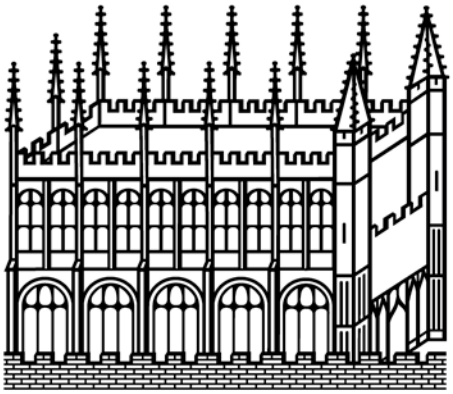


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SHIRLEY.

A Tale.

BY

CURRER BELL,

AUTHOR OF "JANE EYRE."



IN THREE VOLUMES.

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SHIRLEY.

CHAPTER I.

LEVITICAL.

Of late years, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England: they lie very thick on the hills; every parish has one or more of them; they are young enough to be very active, and ought to be doing a great deal of good. But not of late years are we about to speak; we are going back to the beginning of this century; late years—present years are dusty, sun-burnt, hot, arid; we will evade the noon, forget it in siesta, pass the mid-day in slumber, and dream of dawn.

If you think, from this prelude, that anything like a romance is preparing for you, reader, you never were more mistaken. Do you anticipate sentiment, and poetry, and reverie? Do you expect passion, and stimulus, and melodrama? Calm your expectations; reduce them to a lowly standard. Some-

thing real, cool, and solid, lies before you; something unromantic as Monday morning, when all who have work wake with the consciousness that they must rise and betake themselves thereto. It is not positively affirmed that you shall not have a taste of the exciting, perhaps towards the middle and close of the meal, but it is resolved that the first dish set upon the table shall be one that a Catholic —ay, even an Anglo-Catholic—might eat on Good-Friday in Passion Week: it shall be cold lentiles and vinegar without oil; it shall be unleavened bread with bitter herbs and no roast lamb.

Of late years, I say, an abundant shower of curates has fallen upon the north of England; but in eighteen-hundred-eleven-twelve that affluent rain had not descended: curates were scarce then: there was no Pastoral Aid—no Additional Curates' Society to stretch a helping hand to worn-out old rectors and incumbents, and give them the wherewithal to pay a vigorous young colleague from Oxford or Cambridge. The present successors of the apostles, disciples of Dr. Pusey and tools of the Propaganda, were at that time being hatched under cradle-blankets, or undergoing regeneration by nursery-baptism in wash-hand-basins. You could not have guessed by looking at any one of them that the Italian-ironed double frills of its net cap surrounded the brows of a pre-ordained, specially-sanctified successor of St. Paul, St. Peter, or St. John; nor could you have foreseen in the folds of its long night-gown the white surplice in

which it was hereafter cruelly to exercise the souls of its parishioners, and strangely to nonplus its old-fashioned vicar by flourishing aloft in a pulpit the shirt-like raiment which had never before waved higher than the reading-desk.

Yet even in those days of scarcity there were curates: the precious plant was rare, but it might be found. A certain favoured district in the West Riding of Yorkshire could boast three rods of Aaron blossoming within a circuit of twenty miles. You shall see them, reader. Step into this neat garden-house on the skirts of Whinbury, walk forward into the little parlour—there they are at dinner. Allow me to introduce them to you:—Mr. Donne, curate of Whinbury; Mr. Malone, curate of Briarfield; Mr. Sweeting, curate of Nunnely. These are Mr. Donne's lodgings, being the habitation of one John Gale, a small clothier. Mr. Donne has kindly invited his brethren to regale with him. You and I will join the party, see what is to be seen, and hear what is to be heard. At present, however, they are only eating; and while they eat we will talk aside.

These gentlemen are in the bloom of youth; they possess all the activity of that interesting age—an activity which their moping old vicars would fain turn into the channel of their pastoral duties, often expressing a wish to see it expended in a diligent superintendence of the schools, and in frequent visits to the sick of their respective parishes. But the youthful Levites feel this to be dull work; they

prefer lavishing their energies on a course of proceeding which—though to other eyes it appear more heavy with ennui, more cursed with monotony, than the toil of the weaver at his loom, seems to yield them an unfailing supply of enjoyment and occupation.

I allude to a rushing backwards and forwards, amongst themselves, to and from their respective lodgings: not a round — but a triangle of visits, which they keep up all the year through, in winter, spring, summer, and autumn. Season and weather make no difference; with unintelligible zeal they dare snow and hail, wind and rain, mire and dust, to go and dine, or drink tea, or sup with each other. What attracts them, it would be difficult to say. It is not friendship; for whenever they meet they quarrel. It is not religion; the thing is never named amongst them: theology they may discuss occasionally, but piety—never. It is not the love of eating and drinking; each might have as good a joint and pudding, tea as potent, and toast as succulent, at his own lodgings, as is served to him at his brother's. Mrs. Gale, Mrs. Hogg, and Mrs. Whipp —their respective landladies—affirm that "it is just for nought else but to give folk trouble." By "folk" the good ladies of course mean themselves, for indeed they are kept in a continual "fry" by this system of mutual invasion.

Mr. Donne and his guests, as I have said, are at dinner; Mrs. Gale waits on them, but a spark of

the hot kitchen fire is in her eye. She considers that the privilege of inviting a friend to a meal occasionally, without additional charge (a privilege included in the terms on which she lets her lodgings), has been quite sufficiently exercised of late. The present week is yet but at Thursday, and on Monday Mr. Malone, the curate of Briarfield, came to breakfast and stayed dinner; on Tuesday Mr. Malone and Mr. Sweeting, of Nunnely, came to tea, remained to supper, occupied the spare bed, and favoured her with their company to breakfast on Wednesday morning: now, on Thursday, they are both here at dinner; and she is almost certain they will stay all night. "C'en est trop," she would say, if she could speak French.

Mr. Sweeting is mincing the slice of roast beef on his plate, and complaining that it is very tough; Mr. Donne says the beer is flat. Ay! that is the worst of it. If they would only be civil, Mrs. Gale wouldn't mind it so much; if they would only seem satisfied with what they get, she wouldn't care, but "these young parsons is so high and so scornful, they set everybody beneath their fit; they treat her with less than civility, just because she doesn't keep a servant, but does the work of the house herself, as her mother did afore her: then they are always speaking against Yorkshire ways and Yorkshire folk," and by that very token Mrs. