to prepare for my reception. Were you not so engaged, I would ask you to go with me, for I believe it is a huge old Ann-Radcliffe place, a spectrey surrounded by a rookery, which at one time I was on the point of selling on account of its distance from town, and the red-haired bumpkins that came up from it occasionally to see London, and to keep their lord and lady in hot water, and their fellows in the hall in laughter, all the time they stayed."

Mordlaunt smiled at the latter reason for parting with the ancestral residence of all the Sandyfords.

"Upon my honour," said his lordship, "there is more truth in it than you think. You can have no conception how much we were plagued by the sons of the patriarchal fixtures of Chastington Hall coming here to learn the craft and mystery of footmanry; and the worst of it was that, after they were initiated in all the tricks of the trade, I was obliged to give them characters to my acquaintance, in the perfect conviction that any principle of honesty or sobriety, which they brought with them from the country, was entirely lost in this house. The possession of the place, indeed, made me feel as if I kept a roguery for the supply of the London market; and conscience, with a few secondary considerations arising from losses at play, urged me to part with it. But

nobody could be found rich enough, or foolish enough, to make the purchase."

"Surely you have never seen Chastington," said Mordaunt, shocked that his lordship should think with so much levity of parting with a domain and mansion which, for many ages, a long line of noble ancestors had successively delighted to enrich and adorn.

"Oh, never! A hundred and seventy miles from London, in a midland county: not even a market-town within half a score of leagues: only a village at the gate, with a single ale-house, where a cuckoo-clock chicks at one side of the chimney-place, and the curate, smoking his pipe in an antique elbow-chair, churms¹ at the other. Was it possible to vegetate with Lady Sandysford? At our marriage, indeed, I did intend to make it our principal residence; but a blight fell upon all my intentions of that period, and I never since could endure the idea of looking at Chastington, till the adventure of this morning reminded me of what my mother used to say about the presiding genii that inhabit there."

After some further general conversation relative to the earl's plans, Mordaunt rose to bid him good-night.

"Come to me to-morrow as early as you can," said his lordship, as he shook him by the hand at parting; "and in the meantime put as charitable a construction as possible on anything that may

¹ *Churms.* Hums.

have had a tendency to lower me in your esteem. I am not, my dear fellow, half so bad as I have long seemed; all that which others regarded as the inebriation of pleasure was to me the frenzy of a fever. My outward and my inner man were in afflicting opposition. The voluptuous draught that I was seen to swallow so greedily was but drunk as an opiate to allay the mental agony which I suffered. I felt as if the spring and fountain-head of all my motives and happiness were cut off, and the future rendered an arid and devouring desert. A worm was in the core of my heart, and a fire in my brain; and for three years my spirit was parched with inextinguishable despair. My dissipation was martyrdom; and yet I wore the mask of a joyous libertine so well that my hidden misery was never discovered. But the mask, Mordaunt, is now off, the crisis of my distemper is past; and, as the Faculty say, a change of scene, with country air and exercise, will perhaps complete the cure."

During this address, which his lordship delivered with considerable energy, while he still held his friend by the hand, Mordaunt was greatly moved; and at the conclusion, when the vehemence of the earl had subsided into a more familiar strain, he said—

"Sandyford, you ought to have told me what you were suffering. It was too much to put to hazard fame, fortune, and self-respect, without consulting any friend."

"It was," replied his lordship; "I am sensible it was; but if I could have been so prudent as to have taken the advice of any friend, I should not then have been so mad as to require it. There are states of the mind which friends should see are morbid, without being told. One of the worst symptoms of intellectual distemperature is the effort which the patient makes to conceal his malady. Could it have been for a moment imagined by my friends, had they thought seriously on the case, that I would at once forego all my early habits of emulation, the love of fame, and the desire of power, and tie myself to the chariot-wheels of hazard and sensuality, without a cause? No, Mordaunt: when you heard of my falling off, you ought to have come to me. It was not for you to stand aloof and see me perish; for, without vanity, I may now say, humiliated as I am by the sense of my fruitless talents and abortive life, that you at least knew my original worth."

The feelings of Mordaunt were overcome, and hastily bidding his lordship good-night he rushed from the room to conceal the emotion he was unable any longer to control. The heart of the earl was relieved by what had passed: the fine natural elasticity of his mind, which enabled him to pass with such felicitous ease from one topic to another, dilated out in the cheerful anticipation of being yet able to redeem some portion of the promise of his youth; and he retired to his bed-chamber in a more serene and temperate mood than he had

for several years enjoyed. The only anxiety he suffered was on account of his lady, and he sighed as he said, looking at her picture, which hung over the mantelpiece, "And so, Augusta, you also are gone. I thought but last night I could have better spared you. No matter, if you are happy. You have all the kindest wishes of a man that loved you too well."

CHAPTER XXIV

A Man of Business.

AT the time when the earl had requested Vellum to be with him in the morning, the solicitor, punctual to the hour, was at Sandyford House, with a hasty sketch of the state of his lordship's pecuniary concerns. He had heard something of what had happened; but the true circumstances were so different from the report that he could not help saying, "I presume there will be no proceedings."

"None in your way," replied the earl dryly, as he perused the statement; adding, "This looks better, Vellum, than I expected. Have you any account of my debts and mortgages?"

Vellum said, somewhat diffidently, that he had, and produced a paper. The earl, on looking it over, was surprised to observe that Vellum himself was by far the most considerable creditor. He took no notice of this circumstance, however. For the money which he had borrowed at different times he had paid an enormous rate of usury; but he had never any reason before to suspect that Vellum was the real lender, nor did he do so at this time. He only thought (what was indeed

the fact) that Vellum had afterwards bought up the securities.

While the earl was perusing the list, Vellum watched his eye anxiously, but could discover nothing of what was passing in his mind. On returning it to him, however, his lordship said, somewhat emphatically, "Vellum, this is a black account: we must use our best endeavours to bleach the complexion of some of these ill-favoured items."

The solicitor felt the full force and weight of this remark, and said at once, "I am aware, my lord, that some parts of it are not perhaps exactly what your lordship expected to see: I allude to my own claims. But the truth of the case is simply this: Had I not redeemed the bonds which constitute my claim, some other would; and I do not think that any person into whose possession they might have come would have been more delicate than myself. I might, certainly, as your lordship's professional agent, have resisted the debt altogether; and, in that manner, the obligation to pay them might have been got rid of. But your lordship would never suffer me to establish a legal right at the expense of a moral wrong. I might also, my lord—for such things are not uncommon—have exhibited the claim under different names, by which my interest in the business would have been dissimulated; but I am incapable of submitting to practise any such equivocation."

"I am perfectly satisfied, Vellum, with your integrity as a man of business," replied his lordship; "and the candour of your declaration confirms me in the justice that I have uniformly, in my own mind, done to you as such. My confidence in you is none abated, and I do not consider the profit which you may have gained by these dealings as procured at my expense; but, doubtless, the only reason which induced you not to tell me that I might have occasionally redeemed the pound of flesh arose from your thorough knowledge of the state of my circumstances, arising from your professional trusts as my agent."

Vellum bit his lips; but the earl in a moment changed his tone, and said cheerfully, "However, the matter is done, and it must not be repeated. I wish you all happiness with your gains; and the sooner they are realised, the more I shall be content. But one thing you must do for me, in the meantime. I have paid more attention to that Scottish curiosity, Wylie, than perhaps I ought to have done. He, however, served to amuse me when every other thing had become stale, flat, and unprofitable; and he cannot but have formed some expectations from my interest or influence. I believe he is honest."

"It is impossible to doubt it," replied Vellum; "but his talents are not of a high order, nor has his education been of the best sort."

"The being," cried his lordship, gaily, "has

not half the capacity, I believe, of a young elephant; but his very deficiencies have been as talents with me; and now that I am determined to quit London, I wish to do something for him. You must take him into partnership, Vellum."

The solicitor was thunderstruck; and in an accent of astonishment, said, "My lord, it is not possible—he is too young—he knows nothing of business."

"He is old enough to receive profit," replied his lordship, coldly; "nor does it require any particular knowledge to do so. But, perhaps, you would rather give him a salary."

Vellum bowed, and the earl continued: "Then it should be on agreement for a term of years—say seven. How much will you give him?"

The decision of character which the earl in this interview had so unexpectedly manifested overawed Vellum, who had hitherto considered him merely as a common man of fashion. He had never once, in the course of their previous intercourse, suspected the dormant powers of his lordship's mind, which, like a stream long dammed up, and mantled over with water-weeds and rushes, seemed incapable of being applied to any effectual purpose. But he now perceived that it would be useless to parry with such a character; and, therefore, with the off-hand alacrity of a man of the world, he replied, "It is your lordship's pleasure to promote the fortune of the young man, and it is my duty to comply with

your lordship's reasonable wishes on the subject. I will give him five hundred pounds a year for seven years; although I do not think he will ever make any available proficiency in his profession."

"You do not, then, seriously think that he is likely to attain eminence as a lawyer?" said the earl, earnestly.

"I do not," was the emphatic answer.

"Then," replied his lordship, "five hundred a year, for seven years, is too little. You will give him seven hundred and fifty."

"It is far beyond his wants, habits, and ideas."

Vellum, in saying these few words, was rebuked by the grave expression of his lordship's eye; and, stopping as if he had been interrupted, looked confused.

The earl, after a pause of some ten or twenty seconds, rose from his seat, and, standing with his back to the fire, said to the solicitor, who had also risen at the same time, "I am not sure, Mr Vellum, that any man has a right to prescribe limits to another's fortune. You will give Mr Wylie seven hundred and fifty pounds a year for seven years, if you think my business and connections can, with a reasonable advantage to yourself, afford so much."

There was no withstanding either the manner or the matter of this. Vellum bowed with profound respect, and said, "It shall be done, my lord; and I ought to add that it is in my power to comply with your lordship's request."

"I thank you, Vellum : you have obliged me ;" and the earl took him cordially by the hand. "We shall talk no more of these matters. My only instructions to you now are : Let a full account be made out, and sent to me as soon as possible, exhibiting an exact view of my affairs ; with a table, showing in what time my debts may be discharged. I will take it with me into the country, where I shall be able to determine the amount to which I must limit my expenditure."

This was evidently intended to conclude the interview ; and accordingly the solicitor, sensible of the intimation, took his leave. In quitting the room, the earl, however, said to him with his wonted freedom, "You can dine with me, I hope ?"

Vellum accepted the invitation, but with a little more formality than usual. The earl smiled at the change, and added, in his most gracious and conciliating manner, "By the way, Vellum, this house must remain empty while I am in the country, for I do not intend that it shall be let ; you had as well come here and live : you will take better care of the pictures and furniture than servants ; and I hope you and Mrs Vellum will oblige me in this. You need not materially increase your establishment, as I shall leave some of the old servants."

Vellum looked on his lordship. On any former occasion, had such a proposition been made to him he would have laughingly shaken his head in

thankful acceptance; but the singular lustre with which the latent character of the earl shone out upon him smote him with a sense of reverence that overpowered all his wonted familiarity, and he said, with the most profound respect, "I crave your lordship's pardon for having evinced any reluctance to comply with your request. I ought to have known better the obligations that I owe to your lordship, and the magnanimity of your disposition." He then said, somewhat less formally, but perhaps with more effect, "I am not the only one, however, my lord, who has been long in error with respect to your lordship."

"Come, come, Vellum, no more of that," cried the earl, interrupting him. "I have myself, perhaps, been the most in error of you all. But as I have turned over a new leaf in the book of life, it is as well that the first record to be made thereon is what I shall not regret. Bring Wylie with you, that I may see with what humour the Caliban sustains his new fortune."

The solicitor bowed and retired.

CHAPTER XXV

Gratitude.

FROM the transactions of the preceding day, Wylie had been thoughtful and anxious. He studiously avoided the conversation of his companions in the office, and applied himself with more than wonted diligence to his tasks at the desk. He had formed expectations with respect to the favour of Lord Sandyford, which he thought were likely to be frustrated by the unfortunate situation of the earl's domestic affairs, and ever and anon a cold feeling came over his heart, such as often saddens the spirit of the young adventurer when his prospects are suddenly clouded. Vellum, on his returning from his lordship, summoned him into his own apartment, and somewhat abruptly told him of his good fortune.

"It's vera kind of my lord," said Andrew; "really it's vera kind. He's a nice man, and mair in him than he's likened to. I couldna hae thought he would hae done so meikle for me already."

"Then you have expected," cried Vellum, "that he would do something for you?"

"I surely had reason," was the reply. "It

couldna be thought but that in time I might hae ventured to ask my lord's helping hand, considering his discretion¹ towards me."

"The idea did credit to your sagacity, Wylie," said Vellum ironically; "and I suppose you exerted yourself to the best of your ability to amuse his lordship?"

"Nae doubt I did—nae doubt I did that," cried our hero; "it would hae been an unco² thing in the like o' me na to hae done a' in my capacity to pleasure my lord."

"Upon my word, there is more in you than I gave you credit for," replied the solicitor sneeringly, feeling as if he had been in some degree overreached by the part which Andrew had played; adding more sedately, "but now that you have gained your ends, and by his lordship's generosity are placed in a condition to support the appearance of a gentleman, I hope you will set in seriously to your profession, and throw off your ridiculous manners for the future."

"That would be a doing, indeed!" exclaimed our hero, "when you are just at this precious moment telling me that they have already brought me in seven hunder and fifty pounds a year."

This answer puzzled the lawyer, who laughed as he said, "Well, well, take your own way; but it is no longer necessary for you to be so penurious."

"That's vera true," replied Andrew, "and I'm thankful it is sae; but if I dinna save now, where

¹ Discretion. Civility.

² Unco. Wonderful.

will I, in the lang-run, be a whit the better for my lord's bountiful patronage? No, sir; ye maun just let me ride my ain horse wi' my ain ha'ding.¹"

Mr Vellum suddenly broke off the conversation, and turned his attention to some matter of business. Our hero, on going to his place at the desk, in the fulness of his heart wrote a letter to his grandmother; but, without indulging in any expression beyond the wonted temperance of his ordinary manner of addressing the affectionate old woman, he began by stating that for some time he had been keepit thrang² both by night and by day. "But I have no reason to complain, for Providence has been pleased to raise up for me a friend, by whose instrumentality Mr Vellum has settled on me a very satisfactory wage, the which will enable me to show more kindness to you than I have yet had it in my power to do; and I think it my loving duty to send you herein, out of the fore-end of my earnings, something to buy a new gown, or any other small convenience that ye may stand in the need of, hoping you will want for nothing, as I doubt not to have it in my power now to do as mickle, and more, from time to time." And then he continued, "I have seen of late but little of Charlie Pierston. He's in very good health to the best of my knowledge; but a mischievous clever ramplor,³ and never devalds⁴ with

¹ *Ha'ding.* Trappings.

² *Thrang.* Pushed with work.

³ *Ramplor.* Gay fellow.

⁴ *Devalds.* Ceases.

cracking his jokes on me. However, I have fallen in, notwithstanding the unfashion of my apparel, with some creditable acquaintance; but, as you ken nothing anent them, I needna fash you with their names, nor how it was." And he concluded by assuring the old woman that it would be his honest endeavour to give satisfaction to his friends, whoever they were, and to none more than to her, to whose care he was beholden for everything but his being.

This letter afforded great delight to the old woman: she carried it round to all her neighbours, and even to the manse, where the minister declared his entire satisfaction with the affectionate disposition and the generous heart of poor Andrew.

"But," said he, "London is a very expensive place, so you must not count too confidently on his being able to fulfil his kind intentions. We might, however, have been better qualified to judge of that had he told you the amount of his salary; however, upon the whole, you have great reason to be thankful. I believe he was always a well-disposed creature."

"That he was," replied Martha in the pride of her heart: "he's a wee gair,¹ I alloo; but the liberal man's the beggar's brother, and there's aye something to get by key or claut² frae the miser's coffer. I dinna stand in the lack o' his gift; but since it has come, I will buy a new gown for the

¹ *Gair*. Parsimonious; "near."

² *Claut*. Seizure.

kirk, that the whole parish may see Andrew's gudeness o' heart therein. Poor fallow! Nae doubt he has had to baith thole and moil¹ for what he has gotten, and it's a warld's wonder to me how he could gie sic a satisfaction. But naebody can tell what's in the shawp till it's shelt²: Paul was lang a persecutor before he was an apostle, and the bonny butterflies begin the warld in the shape o' crawling kailworms."

Thus was the character of our hero for affection and generosity established amidst the scenes of his youth. And when, from time to time, in faithful adherence to his promise, a five-pound note came regularly to hand, the worthy Tannyhill as regularly lauded the liberality of the donor, and predicted his future greatness, while the delighted old woman, exulting in the constancy of his kindness, as often declared "that she never wished to see him great, but only gude; for, as Solomon says, 'grant me neither poverty nor riches;' and Solomon kent weel what the warld is—though, poor man, in his auld days he gaed aften far ajee out o' the straight road in the gloaming, tapping wi' his gowden-headed staff at the harlot's door, and keeking in at her windows with his bald head and his grey haffits,³ when he should hae been sitting at hame on his throne, reading his Bible to his captains and counsellors in a kingly manner."

¹ *Thole and moil.* Suffer and sweat.

² *Shawp . . . shelt.* Pod . . . shelled.

³ *Haffits.* Temples.

CHAPTER XXVI

An Ale-house.

AGREEABLY to the orders of the countess, her father's travelling-carriage was at the door early in the morning. The day promised to be fine. The winter had been mild; and although it was still February, the spring was seen big in the bud, and the fields seemed to be tinged with new verdure. A few lambs were scattered here and there among the flocks on the pastures; and the air breathed an invigorating energy into the spirit, of which Lady Sandycroft stood then much in need. Everything presented the appearance of youth and renovation; and the rising hopes of a richer harvest of pleasures in life were in accordance with the appearance of nature, and the genial blandishments of the early year.

During the first three stages of her journey towards Elderbower, she met with nothing to draw her attention from the contemplation of her own situation. Indignant at the world, and mortified with herself, her thoughts alternately glowed with anger and were darkened with sadness; but a general tendency to a more elevated course of re-

flection gradually acquired force, and her spirit rose, as it were, out of its passions and prejudices, like the moon ascending from behind the lurid glare, the smoke, and the dark masses of a great city.

When the carriage stopped to change horses at the Rose and Crown, in the village of Castle Rooksburgh, her ladyship was roused from her reverie by the murmuring of a crowd round the door of a small public-house on the opposite side of the way. There was something in the appearance of the people which showed that their feelings and sympathies were excited by some distressing occurrence, and she inquired what had happened. Several voices, all anxious to engage her humanity, answered together that a poor unknown outlandish woman had been taken in labour in the London coach, and, being left there, had expired in giving birth to a beautiful female infant.

It was not the intention of the countess to have halted till she had reached the end of her journey ; but this incident had such a powerful effect on her newly-awakened sensibilities that she immediately determined to alight, and to make some arrangement for the preservation of the helpless child. The crowd were touched with admiration at her generous compassion, and made way for her to the door of the public-house, with a degree of reverence, mingled with delight, that came over her heart with an influence more delicious than the early odours of the spring.

But no previous view of the privations of the

poor had prepared her for the scene that she beheld on entering the house. She was shown first into the kitchen,—or, rather, the door opened into that apartment. It was a rude low-ceiled room, with a large chimney at the one side, in which a hospitable pile of roots and billets of wood were cheerily burning. In the one corner hung several hams and flitches of bacon; in the other stood a bench, somewhat dislocated in its limbs, with a high back, which bore a sort of outline resemblance to an old-fashioned sofa. Opposite to the fire was an enclosed recess, with an oaken table in the middle, carved with the initials of some favoured customers; and round it about six or seven labourers were seated,—some with bread and cheese before them, others with tankards of ale,—and two or three of them were smoking. They rose as her ladyship passed across to a room where a number of women and children were assembled; on entering which, her ear was pierced, and her heart penetrated, by the shrill and feeble wail of the new-born orphan.

She advanced towards the side of an humble bed, on which lay the body of the mother, still retaining that last and indescribable gleam of earthly beauty which remains for a few minutes after the spirit has departed, and seems as if it were the reflection of the ethereal guest hovering in contemplation over the dwelling it has for ever quitted. An elderly woman was respectfully

composing the limbs, while another was dressing the child as it lay on her lap.

Lady Sandyford was exceedingly moved by a spectacle as new as it was mournful, and, obeying the shock and impulse of the moment, she hastily turned back, and ran across the street to the Rose and Crown.

"For heaven's sake!" she exclaimed to the landlady, who followed her into one of the parlours. "What is to be done with that unprotected infant?"

"Don't afflict yourself, my lady," replied Mrs Vintage; "the parish-officers will see to it. They have already sent for Mrs Peony, the wife of Mr Ferrers' gardener. Her own child died yesterday, and she will be right glad to get this one in its place. I would, therefore, my lady, recommend your ladyship to take some refreshment, and compose your spirits. What will your ladyship be pleased to take?"

Flounce, her ladyship's gentlewoman and companion in the carriage, who had been during the whole time an amazed spectator of the countess's agitation, interfered, saying, "Perhaps my lady will be better by being left for a little alone;" and the countess intimating, by a motion of her hand, an acquiescence in this suggestion, Mrs Vintage withdrew.

"Flounce," said her ladyship, the moment they were by themselves, "I have a great mind to take this baby with us."

"Oh, monstrous, your ladyship!" exclaimed the tender-hearted Abigail. "Why, the creature hasn't a stitch of clothes; and how could we nurse it in the carriage on my best pelisse? No, my lady: let the parish-officers first get it nursed; and then, if it chance to be a beauty, your ladyship may show your compassion. But, Lord, if it prove an ugly brawling toad, what could be done with it?"

"There is some reason in what you say, Flounce," replied the countess, "particularly as to the risk your best pelisse might be exposed to. Nevertheless, I will adopt the child; therefore, do you call in the landlady again, that I may speak to her on the subject."

Mrs Vintage, on returning into the room, was accordingly informed that the parish-officers need give themselves no further trouble about the orphan, for it was her ladyship's intention to take it under her protection.

"But," said the countess, "I do not wish for the present to be known in the business. I must beg of you, therefore, to make the necessary arrangements with the nurse of whom you spoke, and in the course of a few days you will hear from me more particularly on the subject. In the meantime, I will leave with you what money may be necessary to defray the expenses of the mother's funeral. In order, however, that some key may be got to her relations, if possible, I think it will be proper to take posses-

sion of any luggage that she may have had with her."

Mrs Vintage told her ladyship that she understood there was nothing but a box, which the officers had opened already, and found to contain a few trinkets and clothes only. "I have taken charge of it, and, if your ladyship pleases, I will give it up to you."

"Yes," said Flounce, "I think that if my lady is to be at the expense of the brat's education, she should have what effects belong to it: so, pray, do let us have the box with us. I dare say, my lady, some of the trinkets must be valuable: for did not your ladyship observe what delightful large ear-rings the poor dead creature had? Surely they will never be so barbarous as to bury her with them. If they do, I should not be surprised were the sexton to dig her up in the night, and pull them out."

"Flounce," cried her mistress with displeasure, "you allow yourself to talk too flippantly. Desire the footman to see the box carefully put up with the rest of our luggage."

Her ladyship then gave Mrs Vintage some instructions respecting a slight repast; and, while the preparations for that were going on, the requisite arrangements were made with Mrs Peony to take charge of the child, which the countess directed to be named Monimia.

During the conversation, it transpired that the Mr Ferrers in whose service the husband of the

nurse was gardener was the same gentleman whose attentions to the countess had already produced such baneful consequences. He was lord of the manor in which the village was situated, and possessed a fine ancient seat in the immediate neighbourhood.

There was nothing in this information which disturbed Lady Sandyford, for she was not aware that it was owing to the ridiculous assiduity of Ferrers that her unhappy situation with her husband had been brought to such a painful issue. Nevertheless, the remainder of her journey to Elderbower (the seat of the countess-dowager) was performed in silence; even Flounce said nothing, and made no attempt to engage the attention of her lady, but, ruminating on the events of the day, fell fast asleep.

CHAPTER XXVII

A Dowager.

ELDERBOWER for generations had been the appropriated retreat of the dowagers of Sandyford. It was a venerable whitewashed mansion, presenting a front of three gables, topped with stately ornamented chimneys, toward a smooth, well-shaven green, enclosed on the right and left by high walls, clothed with laurels and other shrubs of constant leaf and verdure. This lawn (or parterre, as it was called) opened to the public road by a pair of iron gates of florid tracery, between two tall embossed and sculptured columns, on the tops of which stood a couple of grotesque statues, intended to represent Saxon warriors, the supporters of the Sandyford arms. These, in a boyish freak, while residing here under the maternal wing, the earl one day painted in the colours of the family livery (to place them on a footing, as he said, with their equally wise fellows in the hall); and his mother, from an indescribable sentiment of affection, yearly renewed their liveries, contrasting with sorrow the light and jocund gaiety of the time when the frolic was first

played with the headlong dissipation that had succeeded.

This widow's nest, as the earl was in the practice of designating Elderbower, stood on the skirts of Elderton, a cheerful market town, near the rectory, and not far from the church : so situated, as his lordship said, in order that the dowagers might have the benefit of clergy in their felonies on the adjacent characters. But the insinuation did not apply to his mother, who was in many respects an amiable woman, though weakly over-valuing her rank.

When the bell at the gate announced the arrival of her daughter-in-law, she was sitting alone at a parlour window which overlooked a flower-garden that sloped gently down towards a beautiful smooth grass plot round a basin, in the middle of which stood a naked leaden male image, intended for a heathen god (but whether Apollo or Vulcan was never thoroughly or satisfactorily determined). His reverence the rector, who once had acquired some knowledge of such things at Oxford, was of opinion that the statue was an original cast of the Farnesian Hercules ; but the traditions among the domestics and of the environs described it as the effigy of Sir Gondibert le Saint et Forte, who, on account of his great valour, obtained the redoubtable surname of Hard-knocks,—a most valorous and courteous knight that was taken by the Pagans and flayed alive at Jerusalem, in the time of the Crusades.

But however questionable the character might be which the image exhibited, or whatever controversies existed with respect to its origin, it certainly poured from a conch a copious stream of crystalline water, which fell in a gentle and ever-rippling shower on the surface of the basin, and spread into the quiet air around a sober murmur that softly harmonised with the tranquillity of the scenery, and with the golden composure of the setting sun which the old lady was then contemplating, with her elbow resting on a large prayer-book, in which her spectacles marked that recently she had been reading the collects prescribed for the evening. Shock, her lapdog, lay slumbering on the rug, with his head comfortably pillowed on the breast of Pur, a large, demure, and decorous tortoiseshell cat, that also was enjoying at full length the drowsy influences of the bright blue-tinged fire, which, like the splendour of the western skies, gave an assurance of continued clear and dry weather. Shock was disturbed in his siesta by the sound of the bell, and, starting up, ran barking towards the door; while his lady, taking her spectacles out of the prayer-book, placed it on a table behind her, on which, amidst several volumes of a devotional character, lay a copy of the newspaper containing the paragraph that completed the rupture between her son and his wife. It may easily be imagined, therefore, with what emotion she beheld the countess, unannounced, enter the room; and,

almost in the same moment, felt her in tears on her bosom.

"Alas!" said the venerable matron, "what is this? And why have you come to me? But I pity you more than I can express; for I fear that the conduct of George afforded too just a palliation."

"Then you have already heard what has happened?" cried the countess, in some degree recovering herself. "Whatever may have been my indiscretions, I am at least, my dear mother, free from the imputed guilt. Lord Sandyford and I have long lived a comfortless life. He has treated me as if I were unworthy of his affection, and, perhaps, I have acted as if I felt none for him. This public scandal has opened my eyes to my faults; and I have come to you to learn how I may recover the esteem of my husband. My father urges me to a formal separation. He did persuade me indeed to remove with him from Sandyford House. It was a rash step, but it is taken. Instruct me how it may be redeemed."

The dowager dropped a tear on the hand which Lady Sandyford had, in her earnestness, laid upon her knee, and said, "I thank you, Augusta, for this confidence; but I feel a mother's sorrow for George. His ruin, I fear, is now complete. But endeavour to compose yourself, and we shall consider, at leisure, what is the best course to pursue. You have done wisely to come to me. The knowledge that you have taken refuge here will do

much to remove that unfavourable construction towards you which the world, taught by the fatal newspaper tale, will doubtless put on the separation."

The maternal anxieties of the old lady as to the manner in which the earl had acted in the business received some alleviation from the countess's report of Sir Charles Runnington's mission, and she said, "Thank Heaven, his heart is not entirely corrupted, nor his principles destroyed ! I hope he has still good feeling enough, were it once effectually excited, to work out a gracious change in his conduct. If he could once be convinced that you are solicitous to regain his affections, his ruin may be arrested ; for, whatever his behaviour may have been since, once, Augusta, he undoubtedly loved you truly."

The benign composure of the dowager had an immediate and tranquillising effect on the mind of the countess, who, in the course of less than an hour after her arrival, was able to discuss with her the plan that she had formed in the hope of regaining the esteem of her lord. The dowager would have written the same night to request the presence of the earl, that their reconciliation might be immediate ; but the countess would not permit. "No," said she, "I do not wish that we should come together again, unless there can be a reciprocity in our tastes and sentiments. I feel my own insufficiency at present to contribute to his happiness."

The old lady affectionately interrupted her, saying, "You have too humble an opinion of yourself."

"Ah!" exclaimed her ladyship, "humility is to me a new feeling. I cannot disguise to myself that, with all my former vain pretensions to superiority, I have failed to preserve the love of a man that once doted upon me. Perhaps I have even been instrumental to that woeful lapse which has so long embittered your declining years."

The tone of contrition in which this was expressed surprised and grieved the venerable dowager. She beheld the character of Lady Sandyford in a point of view of which she had formed no previous conception; and there was a modesty in this, which, while it moved her compassion, solicited encouragement. She saw that the countess felt more deeply the stigma to which she had been exposed than could have been expected from a woman hitherto considered as equally under the dominion of pride and vanity.

By this time it was almost quite dark; and such had been the earnestness of the conversation between the two ladies that the one forgot the fatigue of her journey, and the other to ask if she required any refreshment. Far different was the case with Flounce: she was prattling away with delight over a dish of green tea, along with the methodical Mrs Polisher, who held the responsible dignity of housekeeper at Elderbower; repaying the civility of her entertainer with a full,

true, and particular account of the infidelities of the earl. "I declare, my dear ma'am," said Flounce, "he is the most shockingest man you ever heard of; and more times than I shall tell he has shown his cloven foot to me. 'But, my lord,' says I, 'I would have your lordship to know that if my lady submits to your raking, I won't.' Really, Mrs Polisher, you make excellent tea; but I suppose the water is very good in this here countrified place—and then his lordship would laugh and make game of me—pray, do give me a morsel of sugar—dear me, what charming cream!—a little more—I protest it's beautiful—I never tasted such delicious cream—and this is such a pretty house—I guess, however, you must be dullish, keeping no company; and I should think my lady will not stay long. I fancy when the divorce is finished we shall have one of the earl's other seats to live in."

"Divorce!" cried Mrs Polisher in amazement; for she had not yet heard, notwithstanding all Flounce's talk, anything of the separation. "Divorce! what do you mean?"

"Why, haven't you heard that my lady has been caught in a denoomang?"

Mrs Polisher, an old respectable matron, started back from the tea-table, exclaiming, "Not possible!"

"As to the possibility of the thing, that's neither here nor there," said Flounce, sipping her third cup; "but the story's all blown abroad,

and our men read it in the newspapers. Being a delicate affair, you know I could not speak of it to my lady herself; but it's in the newspapers; so there can be no doubt of the fact. Indeed, my Lord Avonside came and took her away out of the house, and I was ordered to follow in the evening. Then there was such a piece of work—really, Mrs Polisher, this is prodigious fine hysson—a small knob of sugar, if you please. But, you know, it does not do for us servants to make or meddle in these sort of matters—so I said nothing, because my place is a very good one. I wonder, however, what your dowager thinks of the business.”

“Thinks!” cried Mrs Polisher, indignantly. “It will break her heart. And I am astonished that your Lady Sandyford should dare to show her face in this house; but these sort of creatures are as impudent as they are wicked.”

At this moment the dowager rang the bell that summoned Mrs Polisher, and Flouncee was left, for a short time, to her own meditations; or, rather, to her observations: for, the moment that the housekeeper's back was turned, she immediately began to inspect everything in the room, with the avidity of an intended purchaser. But before she had completed her survey, an old corpulent footman, who was lame with the gout, came in to inquire for his young lord, as he called the earl.

“Don't talk of his lordship to me,” cried

Flounce; "he's a naughty man, and 'tis all his fault."

"I won't believe a word on't," said the man, who had heard something of the separation from the servants of Lord Avonside that came with the countess; adding, "Before he fell in with your damned lady——"

"My damned—oh, monstrous! But the fellow's a bumpkin," said Flounce, with a most ineffable toss of her head; and she then added, "Sirrah, if you know what it is to have good manners, you will bring in a light, and take none of these liberties with me:" thus asserting and upholding her metropolitan superiority.

CHAPTER XXVIII

An Attempt.

MORDAUNT, soon after Vellum's eventful interview with the earl, called at Sandyford House, to represent in the strongest terms to his lordship the misery that he was evidently bringing upon himself. But he found him inexorable.

"Had Lady Sandyford not quitted the house," said his lordship, "thereby leaving me under an impression of her guilt, or (what I regard almost equally bad) in total carelessness whether I considered her guilty or innocent, I might perhaps have been induced to reconsider her situation; but I cannot now. Her conduct confirms me in the justice of the opinion I have been unfortunately taught to form by her behaviour, ever since our ill-fated marriage. She is incapable of caring for any one, and the only pain she will feel for what has happened is the damage that has perhaps been done to her own reputation."

Owing to a long debate in the House of Commons the preceding evening, the newspapers were late in being issued that morning, and the earl, engaged with Vellum, had neglected to look at

them. At this crisis of the conversation, however, his lordship, in folding up a note, happened to throw his eye on the paragraph ingeniously inserted by Nettle to turn the attention of the scandalmongers. It stated the extreme regret of the editors and proprietors that, by one of those inadvertencies inseparable from the haste with which a daily newspaper was necessarily compiled, a paragraph relative to the elopement of Mrs C—— with the gallant Colonel D—— had been so placed in connection with an account of the Countess of Sandyford's assembly as to induce some of their readers to think it applied to that amiable and noble lady: "a mistake which they could not sufficiently lament, even although assured that it had only occasioned a great deal of merriment to the earl and countess, who were everything enviable and exemplary in married life."

His lordship burst into a fit of laughter, exclaiming, "There are really no such fictions as those of your contemporary histories;" and he handed the paper to Mordaunt.

"What can be the meaning of this?" cried the honest country gentleman. "Is it satire?"

"Oh dear, no!" replied the earl: "the editors and proprietors suspect they have got into some scrape, and are taking this method to appease the offended enviable exemplars, meaning Lady Sandyford and myself, of whom, it would appear, they know about as much as they do of

the political intrigues and transactions which they illuminate and chronicle with so much seeming sagacity."

"Monstrous!" cried Mordaunt. "I had no such conception of the licentiousness of the press."

"The only thing I am surprised at," said the earl, "is that the amend should have been made so expeditiously."

"But who is this Mrs C—— and Colonel D——?" cried Mordaunt.

"Who!" exclaimed the earl; "I declare you cooing lambkins and capering doves of the azure fields are such innocents that there is no speaking to you about any townish matter without entering into details obnoxious to all inventive genius. Who, in this case, can Mrs C—— be but the celebrated Miss Fibby Fiction, the eldest daughter of my Lady Fancy, a personage of great repute and influence in the scandalous world? As for the gallant colonel, depend upon't, he is no other than that fine, bold, swaggering blade, who, it is well known, has been long the declared adversary and rival of your country neighbour, Mr Simple Truth."

"And yet by this, which you think an invention, has your domestic happiness, my lord, been sacrificed?"

"Softly, Mordaunt," said the earl, "not so fast—my domestic happiness has not been so maltreated by the Flamens—these priests of Mars

and Bellona, as I consider the newspapers—the heart and bowels were consumed on the altar of the Eumenides long ago. But I cannot divine who has taken the trouble to interfere so expeditiously.”

Mordaunt then told his lordship of the conversation which he had held with Andrew, describing the singular appearance and cunning simplicity of our hero.

The earl was struck with the information, and exclaimed, “It is impossible that Wylie could have contrived anything half so ingenious as this paragraph. But I will sound the bottom of it immediately.”

In the same moment his lordship rang the bell. Wylie happened to be then at the door, coming to thank him for his kindness; and the servant who answered the bell announced him.

Andrew, from the moment that Vellum had communicated to him the generous interference of the earl, had undergone an intellectual transmutation. An irresistible sentiment of gratitude arose in his heart, so strong and powerful that it became as it were a principle of duty; and, actuated by this hallowed and gracious feeling, without reflecting on the impropriety of obtruding on his lordship, at a time when a more worldly head would have concluded that the earl was not likely to be in a humour to receive him, he went to Sandyford House.

On entering the library, he was struck with

the change in his lordship's mien and air. Instead of the quiet smile of intellectual indolence which his lordship usually wore, his countenance was lighted up; and there was a quickness in his eye, and a precision in his manner, that disconcerted the self-possession of our hero.

"How is this, Wylie! Here already!" said the earl, surprised at his sudden appearance.

"I am come to thank your lordship," said Andrew, modestly.

The earl was as much astonished at the diffidence with which this answer was expressed as Andrew himself was at the exactitude of his lordship's question. Mordaunt looked on, curiously examining them both.

"Say nothing about thanks, Wylie," cried his lordship. "I hope what Mr Vellum intends to do for you will be repaid by your endeavours to give him satisfaction."

Andrew replied, still diffidently, "The will's hearty, my lord, but the han's weak; I hope, howsomever, that your lordship will let me do something to oblige yoursel', as weel as Mr Vellum."

Desirous to avoid the promptings of our hero's gratitude, the earl interrupted him, saying, "Pray, can you tell me how this got into the newspaper?" showing him the paragraph.

Andrew read it over studiously, and then said, "My lord, this is glammerie;" and he then explained to the earl that he suspected it was a

device to obviate the effect of the former paragraph. Mordaunt was surprised at the sagacity of the seeming simpleton. His lordship was no less so; and, pleased with the coincidence with his own opinion, loudly expressed his approbation of the conjecture.

Our hero then related what had passed between him and Nettle; adding some reflections of his own, calculated, as he intended, to lighten the importance which he supposed the earl attached to the paragraph. "They are a wheen wily gleds¹ in this town," said he, slyly looking from under his bent brows. "Though it's a hang't lee, my lord, I hope the tae half o't will be true, and that you and my leddy——"

The earl's countenance changed, and Andrew shrank tremblingly from the stern rebuke of his eye; but Mordaunt, who saw the well-meant presumption of the observation, interfered and said, "You are quite right, Mr Wylie; and you could not better show the sense of obligation which you seem to feel towards his lordship than by wishing, as you do, a reconciliation with the countess."

Lord Sandyford felt offended with Mordaunt for the freedom with which he addressed himself so openly on so delicate a subject, and to so young a man, and one, too, of our hero's condition.

Andrew, however, was encouraged by this interposition, and said, "Odsake, my lord, ye maunna flee up at anything I say; for it would be an ill

¹ *A wheen wily gleds.* A parcel of . . . kites.

return for your lordship's goodness, and the discretion I have had at my leddy's han', were no I to ettle my best——"

"Peace!" cried the earl. Andrew looked round to Mordaunt, coweringly and jocularly, as if in dread of a castigation.

"You might at least hear what Mr Wylie has to say," cried Mordaunt. "Kindness at all times merits civility."

"Well, and what has Mr Wylie to say?" exclaimed the earl, a little contemptuously, looking at our hero, who was, however, none daunted by his manner; on the contrary, urged by gratitude and the encouragement of Mordaunt, he replied—

"I didna think your lordship was sic a spunkie¹—ye'll no mend your broken nest, my lord, by dabbing at it. So, out o' the regard I hae baith for you and my leddy, I would speer² what for ye put her awa'?"

The earl, confounded by this category, almost laughed, and cried, "Why, thou paragon of animals, she went away herself."

"Poor body!" replied Andrew, "ye maun hae used her very ill, my lord!"

This was said in such a manner that Mordaunt and the earl looked at each other. He saw their astonishment, but took no notice of it, continuing, "She was a fine leddy—maybe a wee that dressy and fond o' outgait³—I'll no say she was entirely

¹ *Spunkie*. Irritable person.

² *Speer*. Inquire.

³ *Outgait*. Show.

without a fault, for we a' hae our faults, my lord—and I'm in a great ane to speak wi' this freedom to your lordship; but when I think what ye hae done for me—I was a friendless lad, and ye took me by the han'—and could I sit still and see scathe befall my benefactor, I wouldna be a stirk o' the right stock that's bred on the lan' o' Scotland."

There was something in this approaching to energy; insomuch that the earl said, "I am much obliged to you; I thank you for the interest you take in my happiness. It does honour to your feelings; but you will oblige me by saying no more on the subject."

The manner in which his lordship spoke was at once mild and firm. It admitted of no reply, and it offended no feeling. It neither made our hero sensible that he had transgressed the limits of decorum, nor that he ought to regret what he had done; but it effectually closed his lips, and he rose to take his leave. The earl said to him, as he was on the point of retiring, "I intended to have had the pleasure of seeing you with Mr Vellum before leaving town, but that, I find, will not now be convenient. Make my compliments to him, and say that he will have the goodness to send the papers I want to Chastington Hall, as I have determined to set off early to-morrow morning."

Andrew, with humble respectfulness, and more emotion than his lordship deemed him susceptible of, then withdrew.

"I am glad to be rid of the fellow," said his lordship, as the door shut; "we should have been in heroics, with handkerchiefs at our tragical eyes presently; and as I do not think the Scottish dialect is at all sufficiently sonorous for blank verse, don't you think, as a matter of taste, it was right to send him hence? I am sorry, however, to have been so peremptory with him. The gods play with our hearts as shuttlecocks. Here is a woman, that I did not believe had life to feel even an insult, has gone off a flaming seraph, reddening with hostility; and an unlicked thing—becoming at once the noblest work of God—startling my baser humanity almost into tears."

During the time that his lordship was thus speaking, he continued walking up and down the library. Sometimes he addressed himself to Mordaunt; but, for the most part, what he said was in soliloquy, and he was evidently deeply agitated. At last he made a full stop, and said, "I am really persuaded that this young 'Edwin is no vulgar boy.' There is much virtue in that awkward simplicity of his; for it begets negligence towards his talents, and that negligence enables him to acquire advantages which the creature, by a curious instinct, somehow uses in a way that is positively commanding, but in any other individual would be downright and intolerable presumption and impudence."

After this the conversation became light and general, all further allusion to the separation being

studiously avoided. The earl occasionally, however, spoke of his intended journey next morning to Chastington Hall; but, as if there was something unhappy associated with the idea, he as often hastily embraced another topic. Before Mordaunt left him, he gave orders for the carriage to be ready at an early hour, to convey him from town.

"I have long thought," said he, in bidding Mordaunt farewell, "that excellence was a very modest ingredient; but I had no conception that wisdom lurked in so strange a form as in that creature Wylie; therefore, I would advise you to trust him in your conjugal affair; and if he do you service, which, from his acuteness, I am sure he may, you will not neglect to reward him. I wish that I had noticed his true character sooner."

CHAPTER XXIX

The Family Mansion.

CHASTINGTON HALL, the principal seat of the Sandyford family, was one of those fine old mansions which are only to be seen in England, and combine, with the antique grandeur of the baronial castle, the cheerful conveniences of the modern villa. It was erected in the latter part of Queen Elizabeth's reign, when the airy pinnacles, turrets, and tracery, of the Gothic style were first attempted to be assimilated to the symmetry of classic architecture.

The courtyard was entered by a stately portal, surmounted by a clock in a templar edifice, crowned with a dome, in the form of an earl's coronet; and the quadrangle of the court, in the centre of which a marble fountain threw up water from the shells of mermaids and tritons, was surrounded by an arcade. Numerous doors opened from this arcade to the lower range of apartments, and a spacious marble staircase, richly adorned with allegorical paintings, in the taste of Charles the Second's time, ascended from the court to splendid suites of galleries and chambers, all

furnished in that costly and massive style which accorded with the formal pageantry of the magnificent courtiers of the Stuarts.

The situation was chosen with admirable taste and judgment. The mansion occupied the summit of a gentle rising ground, in the middle of an extensive park, naturally commanding a wide expansive prospect; and the approach was by a superb avenue of beech-trees which seemed to droop their branches in salutation, as their master, towards the close of the day, was driven rapidly towards the portal.

The earl had never before visited this princely place, and of course it had suffered by his absence, although the servants had preserved everything as well as it could be preserved without repairs and renovations. It had therefore, in some degree, a faded and melancholy appearance; and when the carriage passed through the grand entrance, his lordship thought, or rather felt, that the echoes in the arcade clamoured as if they had been suddenly awakened by the unusual sound of wheels, and rebuked him for his long neglect.

As he travelled with post-horses, he was accompanied only by Servinal, his valet; indeed, he had determined to make no other addition to the usual establishment at Chastington Hall, the strict economy to which he was resolved to reduce himself requiring every practical retrenchment. During the greater part of the journey he had been silent and thoughtful. The only observa-

tion which he made in the whole time of the last stage escaped from him involuntarily when he first beheld the numerous gilded domes and turrets of the mansion, glittering above the trees in the setting sun. It was simple, brief, and emphatic—"Have I thought of sacrificing this?"

The carriage drove in to the foot of the grand staircase, where the servants were assembled to receive him. The men were, for the most part, grey-headed, and in their best liveries; but, although the colours were the same, the fashion of the clothes was not in so spruce a taste as those of their London compeers; and some of them, instead of smart white cotton stockings, wore their legs decently clothed in grey worsted. The household appearance of the women was no less peculiar. They likewise were dressed in their gayest attire, but rather in the orderly Sabine simplicity of the grange and farm than in that buxom neatness that characterises the full-formed female domestics, belonging to those seats of the nobility which the families are still so patriotic as to visit regularly in summer, like the swallows and cuckoos.

But we should be guilty of unpardonable incivility towards Mrs Valence, the housekeeper, were we to allow a personage of her importance to be dismissed from our account of the earl's reception without some special and discriminative marks of our regard; particularly as his lordship himself showed, by the most courteous deference,

the high esteem in which he held her character, and the equally great satisfaction with which he was persuaded, at the first glance, she had, on all occasions, upheld the dignity and consideration of the family. She was a tall and ample personage, with a gentle oscillation of the head, which seemed to indicate a lofty sense of her own supremacy rather than the infirmity of a slight paralytic affection. She stood on the third step of the stair, in the stately superiority of a full suit of dark-brown rustling double-tabinet, of which the unstinted flounces, and manifold ruffle-cuffs, bore testimony to the taste and prodigality of the mantua-makers of other times; a vast well-starched kerchief-souffle expanded her bosom into swanlike amplitude; and her hair was not only highly frizzled and powdered, but sustained a spacious structure of lace, muslins, catgut, and ribands, the very wiry skeleton of which was sufficient to have furnished iron for the shackles of more than twenty perjured lovers in these degenerate days. Her hands and arms were invested with cambric gloves, as pure as the napery which it was her pride and delight, once more, before she died, to give out that morning to old Corkly, the butler, for the use of her noble master; and her feet were in none of those slip-slop things that are only fit for the bedchamber, but decorously installed in high-heeled red morocco shoes, adorned with knots of white riband, so affluent that they attracted the attention of his lordship, as she

conducted him through the picture-gallery to the principal drawing-room, and he could not refrain from complimenting her, even at the expense of a pun, in having such handsome beaux at her feet.

Mrs Valence stopped instantly at the words, and placing her hands formally over each other, on her bosom, made him as solemn a curtsey as the Princess-Royal, at the commencement of a minuet, at a birthday ball of her late most gracious Majesty Queen Charlotte. His lordship, with no less corresponding gravity, returned a profound bow; and when she had recovered her wonted elevation, he followed her in silence, wondering into what venerable palace, amidst the pageant rites and olden homages of Fairyland, he had been so curiously translated.

When he entered the drawing-room, he was pleased with the domestic taste in which it was evidently set for use, notwithstanding the heavy golden grandeur of the furniture; but felt a little disappointed at seeing the silver chandeliers and sconces filled with candles. However, he good-humouredly resolved to allow the old servants to indulge themselves for that night, nor, on reflection, was he averse to obtain, unsought, a specimen of the hereditary style in which his ancestors had been accustomed to live. While he was cursorily looking at the pictures which adorned the walls (but, as the sun was set, he could see only imperfectly), his valet came into

the room to inquire if he intended to dress for dinner.

"I believe it is not worth while, Servinal. But perhaps I ought: they will expect it," said the earl.

"I think they do, my lord," replied Servinal.

"Then," cried the earl, "I will not disappoint them. Have you brought a court-dress with you?"

The valet smiled, and said he had not.

When his lordship had dressed, and had returned back into the drawing-room, the bell over the portal was rung, and the house-steward, a respectable old man out of livery, announced that dinner was ready. The earl followed him, and immediately on entering the picture-gallery, another old man proclaimed, "My lord!" upon which the folding-doors at the end of the gallery were thrown open by two younger footmen. The earl proceeded, and on reaching the landing-place he turned round to Mrs Valence, who was standing there, and said, with an air of great consideration, "Pray, does Queen Elizabeth, with the noble Earl of Leicester, dine here to-day?"

"I believe not, my lord," replied the stately housekeeper, with undisturbed consequentiality.

This was more than the earl expected, and it forced him to laugh as he descended the great staircase; but on entering the dining-room, or rather, as it was called among the household, the banqueting-room, he started on seeing a table laid

out for at least a dozen guests, and covered with ponderous ancient massy plate.

"What is the meaning of this?" he exclaimed in a tone of displeasure. "Who is to dine here?"

Corkly, the butler, came up, and with three bows told him that "it was an old custom of the family to dine always in state while at Chastington, in order to be prepared to receive any guests that might by accident come."

The earl would have said, "I hope it is not expected that I am to keep open house;" but he checked himself, and said gaily, "Fashions are somewhat changed since the golden age—that is, the age of the guineas, Corkly. However, to-night perform your duty as you were wont to do in my father's time; or, rather, if you please, in my grandfather's."

"I was not, my lord, in the service of Earl James, your lordship's grandfather," said Corkly, with an air that would have been called dignified in an old courtier speaking of George the Second; "but I have been forty-three years in the service of your lordship's noble family."

"Indeed!" said the earl playfully; "then I must take lessons from you as to the etiquettes I am bound to observe at Chastington;" and, in saying these words, he seated himself at the table, when one of the servants in attendance touched the spring of a large musical German clock, which immediately began to play one of Handel's overtures. But the machinery being somewhat out

of tune, the earl called out to them in mercy to stop that horrid musical ogre; and, turning round to the butler, said, "Save me this discord of Magog's accompaniment to my knife and fork, and I will not interfere with your rites and homages to-night."

"As your lordship pleases," replied Corkly, with the reverence of a worshipper.

The eye and fancy of the earl were thus interested and amused on the night of his first arrival at the great mansion of his ancestors. There was a simplicity in the domestics which pleased him exceedingly, and their little awkwardnesses, with the formality and ceremonial which they made use of in their attendance, seemed to him at once venerable and picturesque. Corkly told him that, although the cellar had not been replenished for more than thirty years, it still contained several delicious vintages, and the earl encouraged the generous old man to expatiate on the glories of other years; but though he seemed amused by the recital, an occasional shade came over his spirits, and he reflected, with a sigh, on the unhonoured years he had squandered away in London.

When he returned to the drawing-room, it was superbly illuminated; but his heart recoiled from the solitary grandeur around, and as it was yet early in the evening, he ordered a fire to be lighted in a smaller apartment. He inquired if there were any books in the house, and heard, with

surprise and delight, that it contained a library of many thousand volumes, to which, however, no addition had been made since the death of his father. Indeed, every inquiry served to remind him how much he had neglected this princely mansion, and how he had declined from the patriotic aristocracy of his fathers.

The following morning he walked into the park, and saw in every place the stateliest trees marked for the woodman, and many already felled.

"I could not have imagined," he said, in writing to Mordaunt, and mentioning the effect on his feelings, "that the odd trick was such an edge-tool."

CHAPTER XXX

Noble Authorship.

THE first week after the arrival of Lord Sandford at Chastington Hall passed more agreeably than might have been expected, considering the suddenness of the change which it occasioned in his manner of living. Two or three days were spent in examining the house, and the curiosities which remained as so many monuments of the taste and whim of his ancestors; and, above all, in an inspection of the family pictures. His lordship had some pretensions to a physiognomical perception of character, and he amused himself with conjectures as to the mind and disposition of the direct line from which he was himself descended, tracing, or rather fancying that he traced, the features which indicated the particular points of resemblance in their respective characters. This recreation was occasionally broken in upon by visits from some of the neighbouring gentlemen, with whom, although he received them with his wonted politeness, he showed no inclination to cultivate an acquaintance; on the contrary, he took several opportunities to inform them that he

had come to Chastington expressly for retirement. He also visited his domain; and, having suspended the general orders for the cutting down of the timber, he formed from his own observation another plan of thinning the woods, without materially affecting the beauty of the sylvan furniture of the park, especially in the immediate vicinity of the mansion. His eye had a natural perception of the picturesque; and the plan which he thus adopted, instead of impairing the magnificence of the rides and walks, had the effect of rendering them more pleasant and diversified in the views. The trees which were felled allowed more light (as it were) to be thrown upon the landscape, and prospects were opened, of the extent of which no previous conception had been formed.

It was his custom in the morning to ride round the park, and from the different eminences to examine what distant objects might be seen from the parts covered with wood, and then to order the woodmen to fell in such direction as would bring a village spire, an ancient tower, or a modern mansion, into the termination of the vista which they laid open. But it was around the hall that this species of picturesque economy was most judiciously managed. In the course of years the timber had so increased in magnitude that it enclosed the building with a depth and darkness of umbrageous boughs altogether inconsistent with the florid lightness of the architecture, the effect of which produced a degree of gloom and solemnity

in the building strangely at variance with the fanciful style of the place. The earl, by throwing down some of the trees which had grown to such a height as to intercept the views, and by letting in the light through the general masses of the surrounding woods, produced a change truly magical; but he spared the celebrated chestnut which darkens the southern windows. The lamentation in the neighbourhood for the fine old trees of Chastington was changed into rejoicing, and all the visitors declared their delight and satisfaction at the improvements.

But although, in this manner, the earl for some time created not only amusement, but business, for himself, there was a sameness in the undertaking, and a patience requisite, which did not exactly suit the ardour and activity of his character, and he had recourse to other means of recreation. Having prescribed their work to the woodmen, he resolved to wait the issue of the full effect; and, in order that he might prevent his restlessness from preying on himself, he endeavoured to find pastime in changing the appearance of the state apartments, not by the expensive medium of repairs or upholstery, but by new arrangements of the paintings and sculpture, the china and the cabinets. But still there was something wanting. This also he found must become a subordinate concern—a matter of occasional recreation; for it afforded none of that earnest exercise to the mind which he longed to obtain. At last he had re-

course to the library; and, after a miscellaneous and cursory glance at the collection, he set himself into a regular course of historical reading.

To read was, with Lord Sandysford, to think. Every page that his eye travelled furnished some new association to his mind, till the most remarkable and striking incidents of general history became connected with the passing topics of his own time,—for the French Revolution was then raging in all its fury, and drawing into its destructive whirlpool the venerable institutions of successive wisdom and experience. The excitement which this systematic acquisition of knowledge produced, operated to an immediate effect. His lordship became dissatisfied with the inadequate policy by which it was attempted to suppress the natural issue of a long-continued accumulation of moral impulses; and, actuated by the new light which he had acquired on the subject of national mutations, began to write an historical view of the political effects of popular opinions.

When he had finished this pamphlet, he was conscious that, however just his reflections and indisputable his facts, it was not, in point of style and arrangement, such as would do him credit in the character of an author. He was aware that the habit he had acquired of contemplating everything through an ironical medium in some degree affected his reasoning even in his most serious moments; and that he used terms and phrases

in a recondite sense, not altogether understood by the generality of the public; so that, while his taste, with respect to the composition of others, was remarkably pure and just, he feared that his own work might be considered as conceited in its diction, and deficient in that air of sincerity essential to produce effect. He therefore longed for the assistance of a literary friend to correct its incongruities; but there was no such being within the whole compass of all the adjacent parishes. At one time he thought of writing to his bookseller in London to procure, and to send to him by the coach, some one of those retainers of the press who execute the editorial duties to new editions of old works; but he had early taken an anti-social prejudice against authors and artists in general, and could not endure the thought of having his sequestration disturbed by the caprice of beings whom he considered as sorely skinless to everything that but seemed to interfere with their vanities. Publish, however, he must: he felt himself urged to it by the very hand of fate itself, and he could not resist the force of a necessity that was as irresistible to him as if he had been the hero of a Greek or German tragedy, yearning to commit a crime.

In this dilemma he thought of our hero, of whose prudence he had begun to entertain a favourable opinion, and wrote to him to find some clever literary man who would undertake to prepare a pamphlet for the press; saying that he

would pay liberally for the assistance, but that he wished to remain unknown.

Andrew was at first not a little perplexed by the earl's commission. He knew no author, nor was he in habits of intercourse with any one who did; till, recollecting Nettle, the reporter, he resolved to apply to him, with a previous determination, however, not to employ him in the business. Accordingly, the same afternoon in which he received his lordship's letter, he went to the newspaper-office, under the pretext of inquiring of Nettle if he knew of any person who would take charge of a small parcel to Scotland for him.

No visit was ever better timed: it was exactly at the wonted hour when Nettle usually went to his chop-house for dinner; and Andrew, while speaking to him respecting the little packet he had to send to his grandmother, said, "But, Mr Nettle, if ye're gaun to seek your dinner, it's just my time too, and maybe ye'll no object to let me go with you."

Nettle was not a little pleased with the proposition; for possessing a strong relish of drollery, Andrew was a character that could not fail, he thought, to furnish him with some amusement.

"But," rejoined our hero, when he found his company accepted, "ye'll no tak me to an extravagant house—no that I mind, mair than my neighbours, to birl my bawbee¹ at a time, but in ilka-day meals I am obligated to hae a regard for frugality."

¹ *Birl my bawbee.* Share the expense.

Nettle profited by the hint, and took Andrew to one of the best coffee-houses in the neighbourhood. Our hero perceived his drift; but he also thought to himself, "This is an occasion when I should birl my bawbee." However, upon entering the room, he feigned great alarm, and, catching hold of his companion earnestly by the arm, said, "Noo, Mr Nettle, I hope this house is no aboon half-a-crown. Od, Mr Nettle, I dinna like the looks o't—I doot the folk that come here drink wine."

Nettle laughed, and seating himself at one of the tables, said, "Don't be frightened, Andrew: leave the matter to me—I'll manage everything in the most economical manner."

"Mind, it's on condition ye do sae that I sit doun," replied our hero, seemingly very awkwardly affected by the appearance of the company around, as if a young man, who was in the practice of frequenting the tables and parties of the most fashionable houses, was likely to be disconcerted by the migratory visitants of a coffee-house. But he perceived that the reporter was uninformed as to this, and his object was to make this man of the town subservient to his purposes.

Dinner was ordered by Nettle, who, while it was setting down, said dryly, "It is usual, you know, to have a bottle of white wine during dinner; but, as we are on an economical regimen, I will only order a pint."

"I never ordered a pint o' wine since I was

born," cried Andrew to Nettle, who immediately said, "Oh, very well! I have no objection—waiter, bring a bottle."

Our hero was here caught in his own snare, and exclaimed with unaffected sincerity, "A whole bottle!"

Nettle was exceedingly diverted, and laughed at his own joke, especially when Andrew said, as the wine was placed on the table, "This is what I ca' a rank shame;" (but he was much less displeased than he pretended, and cunningly added, "I'm thinking that this trade of translating and writing paragraphs of yours, Mr Nettle, is no an ill line, an' a body could get weel intil't, and had a name").

"I think," replied Nettle, delighted with his companion, "that you ought to try your hand, Andrew. I'm sure anything from your pen must amuse the public."

"Hooly, hooly," cried Andrew; "a' in a gude time, Mr Nettle. I hae my notions on the subjee, but we maun creep before we gang; only there's a curiosity in the craft that I dinna weel understand, and that is, how to correc the press, and to put in the points, wi' the lave o' the wee perjinkities,¹—that, I hae a thought, is no an easy concern."

"As to the wee perjinkities, as you call them, and matters of that sort, the printers take a great part of the trouble off the author's hands. But the plague is with the substantial matter, Andrew; defects in that are not so easily remedied."

¹ *Lave . . . perjinkities.* The remainder of the niceties.
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"But surely they can be remedied?" exclaimed our sly simpleton.

Nettle was mightily pleased with this sally, and said, "Andrew, when your book's ready to print, let me know, and I'll give you a lift in that way."

"It's very discreet o' you to offer sae; but is't true that there are folk in London wha mak a leeving by sic-like wark?"

"True!" cried Nettle. "How do you suppose the speeches of members of Parliament are got up for publication—the voyages and travels of country gentlemen—novels of ladies of fashion—or any of the other *et cætera* by which illiterate opulence seeks to obtain literary renown?"

"Weel, this London is a wonderful place," replied Andrew; "and are there really folk that do thae kind o' jobs for siller?"

"To be sure there are; and they make a snug thing of it."

"Noo, Mr Nettle, that's what I canna comprehend. Hae they shops or offices? Whar do they bide? And how are they kent? They hae nae signs up—what's their denomination?"

"It's not easy to answer so many questions in a breath," replied Nettle; "but I could name you fifty. There, for example, is our own countryman, Mole: he makes a thousand a year by the business."

"Weel, to be sure, how hidden things are brought to light!" exclaimed Andrew. "I ne'er

could fathom by what hook or crook he was leeving, nor whar he leeves. Whar is't?"

Nettle told him; and Andrew, inwardly overjoyed, proposed to drink his health, as a credit to Scotland, in a bumper, although the cloth was not removed.

"Stop, stop, man: it's not yet time: let us have the table cleared before we begin to toasts," said Nettle, laughing at Andrew's supposed rustic simplicity.

Our hero then inquired what books Mole had edited and prepared for the press, and in what degree of estimation they were held. Nettle told him the names of several; but Andrew affected to doubt the truth of what he said, and alleged that they were perhaps not at all of that degree of merit which his companion asserted. This begot something like a difference of opinion between them, which ended in the reiteration of Nettle's assertion, and an affirmation that the publishers would verify the correctness of what he maintained. Andrew, however, did not urge the matter further. He had thus adroitly acquired the name and address of an able editor, and the names of the booksellers by whom he was employed. He had, in consequence, nothing further to say to Nettle that evening; and accordingly, pushing the wine-decanter past him, he rose to go away, saying, "I'm no for ony mair."

"Sit down," cried Nettle, "and finish the wine. The port here is excellent."

"Ye wouldna hae me, surely, Mr Nettle, to sit till I'm taver't?¹ As sure's death, I fin' the wine rinnin' in my head already—I'll be fou if I drink ony mair. No; ye maun just let me gang my ways. Ye'll pay the reckoning; and if it dinna exceed five shillings, I'll no grudge the cost o' your conversation, which has been vera curious and agreeable—vera curious indeed, Mr Nettle. But gude-night;" and in saying this, Andrew hurried from the house.

His first course was to the shop of Mole's principal publisher, where he inquired for one of the books; and, upon seeing it, he looked into several passages as if he had been examining them critically, and said, "I dinna think, now, that this is a very weel-written work."

The bookseller was a little surprised at the remark; but, as booksellers are accustomed to see wise and learned characters in very queer and odd shapes, he gave Andrew credit for some critical acumen, while he controverted his opinion, maintaining the merits of the style and composition as both of the first class. Andrew, however, stuck to his point, and finally declined to purchase the work; satisfied, however, that the publisher had a high opinion of its literary merits. On leaving that shop he went to another, and another, until he found the opinion of Nettle fully verified. He then proceeded to the chambers of Mole, whom he found at home, and whom he thus ad-

¹ *Taver't.* Stupified.

dressed, although they had no previous acquaintance :—" Mr Mole, I hae a bit turn o' wark that wouldna be the waur o' your helping hand."

This abruptness startled the engineer of literature ; but, as he had seen the unlicked figure of Andrew at some of the fashionable houses, where he occasionally helped to make sensible speeches for the gentlemen, he divined, in some degree, the object of his visit, and civilly requested him to be seated, saying, " Pray, may I ask the nature of the business ? "

" It's a kind o' a book that I hae a thought anent ; but no being just as I could wish, in some respects, so particular in the grammaticals, I think that, before putting it out to the world, it wouldna be the waur o' being coll'd and kaim't¹ by an experienced han' like yours."

" Have you the manuscript with you ? " inquired Mole, endeavouring to look as serious as possible.

" No, sir ; I wantit first to ken if you would undertake the work."

" That will, in some degree, depend on the nature of the subject and the amount of the remuneration," replied Mole. " Do you mean simply that I should revise the manuscript, or rewrite the work entirely ? "

" I mean that ye're no to hain² your ability in the business ; but what I want to ken is the cost. Supposing now the vera utmost, and that ye were to write it all over again, what would you expect ? "

¹ *Coll'd and kaim't.* Cut and combed.

² *Hain.* Spare.

"You will not grudge to pay me at the rate of ten guineas a pica sheet octavo?"

"I'm no versed in your trade; but let me see a book that you would mak your ellwand, and I'll maybe can then make a guess at the estimate." An octavo volume, printed on pica type, was produced, and the extent of a sheet explained to him. "Dear me," he cried, "but this, sir, is a dreadful price—ten guineas for doing the like o' that! Na, na, sir, I couldna think o' mair than five pounds; and, if ye gie satisfaction, I'll try to make it guineas."

In the end, however, a bargain was made, by which it was agreed that the manuscript was to be submitted to the architect; and, if entire re-edification was found requisite, the remuneration was to be at the rate of seven pounds ten shillings. Mole pleaded earnestly for guineas; but Andrew declared he could by no possibility afford a farthing more. The same evening he wrote to Lord Sandyford that he had found a friend with some experience in the book-making line; and that, if his lordship would send up his manuscript, perhaps he could get him to undertake the job; but that he was a particular man, and very high in his price, which was commonly at the rate of ten guineas the sheet of pica demy octavo. Nevertheless, he assured his lordship he would try and get it done on as moderate terms as possible.

The earl knew as little of pica demy as Andrew himself, nor did he care. The manuscript was sent by a special messenger to our hero, who lost

no time in taking it to Mole, by whom it was cursorily glanced over in his presence.

Mole was struck with the composition, and the general elegance of taste and imagination that scintillated in many passages; and he said to Andrew, with a sharp and an inquisitive look, "Is this your work?"

"It's what I spoke to you anent. I'm thinking it's no sae bad as ye expectit."

"Bad!" exclaimed Mole; "it is full of the finest conceptions of a masterly genius. This is inspiration—I am utterly astonished."

"It's a great pleasure to me, sir," said Andrew, dryly, "that ye're so weel satisfied wi't. I trust it will make you abate something in the price."

"We have made an agreement, and the terms must be fulfilled. I cannot say that the work will require to be entirely rewritten. The material is precious, and wrought beautifully in many passages; but it may, nevertheless, require to be recast."

"Then," said Andrew, "since ye like it so well, I'll pay the seven pounds ten per sheet pica demy octavo, but no a single farthing mair, mind that; for if you haud me to the straights o' the bargain, I'll just be as severe upon you. So a' that I hae to say for the present is the old by-word, 'That they that do their turn in time, sit half idle'—ye'll make what speed ye dow."

The admiration of Mole was rather increased than diminished when, after the departure of our hero, he read the manuscript more leisurely. He

deemed it utterly impossible that a being so uncouth could have written such a work ; but he had been told, when he first observed his odd figure in society, that he was a creature of infinite whim and fancy ; and the manuscript was still more calculated than this account to set all theories of physiognomy at defiance.

As for Andrew himself, he exulted in the bargain, and at his own address in suppressing, in the first instance, the rate at which he had agreed the revision should be made. But the effect intended by informing the earl that the price was to be seven pounds ten shillings per sheet, instead of ten guineas, failed entirely in one respect ; for his lordship was no further satisfied with the bargain than as another proof of the simplicity and integrity of his agent,—at least it so appeared in the sequel ; for when the manuscript was recast and sent back to Chastington Hall, he remitted a hundred pounds for Mole, which was nearly double the sum stipulated. Andrew, in taking the money to him, said, “ Ye’ll find, sir, that I’m no waur than my word ; there’s a hundred-pound note, and as for the balance, ye’ll just keep it to buy a snuff-box or any other playock ¹ that may please you better.”

This liberality was, to the amazed reviser, still more extraordinary, after the higgling he had suffered, than even the intellectual merits of the pamphlet ; and in all companies afterwards, he spoke of Andrew as an incomprehensible prodigy of genius.

¹ *Playock*. Plaything.

CHAPTER XXXI

A Secret Expedition.

IN the meantime, the situation of Lady Sandysford at Elderbower with the dowager was far from yielding any consolation to her mortified spirit; for although the conduct of the old lady was truly exemplary, there was yet a sadness in her kindness that penetrated the heart of the countess with anguish. The mother-lady was constantly picturing to her own imagination the regular and gradual ruin of her only and darling son—he who had been the pride of her maternal heart, the joy of her widowhood, and the glory of her expectations. No complaint escaped her; but numberless little accidental expressions betrayed the secret perturbation of her spirit, and more than once she earnestly urged the young countess to allow her to write to the earl, and to invite him to Elderbower.

The first time that the dowager clearly expressed this wish was one day after dinner. The weather out of doors was raw and gloomy. An unusual depression had all the morning weighed upon the spirits of both the ladies; and the

countess began to distrust the power with which she supposed herself capable of adopting a new frame and course of life that would one day extort the admiration of her lord, and revive that affection which she had lost, not forfeited. The old lady eagerly urged her suit; affirming that it was impossible her son could have fallen so entirely from the original magnanimity of his nature as to slight an endeavour to recover his esteem, which had all the energy of contrition with the grandeur of virtue. "Believe me, Lady Sandyford," exclaimed the partial mother, "that if he knew the depth of your sorrow at the misfortune that has come upon you both, there is nothing within the reach of his power and ability that he would not exert to console you."

The countess burst into tears, and replied, "Alas! my dear mother, in what is this to end? I am conscious of my innocence. I know that I have never swerved from the purity of a wife; but I have failed to retain the affections of my husband, because, in the lightness of youth and the intoxication of vanity, I was more gratified with the loquacious admiration of those whom I in reality despised than with the quiet and placid tenor of his affection. My eyes are opened to my error—they have been opened by the consequences—: vexation for my disregard may have irritated him into many of those follies that both your ladyship and I deplore, and may have to mourn all the remainder of our lives. But what

I now most immediately suffer is the grief of knowing that while I am here you have the monitor of your affliction constantly before you; and, alas! I cannot go away without giving some warranting to the evil report of the world."

"But why will you not allow me to tell George the state of your feelings, and leave it to himself to determine whether he will come to Elderbower or not?"

The dowager, in saying this, took the countess gently by the hand, adding, "Indeed, my dear Augusta, you are wrong in this—you are sacrificing yourself—you are distressing me; and I fear you may have cause to rue the effect on George."

Lady Sandford dried her eyes, and said, "Ah, I fear your ladyship thinks of him as if he was still a boy! You are little aware of the latent strength of his character; nor was I, till reflecting on many things since I came to this house. Whatever his faults or his errors may be, meanness is not one of them. Nothing would be so easy as to bring him here, out of compassion; but I cannot be an object of compassion to the man I love. The very virtue of his generosity takes the nature of a vice towards me, and I dare not appeal to it."

She could add no more. The tears rushed into her eyes; and she wept so bitterly that the old lady became alarmed, and said, "This, Augusta, is what I did not look for from you. Let us drop

the subject. But I will write to George ; and, without saying you are with me, I will inquire into the circumstances, as they may have affected him, by which your separation has been produced : an event of which I am totally unable at present to form any proper opinion."

In the course of the same afternoon the dowager wrote to the earl, believing he was still in London ; and, while engaged with her letter, the countess went to her own room, where Flounce was notably employed in distributing her lady's wardrobe from the trunks. The box which belonged to the mother of the orphan was standing on the floor ; and Flounce, two or three times before she excited any attention towards it, expressed her wonder about what it could contain. At last, however, she was successful : the eyes of the countess were directed towards the package ; and her mind becoming disengaged from the passion of her own thoughts, her curiosity was awakened.

"I think, Flounce," said her ladyship, "we should examine that box, and take an inventory of what it contains for the poor infant. The contents cannot be valuable ; but they may be such as to help the orphan at some future day to discover her relations."

"I dare say they will," replied Flounce ; "and I have my own reasons for thinking she will be found to have come of very great people in foreign parts. Does not your ladyship recollect what delightful ear-rings were in her mother's ears ?"

After some discussion respecting the means of satisfying this,—as to whether a hammer was requisite, or the poker might serve,—it was agreed that the assistance of the latter potentate should be first summoned, and, if unsuccessful, the hammer might then be invited to take a part in the business. The poker, however, proved, in the strenuous hands of Flounce, abundantly effective: the lid of the box was wrenched open, and the contents exposed to view.

The first sight presented nothing remarkable. It consisted of different articles of female finery, neither of a very high nor (as Flounce truly observed) of a very prime and fashionable quality. But, on exploring the mine, a small casket was found; it was seized by her ladyship, and opened in haste, while Flounce stood, the figure of wonder, by her side. The contents, however, were not of any particular value; but among them was the miniature of a gentleman which the countess recognised as that of Mr Ferrers. A letter also was found from Ferrers, written in such imperfect Italian as men of fashion are in the practice of addressing to the virgin train of the opera and ballet. It was not, however, of an either very amorous or amiable kind, for it seemed to be the dismissal from his protection of the unfortunate mother.

The first movement which the perusal produced in the spirit of the countess was not of the most philanthropic kind; as for Flounce, she loudly and

vehemently protested against all the male "sect" (as she called them) for a pack of infidel wretches.

After various disquisitions on this discovery, it was agreed that, under existing circumstances, it would be as well, for the present, to say nothing in the house about it; but that Flounce should return to the Rose and Crown, and explain to the landlady, in confidence, the relationship of the child, and urge her to take the necessary means to acquaint the father of Monimia's situation.

This was a charming mission, and exactly suited to the genius of Flounce, who accordingly went off next day by the London coach, which passed the gate of Elderbower; and, that the servants might not be wondering and guessing as to the objects of her journey, she prudently deemed it expedient to inform them that she was going to town to bring some additions to her lady's wardrobe. The landlady of the Rose and Crown received her with great cordiality; but when, after many solemn injunctions, Flounce disclosed the object of her visit, Mrs Vintage coolly said, "She would neither make nor meddle in the matter; for it was rumoured that Mr Ferrers had gambled away his whole estate, and that Castle Rooksborough was expected to be sold immediately." Flounce was not quite content with the conduct of the landlady, and returned by the coach the same evening, somewhat in a huffy humour, greatly to the surprise of all the household at Elderbower, who, being in the practice of calculating the

distance, discovered that she could not possibly have been at London. Flounce, however, was not to be confounded, as she told her lady, by any suspectifying persons, and on the first expression of John Luncheon's surprise, when he saw her alight, she informed him that, having forgotten something very particular, she was obliged to return. But there was a mystery and a flurry in her appearance that John did not much like, as he did not, indeed, much like herself; and he made his remarks on her accordingly to his fellow-servants in the hall, the effect of which had no tendency to exalt their opinion either of mistress or of maid.

The whole affair, however, might have soon passed off, and a plausible excuse been devised for not sending Flounce again to town; but the wonder was considerably augmented by another equally unaccountable excursion which she made the same evening.

In a laudatory account to her lady of the infant—for she had summoned the nurse and Monimia to the Rose and Crown—she deplored the meanness of its attire, declaring that it was dressed in old trolloping things which had belonged to Mrs Peony's brat; adding that she had seen in a shop-window in Elderton the most beautiful baby-linen, advising her lady to purchase a supply for the poor dear little creature, just in charity, although it was not a legitimate. The countess consented to this, and gave the requisite money. Flounce

was not one of those foolish virgins who slumber and sleep in their tasks; on the contrary, she could never rest till her work was done, especially if it was a business seasoned with any species of adventure or of mystery. Within less than two hours after her return, she contrived to slip out alone, and to purchase the articles she wanted. These she directed herself for Mrs Peony, to whom she wrote on the subject also in the shop where she had bought them; and carried the parcel in her own hands to the London coach-office at the Nag's Head, and saw them booked with her own eyes, all in the most commendable spirit of faithful agency.

The purchase of fine baby-clothes in a small market-town, especially by a lady's-maid, is an event of some consequence; and the expedition of Flounce caused a good deal of conversation, insomuch that the landlady at the Nag's Head, where John Luncheon and the coachman were in the practice of nightly taking their pipe and potation, heard of it next day, and, mentioning the subject to her husband, he recollected the circumstance of Flounce bringing a parcel for the coach, and being very particular in seeing it booked. By this means the affair reached the ears of John Luncheon, who, having no remarkable esteem for Flounce, whom he described as a pert London hussy, surmised something not much to the credit of her virgin purity, and communicated his suspicions to Betty Blabbingwell,

one of the maids, who rehearsed it, with some circumstantial and descriptive details additional, to Mrs Polisher, the housekeeper. Mrs Polisher, however, was not convinced of the truth of the report, but went herself to the shop where the purchase was made, where she not only ascertained the whole circumstances of the fact, but also that the articles purchased were of the very finest description, altogether unlikely, indeed, for any chambermaid's accidental progeny. But Mrs Polisher was a prudent woman, and she said nothing. She, however, made her own reflections, and drew an inference that riveted her antipathy against the countess,—an antipathy which had its origin in the great affection which she bore her young master from the first hour that she dandled him in her arms when a baby. But she did not disclose her suspicions to the dowager, being determined to find out the whole affair before unnecessarily occasioning a rupture, which she anticipated would soon be complete and final.

In this manner the seeds of distrust were carried into that asylum where Lady Sandford had hoped to prepare herself for appearing with renewed advantage in the eyes of her lord. Perhaps she erred in concealing the discovery which she had made of Ferrers' child, and the protection which she had bestowed on the orphan. Nor is it easy to explain the feeling which influenced her. But a vague notion had floated across her mind occa-

sionally that the paragraph which involved her in so much trouble referred to his marked attentions ; and it operated with the effect of a motive in restraining her from ever alluding to him in her conversations with the dowager.

CHAPTER XXXII

A Mystery.

ALTHOUGH the earl had got his manuscript prepared for the press, as we have described, the publication was delayed by the occurrence of a disagreeable incident. One morning, on reading the county newspaper, he happened to observe the advertisement of a sale by auction of the furniture of Castle Rooksborough; and among other things enumerated was a quantity of china, said to have been the same which was used by *Jamies I.* at his accession to the English crown. In the *changes* of his furniture, his lordship wanted some additional old china to complete an effect in one of the state apartments; and having nothing very particular at the time to engage his attention, he determined to attend the sale of Ferrers' effects.

Castle Rooksborough was, as we have already mentioned, situated near the Rose and Crown, about thirty miles from Chastington Hall. It was, therefore, on account of the distance, in some degree necessary that his lordship should remain there all night; and being desirous that his mother

should not hear of his being so near her neighbourhood,—for Elderbower was but one stage off,—he resolved to go alone to the sale, that he might not be known by his servants.

It was late in the evening when he reached the Rose and Crown, and nothing particular occurred that night. Next morning, before the sale, he walked in the park of Castle Rooksborough; and although the air was clear and bracing, and the spring sat in every bower, crowned with her gayest garlands, there was something in the scene and circumstances which did not altogether tend to exhilarate his spirits. The estate was dilapidated by a spendthrift possessor, and ordered to be sold, with all the movables, by his creditors. It had been for ages in the possession of the prodigal's ancestors, and a general murmur prevailed throughout the county against the unhappy man's indiscretions. The reflections which these things produced sank into the heart of Lord Sandyford, and placed his own conduct in a mortifying light before him.

As he was straying over the grounds, he fell in with a young country girl carrying a child. The brilliant dark Italian eyes of the infant attracted his attention; and the style in which it was dressed,—so much above the appearance of the nurse,—induced him to stop and speak to her. The beauty of the infant won upon his affections, and his curiosity was excited to learn how a child, apparently better born, came to be entrusted to

so young, and seemingly so improper, a nurse. The girl, however, could give him no satisfaction. All that she knew respecting it was that she had been hired by the landlady of the Rose and Crown to take care of it while it remained with Mrs Peony, who was employed by a grand lady to suckle it.

There appeared to the earl some mystery in this; and when he had purchased the lot of china, which he ordered to be sent to Chastington Hall, he returned to the inn to hold some conversation with the landlady on the subject of Monimia,—for the child was that orphan.

Mrs Vintage of the Rose and Crown did not prove quite so communicative as he expected. She only civilly answered his questions, and said no more than what a direct response required.

“Do you know the parents of the child?” said his lordship. “They must be persons of some condition, I should think, by the dress of the infant.”

“As to that I cannot say; I have never seen either of them. The mother is dead; and as for the father,—I can give you no account of him.”

“Then who in this neighbourhood pays the nurse?”

“I do,” replied Mrs Vintage.

“And how are you repaid?” said the inquisitive peer.

“I do not think I am bound to answer that

question to a stranger," replied the prudent landlady of the Rose and Crown.

His lordship, finding that she was resolved not to satisfy his curiosity in a direct manner, and her guarded answers having only served to whet his inquisitiveness, took another and a more ingenious course with her. He affected to let the topic drop, and began to question her about the neighbourhood, and about the travellers of rank who had recently stopped at the house,—a subject on which she delighted to expatiate. Among others, she mentioned the transit of the unfortunate Lady Sandyford in her father's carriage: in speaking of whom there was a degree of embarrassment in her manner that strongly excited his attention.

The sharpness of the earl's interrogatories increased her confusion; and she contrived, in order to avoid the keenness of his questioning, to leave the room just at the moment when she had led him to suspect that there was some mystery connected with the countess and the child.

The agitation into which he was thrown by this conversation is not to be described. He almost instantly ordered a post-chaise, and returned to Chastington Hall burning with thoughts of suspicion. At the first stage where he changed he met Servinal, his valet, returning from London, where he had been sent on some business; he had come back with the coach on which Flounce had travelled from Elderbower on her mission to Castle

Rooksborough, and he heard of that damsel's secret expedition—she herself having told the coachman that she was Lady Sandyford's maid.

On seeing his master alight, and not being aware of the state of his feelings, Servinal informed his lordship of that circumstance, wondering what business could have taken Flounce to the Rose and Crown. This was confirmation to all his lordship's jealousy; and when he resumed his chair at night in the library of Chastington, his very soul was boiling with indignation against the insolence (as he now deemed it) of the message which Sir Charles Runnington had brought from the marquis. But suddenly, in the fury of his passion, the remembrance of the part he had himself performed as a husband came like a blast from the frozen ocean, and chilled his blood.

The temper of his feelings changed. The countess, in the youth and bloom of her bridal charms, rose in the freshness of his early fondness, and moved him to sorrow and remorse. All other feelings were absorbed in contrition, and he wept with the profuse tears of lamenting childhood.

In an instant, however, the paroxysm took another turn, and he reflected on the sincerity with which he had loved, and how coldly his ardour had been met: how negligently his tastes and his predilections were regarded; and, giving way again to the impulse of these reflections, he accused the countess as the most insensible of

women—the most artful, perfidious, and base,—and, starting from his seat, rushed across the room, with desperation in his looks, and his hands fiercely clenched and upraised. In that moment the door opened, and his mother entered.

His surprise at her appearance was inexpressible, and still more when, in pressing him to her bosom, and weeping on his neck, she said, “Alas ! my unhappy boy, I did not expect to find you in this condition.”

The venerable matron, unable to repress her maternal feelings when, by accident, she heard that he had retired from London to Chastington Hall, determined to visit him. Nor did the countess oppose this natural solicitude. When the first reciprocity of affection was over, the dowager took a seat beside her son, and calmly remonstrated against the seclusion in which he had too suddenly shut himself up ; expressing her hope that the breach between him and his wife was not irreparable.

“What !” he exclaimed, “can you think me able to submit to the degradation of respecting a flagrant adulteress ? I have such proof. I have seen with my own eyes the living evidence of her guilt. Oh ! let us speak of her no more, let her perish in the unproclaimed infamy to which she has sunk !”

The dowager was thunderstruck, and remained looking at him, and unable to speak. But when his agitation had in some degree subsided, she

recovered her self-possession, and inquired to what circumstances and proofs of guilt he had alluded. This led to an account of his excursion, and to the supposed discovery he had made of Monimia. The old lady could not credit the story, and expressed her suspicion of some mistake on his part, which had the effect of reviving all his indignant feelings.

"Mother!" he exclaimed, "you do not know the woman—her whole soul is engaged with nothing but herself—she could never see attention shown to any other without considering it as something unjustly taken from herself—she never felt that her interests and affections were wedded to mine, but regarded them as distinct and pre-eminent—she worshipped no other god but herself—she made me feel, from the fatal day of our marriage, that there was nothing mutual between us, that I *was only* subsidiary to her. The sense of that discovery drove me to despair,—a despair that wore the mask of pleasure to the world, while worse than ten thousand scorpions was stinging me at the heart. In all that wild and wicked interval, she calmly set herself out for adulation; never once did she look as if she felt any apprehension for the issue of a career that she could not but see must terminate in ruin,—even in those hours of remorse and ennui, when one gentle wish from her might have recalled me to myself, did ever any such pass the cold marble of her lips?"

"This will not do, George," interposed the

dowager, with an accent of entreaty and moderation. "This vehemence of feeling is not what the object deserves, if she is so unworthy as you have represented her. But calm yourself; it is possible there may be some misunderstanding or misconjecture in all that you have told me."

"There is neither conjecture nor misunderstanding in what I have felt," replied the earl; "but let us drop the subject. I am glad to see you at Chastington, and I will show you to-morrow the improvements I am making."

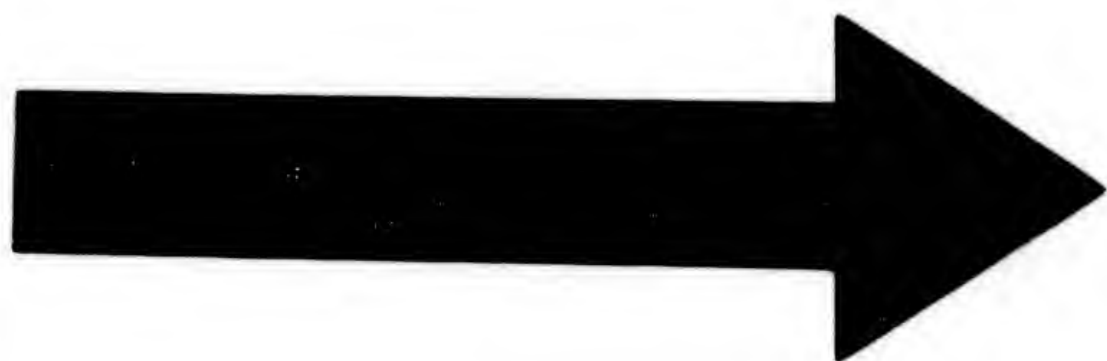
In this abrupt way his lordship changed the conversation, and, in the course of a few minutes, was almost as cheerful with his mother as if he had never given her any reason to deplore his folly, nor had any to do so himself. But determined in his own mind to sift the matter thoroughly, since it was possible there might be some mistake, he wrote the same evening to Mr Vellum, requesting Wylie to be sent to assist him in the arrangement of some domestic concerns. He said nothing of the business for which he wished this assistance, but allowed the solicitor to imagine that it might be with reference to the papers and suggestions which the earl, a few posts before, had received relative to the state of his income and debts.

The situation of the dowager was most embarrassing. When she parted from the countess, she had promised to return on the third day, or to write. But with the disagreeable news she had received, neither could properly be done. At the

same time, however, such had been the favourable light in which her daughter-in-law appeared, from the moment of her arrival at Elderbower, that she would not allow herself to entertain any thought derogatory from her honour. She expected that the earl would have set out the next day to Castle Rooksborough again, to examine the mystery there more leisurely; but he evinced no disposition to do so. He merely said, after breakfast, that he had written to London for a young gentleman who, he thought, might be useful in helping him to investigate the mystery of the child of the Rose and Crown: "For," said he gaily, "until we discover its parentage, we can assign it no better sire and dam."

But if the arrival of his mother disturbed the monotony of the earl's retirement, it was an event of delightful importance to the domestics at Chastington Hall. Mrs Valence exulted in the opportunity which it afforded to her of displaying, before so thorough a judge as her ladyship, with what care, and in what perfect beauty, she had preserved every article which had been committed to her charge; nor was there a servant in the house who had not some voucher to produce of fidelity and vigilance. All received their due meed of dignified commendation, and all of them rejoiced in the greatness of that reward.

Her arrival was productive of other cheerful consequences to the household. The shyness with which the earl received the visits of the



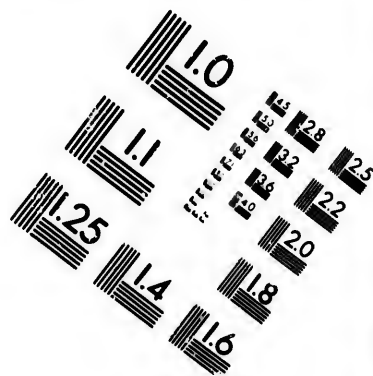
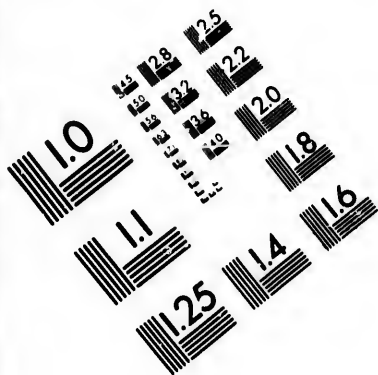
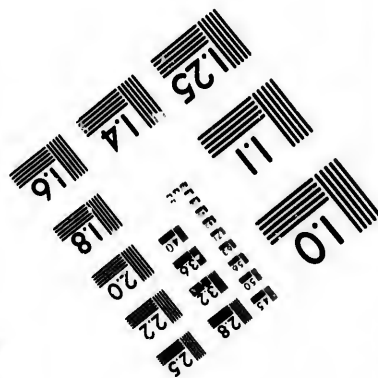
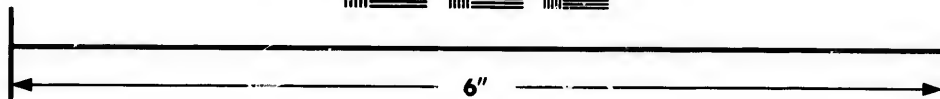
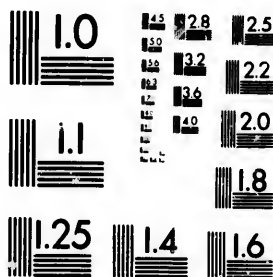


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neighbouring gentlemen had, in a great measure, suspended the intercourse that might otherwise have arisen; but the elderly matrons in their families, who had been acquainted with the dowager in the time of her lord, on hearing that she had arrived at Chastington, came flocking in crowds to see her, so that, for a day or two, there was something like a stir about the house.

The presence of a Lady Sandyford at the Hall was, indeed, like the spring: it drew out from their winter seats, as gay as tulips from their bulbs, all the ladies in the vicinity; and many a sable son of the Church was seen slowly moving towards the portal, as sleek and as plump as the snails that the genial influence of the season had induced to come abroad. Among other visitors, the dowager was pleased to discover, in a little smart old man, in black satin inexpressibles, with sky-blue silk stockings, golden buckles, a white waistcoat, and a green coat, with his smirking face dapperly set in a trim white tie-wig, Dr Trefoil, whom she had herself been chiefly instrumental in bringing into notice when a young man: not, however, so much on account of his professional abilities, as for a certain dainty and pleasing method of treating those little irksomenesses of the sex that are often as afflicting to themselves and their friends as more serious diseases. The doctor, in his youth, had been a beau: indeed, his appearance bore incontestable proofs of that historical fact; but, notwithstanding all the pretty

little compliments which he was daily in the practice of paying the ladies, he still remained a bachelor, and was now determined to die, as he said, a martyr to his humanity. For it seems the doctor had, like many other sage and learned personages, become a convert to the Malthusian heresy, then recently promulgated, and was alarmed at the hazard we run of being elbowed out of the world, in spite of the Faculty, war, pestilence, famine, and sudden death.

Scarcely had her old acquaintance offered his congratulations at seeing her ladyship look so well, when, recollecting his delicacy and address, it immediately occurred to her that he might be a fit person to employ as an agent in sifting the mystery connected with the birth of the child. But it is necessary that we should revert to the state and situation of the young countess, who, in the meantime, was left as dull as any lady of fashion could well be that had actually happened to suffer the enamel of her reputation to be damaged.

CHAPTER XXXIII

A Discovery.

WHEN the countess heard that the earl also had, suddenly after her departure from London, quitted the town and retired to Chastington Hall, her mind was seized with an unaccountable anxiety and apprehension. She ascribed the cause at first, naturally enough, to his wish to avoid their mutual friends until the separation had blown over ; but when her father wrote that their house had been taken possession of by Mr Vellum, and that the establishment was broken up, she felt that a change indeed had taken place, as much beyond her control as it was above her comprehension. That Lord Sandyford should disentangle himself at once, and as it were by force, from all his town connections, seemed to her a prodigy of which she could form no just estimate. She sometimes thought it was but the temporary resolution of a fit of spleen ; but she remembered, with a feeling to which she could assign no name, that he had often manifested a decision and firmness that belied that carelessness which she had considered as the strongest peculiarity of his char-

acter. The event interested her curiosity as well as affected her sensibility ; and she was glad when the dowager proposed to visit him at Chastington.

Nothing, however, could exceed her chagrin, when, instead of the return of the old lady on the third day, according to her promise, she received a note, simply stating that it was the dowager's intention to remain some time at the Hall, and without containing a single word on any other subject. This was even still more mysterious than the sudden alteration in the conduct of the earl, while it seemed to spring from the same cause. It grieved and it vexed her, and affected her best thoughts and calmest moments with inquietude and despondency. She felt, sometimes, as if she had been abandoned to solitude and suffering ; and though conscious that she had committed no crime to entail so bitter a punishment, she confessed to herself that she had been perhaps too late in considering that the preservation of a husband's love is often the most difficult, as it is always the most delicate, duty of a wife.

When the dowager had been absent four days, a servant came from the Hall to make some addition to her wardrobe ; and from him his unfortunate mistress heard that it was doubtful when she would return. She also learned that the earl had been informed by his mother that she was at Elderbower. All this was incomprehensible, and turned her pillow into thorns. Flounce, who saw her anxiety, and guessed

something of her thoughts, exerted her utmost powers of talk and tattle to amuse her, without effect; at last she proposed they should make an excursion to see the orphan.

"It is such a beauty," said Flounce: "has the most charming eyes; it will do your poor heart good to see the pretty dear. Besides, it is but twelve miles off. We can go there in the morning, and whisk back to dinner with all the ease in the world."

The countess was not in a disposition to controvert the exhortation of Flounce; and accordingly a post-chaise was ordered, and the lady, attended only by her waiting-gentlewoman, set off to visit the child of the Rose and Crown.

The sale at the Castle had lasted several days, but it was all over before they arrived, and the mansion shut up.

After amusing herself for a few minutes with the infant Monimia, whose beauty certainly did not appear to have been exaggerated by Flounce, the countess strayed into the Castle-park alone, leaving Flounce to gossip with Mrs Peony. The day was remarkably fine for the season, and the spring was in full verdure; but there was a solemnity in the woods,—all marked for the axe of the feller,—and a silence in the venerable mansion,—every window being closed,—that touched the heart of the solitary with inexpressible sadness. She walked round the walls, and looked for some time at a number of swallows,

which, as if informed that the house would be long untenanted, had that morning begun to build their nests in several of the window-corners.

As she was indulging the train of reflections which this little incident awakened, she saw a gentleman pass hurriedly across the lawn, and enter a small gate in the garden-wall which she had not before noticed. His figure was familiar to her; but the rapidity of his pace, and the intervention of the boughs of the shrubbery, prevented her from seeing him distinctly.

There was something in his air and haste which startled her; and a sentiment more deserving the name of interest than curiosity led her to follow him to the gate, which he had left open. On looking in, she was surprised at the beauty of the garden, but her eye speedily searched around for the stranger. He was, however, nowhere to be seen.

As she was standing with the door in her hand, she observed a puff of smoke rise from behind the corner of a conservatory, and, immediately after, the stranger rush from the same place with a pistol in his hand. His appearance left her in no doubt that he meditated a desperate deed against himself; and, prompted by the irresistible impulse of the moment, she darted forward and snatched the weapon from his hand. In the same instant she recognised in him Mr Ferrers, the unfortunate owner of the castle. He also knew her, and

exclaimed, "Gracious Heaven! Lady Sandyford here!"

A brief conversation followed. He declared himself utterly ruined: all his friends had deserted him, and he had none left but death: no home but the grave. Her ladyship was excessively shocked: she trembled from head to foot, and, still holding the pistol, implored him to desist from his dreadful intent.

"Alas, madam!" cried the frantic man, "you may as well tell him who is expiring of a fever not to die. Despair is my disease; and I am as much its victim as the leper that perishes of malady in an hospital. I have stooped to beggary, I have scarcely refrained from crime; but all has been of no avail. A curse is upon me, and misery in my blood. It is inhuman, lady, to break thus upon the secret horrors of a dying wretch. Leave me—oh, leave me, Lady Sandyford, to my fate!"

He made an effort to seize the pistol again; but she had the presence of mind, though agitated beyond the power of speaking, to plunge it into a pond where the gardeners filled their watering-pans.

Ferrers, on seeing this action, started back, and said in a voice that was seemingly calm, but awfully emphatic, "I have heard or read that sometimes in those black moments when all chance of help deserts the hope and reason of man, Providence is pleased to manifest its power

and watchfulness. Has it sent you to save me from perdition?" And in saying these words, he knelt and kissed her hand with the reverence and awe of adoration.

In this crisis, the Dowager Lady Sandyford, leaning on the arm of Dr Trefoil, entered the garden; but, on seeing this scene, immediately withdrew. The old lady recognised her daughter-in-law, and, without uttering a word, hurried back to her carriage, which stood at the entrance to the park. The doctor, who was unacquainted with the countess, made several attempts, as they hastened back, to break the consternation of the dowager, by joking on their mal-intrusion; but she fearfully silenced him by wildly shaking her head.

On reaching the carriage, he handed her in, and then took a seat beside her.

"Where shall we drive?" said the servant, as he shut the door.

"Home, home, home, to Chastington."

The countess, unconscious of the evil construction that was, perhaps naturally enough, put upon the situation in which she had been discovered, retreated from the impassioned gratitude of Ferrers, and hastened back to the Rose and Crown, where she learned, with extreme vexation, that the Dowager Lady Sandyford had been there with a gentleman anxiously inquiring for the orphan.

"I do believe," said the landlady, as she communicated this news, "they have come from Chas-

tington on purpose ; and I dare say they will be back presently, for the nurse, with your maid, is walking in Rooksborough Park with the child, where they have gone to seek her. I happened to be out of the way when her ladyship arrived, and she asked (I am told) very earnestly to see me."

While they were speaking, the nurse, with Flounce and Monimia, were seen coming quickly towards the inn. Flounce had recognised the carriage and livery from a distance, and was hastening to ascertain the cause of so unexpected a phenomenon, when she saw it drive suddenly away.

The spirits of the countess were exhausted by the painful trial to which her feelings had been subjected. A presentiment of misfortune oppressed her heart ; and during the greatest part of the journey back to Elderbower she seldom exchanged words with Flounce. They were, indeed, half-way before anything occurred to move her from the melancholy abstraction into which she had fallen. It happened, however, that on reaching the cross-roads, where the branch that led past Chastington diverges, they met the London coach, on the outside of which, covered with dust, sat our hero, on his way to the Hall.

"As I live," exclaimed Flounce, "if there be not that Dutch nut-cracker, the Scotch creature, flying away on the top of the coach ! Where can he be going to wink and twinkle, and snap his fingers, till he makes the sides ache again ?"

"I wish," said the countess, "I had stopped him;" and she added, with a sigh, "Can he be on his way to Chastington?" She then relapsed into her melancholy reflections, thinking it probable the earl was entertaining company, and had invited Andrew to amuse them. "In what," thought she to herself, "is this singular solitariness of mine to end? Can it be possible that some one has poisoned the ear of Sandyford, and that he has converted his mother to believe the suspicion? That vile paragraph he seemed to think true. Has the author of the malignant invention had access to him? Can Sandyford condemn me without a hearing, without proof, without investigation? No matter: I will droop my head in secret; and whatever may have been my faults hitherto,—for all that heartlessness with which I have been so often taunted, perhaps justly,—I may yet die of a broken heart. I feel that I can."

While these painful reflections were vibrating in her mind, the carriage arrived at Elderbower. On alighting, she walked directly to the dowager's parlour, where dinner was immediately served up. She felt herself so much indisposed, however, that, instead of sitting down to table, she retired to her own room, and surrendered herself to the most desponding reflections. Bred up in the preserves of dignified opulence, she had never before seen the anguish of mental distress in any undisguised form, nor could she till then com-

prehend the horrors which ruin and poverty presented to a mind of such a feverish temperament as that of Ferrers. Her life, till the occurrences arose of which we have been treating, had been one continued series of the most ordinary transactions that befall persons of her rank and condition. She had passed from the fondling embraces of the nursery to the measured and circumspect regulations of her governess, and from these to the incense of public admiration, under the auspices of her accomplished husband. She had never till now come into actual contact with the world, nor once been obliged to draw on those innate resources which she possessed within herself against its malice or the vicissitudes of fortune. She had heard of suffering and of sorrow, had wept over afflictions described in novels, and sighed over sorrows deplored in poetry ; but the real nature of either she had never known, and what she felt for the distress of the wretched Ferrers was as new in sensation as it was disagreeable.

While she was thus indulging her feelings, a messenger arrived from Burisland Abbey, her father's seat in that neighbourhood, with a letter from the marquis, in which his lordship expressed his regret that she should have exposed herself to the mortification of being abandoned by the Dowager Lady Sandyford ; hoped she was in good health ; informed her that his own seat, Bretonsbiel Castle, was in readiness to receive her ; and advised her to remove thither immediately, and to

write him what she wished done, for that he was obliged to return to London on public business of the utmost consequence, the second reading of the County Prisons Bill being fixed for the day following.

The mind and feelings of the countess were so much occupied with her own agitated reflections that the style and contents of this paternal epistle did not at first make any particular impression, and she read it as Hamlet did the words. She saw the forms of the alphabet, the outlines of the page; she knew the handwriting, and the sense floated before her; but when she laid the paper on the table the whole was forgotten, and she remained for some time ruminating and abstracted, till a flood of tears came to her relief.

When the emotion of weeping had subsided, her eye accidentally fell on her father's letter, and she immediately took it up, and read it again. The coldness of the language smote her heart, and she felt as if the barb of an icy arrow had penetrated her bosom on reading the expression, "abandoned by the dowager."

She rang the bell with an eager hand, and ordered the carriage to be instantly ready for the Abbey. She drove thither in a state little short of distraction; but, on arriving at the gate, was informed that the marquis had three hours before set off for London. She had still his letter in her hand, and her first thought was to proceed immediately to Chastington; but, changing her

determination, she unfortunately went on through the park to the Abbey, where she alighted, and requested that one of the servants might immediately prepare to go to the Hall for her, on business of the utmost consequence. Having given these orders, she wrote a note to the dowager, enclosing the marquis's letter, and simply requesting an explanation of its contents.

The groom was in readiness with his horse at the door almost as soon as this brief note was sealed, and he instantly set off. He reached the Hall while the dowager was dressing for dinner, after her return from the excursion with the doctor; and the note was delivered to her in her own room. She read it hastily, and that of the marquis also, and immediately folding them up, in the agitation of the moment, and with a trembling hand, she wrote two lines, simply saying that the occasion of Lady Sandyford's visit to Castle Rooksborough, and her clandestine interview with Mr Ferrers in the garden there, would sufficiently explain the reason of her abandonment.

CHAPTER XXXIV

Outside Travelling.

NEAR the great gate that led to Chastington Hall stood a small public-house, the Sandyford Arms. It was about a quarter of a mile from the village, and had been established chiefly for the accommodation of the servants of visitors, and of the labourers employed in the grounds. At this house the London coaches were in the practice of stopping to deliver letters or parcels, as the case happened to be; but, in the opinion of the passengers, to enable the drivers to regale themselves in the morning with a glass of rum and milk, and in the evening with a draught of ale. Here our hero, in due time, after passing the countess, was set down from the top of a coach which left London the preceding day, but so covered with dust that a fellow-passenger of the sister isle declared that if he was a potato he might grow without any other planting.

Andrew, on alighting, procured materials for washing, and changed his dress; and as Mrs Tapper, the landlady, was an agreeable, talkative matron, he bespoke a bed,—conditionally, how-

ever. "I would like vera weel, mistress, to bide wi' you," said he, "and maybe I may do sae, so ye'll hae the considerateness to keep a bed, at least till I come back from the Hall; but if I shouldna happen to come back before twelve o'clock at night or sae, ye needna expec me."

The truth was that he counted on being invited to take up his abode at the Hall, but in case of disappointment took this method of having another string to his bow.

When he had equipped himself in the wonted style in which he was in the practice of visiting at Sandyford House in London, he proceeded up the grand avenue to the portal of the mansion. But as he approached nearer and nearer, and the spacious and richly adorned front, with the numerous gilded spires, pinnacles, and domes, dilated in his view, his wonted confidence began to fail, and he experienced a feeling of diffidence that had never to an equal degree affected him before. He wondered what could be the matter with himself, considering how intimately acquainted he was with the earl. In a word, he felt as abashed and out of sorts as a young nobleman does in going to court for the first time, although assured of a gracious reception, both from his personal knowledge of the monarch and acquaintance with the principal attendants.

When he reached the portal, the gate was open and the porter was absent, so that he entered in quest of a door to knock at or a bell

to ring; but before he had advanced many paces, the porter came to him, (an old corpulent and somewhat testy as well as proud personage), and gruffly inquired what he wanted.

"I am come frae London," replied Andrew, still under the repressive influence of the genius of that magnificent mansion, "on business wi' my lord."

Peter Baton, the porter, surveyed him from head to foot, and thought there was not much of the arrogance of a gentleman in his look or garb; and his face had the tinge of a rustic exposure to the weather—the effect of his outside travelling.

"My lord is out, young man, a-riding, and it will be some time before he returns; you may therefore step into the servants' hall and rest yourself. There is plenty of good ale for all strangers."

This was said in a more civil tone by Baton, in consequence of the humility of Andrew's appearance.

Our hero, however, did not accept of the hospitable recommendation, but replied, "I'm vera much obliged to you; but I'll just dauner about in the policy till the earl comes in, as my concern's wi' hissel'."

At this crisis, however, his lordship rode into the court, and instantly recognised him with all his usual jocularitv, which sent honest Peter Baton to his post grumbling, wondering who the devil that queer chap could be, and concluding

in his own mind that he must be some apprentice to one of the Jew money-lenders for whom the woods were so rapidly thinning.

The moment that Andrew was in the presence of the master, his habitual ease returned; and, in going into the library with the earl, he gave his lordship such a description of his adventures in the journey from town as effectually cleared, as the earl himself expressed it, the duckweed from his stagnant thoughts.

"If your lordship," said Andrew, "has never travelled on the tap o' a coach by night, I wouldna advise you to try't; for although I cannily placed myself between an Irishman and an auld wife, in the hope that the tane would keep me awake by his clavers, and the other by her clatter, and so save me frae coupling aff,¹ a' was naething, even wi' my own terrors free gratis, to haud me frae nodding as if my head had been an ill-sew't-on button; and the warst o' a' was, the deevil o' an Irishman, though he was sitting on the very lip o' the roof, he had nae mercy, but fell asleep as sound as a tap the moment his tongue lay, and was every noo and then getting up wi' a great flaught² of his arms, like a goose wi' its wings jumping up a stair, alarming us a' as if he was in the act o' tumbling down aneath the wheels. And then the carlin, she grippit wi' me like grim death at every joggle the coach gied; so that if, by ony mischance, she had been shooggled aff, whar

¹ *Coupling aff.* Tumbling off.

² *Flaught.* Spread.

would I hae been then? It's really, my lord, an awfu' thing to travel by night on the tap o' a coach."

"True, Wyne; but why did not ye take the inside?" said the earl.

Andrew did not choose to confess the real saving cause, considering the liberal provision his lordship had procured for him; but, evading the question, replied, "It's no every ane, my lord, that can thole tne inside o' a coach, especially the fore-seat that draws backward."

"Ay; but what prevented you from taking the other?" cried his lordship, who correctly guessed the true reason of the preference for the outside.

"Ye may weel say that, my lord; but I thought the outside would hae been vera pleasant; and, indeed, naething could be mair sae, as we came trindling along in the dewy eye o' the morning, smelling the caller air frae the blithesome trees and hedges, a' buskit in their new cleeding, like lads and lasses dressed for a bridal."

"Poetical, by all that's marvellous!" exclaimed the earl at this sally; "there is no exhausting the incomprehensible treasury of thy accomplishments. Sidney and Crichton were as the million compared to thee."

Andrew assumed an extremely well-feigned seriousness, and replied, "I ken your lordship's joking way; but whatever may happen, I trust and hope I'll ne'er be ony sic thing. Poeticals, my lord, are like heather flourishes—a profitless

bloom, bred in the barren misery o' rocks and moorlan's. Na, na, my lord, I'm like the piper's cow : gie me a pickle pea-strac, and sell your wind for siller. That's the precept I preach ; and I wadna, my lord, after my journey, be the waur o' a bit fodder just noo."

Lord Sandyford was not altogether deceived by this whimsical speech ; but he rang the bell, and ordered in some refreshment. "My mother," said he, "is with me at present, and we must wait dinner for her. By the way, as she's one of the old school, you must be a little on your p's and q's."

"Unless," replied Andrew, "she's greatly out o' the common, I dare say I'll be able to put up wi' her."

"That I don't doubt ; but perhaps she may not be disposed to put up with you. Ladies of a certain age, you know, will have their own way."

"Ay, my lord, leddies o' a' ages would fain hae their ain way, an' we would let them. Howsever, I dare say, the auld countess is nae sic a canstrarie commoditie as maybe ye think. If I ance get her to laugh wi' me, I'll maybe gar her do mair—for the young leddy, that was aye as mim as a May puddock to a' the lave o' mankind, made me, ye ken, just a pet."

The earl's countenance changed ; and rising from the sofa, into which he had carelessly thrown himself, walked several times in silence across the room. Our hero observed his emotion, and sen-

sible of having gone too far to retreat, added, "Gratitude, my lord, has tied up my fortune wi' your favour, and you maun allow me to speak o' her leddyship as I feel. She's a woman o' a powerfu' capacity, but needs cooking."

His lordship stopped, and, knitting his brows, looked sternly on Andrew.

"I'm no gi'en to gambling, my lord; but I would," cried our hero, "wager a boddle to a bawbee that, although your lordship's aye in the right, my leddy's no far wrang."

This upset the earl's austerity completely, and, turning on his heel, he laughingly said, "Then you think me, Wylie, somewhat of a pertinacious character—too strict with my wife."

"Just so, my lord—I think ye were overly strict in taking your ain way, without reflecting how it might affec' her. Nae doubt your lordship was in the right—ye were privileged to do so. But what I would uphold on behalf of the absent leddy, poor woman, is, that she was nae far wrong, since ye did sae, to tak a wee jookie her ain gait too. My lord, you and her maun gree."

"Impossible, impossible, Wylie!" exclaimed the earl, not displeased at the advocacy which our hero seemed disposed to plead in behalf of the countess. And he then explained to him the mystery of the child, and that his object in sending for him was that he might assist in ascertaining the facts and circumstances. Andrew listened with no inconsiderable degree of amazement. He,

however, allowed no remark to escape, but thought that there might be some mistake in the statement, or some error in the conception.

When his lordship concluded—for he spoke with agitation, and with much energy of feeling—our hero said, with unaffected sincerity, “My best services are at the command of your lordship. It is my duty to serve you—it is my interest, my lord; and that is the plainest way I can tak to assure your lordship that I’ll do the part of an honest man and a true servant. But, my lord, I’ll neither hae colleague nor portioner. Your lordship’s leddy-mother, and the doctor, who have gone to the inns, may hook a baukie-bird in the air, or a yerd taid¹ on the brae, and think they hae catched a fish, and they may catch a right fish too. Ye’ll let me, however, my lord, cast my ain tackle in the water, saying naething to them till we compare the upshot.”

Before the earl could reply, the carriage, with the doctor and the dowager, was heard in the court; and in little more than a minute after, her ladyship, leaning on his arm, agitated and depressed, entered the library.

Andrew perceived that they had caught, as he anticipated, either a baukie-bird or a yerd taid, and brought it home for a fish; but he said nothing. The dowager, on observing a stranger in the room, immediately retired, followed by the earl. The moment they were gone, and the door

¹ A bat or an earthed, or buried, toad.

shut, our hero sidled up to the little, prim physician, and, without preface, said at once to him, "Noo, sir, what hae ye got by this gowk's errand?"

Dr Trefoil started aghast, and bending forward, looked as if he examined some reptile of which he was afraid. He then resumed his wonted erect and precise air, saying, "May I presume to ask whom I have the honour to address, and to what you allude?"

Andrew, whose quick insight of character was instinctive, saw the self-sufficiency of the doctor, and determined to take the upper hand of him, replied, "Ye're speaking to Andrew Wylie, sir. I dinna think there's mickle honour in't; and what I was asking anent is the affair o' my lord and my leddy, that ye hae been thrashing the water and raising bells about."

"I do not understand you, sir," said the doctor, somewhat confounded. "But if you mean what has been the result of my journey with the countess-dowager to Castle Rooksborough, I regret to say that it has been attended with most unhappy effects. Her ladyship and I happened to stroll into the garden, where we discovered the unfortunate Lady Augusta Spangle—for she can no longer now be called the Countess of Sandyford——"

"Hoot, toot, toot, doctor; no sae fast, no sae fast," interrupted Andrew. "What did ye see?"

"We saw her and Mr Ferrers in a most unpleasant situation."

"Noo, Dr Trefoil," replied Andrew, "but that I ken ye're mista'en, I could wager, as sure as onything, that there's a wee spicerie of I'll no say what in this. Oh, doctor! it would hae been mair to the purpose had ye been kirning drogs with the pistle and mortar in your ain shop than gallanting frae Dan to Beersheba with an auld prickmaleerie¹ dowager, to pick holes in the coats o' your neighbours."

"Sir, your language and insinuations are insulting," cried the doctor, reddening into valour.

"Dr Trefoil, I'll tell you something that ye'll maybe no be ill pleased to learn. I'm no a gamecock. The deadliest weapon that I ever handle is a doctor's bottle; so that your whuffing and bouncing are baith ill-war't on me. Keep your temper, doctor; keep your temper, or ye may lose your appetite for my lord's dinner. Hows- ever, I forgie you this bit spunk² of your bravery, and I doubt not but we shall by-and-by be couthy frien's, though we will differ on twa points—that's certain. I'll ne'er allow that physie hasna an abominable taste; and some better evidence than your seven senses, my man, maun be forthcoming before I credit this story o' the twa ghosts that you and the poor, feckless auld leddy saw at Castle Rooksborough."

"Ghosts!" cried the doctor, utterly amazed at the self-possession of his companion.

"Ay, ghosts, doctor; and I'm thinking they

¹ *Prickmalcerie*. Preciso.

² *Spunk*. Spark.

bae been twa o' your ain patients, they hae gi'en you sic a dreadfu' fear. What did they say to you, and what said ye to them?"

"Sir, you very much astonish me—exceedingly. I know not that I ever met with anything like this. Sir, the countess-dowager knew Lady Sandyford at the first sight, and I could be in no mistake with respect to Mr Ferrers, whom I have known from his childhood."

"A' that may be true, Dr Trefoil. I'll no dispute that the countess-dowager was able to ken her gude-dochter, and that ye can decipher the difference between Mr Ferrers and a bramble-bush. But, doctor, what did ye see? That's the point: a gentleman and a leddy in a garden, picking lilies for a poesy. Oh, doctor, doctor! ye maun be an ill-deedy body yoursel', or ye wouldna think sae ill o' others. What, noo, was you and the auld leddy after when ye were linking and slinking sae cagily¹ wi' ane anither in holes and corners?—

'Davy chas't me through the pease,
And in amang the cherry-trees.'

Ah, doctor, doctor, ye deevil! Vow! but ye're a Dainty Davy."

The manner in which this was said and sung overpowered the doctor, and, in spite of himself, he was compelled to laugh. In the same moment the bell of the portal summoned them to dinner.

¹ *Cagily*. Sportively.

CHAPTER XXXV

Conversation.

ANDREW and the doctor, on reaching the dining-room, found the earl and his mother already there. The dowager was somewhat surprised at the uncouth appearance of Andrew, and his lordship was evidently amused at the look with which she inspected him. At first, and for some time, the conversation was vague and general; but the earl saw that Andrew was studiously cultivating the good graces of the old lady, and that, although every now and then she looked at him statelily and askance, occasionally both his manners and language deranged the settled seriousness of her features into a smile.

When the dessert was placed on the table, and the servants had retired, our hero opened his battery by saying to the earl, "What do you think your leddy-mother here, and my new friend the dainty doctor there, hae been about, my lord?"

Her ladyship was in the act of holding her glass while the doctor poured a little wine into it; but at the nonchalance of this address she withdrew her hand, and erected herself into the

stateliest pitch of dignity; and the physician, setting down the decanter, his task unperformed, looked across the table in unspeakable amazement. His lordship smiled, and replied, "Why, Wylie, how should I know? I dare say something they don't like to hear of, if I may judge by their looks."

"Weel, I'll tell you," resumed Andrew. "Now, my leddy, ye maun just compose yoursel'; for it's vera proper his lordship should hear how you and the doctor were playing at Damon and Phillis among the groves and bowers. They think, my lord, that they saw your leddy gallanting wi' a gentleman."

"Monster!" exclaimed the dowager, flaming with indignation.

The doctor was panic-struck.

"Whisht, whisht, my leddy," cried Andrew, slyly; "if you will be poking at a business of this kind, ye maun just abide the consequences. But I would ask what greater harm could there be in the countess walking in a garden with a well-bred gentleman than in your leddyship doing the same with that bit leddy o' a doctor?"

The earl perceiving the turn that the conversation was taking, and knowing from Andrew's manner that the truth would be served up without any disguise, was uneasy and disconcerted, and almost wished that the topic was changed. But anxious at the same time to learn the whole circumstances, and curious to know the point of

light in which it struck our hero, he remained, as it were, seemingly absent and inattentive, making a Niobe's face of an orange, and squeezing it, "all tears," into his glass.

Andrew continued—

"I have always heard, Leddy Sandyford, that ye were a wise and a sensible woman; but I would ask you a question:—Granted noo that ye did see a decent woman like the countess—but like's an ill mark—would it no hae been mair to the purpose to hae made sure, in the first place, that it was really her? and in the second, to have inquired at herself on the spot what she was doing there? Na, my leddy, this is a serious concern, and the truth must be borne wi'. To come away without searching it to the bottom wasna according to your wonted discretion; and if ye hadna been inoculated wi' a bad opinion of your good-dochter beforehand, ye wouldna hae put sic an ill colour on what may have been in itself a very comely action."

The doctor by this time had in some degree recovered himself, and the freedom with which Andrew spoke having an infectious influence on him, said, "But, sir, you forget that there is a child in the case."

The dowager, however, who had sat some time in a state of consternation, interrupted the conversation, exclaiming, "Lord Sandyford, how can you permit this at your table, and in my presence?"

"Why," replied the earl, "I'm afraid there is something like reason in what Wylie says: he is a being of a strange element, and your ladyship must endure to hear him out, or you will perhaps do both his wit and his wisdom injustice."

Andrew discovered that he had gone too far with the circumspect dowager. He had treated her with a sort of freedom that could only have been used with impunity to the whist-table tabbies of London; those whom he occasionally met with, and, as he said, touzled their decorum. But his natural shrewd perception of character soon enabled him to correct the error, and to adapt his conversation much more to the dowager's formal notions of etiquette and delicacy.

"I'll tell you what it is, my leddy," said he; "from the first to the last there has been a great misunderstanding in the whole business between my lord and the countess; I could see that long ago, though I hae but twa een, and nae better anes than my neighbours. They have wanted a sincere friend between them,—the like o' your leddyship, for example; and noo that they're hither and yon frae ane anither, it behoves a' that wish them 'weel, and few hae mair cause to do sae than mysel', who has been made, as it were, by my lord, to take tent that a breach is no opened that canna be biggit up.¹ Joking aside—I think your leddyship and the doctor hae been a wee hasty in your conclusions. I'll

¹ *Take tent . . . biggit up. Beware . . . built up.*

no say that the countess is an innocent woman, but let us hae some proof o' her guilt before we condemn. As to the bairn, that's a living witness of a fact somewhere—I alloo that. But, my leddy, I'll tell you what I'll do: that is, if ye approve it, for I would submit to your better judgment. I'll gang warily and cannily ouer to Castle Rooksborough mysel', and muddle¹ about the root o' this affair till I get at it. I think that I may be able to do this as weel as a person o' mair consideration. Naebody in this countryside kens me; I'll be seoggit² wi' my ain hamely manner; and if I can serve my lord, I'm bound by gratitude to do sae."

After some further conversation this project was approved of, and the dowager began to entertain a more condescending disposition towards our hero. The carriage was ordered to be ready to convey him early next morning to the Rose and Crown. But, said he, "No just sae far: I maun gang there on shanks-naigy; I'll only tak it till within a mile or twa o' the place; and when I hae got my turn done, I'll either come slipping back, or the servan's can, at their leisure, bring the carriage on to the inn, whar I'll get in as an utter stranger, taken up by them, as it were, for a job to themselves."

The aristocracy of the dowager did not entirely relish this method of setting on foot an inquiry into the conduct of a Countess of Sandysford.

¹ *Muddle.* Secretly work.

² *Seoggit.* Sheltered.

But Andrew combated her prejudices so adroitly, and in so peculiar a manner, that she was forced to acquiesce.

"It's no for me, certainly," said he, "to enter into a controversy with your leddyship on points o' this nature ; but ye hae lived ouer good a life to ken onything about the jookerie-cookerie¹ o' crim-coning."

The dowager's face, which had for some time worn a complacent aspect, became again troubled at this renewal of a familiarity so little in harmony with her habits and notions ; and having sat her due lady's portion of time at the table, she rose and left the room. The earl also soon after retired, leaving the doctor and Andrew by themselves : the physician, however, was so effectually mastered by the irresistible humour of his companion that, dreading to encounter his railery, under the pretext of professional engagements, he rose and went home before tea was announced.

Our hero, being thus left alone, pondered on the circumstances which had procured to him the confidence of Lord Sandyford, and the promptings of his own honest persuasion made him determine to leave no effort untried to restore the domestic happiness of his patron. In frequenting the parties at Sandyford House, and in the course of the familiar access which he was allowed at all times both to the earl and countess, he had noticed the cold politeness which existed between

¹ *Jookerie-cookerie.* Trickery.

them ; but he formed an estimate of their respective dispositions much more correct than that of the world in general. He discovered, through the disguise of his lordship's habitual ennui, a gnawing anxiety, and justly ascribed his dissipation to the irritation of his embittered reflections. The equable and sustained deportment of her ladyship was not, however, so easily penetrated ; but he saw that it was more the effect of practice and caution than her natural disposition, and suspected that she possessed an inherent energy which only required commensurate circumstances to call into action. She was evidently a woman not easily disturbed by the little occasional incidents which so profoundly affect the happiness of her sex ; and her feelings having no particular object to interest them, neither children nor, in a certain sense, husband, she moved along the stream of time like a stately vessel on the tide, whose superb appearance is all that attracts the attention of the spectator.

Her ladyship was certainly to blame for not endeavouring to recall the scattered affections of her lord ; nor is it easy to frame an apology for her negligence in this respect. But how many ladies act in the same way, and, heedless of the unsettled and fluctuating state of all human attachments, seem to consider, when they are wedded, that it is no longer requisite to continue those agreeable humours and graces which first won the esteem of their husbands. The triumph

of woman lies not in the admiration of her lover, but in the respect of her husband; and it can only be gained by a constant cultivation of those qualities which she knows he most values. But Lady Sandyford, like many of her sex, had been taught to entertain other notions. She did not certainly regulate herself, as some others (fatally for their own happiness) often do, by the standard of some particular individual, whom habit or duty may have taught them to venerate—a father, a brother, or a guardian—; but she did what was equally unfortunate: she courted public admiration, and it was with deference towards it that all her actions and motions were estranged from that sphere of duties which would have endeared her to the sensitive bosom of her lord. Our hero, therefore, in contemplating the result which had flowed from her apparent indifference, suspected that she felt infinitely more under the separation than the earl conceived.

He did her justice in another point also: he could not for a moment allow himself to think she was guilty even of levity. He had remarked her pride, and his intuitive knowledge of human nature convinced him that pride alone will often do the part of virtue. In a word, the tenor of his cogitations was honourable to himself and favourable to the countess. For, not assuming the probability of guilt, but only desirous to reach the bottom of the business, he was able to take a far more candid view of the different presumptions

against her than if he had been actuated by any preconceived opinion. In this generous frame of mind, he embarked with a determination to sift the whole matter to the utmost, and, in the end, if he found the conduct of the countess what he hoped and expected it would prove, he resolved to speak to her freely of what he had observed in her behaviour towards her husband, and then to bring about the more difficult and delicate task of a cordial reunion.

When the mind entertains a noble purpose, it never fails to dignify the physiognomy and external appearance. Andrew, in obeying the summons of the dowager to tea, entered the room with an ease of carriage which struck her, not only on account of its propriety, but also by the contrast which it presented to his naturally insignificant air and homely garb.

Her ladyship, in the interval after quitting the dining-room, was not, upon reflection, much satisfied with what had passed, and was resolved to be both cool and dignified, in order to prevent a repetition of the familiarity which had so ruffled her notions of decorum ; but the generosity which lighted up the smooth round face and little twinkling eyes of her guest produced an instantaneous and sympathetic effect, and, instead of the austere grandeur which she had determined to practise, she invited him to take a seat on the sofa beside her, with a graciousness of manner that could not have been excelled, even had she

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The first part of the book is devoted to a general history of the United States from the discovery of the continent to the present time. It is written in a clear and concise style, and is well adapted for use in schools and colleges.

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The man, woman & child - a group



known the intention with which he was at the moment animated.

When the earl, who soon after entered the room, saw them in this situation, his favourable opinion of the tact and address of Andrew was considerably increased. He knew the nice notions of his mother, and her profound veneration for the etiquettes of polite life, and had, from the first, apprehended a rupture, the state of her mind at the time not being at all in unison with that familiar drollery which our hero could neither disguise nor repress. He was, therefore, in no small degree surprised to find them seated together, and, apparently, on those terms which he had never imagined it was practicable for Andrew to attain with her ladyship.

During tea the conversation was general and lively: no allusion was made to what had constituted the chief and most interesting topic after dinner; and the old lady was several times constrained to laugh heartily at Andrew's ludicrous adventures in his journey from London, as well as at some of his queerest stories, of which he selected those most calculated to please her. So that, while she perceived he was a person of no refined acquirements, she could not but acknowledge in her own mind that he was undoubtedly endowed by nature with singular shrewdness, and with peculiar talents of no ordinary kind. It was true that he said things which a delicate respect for the prejudices and notions of others would

have restrained a man of more gentlemanly pretensions from expressing ; but there was no resisting the strong common-sense of his remarks, nor withstanding the good-humoured merriment of his allusions. She, however, now and then felt uneasy that she had so rashly sent back the countess's letter. But, like all others who do anything of which they afterwards doubt the propriety, she concealed entirely from her son, and wished, if possible, to forget herself, that she had taken so decided a part.

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CHAPTER XXXVI

New Lights.

I FEAR, my lord," said our hero, when the dowager had left the room, "that I have spoken over freely on this misfortune that has befallen your lordship's family; but in truth, my lord, a sore at no time will bear handling. If I had conversed in a manner that might have been mair fitting to the occasion, it wouldna hae mended the matter; so I rather ran the risk of the consequences with your leddy-mother than be slack in delivering my honest opinion. But setting joking aside, my lord, this story of hers and the doctor's concerning the gentleman ayont the bush is really something vera extraordinary."

"Yes, Wylie," replied the earl, "it is so; but although my mother makes it of importance, it is none to me. I have been but so-so as a husband and, by my conscience, nothing in earth will ever induce me to institute any proceedings against Lady Sandyford."

"That's a vera contrite sentiment of your lordship, and comes, or I'm mista'en, from the bottom of the heart; but surely, my lord, ye

wouldna like your estates, and the honours of all your lordship's ancient and famous progenitors, to go to the base blood of a stranger."

"I thought, Wylie," said the earl coldly, "that you had been more the friend of Lady Sandysford. I am sure that she always treated you with kindness."

"With the heigh^t of discretion, I maun aye allow that," replied our hero; "and far be it from my thoughts or intent to advise any harm either to the name or dignity of the countess, whom I canna believe to have been playing ony plasket.¹ A' that I meant your lordship to understand was: supposing, just by way of premises to confer upon, that the countess had done the deed, and was as black as your leddy-mother and her gallant the doctor fear, how would your lordship propose that she should be treated?"

"As the daughter of the Marquis of Avonside."

"Her father is a proud man, my lord," resumed Andrew, "and will take care of that. But suppose she is the mother of the bairn,—for to this length the suspicion, as I guess, runs,—what would be your lordship's pleasure then?"

The earl made no answer. He sat for some time silent, and then he rose and walked thrice across the room. He was evidently grieved and perplexed. Wylie sat watching him with interest and sympathy. The struggle lasted about five

¹ *Plasket*. Evil trick.

minutes, at the end of which his lordship resumed his chair, and said :

"I cannot tell you what I may do, nor can I imagine what I ought to do. But Lady Sandysford, whatever may have been her fault, has pride enough to prevent her from imposing a spurious heir on my earldom. The concealment with which she has covered the birth, if she is a mother, assures me that the attempt will never be made ; so that, even in a worldly point of view, I ought to make no stir in this business." And he sighed deeply, adding, "It is needless to disguise to you any longer that I am more distressed than I seem."

"Really, my lord, your case is a very kittle¹ one," replied our hero, deeply affected ; "but, no to dwell on the dark side o't, let us suppose, noo, that after all this hobbleshow and clash² it should turn out that the countess is an innocent and an injured woman?"

"You are destined to exalt or to sink me for ever in my own esteem!" exclaimed the earl ; "and you have put to me a question that I would, but durst not, ask myself. She left my house voluntarily, by the advice of her father."

His lordship paused, and looked as if he expected that Andrew would say something ; but he remained silent.

The earl then said abruptly, "What do you think I ought to do? I cannot ask her back—

¹ *Kittle*. Delicate.
VOL. I.

² *Clash*. Gossip,
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she will be happier apart from me; and since we are in the tongues of the world, it is no longer expedient for us to assume counterfeit virtues."

"Truly, what your lordship says is no without a glimmer of common-sense; but, in the way of a conjecture, let us take another supposition. What would your lordship do if my leddy, of her own free grace, was to confess a fault for running awa wi' her father, and beg to be received home again?"

"Impossible!" exclaimed the earl with energy. "Impossible! Her pride could never stoop to such humiliation."

"I can see there is difficulty in the way. Howsoever, greater mountains have been removed without miracles. And your lordship hasna said what you would do, supposing my suppose were to come to pass."

"It would, I suspect, Wylie," replied the earl jocularly, "be rather an awkward meeting."

"Then you would consent to meet her leddyship?" said our hero slyly.

The earl was startled at the unconscious disclosure he had made of his own feelings, while he admired the shrewdness of his counsellor; and said, with a free and sincere accent, "Wylie, it is in vain for me to equivocate with you. I do not think the return of the countess probable, and, therefore, have never considered how I should act on such an occurrence. Towards her I can bear no malice. But you surprise me. However,

I will say no more. Let this conversation, for the present, end."

"I thought," replied Andrew, with a degree of firmness which surprised the earl, "that your lordship had better notions of justice than to punish where perhaps you ought to make atonement."

His lordship, who had risen during part of this conversation, took a chair as our hero uttered these words, and looked flushed with an angry confusion.

"My lord," continued Andrew, observing his agitation, "there's none in the world has such cause to speak the truth to your lordship as I have. You have taken me by the hand, and led me out o' the slough of poverty, where I might have struggled and sunk. Ye hae placed me in the flowery pastures of prosperity, and ye shouldna be displeased at the humble ettling¹ of my gratitude. If my leddy has had her faults and deficiencies, your lordship's own breast bears witness that ye have not yoursel' been perfect. But I am transgressing the bounds of discretion in speaking in this manner to your lordship. Nevertheless, my lord, though I should offend, it will be my endeavour to serve your lordship as it is my duty to do, whatever your lordship may say to the contrary; and to strive, by all honest means, to testify my sense of obligation for the kindness heaped upon me."

The earl was petrified. There was an energy

¹ *Ettling*. Endeavour.

of tone and a decision of character in this which his lordship had never experienced towards himself, nor did he imagine Andrew possessed half so much generous sensibility.

"Do you think," replied the earl thoughtfully, "that even were I disposed to wish for a reconciliation, Lady Sandyford might be averse to it?"

"I hope she has more sense, were your lordship to entertain any such creditable wish. But, my lord, she has been long an outcast, as it were, from your affections. I cannot, therefore, venture to give your lordship any reason to think that she may wish for a reconciliation. But as soon as I have made an experiment I'll hae the greatest pleasure in letting you know the result, especially if it be favourable."

"You are too quick, Wylie," said the earl coldly; "I did not express any solicitude on the subject. Judging from the past, I still continue of the same mind: that it is better for Lady Sandyford and me to remain as we are than to live together as we have done."

"That's no to be denied," replied Andrew. "But it's to be hoped that, were ye coming thegither again, it would be with better hopes, designs, and intents. Knowing, as ye now do, wherein the great strength of both your faults lies, ye would bear and forbear with more reciprocal indulgence. Ye couldna live the life ye have done, even though ye were both so ill-deedy as to try."

This characteristic touch made the earl smile ; and he said, " You are a singular being, and will have your own way."

In saying these words, the countenance of his lordship was for a moment overcast, and the sudden flowing in of thoughts and feelings on his heart obliged him to leave the room. Andrew soon after pulled the bell, and, requesting the carriage to be in readiness to convey him to Castle Rooksborough by daylight, was shown to a bedroom. But it is necessary to revert in the meantime to the situation of Lady Sandyford.

CHAPTER XXXVII

The Castle.

THE countess, on sending off her letter, had returned to Elderbower, where she received the answer, the first shock of which almost overset her reason. She started from her seat, and, wildly shaking her head and hands, ran and touched several articles in the room, as if to ascertain their reality, and that she was not in a dream. She was like a bird entangled in a snare, or a captive when first immured in his dungeon. She felt as if an invisible power that would crush her to death was closing in on all sides. She gasped, as if some enormous weight pressed upon her bosom, and for several minutes her mind was as the fury of a glowing furnace.

In the midst of this paroxysm, she made a vigorous effort to control her agitation, and succeeded. While distractedly pacing the room, she halted suddenly, and said :

“Why do I yield to this consternation ? There is some error in all this. There is no conspiracy against me—I am innocent of the crime imputed—I will go at once to my lord—I will relate the

whole of what has happened. He has treated me as if I had no feeling ; but he is a man of honour, and will not allow me to be injured unjustly."

When she had thus somewhat calmed the perturbation of her spirits, she ordered a post-chaise for Chastington Hall, and in the course of a few hours quitted Elderbower.

Before she had gained the second stage, she felt herself so much indisposed that she was obliged to stop and go to bed. In the course of the night, however, she obtained some rest ; and her spirits were so refreshed in the morning that she arose with a cheerful alacrity to resume her journey to the residence of her husband.

After breakfast, a chaise for Chastington was accordingly ordered, and she went to the door, attended by the landlord to hand her in. As she was on the point of ascending the steps of the carriage, her hand was eagerly seized by some one behind, and on looking round she beheld, with equal surprise and alarm, the pale and ghastly Ferrers.

"Ha !" exclaimed the countess, horror-struck at his appearance ; "how ! when ! what has brought you here ?"

"I came last night, and I have been——" What he would have added was broken off by a shriek from the countess, who fainted, and fell back into his arms.

Some time elapsed before she recovered, and when she opened her eyes in the apartment to

which she had been carried, the first object they caught was Servinal, her lord's valet, who, perceiving that she recognised him, instantly left the room, and, having a horse ready at the door, quitted the house. He was on his way to London on some confidential business ; but he returned to Chastington Hall with the news of this discovery. As for Ferrers, still under the influence of insanity, believing he had been the cause of this unfortunate lady's death, he rushed from the house in a state of distraction, and was nowhere to be found.

When the countess was so far recovered as to be able to speak, she ordered the chaise, which still stood at the door, to carry her to Burisland Abbey, where, immediately on her arrival, she sent for Flounce ; and being determined now to avail herself of her father's offer of Bretonsbiold Castle, she despatched at the same time one of the servants to apprise the domestics of her intention. All this was done with a force and precision of mind new to her character.

The singularity of the circumstances into which she had been placed with Ferrers awakened in her a sort of superstitious dread. Their misfortunes seemed strangely and awfully mingled ; and feeling herself unaccountably and darkly connected with the desperate fortunes of a frantic man, she believed herself a passive agent in the hands of Fate, and trembled to think that she was thus united to some tremendous and im-

measurable movement of the universe. There was sublimity in the fancies that rose with this notion ; and the place where she had determined to take up her abode was well calculated to cherish the solemn associations connected with her Promethean resolution to retire from the world, and there await the issue of that scheme of destiny with which she was so mysteriously involved.

Bretonsfield Castle was a pile of unknown antiquity. From the earliest periods of our national history it had been remarkable, on account both of its massy architecture and the sullen and stern solitariness in which it stood. The Saxons had added to its strength, and the Normans had enlarged the sweep of the walls and the number of the towers. In the chivalric times of the heroic Plantagenets it acquired some ornamental appendages ; and in the first reign of the Stuarts it lost some of the features of a mere stronghold in a suite of magnificent apartments, of an airy and fantastic style, which, however, still harmonised with the rude grandeur of the general edifice.

The road to it lay along the acclivity of an extensive common, and by a gentle ascent attained the summit of the downs, from which, on the one hand, the country below presented a wide and magnificent prospect, extending to the horizon, while, on the other, an open and lonely waste spread out to a great distance, in which no other

object was visible but the castle, rising from the midst of a dark mass of fir-trees.

The scene suited the disposition of Lady Sandyford's mind; and it seemed to her that a spot in which the wild, the old, and the magnificent were so united was a fit theatre for the exercise of the courage and endurance which she was determined to exercise. But far different were the reflections of her waiting gentlewoman. According to her own account, when the carriage reached the brow of the downs, and she saw nothing before her but a desert waste, she felt as if a magician was carrying her away on the back of a fiery dragon to the well at the world's end.

As the carriage drove into the silent court of the castle, like a peal of thunder, the countess said, as it stopped at the entrance to the hall, "What an awful place it is!" and she cast her eyes apprehensively round on the ivy-mantled towers, the hoary walls, and the lichen-furred pinnacles.

"Yes," replied Flounce :

" ' It chills the suspended soul,
Till expectation wears the cast of fear ;
And fear, half ready to become devotion,
Mumbles a kind of mental orison,
It knows not wherefore.' "

"Why, Flounce!" exclaimed her astonished lady, "where got you that language?"

"It is a beautiful sentiment," said that erudite

gentlewoman, "which I learned by rote from one of Mrs Radcliffe's romances. It will be quite charming, my lady, to read them in this delightful Udolpho; and I hope your ladyship will make a point of having them sent from town."

As none of the servants were in attendance, the countess desired the post-boys to open the door, and, alighting with Flounce, walked into the hall. The housekeeper, and her husband the gardener, were indeed all the domestics that the Marquis of Avonside kept at this place; and it happened that, when the carriage drove up to the door, they were in a remote part of the castle.

The countess halted when she had reached the middle of the hall, and surveyed it in silence. It was lofty, and of stately dimensions, lighted from the one side by two tall narrow windows, the space between which was occupied by a huge arched chimney, with massy antique iron dogs for burning wood; and great piles of billets at each side of the hearth showed something like the habitude of ancient hospitality. A small claw-footed table, on which stood a basket of linen and old stockings, with a pair of scissors, a thimble, and thread-paper, lying around as they had been left by the housekeeper, occupied, with two old-fashioned gnarled elbow-chairs, the niche of one of the windows. The walls were of dark and small-panelled wainscot, on which hung four or five family portraits that time had almost effaced. The aspect of the whole apartment was gaunt

and venerable; but it could not be said that altogether the effect was either desolate or melancholy. But this was less owing to the style and architecture of the room than to the superb prospect which the windows commanded. The castle stood on the brink of a shaggy precipice; and the side where the windows were placed overlooked a wide expanse of one of the richest tracts of England, on which the sun at the time was shedding the golden radiance of the afternoon. Woodlands, parks, villas, and towns lay scattered in beautiful diversity to the utmost verge of the horizon; and here and there the steeple of a country church pointing to heaven might be seen rising from the middle of a grove, crowned with a glittering star,—the effect of the setting sun on the gilded weathercock—; while, broad and bright, with all their windows glancing as if animated, several large mansions studded (as it were) like gems the bosom of that magnificent landscape.

“Our ancestors,” said the countess to Flouncee, “did not lack taste in the choice of situations. Their captives, with such a free and spacious view before them, could scarcely feel the loss of liberty.”

At this moment the old housekeeper entered, and, apologising for her accidental absence, opened a pair of folding-doors at the upper end of the hall, and conducted the countess through the long suite of state apartments to a small drawing-room in an octagon tower, which commanded seven different views from as many small windows. “I

have brought your ladyship to this place," said Mrs Scrubwell, "because it was the favourite room of the marchioness, your mother; and I thought on that account you would be pleased with it."

"You have judged rightly," replied her ladyship with emotion; and she mentally ejaculated, "My mother! How woefully I now feel that loss!"

CHAPTER XXXVIII

Inexperience.

AT break of day our hero was afoot and dressed for his mission to the Rose and Crown at Castle Rooksborough ; but instead of waiting for the carriage to come up to the portal of the Hall, he walked out to the court of offices, which stood at some distance from the mansion.

It was a beautiful spring morning. The mavis, the blackbird, and the linnet were beginning to chirp and churm over their young in the bowers, but the lark was already at heaven's gate singing her matins. The sun had not yet risen, and the dewdrops lay like pearls on the grass and leaves ; a cheerful and refreshed composure was diffused over the whole face of the landscape, and the forehead of the sky appeared unusually spacious and beautiful : a few grey flakes of vapour scattered over it seemed to float at an unwonted elevation, as they gradually brightened into the full glory of the morning. The reflections of Andrew were in unison with the beneficent aspect of nature, and he loitered with the sense of beauty glowing at his heart, often turning round as the different

windings of the road unfolded, through the massy groups of foliage, the diversified scenery of the surrounding country.

By the time he reached the entrance to the stables, the carriage was coming out.

"Ha'd your han', my lad," he cried to the coachman; "ye needna gang to the house; I'll e'en step in here."

"As you please," replied the coachman; "but Tom Berry is not yet come."

"And wha's Tam Berry?"

"The footman, sir, that is to go with us."

"Loup¹ your ways down, and let me into the chaise. I'll no be fashed wi' ony sic ceremonials. A' that I want is a fast drive, without coupling."

The coachman obeyed, and long before Tom Berry had opened the shutters of his eyes, half the journey was performed.

At a public-house within two miles of Castle Rooksborough our hero stopped the carriage, and told the coachman to wait for him there.

"Your horses, my lad," said he, "will be nane the waur o' a rest; and I'll just step on by mysel'."

"But," replied the charioteer, "my orders were to take you to the Rose and Crown."

"I'll not dispute what your orders were; nevertheless, ye'll bide here; or if ye maun corn your cattle at the Rose and Crown, and at no other place, I canna help it,—only ye'll serve my lord's turn better by minding what I bid you."

¹ *Loup.* Jump.

"It don't make no difference to me," said the coachman; "and so be as you doesn't wish for the contrary, I'd as lief bait where we now be."

"Hear ye," cried Andrew, stopping suddenly, after he had alighted and was walking away, seemingly as if he had recollected something, "I hope ye'll sae naething to the folk about the inns here concerning my business."

"I knows nought o't, sir—I was but told to fetch you here."

"Then," replied our hero, "ye'll oblige me by keeping your finger on your mouth, for it might be detrimental if anything were to spunk out."

"Never doubt me, sir. I have been bred and born in his lordship's service, as my father was in his father's: so I may be trusted; and I never speaks of anybody's consequences, but only minds my own servitude."

"I had a notion that ye were a prudent lad," said Wylie; "what do they ca' you?"

"My name, sir, is Snaffle—Jack Snaffle."

"Weel, Jock, I hae great dependence on your sagacity, and there's a sixpence to you for a chappin o' strong yill till I come back. But mind and dinna say onything in the tap-room, when ye're drinking and smoking your pipe wi' ithers, anent my coming to speer¹ the price o' growing trees in this neighbourhood: and noo that I hae better thought on't, ye needna let on about my coming from the Hall at a', but pass me off as a by-hand job."

¹ *Speer*. Inquire.

The coachman, being thus set upon a wrong scent, supposed that Andrew had some interest in the sale of the timber then felling at Chastington; for, not belonging to the establishment of Sandyford House in London, he knew little of the domestic concerns of the family, and nothing whatever of the footing on which our hero was treated by his master.

Having in this manner got himself extricated from the embarrassment of the carriage, Andrew walked forward to the Rose and Crown alone, and upon his arrival, instead of going into the house, went to the tap and ordered breakfast.

Among the waiters, hostlers, and post-boys, several labourers were assembled, and the burden of the conversation among them was the ruin of Ferrers, interspersed with conjectures as to the cause of his late strange visit to the castle, and observations on the extravagance of his behaviour. The subject was interesting to Andrew, and it became particularly so in consequence of one of the waiters remarking that the "lady's child" (as they called Monimia the orphan) was exceedingly like him. This observation was not, however, altogether attributable to the discernment of the waiter; for it seems that Flounce had, in the excursion with her lady, more than hinted to one of the chambermaids that she should not be surprised if the unknown baby was Mr Ferrers' daughter, for it was as like him as a kitten to a cat, and the chambermaid had frequently ex-

pressed her admiration of the resemblance, until a very general persuasion of the fact was entertained among all the servants of the house.

It is certainly much to be regretted that people do not always act with the most perfect reason and good sense. But if they did so, there would be an end to everything romantic in life; and therefore, perhaps it is as well, after all, that there is a little folly in the world, a blessing which we sometimes think was bestowed to produce amusement. The reflections on the "lady's child," and its resemblance to Ferrers, had the effect of inducing our hero to change his original intention of sifting the mystery at Castle Rookborough, and to adopt another, calculated, as he thought, to bring the business to a more speedy conclusion: and assuredly it would have done so had there not been other causes at work, the force and effect of which he could neither counteract nor foresee.

The construction that he put upon the unfortunate manner in which the orphan was mentioned, namely, "the lady's child," led him to conclude that the real circumstances of its birth were not to be ascertained at that place, and he resolved to proceed directly to Elderbower, and have an explanation with Lady Sandyford herself.

This determination undoubtedly originated in motives of delicacy towards her ladyship; for the coarse remarks of the persons around him with respect to the unfortunate Ferrers had the effect

to make him feel an extreme repugnance to enter into any conversation with them. He accordingly sent a messenger to the inn where he had left the carriage to order it back to Chastington Hall, and when the London coach came up, he mounted the roof, and was conveyed to Elderbower.

CHAPTER XXXIX

At Fault.

OUR hero reached the mansion of the dowager about an hour too late. Flounce, in obedience to the summons of her mistress, had quitted the house and gone to join her at Burisland Abbey; whence, as we have related, they proceeded to Bretonsbiel Castle. The servants were still in all the quandary and agitation which belonged, among them, to the unexpected and unexplained nature of that event. And Andrew, on inquiring at the gate for the countess, was informed that they knew nothing of her. This intelligence mortified him exceedingly; and he stood for some time in a state of stupefaction, occasioned by the repulsive tone in which it was given. He, however, soon rallied, and endeavoured to enter into conversation with John Luncheon, the footman, who had answered the gate-bell; but his questions were so gruffly dismissed that he was utterly at a loss how to proceed. At last he mustered self-possession enough to say, "I have come from my lord at Chastington Hall on most particular business with my

leddy; but, really, what ye say is very confounding."

Upon hearing this, John gave him immediate admittance, and conducted him to Mrs Polisher.

"What's a' this amang you?" said he to her as soon as the footman had left the room. "Whar's Leddy Sandyford, or that glaikit clatter-stoup,¹ Flounce, her maiden? I would fain see the tane or the t'other."

"As for that," replied the decorous housekeeper, "it is impossible to give you any satisfaction. The day before yesterday, the countess, as I must continue to call her till my lord instructs us to the contrary, left this in a post-chaise alone for Chastington Hall."

"That's no to be credited," cried Andrew, petrified at the news; "for I left it this morning, and she wasna there."

"Ah! well we know that," said Mrs Polisher; "she went but two stages, where, feigning to be indisposed, she stopped; and that evening the fellow Ferrers came to the inn where she then was."

Andrew drew in his breath, as if he had been pierced in the most sensitive part with some acute instrument; and then gave a long and deep puff of his breath, as if inwardly suffering the greatest corporeal anguish.

"Then," continued the housekeeper, "such a tragical scene took place, on her stepping into the

¹ *Glaikit clatter-stoup.* Giddy rattle-pan.

carriage next morning after bidding Mr Ferrers farewell, as never was witnessed. She fainted cold dead, and he ran off in a state of distraction, and some think he has made away with himself."

"All this," said our hero, "is most prodigious; but how came you to hear so many particulars?"

"Why, the fact cannot be questioned," exclaimed Mrs Polisher, a little sharply, at hearing any shade of doubt cast on her information. "Mr Servinal himself happened to come up to the inn-door at the critical moment; and, on seeing what took place, clapped spurs to his horse, and galloped back to Chastington Hall, to inform his master of this most scandalous discovery."

"But how did you hear it? Who galloped here with this black story? That's what I wish to know," said Andrew, in a peevish accent, distressed, and almost angry, he knew not why.

"Oh!" cried the housekeeper, "ill tidings are fast travellers. The chaise which her ladyship had ordered for Chastington before she was detected by Mr Servinal, as soon as her fellow was off, knowing it was all over with her character, she ordered round to Burisland Abbey, where she now is; and her slippery nymph, Flounce, has gone there with their bags and baggage. The post-boys who drove her told the whole story to the Avonsides, and the groom, who came to fetch Flounce, told our men: so there is no dubious possibility in the matter. The only thing that has consternated me in the business is how our

Lady Sandyford was so blind as not to see through the craftiness of the plot. But I take great blame to myself for concealing from her what everybody in the house knew so well."

"And what was that?" inquired Andrew sorrowfully, quite overcome to find his good opinion of the countess so utterly wrecked.

"The child. The two good-for-nothings had not been here above three or four days till I found all out: where the brat was at nurse, and what beautiful clothes were so clandestinely sent to it," said Mrs Polisher; adding, in a tone of exultation at having so completely established what she deemed the truth, "And the creature Flounce, in her hurry, has left behind a portrait of Ferrers, which we all know, for we have seen him often. I have it, and will deliver it to my lord."

"Weel," ejaculated Andrew, with a sigh, "I have come a gowk's errand; and what am I to do next?"

At first an indescribable impulse of compassion, interest, and curiosity prompted him to visit the countess at Burisland Abbey; for still (but it was only for a moment) he thought there might be some mistake in the story. But the tissue of circumstances was so strong that he could not resist it; and he almost instantly resolved to return without delay to Chastirgton Hall, in order to ascertain the whole extent of the derogatory discovery which he was led to believe Servinal had made. On quitting Elderbower, however, he re-

flected that his services could no longer be of any use to the earl, and that, under the disagreeable circumstances which had come to light, it would be more discreet to return at once to town. Accordingly, he proceeded straight to the Nag's Head, where he engaged a place in the London coach, and wrote a brief but characteristic note to the earl, to the effect that, finding he had been all in the wrong, he could do no better than go home to Mr Vellum's work : his only consolation being that he had been actuated by the best intentions.

When his lordship received this note, he read it over several times. He perceived that the information which Andrew had obtained was in unison with the discovery that Servinal had supposed he had made ; and he had no doubt that it was perfectly true, and of the most afflicting kind. He affected, however, to speak of it to his mother lightly, and he praised the delicacy which dictated Andrew's letter and resolution to return directly to London ; but she soon saw the profound effect which it had produced, and trembled for the consequences. For, although he seemingly in nothing changed the daily routine of his recreations, she could discern that there was a self-exertion about him that was wholly at variance with the easy air he affected ; and several times, when he seemed to be only reading at the table, she observed his eyes to wander vacantly round the room, and a tear drop upon

the unnoticed page. More than once she began to speak with him on the subject of his concealed sorrow; but he either broke away from her abruptly, or exclaimed, with a sharp accent of vexation, "For Heaven's sake, spare me; I cannot endure to think of what has passed!"

One afternoon he seemed to have recovered his wonted serenity; but there was a tone of solemnity and sadness in his voice which filled the maternal breast of the dowager with boding and dread, and when, in the course of the evening, he happened incidentally to remark that he considered himself as the cause of his wife's ruin, she was struck with a feeling of horror and alarm, especially when, in attempting to palliate the reflection that dictated this sentiment, she hinted at the selfish disposition which the countess had always shown.

"Do not blame her!" he exclaimed; "I was a fool not to have seen her true character from the beginning. I know not why I was so besotted as to believe that under her artificial manners I saw the latent principles and essence of worth, and virtues, and sensibilities. Heavens, what a wretch I have been, if she did indeed possess any such qualities!"

And, rising from his seat, he rushed wildly out of the room.

CHAPTER XL

A Scientific Baronet.

FOR some time after the Earl of Sandysford's departure from London, his friend Mordaunt remained anxious and indecisive respecting his own matrimonial concerns. The baronet still so strictly adhered to his determination that Julia should marry Birchland that it was found impracticable to work alike upon his feelings or his reason. He had given his word, and that pledge he was resolved to redeem.

Having exhausted every other resource of influence and persuasion, Mordaunt at last recollected what the earl said to him about our hero, whose address and sagacity had indeed left a favourable impression on his own mind. But there was something in the appearance of Andrew not altogether satisfactory to the pride of Mordaunt; and although he was inclined to consult him, he did not very clearly perceive in what manner his services could be rendered available.

However, soon after Andrew's return to London, having sent for him to breakfast, in order to inquire respecting the unfortunate situation of

Lord and Lady Sandyford, in the course of their conversation he several times became thoughtful, and alluded inadvertently to his own matrimonial prospects with doubt and anxiety. This, in one instance, was so particular that our hero could not help remarking that he seemed troubled; and, from one thing to another, Mordaunt at last opened his mind, describing the perplexity arising from the intractable character of Sir Thomas Beauchamp; at the same time expressing his regret that the circumstances of Lord Sandyford should have been such as to deprive him of his powerful assistance, to influence, if possible, the paternal feelings of the baronet.

Andrew sat for some time silent. At last he said, "I canna understan' what's the need o' a' this fasherie; for, surely, if the lad and the lass are baith willing, they may soon come thegither."

"But," replied Mordaunt, "there are two things to be considered: first, the obligation which Sir Thomas conceives he is under to Birchland; and Miss Beauchamp's fortune. If she marry without her father's consent, I am persuaded he will cut her off with a shilling."

"It would be very dure o' the auld carle were he to do the like o' that. But as for his promise, that's but wind o' the mouth and breath o' the nostril. The siller, however, is a deevil. I'm thinking that a fortune's no to be made, even by matrimony, without trouble. But, no to mince

the matter, what does the leddy hersel' say? Will she rin awa wi' you?"

Mordaunt laughed, and replied that the case was not so desperate.

"Toot, toot!" exclaimed Andrew; "ye ken vera weel that I didna mean that she was to gallop, stridling on a horse, wi' you in a pock before her, like a cadger wi' a smuggled keg o' brandy, or a butcher wi' a calf frae the fair. But to speak proper English, if we maun be on our perjinks,¹ will you an' her baith rin awa thegither?"

"No," replied Mordaunt; "that is the difficulty. She will not consent to take any such disgraceful step."

"I'm thinking then, sir, that you should strain a point to get her; for, an' that's her mind, she'll mak' you a very decent wife."

"Well," cried Mordaunt, "but how is the point to be strained?"

"I'll gang and speak to Sir 'Thomas," said Andrew. "I would hear what he has to say anent the matter. Let me ken the rights o' the case first, and then aiblins it may be in my capacity to help you."

"Depend upon't, Mr Wylie," said Mordaunt, "that any interference of a stranger with Sir Thomas will only make matters worse. He's a thorough self-willed roundhead, and can only be dealt with by letting him have his own way."

"If he thinks he has it, won't that do as weel,

¹ *Perjinks*. P's and q's.

sir? Mr Mordaunt, an' ye put your concerns into my hands, ye maun just let me tak my ain gait, or I'll only ravel them by my meddling. Is Sir Thomas at hame, think ye, even noo?"

"Surely," exclaimed Mordaunt, in a tone of alarm, "you would not rush to him at once on the business?"

"Dinna fash your head about my ways and means, sir. Are nae ye wud¹ for your wedding? What for would ye put obstacles and delays to your ain pleasure? I'll go to him outright; so just sit ye whar ye are till I come back. It's easier to excuse an ill deed than to gie satisfactory reasons beforehand for the doing o' a good one. Therefore, Mr Mordaunt, sit still; an' if ye hae nae other playock, try if ye can persuade the cat to stand on her hind-legs till I come back." And in saying these words, our hero, with a smirking nod, whisked out of the room, leaving Mordaunt equally astonished at his humour and familiarity—distrusting his prudence, while he admired his promptitude.

Andrew went directly to Sir Thomas's; and, on the servant telling the baronet that a young man desired to speak with him on very particular business, he at once obtained an audience.

Sir Thomas was a tall, meagre, hard-favoured personage, verging towards his grand climacteric. He had little of the general appearance of a country gentleman, except in the freshness of his complexion; indeed, he had never cared much

¹ Wud. Eager.

for field-sports, or for those kinds of exercises so contributory to that hearty obstreperous corpulency which is commonly deemed the most remarkable characteristic of the regular members of a country quorum. The baronet, in fact, was, in his own opinion, a man of science; but whether he excelled most in botany, mechanics, chemistry, astronomy, mathematics, or metaphysics, he had never ascertained, having no neighbours who understood even the meaning of the terms. But, undoubtedly, his proficiency must have been very extraordinary; for he had several times read all the books in his library which related to these sciences, amounting to nearly a hundred volumes, part of the collection of his maternal ancestor, Dr Gropingwit, who flourished in the Augustan reign of Queen Anne: as Sir Thomas often said of him, "A most learned man, having been one of the contemporaries of the great Sir Isaac Newton." To this collection the baronet himself had made no additions; judiciously observing, when any new book relative to his private studies was accidentally mentioned, "Those that drink at the fountain-head can never relish the waters of the polluted stream." And then he was wont to spout, with a sounding voice, and a most tragical emphasis, of both look and gesture, the following verses from Chaucer:

"Out of the old fieldes, as man saith,
Cometh the new corn fro year to year;
And out of old books, in good faith,
Cometh all new science that men lere."

His favourite passage, however, from the poets was the opening to Young's *Night Thoughts*, which he repeated sometimes on a Sunday evening to his sister, Miss Lucretia, with so much slow solemnity that sleep, *in propria personâ*, generally paid her a visit before he got to the cadence of

"Lights on lids unsullied with a tear ;"

at the close of which he was wont to give an awful stroke on the table, as with the melancholious hand of Fate, and Miss Lucretia as regularly then awoke, and said, "Brother, what's the clock?" To this he as regularly replied, with a smile of compassion,

"We take no note of time,

To give it then a tongue was wise in man ;"

but lifting his watch from the table at his elbow, he subjoined, "Ring for tea."

CHAPTER XLI

A Remonstrance.

ANDREW, when shown into the baronet's parlour, was rather startled at his appearance. Sir Thomas was reading in an arm-chair, with his feet on the fender; his clothes had been hastily huddled on—a condition that could not be altogether fairly attributed to having hurriedly dressed himself on account of the sharpness of the weather, for in all seasons he breakfasted in that state, and sat till about twelve o'clock. His stockings were loose, his knees unbuttoned, his neckcloth untied, and a slovenly grey duffle morning-coat carelessly invested the generality of his figure; while an old fur cap had succeeded his nightcap, and was destined, when the sun passed the meridian, to be supplanted in its turn by a wig.

“Well, friend,” said he to Andrew, looking over his shoulder as our hero entered the room, “what are your commands?”

“I hae something that I would say to you,” replied our hero; and he glanced at the venerable Miss Lucretia, who was sitting on the opposite

side of the fire, busily employed in examining the weekly bills of the family. This look (if Sir Thomas had observed it) was meant to intimate a wish that the lady might be requested to favour them with her absence; but it was unnoticed, and Andrew continued, "I believe, sir, ye hae some acquaintance with Mr Mordaunt?"

"I know the gentleman," replied the baronet, closing the book, and looking from under his spectacles as if he expected something interesting.

"He's a worthy gentleman," said Andrew, "and I am sure has a great respect for you, and would do onything to oblige you in his power."

"Hem!" ejaculated the baronet; and Miss Lucretia looked askance from her household bills towards the sly advocate. "But what's the drift of all this, young man?" inquired Sir Thomas, laying his book on the table, and taking off his spectacles.

"Nothing particular, Sir Thomas; but only as he's a good frien' to me, I wish him weel, and would fain hope that things are no past remedy between him and you; for if that's the case, he's a gone dick—a dead man, as the saying is—and I doubt his death-ill will lie at your door, Sir Thomas."

The baronet looked in some degree of amazement; and Miss Lucretia, in her turn, glanced her inquisitive eyes first at our hero and then on her brother.

Andrew saw their anxiety, and concluded that Sir Thomas meant to signify he thought him insane; for he observed him touching his forehead as he ocularly replied to Miss Lucretia's ocular interrogation. However, none disconcerted, he intrepidly continued, "But I'm sure, Sir Thomas, that it's no in your nature to harm the hair o' a dog, far less a gentleman that has a great regard for you and all your family, especially for your dochter, Miss Julia."

Miss Lucretia abandoned the investigation of her bills, and, pushing back her chair from the table, sat in upright astonishment. The baronet's under-lip fell down, and it would be difficult to say whether his eyes or mouth most strongly expressed the wondering of his spirit.

"Ye maunna be surprised, Sir Thomas, at what I'm saying, for it's a truth that Mr Mordaunt's in a state of great distress o' mind; and he's my friend, and I canna but try to serve him. But he says, Sir Thomas, you're such a man of your word that I have no hope ye'll ever consent to give him your dochter. To that, however, sir, I answered that surely ye were a rational man, and would hearken to rationality."

"What's your name?" inquired the baronet.

"My name's Andrew Wylie."

"And did Mr Mordaunt send you to speak on the subject to me?" resumed Sir Thomas.

"No, sir; he was confounded when I offered to come; but better to hae a finger off than aye

aching. There was nae need that he should pine ony langer in pain; or you, Sir Thomas, live in anxiety lest Miss Julia and him should rin awa' to Gretna Green,—for the siclike has been before. I'm sure this sensible ledly here kens that ye're running a dreadful risk of an elopement."

"I know nothing about it!" exclaimed Miss Lucretia with an indignant snort.

"Nae offence, madam, I hope," replied Andrew; "but I'm vera sure ye wouldna, ony mair than Sir Thomas himsel', like to see Miss Julia and Mr Mordaunt jehuing awa' in a chaise and four, and you and her father flying like twa desperate tigers after them, and no able to catch them."

"Why, friend," said the baronet, "this seems to be a very singular interference on your part. I don't understand it. How came Mr Mordaunt to consult you in an affair of this sort?"

"Ye wouldna, Sir Thomas, hae me to be my ain trumpeter?" replied our hero significantly.

"Then, to put an end to the business at once, my word is pledged to Mr Birchland."

"So Mr Mordaunt said. But ye maun just break your word, Sir Thomas; for a broken word's naething to a broken heart."

"I tell you, friend, that I will hear nothing further on this subject," replied the baronet.

"We'll hae twa words about that, Sir Thomas. I dinna think, noo, baronet, that ye're just such a contumacious man as to be out o' the reach o'

reason a'thegither, or I wouldna speak to you as I do, but help the lad and lass to be man and wife wi' a' expedient ability. Therefore, Sir Thomas, ye maun consider this matter with a cool and a sound mind, an' ye hae ony pretensions to gumption¹ at a'; for it's no past the bounds o' probability that some morning or lang ye may rant and ring for your dochter, whiskit awa' wi' the gaberlunzie,² an' ye continue in this contrarie disposition."

"Does Mordaunt mean to force me in this manner to give my consent?" said the baronet angrily.

"I'm sure," replied Andrew, "that I see nae forcing about it. But if ye will gar your dochter marry a man she doesna like, what comfort will ye get frae your dure word of honour, an' ye hear, in less than a week after the wedding, a' the big wigs o' Doctors' Commons in a commotion?"

"The insinuation is insulting to my daughter's honour and principles!" exclaimed the baronet wrathfully.

"Vera true; but, Sir Thomas, ye ken marriages are made in heaven, and it's plainly ordain't that Miss Julia and Mr Mordaunt were trysted there by their mutual affection; and ye're fighting against the laws o' God when ye would try to set aside this natural attraction or affinity o' their spirits."

This touched the philosophy of the baronet, and

¹ *Gumption*. Common-sense.

² *Gaberlunzie*. Beggar.

opened to him a view of the subject that had never presented itself to him before, and he said, "Are you acquainted with the Newtonian philosophy?"

"'Deed no, sir; I never fash my head wi' sic havers; for if a man's void o' common-sense, I wonder what the wiser he'll be wi' philosophy. Can philosophy mend a club-foot, or put understanding in a toom¹ head? I doubt not. Truly, sir, it behoves you to think on what I hae said. Firstly, there may be an elopement; secondly, there may be worse; and thirdly, and assuredly, one way or another, there will be a broken heart, and the sin and blame o' a' will rest on your head. Talk o' words o' honour in a case like this! What's a word o' honour mair than anyither word? It's just wind, Sir Thomas; and if ye'll tak my advice, the sooner ye break it ye'll be the easier. O Sir Thomas, ye look like a man that has something fatherly in you! But think o' auld, doited Jephtha: what did he get by his rash vow? What consolation was it to him to see his lovely daughter lying in her winding-sheet? Words o' honour, Sir Thomas? Snuffs o' tobacco. But I'll sae nae mair at present: I see ye're prickit. O Sir Thomas! Sir Thomas! there's nae plaster for a wounded conscience, nor solder for a broken heart. It will be an awfu' thing, when ye lie down to die, to think o' the shame or misery o' your only daughter; and that, but for your own outstrapalous obstinacy,² ye might

¹ *Toom*. Empty.

² *Outstrapalous*. Obstreperous.

hae left her in felicity, or been laying your hand in prayer on the heads o' her bonnie wee bairnies, a' greeting like bleating lambies at your bed-side. Think o' that, Sir 'Thomas—think o' that; and if ye can then set yourself up against the laws o' God and nature wi' your daft words o' honour, I ken mysel' what's the name that will best fit you."

The ascendancy which our hero here assumed, and unconsciously felt, produced a profound effect on the baronet's mind and heart. He rose from his seat and walked across the room; he halted and looked at Andrew; he then seemed to turn his thoughts inwardly, and again he paused.

"Tell Mr Mordaunt," at last he said, "to come to me."

"That's a man," exclaimed Andrew; "noo ye're like yoursel', baronet; gladly will I tell Mr Mordaunt—so I wish you a vera good morning. Ye see, madam, what it is to hae a kind heart like Sir Thomas: it's the source o' a' delight and comfort in this world, begetting friends and quenching foes. Good morning to you again, Sir Thomas, and to you too, madam."

And with this our hero quitted the room, and sped with what speed he could to inform Mordaunt of the happy result of his visit.

CHAPTER XLII

Encouragement.

A FEW days after this interview, Andrew found a letter from his grandmother, which the master had written to her dictation. It related chiefly to some small matters that she was sending; but it contained a postscript from Tannyhill himself, which gave him more pleasure—he could not tell why—than even the affectionate spirit which breathed through the other simple sentences.

Mary Cunningham, who by this time had returned a full-blown young lady from Edinburgh to the Craiglands, in her walks round the village often called at the cottage, and jocundly chatted with old Martha about Wheelie, as she still continued to call him; and, at the time when the master was employed as amanuensis on this letter, she happened to come in. On being told for whom the letter was intended, she said, in her light and sprightly way, "Give my compliments, and say I am still waiting, and that he must do all he can to make his great fortune soon, or maybe I'll change my mind. Say I'll no have him unless he come in his own coach-and-four."

The master was amused with the freedom of the playful rattle, and literally wrote down the message as it had been delivered, adding from himself, by way of news, "William Cunningham, her brother, has gone into the army, much to the grief and displeasure of his aunt, who regarded him as the last of the male line of the family. As for the laird," continued the master, "he's just dauner about the doors in his old way, with his hands, as you first noticed, in his pouches ; but he's a blameless body, and since his last increase, by the renewed tacks¹ of the Braehead and the Loupingstane Farms, he has been very kind to the poor, having divided five load of victual among all the needful in the parish."

While our hero was reading this epistle, Charles Pierston chanced to call, and said, on hearing the paragraph,—for he had now begun to speak with an English accent,—“Why, this is frank enough.”

“Hoot, Charlie,” replied Andrew, “ye ken very weel I durst never even mysel’ to Craiglands’ only daughter ; and ye may see through her blethers that she’s making a fool o’ me. Na, na, man : Mary Cunningham’s setting her cap for a soldier-officer in gold lace. The very sight of sic a puddock² as me in the capacity of a joe would gar her kick me ouer on my back wi’ her tae.”

“Love is blind,” replied Pierston ; “and who knows but she may think you a likely, handsome fellow.”

¹ *Tacks*. Leases.

² *Puddock*. Frog.

"If she did," cried Andrew, half seriously, "I would think her a terrible tawpy;¹ and I'm sure I would as soon stick a rose in my bosom wi' a kailworm in't, as take the bonniest lass that ever was seen for my wife, that could be guilty o' ony sic haveril fancy."

From the time that our hero had been invited to Sandyford House, Charles had remarked a change in his deportment for which he could not account, Andrew never having mentioned either that circumstance or the masquerade. It had, however, the effect of producing a feeling of deference to his opinions, which he could not overcome. Wylie bore his raillery as gaily as ever; but there was a self-command, and a pith in some of his observations, which begot a respect that unconsciously made Charles feel himself the inferior, in spite of all his fashionable dash and figure. This feeling, however, was unmingled with any of that invidious alloy which the secret sense of inferiority commonly produces in mean and sordid minds; for Pierston was naturally frank-hearted, and there was something in the character of his friend which he liked, even while he could not restrain his disposition to laugh at him.

Why a youth in Andrew's station should have concealed from his companion the honour conferred on him by Lord Sandyford, we shall not attempt to explain. It may be that he thought Charles would suspect that he had been invited merely to

¹ *Tawpy*. Senseless, worthless woman.

make amusement—a humiliating consideration—or perhaps, judging from the ambitious love of show in his friend, he might apprehend that he would tease him to procure his admission to the same fashionable parties. In either case his silence was prudent; and, if the result of the latter consideration, it did credit to his sagacity. But this is an abstruse subject, and it is quite enough for us to state the fact; and also that, for some other good and substantial reason best known to himself, Andrew also as carefully concealed from Charles the amount of the extraordinary salary which the earl had so generously obtained for him. This circumstance occasioned Pierston, after the observation which we have quoted, to say—

“By the way, Andrew, you have never told me the amount of ‘the wage,’ as you call it, which has enabled you to be so liberal to your grandmother. How much is it?”

“It’s no under a hundred pounds,” replied Andrew, apparently in a careless manner.

“I doubt,” said Charles, “if it do not greatly exceed, the coach-and-four will be long of coming forward.”

Andrew laughed, and said, “A plack wi’ me, Charlie, will aye gang as far as a pound wi’ you, and I’m no fear’t.”

“True,” cried Pierston, “for I have no Mary Cunningham to make me grip and gather.”

“Now, Charlie,” again exclaimed Andrew a

little pettishly, "I dinna like that. An' I were her equal ye might crack your jokes; but it's no a friend's turn to tell me in that gait that poverty has debarred me from looking so high, even though I had been as braw and as crouse¹ as yoursel'."

"Upon my conscience," replied Pierston, laughing, "I had no notion ye were so far gone. The fellow's honestly and simply in love!"

Andrew reddened, and said sharply, "An' I were sae, which I am not, ye might spare me your jeers, considering the impossibilities between us."

"Poo, poo!" cried Charles. "Faint heart never won fair lady; and wit, which you do not want, both in the stratagems of love and war, is worth a well-turned leg."

"What taught you to proverb sae glibly the auld tale o' Beauty and the Beast?" said Andrew, not displeased by the observation. "But, Charlie, —to make an end o' a' debate on the subject,—ye'll really oblige me by never speaking o' Mary Cunningham; for ye ken as well as I do that no lassie would be so free wi' ony young lad if she had the least spunk of affection for him."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Pierston, "but get twenty thousand pounds as fast as ye can, and then away to the Craiglands, where, if ye speak auld crabbit Miss Mizy fair, I'll bet ten to one that there have been more hopeless speculations than your chance with Mary."

¹ *Crouse*. Confident.

Andrew made no answer for some time to this, but sat pursing his mouth for about a minute, when he said, "She wouldna tak me wi' twenty thousand pounds, and that's mair than I can noo hope for."

"Noo!" cried Charles; "why noo? What has happened to make the likelihood less than it was?"

Andrew had alluded, in his own mind, to the termination of all further hope and expectancy with Lord Sandyford; but, not choosing to explain himself, he said carelessly, "Atweel, I dinna ken what for I should think mysel' less likely noo than before of getting twenty thousand pounds." And with this observation the interview ended.

Pierston, however, paid but little regard to the injunction with respect to Mary Cunningham; on the contrary, he took every opportunity of rallying Andrew more and more. And an event had already taken place that was calculated to verify some of the jocular predictions which he was in the practice of sporting on the subject.

CHAPTER XLIII

Insight.

ON the Sunday following after the conversation described in the preceding chapter, Charles Pierston called again on his friend, and, with a look pregnant with merry mischief, said, on entering, "Now, Andrew, ye must promise me to be angry with me, and I'll tell you news. Mary Cunningham's in London. Her brother has been wounded in one of the late battles, and she's come up with Miss Mazy to nurse him; for he's not in a condition to be removed to Scotland."

To have judged by the expression of our hero's countenance, it would not have been thought that he received any pleasure from these tidings; for he looked confused, and his colour went and came.

"Poor Willy Cunningham," said he, "was a clever, warm-hearted callan. I'm sorry for his hurt, and I hope it's no deadly."

"But Mary is grown most beautiful," said Pierston waggishly. "She dined with her aunt at my uncle's yesterday. Lord, Andrew, man, but ye'll get a prize an' ye get her! She inquired very kindly for you; and I promised to let you

know where they are in lodgings, for she expects you will call."

"I hae no occasion," said Andrew, with great simplicity.

"Why, you simpleton, have you no regard for your old schoolfellow? I have come on purpose this morning to take you with me. Cunningham will be glad to see you; and Miss Mizy herself bade me say that she has long forgiven the devilry o' the pyet."

"And I hae forgiven her, too," replied Andrew; "for it was out o' that I got the fifty psalms by heart."

"And out of that you and Mary Cunningham fell in love behind the headstone, ye know," cried Charles, laughing.

"I'll tell you what it is, Charlie Pierston," said Andrew seriously: "I dinna like this daft nonsense of yours; and I'm sure Miss Cunningham would be vera angry if she heard you claver in that gait about her. So say no more about it, unless ye want to pick a quarrel wi' me, which I am sure and certain ye hae no intent to do."

"Oh, very well!" exclaimed Pierston; "if you don't like to hear o't, I'm sure it's no business of mine; but Miss Cunningham is a fine spirited girl, and, if you don't make haste, she'll be taken out of your hands."

"This is wicked havers, Charlie," cried Andrew in a short and shrill peevish accent, as if he had been pricked with needles. "I'm in no condition

o' life to even mysel' to her, and that should cork your gab. But, howsomever, I'll be glad to go with you to see Willy; and I hope his sister may be out, for she's as thoughtless as yoursel', and ne'er devalds¹ jeering me."

"Then come with me; and if she should be out," said Pierston dryly, "ye'll be able to have more talk with that amiable creature, Auntie Mizy."

"De'il's in the fallow! I would as soon meet wi' a pow-head² in my porridge at any time, as wi' the auld red-nebbit runt!" said Andrew, somewhat restored to good-humour, as he prepared himself to go out with Charles.

Pierston pretended to remark that he seemed to take a little more pains than usual with his appearance, and said, "Dear me, Andrew, surely ye never intend to call on such ladies in that old-fashioned style? I thought by this time you would have changed your tailor, and had a more spruce coat for Sunday."

"What's the matter wi' this coat, Charlie?" said our hero pawkily, thinking of the parties where it had been often worn with far more consideration than many of the most fashionable there. "There's no ae steek broken. Na, na: I allow mysel' but ae new coat in the year, and this maun serve for six months yet."

Pierston, who was well aware of the original penury of Andrew's circumstances, and respected

¹ *Devalds*. Ceases.

² *Pow-head*. Tadpole.

the firmness of his character, did not push his raillery further on his appearance and dress. Had he been acquainted with the actual amount of his income, however, he would have despised him as one of the most sordid of mortals.

In their way to Cunningham's lodgings, he informed him that his uncle intended to place him in business on his own account, and hoped that in time he might have it in his power to be of some use to Andrew. There was both pride and kindness in this; but our hero felt only the warmth of the latter sentiment.

In this sort of conversation they reached Sackville Street, where they found the Cunninghams in the second floor of the same house where Mordaunt lodged. Pierston was a little mortified to find them so far aloft, and blamed "the haining¹ heart" of Miss Mizy, alleging that it was unworthy of people of their fortune to be so meanly accommodated. Andrew, without dissenting from this opinion, was pleased with the circumstance; because, by his acquaintance with Mordaunt, it gave him an opportunity of being indirectly seen, as it were, by Mary Cunningham on a vantage-ground that he could not otherwise have so easily reached. And with a view to this, while he sent Charles upstairs before him, he stepped into the drawing-room, where Mordaunt was at the time sitting, engaged on some papers connected with the arrangements for his marriage,

¹ *Haining*. Saving, penurious.

which was to take place in the course of the following week.

Mordaunt, whose admiration of our hero's address and discernment was raised to the utmost by the happy effects of his remonstrance with Sir Thomas, received him with the greatest pleasure, saying, "I consider myself, Wylie, so much indebted to you that I beg you will count me among your friends; and when at any time you can point out in what way it is in my power to serve you, I trust and expect you will claim the fulfilment of this promise."

At such a time, and when Andrew was on the point of visiting Mary Cunningham, this assurance came to him like an inspiring air; and he said, "Whenever the time arrived that he might go into business on his own account, he would take the freedom of then applying to him."

Mordaunt on this reiterated his promise, and declared that he should not only have him for a client, but that he would never lose a proper occasion to speak of his merits and abilities.

Andrew, with this assurance of prosperity in hereafter, left Mordaunt, and with a light foot mounted the stairs to the sitting-room above; where, knocking with his knuckle, he was immediately admitted by Mary Cunningham herself. Charles Pierston was in the room with her; and it was evident, from the excessive interjections of joy with which she received him, that they had been contriving some mirthful salutation. But

although, in the first moment of meeting, this was plainly the case, there was in her manner, almost immediately after, a sentiment of unaffected pleasure towards him of a more moderate, but deeper, kind; and she treated him with something very like that cheerful and pure affection which subsists between a brother and a sister. She expressed her satisfaction that he had been so fortunate to obtain the goodwill of his master, and spoke to him of the love and interest which his grandmother showed to him, and of her honest pride at every little token of his affection. But there was something like a feeling of condescension in this kindness that he liked less than her banter. And though more put out of countenance, he was yet much better pleased, when she reminded him of several little village anecdotes, and described his ludicrous appearance behind the tombstone conning his psalms.

But this momentary embarrassment was relieved by the entrance of Miss Mizey, who came out of Cunningham's bedroom with an air of prodigious consequentiality, addressing herself with a simper to Pierston, who could with difficulty keep his gravity, while she glanced askance at our hero, as on a creature of an inferior order of beings. Many things had occurred to convert Andrew's dislike of Miss Mizey's superciliousness into contempt; and with a degree of nonchalance that neither Mary nor Pierston could withstand, he said, "Eh dear! Miss Mizey, but ye're looking auld-like. I

couldna hae thought that in sae short a time there would hae been sic a change."

The elderly gentlewoman did not well know what reply to make to this most irreverent salutation; but at last she said, tartly, "It's no the case wi' thee, Wheelie, for thou's just the same wee blackent-like taid as when you left the Stoneyholm."

"Ay, Miss Mizy," said Andrew, "neither you nor me can help our looks. We're baith made by the hand of God, and the art o' man canna mend us."

"Thou was aye a sorrowfu' laddie," cried Miss Mizy, *both nettled and diverted by this address; for, with all her acrid humour, she was not insensible to the influence of Andrew's drollery.* "And they would need lang spoons that sup wi' the de'il. Howsomever, I'm glad to see thee looking sae weel, and to hear o' thy weel-doing." And she then proposed that Andrew should adjourn to see his old schoolfellow.

Time, which had not improved the charms of Miss Mizy, had wrought a great change on Cunningham. He was grown into a fine manly figure, and his profession had brought out and confirmed the bold and decisive features of his character. His wound, however, confined him to his couch, and he could only welcome Andrew with a generous shake of the hand, expressing his admiration at the unchanged simplicity of his appearance.

Mary, who had accompanied our hero into her brother's apartment, still harping on the old theme, reminded them of the pyet-plot, and joked with Andrew on the loss of his first love, Maggy.

Experience of the world, the freedom, it may be the licentiousness, of a military life, had given Cunningham a knowledge of womankind above his years, and he looked sharply for a moment at his sister in such a manner as brought a blush into her cheek that spread over her neck and bosom ; nothing, however, further passed, for the necessity that Cunningham was under, on account of his wounds, of remaining undisturbed, obliged them to leave the room, and return to that in which Miss Mizy and Pierston were sitting. Andrew did not resume his seat, but nodding a good morning, moved to go away. In turning round, his eye caught several cards on the mantelpiece ; and, among others, he observed an invitation, sticking ostentatiously behind the glass, from his friend the Duchess of Dashingwell ; but he said nothing. The moment, however, that he got into the street, he contrived to shake off Pierston, and went immediately to pay his respects to her grace.

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CHAPTER XLIV

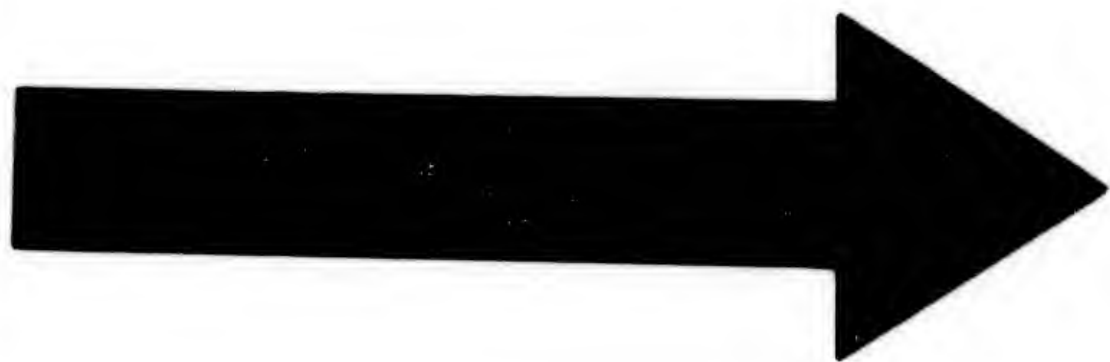
Stratagems.

ANDREW, from their first meeting, had continued a great favourite with the duchess ; but having, from motives of delicacy towards Lord and Lady Sandyford, abstained from the parties of their friends, her grace began to wonder what had become of him, and his reception, in consequence, was unusually free and cordial. After the buoyaney and gladdenings of her joyous welcome had subsided, she requested that he would make a point of coming to her ball,—the same to which Miss Cunningham and her aunt were invited.

“I’ll do that, my leddy duchess, with the greatest pleasure,” was his answer ; “for there’s a young lady frae the same country-side wi’ me that I understand is likely to be there.”

“And pray who is that ?” cried her grace, looking a little slyly, and not a little surprised at the reason.

“Miss Cunningham,” was the reply ; and there was a degree of diffidence in the tone in which it was said that still more excited the curiosity of the duchess, who immediately exclaimed—



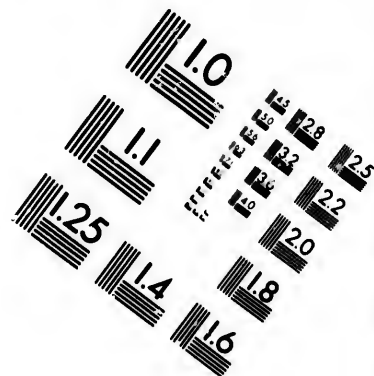
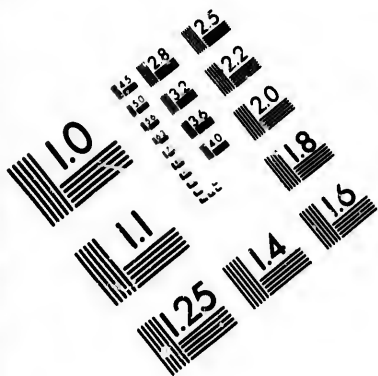
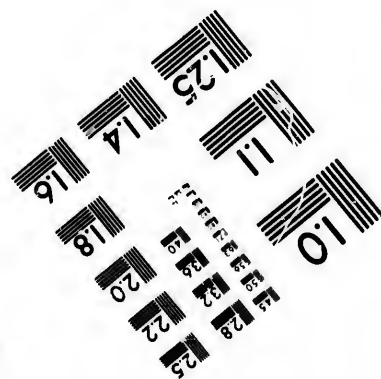
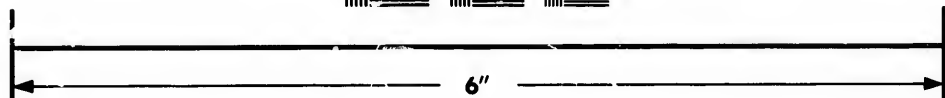
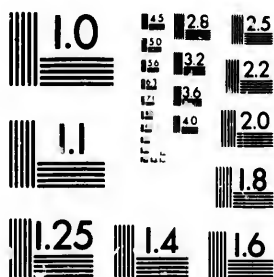


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"On my conscience, Wylie, you are a man of infinite taste, as well as jest. She is very beautiful, and possesses an air of life and fashion uncommon for a country girl."

"She's weel enough an' she be gude," said Andrew, half blushing, and with an affected simplicity, seemingly intended to parry the mirthful malice which he saw her grace was mustering for an assault. but in reality to inveigle her into his interests, for he knew that the open and blithe heartiness of her disposition would, if once engaged on his side, make little scruple in setting him off to the best advantage.

"Why, Wylie," she exclaimed, "how long have you known Miss Cunningham?"

"Oh, ever since we were bairns!"

"Bairns!" cried the duchess.

"It's a perfect truth," replied Andrew; "her father was the laird, and I'm but a cottar's son: so I wouldna hae you fancy, because I should be glad to meet Miss Cunningham at your ball, that I hae any other motive than the pleasure of seeing an old acquaintance."

"If any other being than yourself," cried the duchess, "had said so, I might perhaps have half believed him; but I know you too well, Wylie. My cousin Mordaunt has told me what you have done for him, and that Sandyford writes you have more skill in the common law of human nature than all the twelve judges have of the laws of the land; so no going about the bush with me: I

see you are in love with Miss Cunningham—that's the perfect truth."

"Weel, my leddy duchess, an' I should be sae, I canna help it—the cat may look at the king," replied our hero. "But it's ae thing, your grace, for a man to admire, and another thing for a woman to admire; and it's no reasonable to expect that ever Miss Cunningham would have anything more than the kindly condescension of an old friend towards me."

"Now, Wylie," said the duchess in a firmer tone, and with a steady countenance, while her eye playfully sparkled, "I have a great mind to be angry. How dare you, in this cunning manner, try to make me your confidante? For you know very well that a woman, once in the secret of a lover, must needs take a part. I see through your drift, friend; you think if you could get the backing of a duchess it might further your suit."

"Your grace," cried Andrew, interrupting her, "is cutting far before the point. I never had ony sic thought, my leddy duchess; and I think, considering who I am, and what Miss Cunningham is, we have sported in this matter a wee thought ower muckle."

It can scarcely be questioned that her grace was right in her conjecture, and that Andrew was actuated by a wish to lessen, in the opinion of his mistress, the disparity which he felt so deeply; but that he should have presumed to suppose that

a lady of the duchess's rank would ever be brought to take any interest or to feel any sympathy in his case, at first sight appears highly ridiculous. He had, however, seen enough of the world to know that below a certain degree the great make no distinctions of rank, and that the laird of Craiglands' daughter and the cottar's son, considered from such an elevated pinnacle of nobility as that of her grace, would seem to stand on no very striking inequality of either rank or condition. Besides, he was fully aware that the familiarity with which he had been always treated by the duchess had entirely stifled any sentiment which the humbleness of his birth might perhaps, in an earlier stage of their intercourse, have occasioned to his disadvantage. But, whether we are attributing to him more machiavelism than he really practised, or ascribing to the duchess more discernment than she possessed, it is certain that the result was in consonance with what we have stated of both; for her grace found herself irresistibly engaged in his behalf; and from this conversation, after leaving the duchess, he seemed to be animated with a new spirit, the first manifestation of which was in ordering a new suit of clothes, with strict injunctions to make them of the very finest cloth, and in the neatest manner possible, and a little more in the fashion than the cut of those he always wore, which were the exact counterpart of the suit he had originally brought from Stoneyholm.

In this new suit, on the night appointed, he made his appearance at the ball. The duchess, with that sharp eye which the ladies always have to the appearance of the gentlemen, saw, at the first glance, the change in his garb, and said that she suspected Miss Cunningham's interest and influence had been already beneficial to his tailor. At that moment Mary was announced, and entered the room leaning on the arm of her aunt. In approaching towards the duchess, she was so startled at seeing Andrew at her grace's side, and on terms of such familiarity, that she became confused, and blushed, and seemed utterly at a loss to express the few simple commonplaces requisite for the occasion.

The keen-sighted duchess saw her confusion, and gave Andrew a pinch between the shoulders; while, with her wonted urbanity, she said, "My dear Miss Cunningham, I am so rejoiced you are come; for my friend, Mr Wylie here, has been beseeching me to get him a partner for the next dance so earnestly that I was driven to my wit's end. He is such a creature that, unless he obtains one of the very finest women wherever he goes, he will not dance at all."

Miss Mizy, who during this speech had recognised Andrew, stooped forward and pried, as it were, into his face, with such curious amazement that he could with difficulty keep his gravity, while he said, "Dear me, Miss Mizy, is that you? I thought your dancing days were past."

"I declare," cried Miss Mizy, turning round to her niece, and stretching herself up into the most lofty posture of consequentiality, "it's that whittret¹ Wylie!"

Mary by this time had a little recovered the emotion of her first surprise; and while she clung, as it were alarmed, to her aunt, in passing from the duchess she said, "Wheelie, I'll be as plain as I'm pleasant: mind, you're no to expect me to dance with you."

"It's vera weel o' you, Miss Mary," replied Andrew pawkily, "to tak the first word o' flyting;² but ye should first ken whether ye're come up to my mark or no."

Mary bit her lips and blushed. There was a confidence in this retort that made her feel the inferiority of her feminine bravery; and, for the first time, she was affected with an indescribable embarrassment towards Andrew. He, however, continued at her side; and, as he was well acquainted with many of the most distinguished guests, Miss Mizy was delighted they had fallen in with him; for, unaccustomed to large and general companies, she was peculiarly susceptible to that disagreeable feeling of insignificance which the unknown multitudes of London uniformly awaken in strangers from the country.

When Andrew had paraded the rooms with them for some time, and enjoyed his ovation, he inquired of Mary if she was really disposed to

¹ *Whittret*. Weasel.

² *Flyting*. Scolding.

dance, saying, "I ken vera weel that ye dinna like to hae sic a wee smytch¹ o' a partner as me; but, for auld lang syne, I'll get you a partner."

By this time the lady's pride was a little cowed, and she hesitated in her answer.

"Oh!" said Andrew, "ye needna be on any ceremony wi' me; for, in truth, I never dance; so I'll let you aff for the partnership of her grace's making."

There was something in the manner in which this was said, and in the look which accompanied the words, that brought the crimson into Miss Cunningham's face.

"What are ye saying?" exclaimed Miss Mizy, observing the confusion of her niece.

"Oh, naething," replied Andrew, "but that I'll get Miss Mary another partner, which will leave me free to dance the Scotch measure or the Blackamoor's jig wi' you, Miss Mizy. Eh! what a wonder it will be to a' the company to see you and me louping and flinging like the witches in Alloway Kirk!" And after these words he scudded from them through the crowd towards a young nobleman with whom he was acquainted, equally remarkable for the beauty of his person, his self-conceit, and shallow understanding, and inquired if he would dance with Miss Cunningham. Mary's appearance had by this time attracted the attention of all the men; and Lord Dimpleton, delighted with the proposal, imme-

¹ *Smytch*, Small chit.

diately went with Andrew, and was introduced to the ladies.

In choosing such a partner, it is not to be doubted that Andrew had consideration for his lordship's endowments; for in the selection he paid a compliment to the discernment of his mistress, with whom, according to the estimate he had formed of her judgment and sense, he judged that neither the rank nor the personal appearance of the young baron would have any prejudicial influence on his own pretensions—pretensions for the first time felt on that evening.

Nothing else particularly occurred during the remainder of the night. The two ladies, on account of Cunningham's illness, retired early, and next day, when Andrew called, Mary was cool and distant towards him; while her aunt, on the contrary, received him with marked attention, expressing her wonder and surprise to have found him such a favourite among so many of the nobility. But all the pleasure he derived from the altered manners of Miss Mizy was far more than overbalanced by the cold decorum of Mary; for he perceived that it was the result of some secret reflection, and that the change was not favourable to his wishes. In one respect, however, it was not discouraging; for it seemed to imply that she no longer considered the difference in their condition an insurmountable obstacle to the gratification of those wishes which he had now seriously begun to entertain.

During the remainder of the time that the Cunninghams stayed in London, Andrew frequently called; but no alteration took place in the studied reserve of Mary, nor did he appear in any instance to presume one step further than he had been accustomed to take. Towards Miss Mizy, however, his behaviour had evidently entirely altered. He took every opportunity of soothing her humour, and flattering her in all the tenderest and most vulnerable parts of her character, till she was thoroughly persuaded that he was one of the wisest and most discerning of mankind: an opinion which she peremptorily asserted whenever Mary affected in his absence to ridicule his person or manners; adding to the assertion an emphatic prediction that she was sure he would be ordained Lord Mayor of London, for he was in a far more likely road to the post than Whittington when "greeting wi' his cat in his arms."

CHAPTER XLV

The Forest.

FOR some time after the Cunninghams left London, nothing particular occurred to our hero. He attended his duty as usual at chambers, and frequently the parties of his fashionable friends. The marriage of Mordaunt took place at the time appointed; and, in addition to a renewal of his promise to give Andrew his business when he commenced on his own account, Sir Thomas Beauchamp himself assured him that he might likewise count him among his friends, and claim his best offices as soon as they could be of any use. But no incident gave him more pleasure than a letter from Lord Sandyford requesting him to come to Chastington Hall for a few days, an invitation which Mr Vellum cheerfully allowed him to accept.

The object which the earl had in view in wishing to see him was with reference to a settlement which he intended to make on the countess, but, for some reason that he never explained, wished to be kept secret even from Vellum.

Andrew was never fond of travelling post, nor

was he more satisfied with the perilous velocity of stage-coaches. In his jaunt to Chastington Hall, therefore, he resolved to take his own way. Accordingly, in the afternoon of the first day's journey, as he intended to sleep that night at the seat of Mordaunt, to whose happiness he had so essentially contributed, he left the coach in which he came from London, and walked forward alone ; his portmanteau being, with many injunctions, entrusted to the care of the guard, to be left at the Sandyford Arms, the public-house at the park-gate of Chastington Hall.

His road lay through an open forest, along the bottom of a range of hills beautifully covered with verdure, but, except where here and there sprinkled with sheep, lonely and silent. The fantastic forms of some of the old trees were calculated to awaken romantic fancies ; while the pastoral tranquillity of the hills had a sympathetic influence on the mind, and disposed the passing traveller to something like a sense of awe.

As Andrew was onward plodding his solitary way, he happened, in one of the thickest parts of the wood, to observe a troop of gipsies encamped at the foot of a spacious oak, to a branch of which they had fastened a rope that suspended their kettle. An old and withered hag, in a red cloak, —the ancestress, as she seemed, of the whole gang,—was seated near the kettle, endeavouring with her mouth to blow into flame a few sticks and splinters which she had placed under it. At

her side stood a knavish black-eyed urchin peeling onions ; while at some distance a younger female, the mother of the boy, was picking the feathers from a goose that had been missed that morning from the flock of Justice Stocks on Ganderfield Common. A child about twelve months old was standing near the grandmother, in a wattled frame, somewhat like a fowl-basket in shape, but without top or bottom ; some ten or a dozen yards farther off lay a stout ill-favoured young man, in ragged regimentals, asleep on the ground, his head resting on the root of a tree ; while an old churl was engaged in unloading a rude cart, from which an ass had been unyoked, that a sturdy lad was dragging by a hair-tether towards a richer rug of grass and herbage than covered the spot where they had fixed their temporary domicile.

Andrew who had no great affection for vagrants of any kind was not at all comfortable when he discovered these, and tried to walk hastily and softly past them ; but the boy who was peeling the onions happened to discover him, and was at his side in a moment, most pathetically imploring charity. Our hero affected not to notice him, but hastened on, which quickened the boy's importunity to such a degree that it could be no longer resisted. It happened, however, that Andrew had no smaller change than silver ; and in his trepidation, mistaking half-a-crown for a penny-piece, astonished the beggar by his liberality. The gipsy, in a transport of joy, returned

shouting to headquarters; and, to the horror of Andrew, who gave a hurried backward glance, the whole gang were assembled round the boy, and looking towards him. "They will think me," said he to himself, "made of money, and they'll pursue and murder me." The thought lent wings to his heels; and the moment that a turn of the wood concealed him from the view of the gipsies, he ran at full speed till he was out of breath.

By the time he had recovered the immediate effects of his race, the sun had declined to the horizon, and the skies, with that uncertainty of weather which prevails in the fall of the year, were clouded and overcast. No habitation was in sight; and as the road had proved more long and lonely (to say nothing of the gipsies) than was expected, he began to fear he was destined to be overtaken by the night. This was not at all a comfortable apprehension, nor was it cheered by a flash of lightning, slowly followed by deep and muttering thunder that grumbled heavily behind the hills.

"What shall I do if the rain comes on before I get to biggit land?" said our disconsolate adventurer, eyeing the threatening heavens. The lightning flashed in his face, and the thunder instantly rattled such a peal that he ran cowering along as if the vault and rafters of the skies were tumbling about his ears. This sudden clap was immediately succeeded by large drops of rain.

On the one side Andrew beheld only the darkening hills, bare and dreary, and on the other the forest, full of fantastic shapes and shadows. The lightning grew more frequent, and the thunder rolled louder and louder. The whole welkin was filled with blackness, and the gloom of night invested every object long before the natural time. Still, however, the rain held off, except an occasional scattering of broad and heavy drops, which indicated with what a deluge the clouds were loaded.

There was no time for reflection, but only for speed ; and as Andrew hastened on, he discovered, by the frequent gleams of the lightning, that the forest was left behind, that the hills receded, and that his road lay across an extensive common. This circumstance did not in itself disturb him ; but soon after he found that he had strayed from the path and was walking on the grass. He tried to regain the road ; but, in doubt whether it lay on the right or the left, in the search he went still more and more astray ; and the rain beginning to descend in torrents, his heart sank within him. In this juncture he discovered, by a gleam of lightning, a large tree at some distance ; and impelled by the immediate instinct which the rain awakened, he forgot the danger of such a shelter in such a storm, and ran towards it. Scarcely, however, had he taken twenty steps, when, in the midst of a fearful flash, the tree was riven into splinters by a thunder-bolt.

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CHAPTER XLVI

Hospitality.

ANDREW, for some time after the tree had been shivered into splinters, stood like a statue. Drenched to the skin, and astray, he had no alternative, when he recovered from his consternation, but to walk straight forward. He had not, however, advanced many paces till he found his perplexity increased, and his feet bewildered among rushes and sedges, and environed with the perils of a morass. Perhaps his fears augmented the danger, and it was only the effects of the heavy and sudden rain that he mistook for a marsh; but the water deepened when he attempted to advance, and he was glad to retrace his steps.

Completely wet, and almost overwhelmed by despair, he quitted the borders of the morass, and, with a sort of instinctive, or rather irrational, precipitancy, he ran from it till he was again stopped by the noise of a river before him, so loud that he could not but fear it was deep, strong, and rapid, swollen as it was into fury by the torrents from the hills.

This was even, he thought, more appalling than the oak shivered by the lightning; and, under an immediate pressure of despair in the moment, he sat down upon a stone, which he afterwards described as the head and corner-stone of his sufferings in that night. He had not been long seated when he discovered a light at some distance. It was low, dim, and red; but it was to him like the hospitable eye of a friend, and he rose and walked cautiously towards it. In a short time he found himself again in the forest, and still the light was beaming and alluring him forward; and the rain having passed off, he felt, although dripping with wet, more and more confidence as he advanced.

As he walked in a straight line, his path was rugged and uneven, and in many places interrupted with brambles, through which, however, he resolutely forced his way, afraid, if he deviated to the one side or the other, he might lose sight of the light. By this constancy of perseverance, in the course of a short time he reached near enough to see that it was a fire, around which several persons,—men, women, and children,—were seated; and pressing still on, he at length discovered a stew-kettle hanging from a bough, and recognised his old acquaintances the gipsies.

This recognition did not at first produce any very agreeable emotions; but the horrors of the thunder-storm had somewhat changed his mood. He was cold, and weary, and wet. He was also

not altogether free from the pains of hunger. The fire burned brightly; the flames flickeringly climbed the sides of the pot, as if they would have gladly tasted its savoury contents, that fumed in a steamy vapour to the boughs; while the gipsies around were drying their rags at the fire, and smiling cheerfully to one another, their sparkling eyes and brightening faces giving an assurance of innocent thoughts and free dispositions.

The boy who had won the half-crown was the first who discovered Andrew, and, coming hastily forward, immediately recognised him. Danger had taught our hero address, and before the boy had time to say anything, he stepped briskly to the group, and said, "Honest folk, can ye assist a poor wayfaring man that has missed the road, drookit¹ to the skin, and little able to gang farther?"

The gipsies immediately opened their circle and made room for him by the fire; and, after some unknown jabber among themselves, the stripling whom we have mentioned as leading the ass rose and went to the cart, from which he returned with a bottle that he offered to Andrew, telling him it was brandy, and to take a suck. The offer did not require the aid of much persuasion; and in drawing his breath, after having swallowed a modicum, our hero thought the gipsies very civilised kind of creatures.

Somewhat invigorated by the brandy, and his clothes beginning to dry, he entered into con-

¹ *Drookit.* Drenched.

versation with them, inquiring how far he was from any place where he could obtain shelter. They told him that there was a village about two miles off within the forest; and the young fellow in the old regimentals offered to conduct him thither after supper. In the meantime, the grandmother, who had frequently tasted the soup with a wooden ladle, at length declared it ready; and the kettle was untied from the rope and placed on the ground. Horn spoons were then distributed, and our hero invited to partake. The soup was eaten immediately from the seething kettle, each of the company blowing to cool it as he carried it to his mouth. In this manner the broth was consumed; and slices of bread being distributed, the goose was torn in pieces, and the parts seized at random. The old man, however, presented Andrew with a leg; and he, in his turn, won the hearts of the women by giving the youngest child a bone to suck from his own mouth. It was this happy facility of adapting himself to the manners of those among whom he happened to be placed that so wonderfully shaped his fortune. The gipsies, whom he had so greatly dreaded, not only treated him with kindness, but the fellow whose appearance seemed almost too uncouth for humanity was delighted in being afforded an opportunity of repaying the confidence which he seemed to have reposed in them.

When supper was over, the regimental gipsy accordingly renewed his offer to conduct our hero

to the village : and Andrew, in a glow of thankfulness, augmented by the generous effect of finding so much of the kindness of human nature among a troop of vagrants, whom he considered as the most depraved of the species, distributed among them a handful of uncounted silver, the first unreckoned money he had ever expended.

After the storm, the moon looked from her window in the cloud to tell the travellers who had gone into shelter that they might resume their journey, and our hero, with the gipsy, went towards the village.

"You will find but sorry quarters there," said the guide. "The only person who can give you warm ones is the parson ; and he won't. The never a one does he fodder ; but for that, his goslings are thin on the common, and his capons are at feast before they are fattened. Howsomever, we'll pull his latch and try his heart. But that you must do ; for were I seen within his paling, the hemp is not to spin that would purse my throttle."

As soon as the gipsy showed the parson's gate, Andrew said to him, "Maybe, young man, I may hae it in my power to do as good a turn as this for you some time, if ye'll let me know when." And he gave him his card and wished him good-night.

It was now far in the evening ; but the candles were still burning bright in the parlour of Dr Saffron when our hero rang the bell at the gate.

A watch-dog, with an audible bay, answered the summons, and soon after a servant in homely livery opened the door and inquired who was there.

"Tell your master, my lad," was the reply, "that a young man, in great need of a night's lodging, would be obliged to him for a bed."

"Tell the fellow to go about his business!" exclaimed a gruff corpulent voice from within, whose accents were scarcely more civil than those of the mastiff.

"I have no other business at this time, reverend sir, and ye had as weel let me in; for my claes are damp and my legs are weary, and it will no be telling you if onything ails me at your door," replied our hero.

"Who are you? What are you?" cried the doctor, showing forth his plump red visage, crowned with a white nightcap, from behind the door, and holding a candle in his hand.

"I am a bewildered Christian," said Andrew slyly, "that was overtaken by the storm, and glad to ask help of a gang of houseless gipsy vagrants that treated me with great discretion. Your reverence will no surely be more uncircumcised than gipsies?"

"But what are you?" cried the doctor more earnestly, coming out into full view.

"I'm by profession in the law," replied Andrew, "and was only passing through this part of the country."

"Have you no horse, no carriage?" exclaimed the parson.

"I have nothing of the sort," was the reply. "In truth, sir, ye never had a better opportunity to do a ceevil thing in your life than to take me in who am a stranger in this land."

"It is a bold request to come to any gentleman's door and demand quarters in this manner," replied the doctor; and he was on the point of ordering the footman to come in and shut the door, when our hero, apprehensive of prolonging the conversation in this way a little too much, said, "It's vera true, doctor, what you say; but it was all owing to a freak of mine. I am going into the west, on a visit to the Earl of Sandyford, and was to have taken my bed to-night with Mr Mordaunt of Beech Grove, in this neighbourhood. Beguiled by the fine afternoon, I was enticed to walk from the last stage. The storm overtook me, and here I am at your merciful hospitality."

There was something in this that the doctor liked better than the previous conversation, and he requested him to come in. The appearance of our hero, at all times rather odd than prepossessing, somewhat startled the rector, who soon, however, discovered, notwithstanding his homely exterior, that he was accustomed to good society. The conversation having led to a few further explanations, the parlour-bell was rung, and the servant ordered to get a bed prepared for the stranger.

CHAPTER XLVII

Explanations.

THE Reverend Doctor Saffron, into whose hospitable mansion our hero had been received, questioned him in rather a particular manner as to the situation of Lord and Lady Sandford. Wylie was struck with this circumstance, and it excited his curiosity to ascertain the cause.

"It's no easy to say what's their situation," was his wary reply; "but I'm thinking they are some friends of yours."

"No," said the doctor; "but I have heard that an unfortunate nephew of mine is deeply implicated in what has happened between them."

"Ay!" exclaimed Andrew, "so ye're uncle to that slippery blade, Ferrers?"

"Yes, I have the sorrow and misfortune. His mother was my only sister, and he is properly my heir; but for some time his conduct has been so extravagant, and his mind so unsettled, that I fear he will constrain me to cancel the obligations of nature and affection."

"Where is he now?" said our hero.

"That I cannot answer," replied the doctor

"I would give much to know; for this very afternoon I received a letter from one of his friends, the contents of which have greatly distressed me. He has not been seen in London for some time, and no one of his acquaintance there can tell what has become of him."

"That's very distressing, sir, very distressing indeed!" observed Andrew thoughtfully; and he then added, "The last account we had o' him was his being in the neighbourhood of Elderbower with the countess."

"Possibly he may still be with her—where is she?" inquired the doctor.

"No," replied Andrew, "her leddyship is no just left so far to hersel'. Ever since the discovery, she has been living a very penitent life in one of her father's old castles, where ravens and howlets are the only singing-birds she can bide to hearken to. Maybe Mr Ferrers has fled the country."

"According to his friend's account, that is not likely to be the case, for his means were entirely drained: he had lost everything," said the doctor. "Indeed, the occasion of the inquiry respecting him is of such a nature that nothing but the most extreme ruin could have given rise to it."

"It's a sore thing to have ill-doing friends. But I trust and hope that he's no under hidings for anything worse than his cuckooing."

The doctor looked severely at the levity of this expression; but he added, with emphasis, "There

are sins which deeply injure society, more venial than crimes of far less turpitude. Nothing but actual insanity can palliate Ferrers' offence."

"I'm concerned to hear't. What is't?" said Andrew, drawing his chair a little closer to the doctor, and looking earnest and grieved.

"He abandoned an Italian girl who lived with him, and left her on the eve of becoming a mother, almost literally without a shilling. Overwhelmed with the sense of her situation and poverty, she rashly followed him to Castle Rooksborough, where she died suddenly in giving birth to her child."

"And what has become of the baby?" said Andrew compassionately.

"Fortunately (as I have learned, on sending over this afternoon to my friend, the rector of Castle Rooksborough), a lady of rank happened to be passing through the village when the melancholy occurrence took place, and humanely left money to defray, not only the expenses of the mother's funeral, but the nursing of the child."

"How long ago?" said Andrew eagerly.

The doctor was startled by the quickness of the question, and, instead of giving him a direct answer, said, "You seem surprised."

"What did they ca' the ledly?" exclaimed our hero, still more impatiently.

"She wished her name concealed; but some suspicion is entertained that it was no other than Lady Sandyford."

At these words Andrew leaped from his seat, and ran dancing round the room, cracking his fingers and whistling triumphantly. The reverend doctor threw himself back in his chair and looked at him with amazement. At last Andrew halted, and going close up to him, said, "Oh, but ye hae told me blithe news! I could wager a plack to a lawbee that I have been ane of the stupidest creatures that ever the Lord took the trouble to put the breath of life in."

Still the doctor could only look his astonishment.

"Ay," continued Andrew, "ye may weel glower with the een of wonder; for really this is a joy unspeakable, and passing 'n' understanding. I'll set off for Chastington Hall this blessed night—no; I'll gang first to my leddy, to make all sure. Weel, who could have thought that Providence was in a storm to make me an instrument in this discovery?"

"Discovery!" echoed the doctor mechanically.

"It's better than the longitude; it's the philosopher's stone! Oh, doctor, doctor! the genie of Aladdin's lamp could not play 'Pew!' to you! What's apple-rubies and plum-pearls to charity and heavenly truth? But I maun compose myself, for I see ye're terrified, and think I'm going off at the nail."

"I am, indeed, exceedingly surprised at the vehemence of your conduct," said the doctor emphatically. "This news, which was to me so

fraught with affliction, seems to you pregnant with great pleasure."

"It's an ill wind that blows naebody good!" cried Andrew, still unable to bridle his joy. "But what's pleasure to me bodes no ill to you. Depend upon't, doctor, there's as little truth in that foul tale of your nephew and Leddy Sandyford as in a newspaper clash. The bairn was thought a living evidence of the fact."

"I wish, sir," interrupted the doctor, "that you would take time to explain what it is you allude to."

Andrew then, with as much method as the flurry of his spirits would allow, related the mystery and suspicion which had attached to the child of the Rose and Crown, declaring his persuasion of Lady Sandyford's perfect innocence, and that even "the black story" of her fainting in the arms of Ferrers would prove, on examination, nothing worse than "the likeness of a ghost cawkit¹ on a door."

The mind of the worthy rector seemed to derive some degree of satisfaction from this assurance; but he still deplored the wickedness of heart which instigated his nephew to abandon the poor Italian girl in a situation so interesting.

By this time supper was brought in, and Andrew, having reflected a little more considerably on the business, agreed to remain where he was that night. Next morning, however, the doctor's ser-

¹ *Cawkit*. Drawn with chalk.

vant was sent to the nearest town for a chaise, and during his absence the village was thrown into great consternation in consequence of a nobleman and his servants having found the body of a man who had been robbed and murdered by two gipsies in the forest during the night. The story was incoherently told; but the circumstances, wild as they were, made our hero shrink with an involuntary feeling of apprehension, for he had no doubt that the robbers belonged to the gang he had met with. When the servant returned, he learned that the nobleman was Lord Sandyford, and that his lordship was still at the inn, to attend the coroner's inquest, whither he resolved to proceed immediately.

CHAPTER XLVIII

The Examination.

ALTHOUGH Lord Sandyford had allowed his spirits to sink after what was considered the full discovery of his lady's infidelity, still he occasionally rallied, and, on hearing of his friend Mordaunt's marriage, summoned resolution enough to pay him a complimentary visit. In passing the forest early in the morning on his return from this visit, the post-boys who drove his lordship suddenly stopped, and the groom in attendance on horse-back, riding up to the window of the carriage, informed him that the body of a man was lying on the road, and that he saw two men, gipsies by their appearance, part from it and rush into the wood. The earl immediately ordered the body to be drawn off the high-road and laid on the grass, and the post-boys to make all the haste they could to the nearest town—the same to which our hero had sent for the post-chaise. On his arrival there, a party was immediately formed to bring the body, and to scour the forest in quest of the murderers; for it was not doubted that the

gipsies who were scared from the body had perpetrated the deed.

By the time Doctor Saffron's servant had arrived at the rectory with the chaise, the body was brought to the inn where the earl was ; and the two gipsies, the father and son, by whom Wylie had been so hospitably treated, were taken prisoners, and likewise carried to the town.

A coroner's inquest, in order to occasion as little delay as possible to the earl, was immediately held ; and both the post-boys and his lordship's groom swore that the two gipsies were the persons whom they had seen quit the body on the approach of the carriage. Indeed, no doubt could be entertained of their guilt ; for a gold watch and several other articles, which were known to be the property of the deceased, were found in their possession—the body being immediately recognised to be that of a Mr Knarl, who resided in the neighbourhood. A verdict of murder was accordingly pronounced against the prisoners, and they were taken to the court-house before Sir Hubert Mowbray, the lord of the manor and a justice of the peace.

The gipsies vehemently protested their innocence of the crime, but the young man confessed that he had plundered the body, declaring at the same time that he found it lying dead on the highway.

Sir Hubert was of opinion, and indeed all present concurred with him, that there never

was a clearer case of guilt; and he added, from his own knowledge, that, in passing through the forest with his servant late the preceding evening, he had seen two men by the moonlight skulking among the trees, and one of them he could almost himself swear was the younger prisoner.

The gipsy admitted that this was true, but said he was conducting a gentleman who had lost his way in the forest, and, in verification of this, presented our hero's card.

Sir Hubert looked at the card, and warmly expressed himself on the barefaced falsehood of the statement, saying it was absurd to suppose that any gentleman would, at such an hour, be passing the forest with such a guide; and he added that the probability rather was that the card had been taken from the person of the unfortunate victim. All the gipsies, young and old, were present at the examination; and the grandmother, during the whole time, preserved a sort of emphatic silence, with her eye steadily and sternly fixed on the baronet, who, while commenting on the story, carelessly tore the card and threw it on the floor. The boy who received the half-crown from Andrew watched the old woman intently, and, on receiving a signal from her, stooped down and picked up the pieces.

At the close of the examination the father and son were ordered to prison. The rest of

the family immediately retired. The father looked fiercely at Sir Hubert when he signed the warrant for their committal, and the young man, with horrible imprecations, exclaimed against the injustice of their doom; but while he was declaiming, the old woman touched her lip with her forefinger, and he instantly became silent, and followed his father quietly but sullenly to jail.

When Lord Sandyford, who had taken a deep interest in this impressive business, returned from the examination, he sent in quest of the gipsy women and their children, for the purpose of giving them some assistance, and to obtain an explanation of several circumstances which were not, in his opinion, very clearly made out. In fact, the whole proceedings had been conducted in a troubled and unsatisfactory manner. There was a tremor and haste about Sir Hubert, and a horror in the minds of the spectators, which at once awed and interested him. But his messenger was unsuccessful: the women, immediately on quitting the court-house, had left the town. This desertion of their relations did not improve the opinion which his lordship had formed of their character; and while he was speaking to the landlord on the subject a post-chaise drove up to the door. The landlord, as in duty bound, left the room to attend the stranger; and the earl, going forward to the window, was agreeably surprised to see the little sidling figure of our hero

alight. Nor could he refrain from smiling when he saw Wylie pay the post-boy, and the lad, after receiving his optional, apply for an addition, and even after obtaining another sixpence, still go away grumbling.

Although Andrew had hastened with the express intention of communicating his joyful discovery respecting the mysterious child, a degree of diffidence overcame him when he entered the room, chiefly perhaps occasioned by the altered appearance of the earl, the elegant languor of whose expressive countenance was deepened into a pale and settled melancholy. "I am rejoiced to see you," cried his lordship, with an effort to be gay; "but I have one injunction to lay on you: that is, Never to speak of Lady Sandford, or allude to her story, beyond what may be requisite to the business for which I wish your assistance."

"But if I bring you glad tidings of her purity, my lord?" cried Andrew.

The earl interrupted him by saying, "It is not a matter in which I take now any interest, and I request you to be silent on the subject."

Wylie, as if he had received a blow on the forehead, staggered backward, and seated himself for some time without speaking. The earl was evidently affected by his mortification, but, without noticing it, immediately began to relate the circumstances attending the discovery of the murder and the singular story of the younger

gipsy respecting the card. This led our hero to recapitulate his own adventures in the forest.

"Then," said the earl, "the story of the gipsy as to the manner in which he got the card is perfectly true?"

"As gospel," replied Wylie emphatically; "and, considering he's a gipsy, I'm far wrang if he isna an honest man, gin we make a proper allowance for his tod-like¹ inclination to other folks' cocks and hens; but that's bred in him by nature, out of his neighbouring wi' puddocks and taid, and other beasts of prey that den about dykes and ditches."

"But," said the earl, "the proof is so strong against him that it is impossible to doubt;" and his lordship then stated circumstantially what had taken place at the examination.

"The old woman is a pawkie carlin," said Andrew; "I saw that when I was supping their goose-broth; and I could wager a boddle to a bawbee that the whole clanjamphrey of them are awa' to London to speer me out, in order to get me to bear testimony as to the card. But I wonder, my lord, that ye allowed the justice to rive² the card!"

"It was of no consequence," replied his lordship, "because he had himself taken down your address."

"I dinna ken," said Andrew thoughtfully. "Howsever, I'll gang to the Tolbooth and see

¹ *Tod-like.* Fox-like.

² *Rive.* Tear.

the gipsy-lad, and hear what he has to say for
himsel'. He's a toozie tyke¹ in the looks, that
maun be alloo't; but a rough husk often covers
a sweet kernel."

¹ *Toozie tyke.* Uncombed dog.

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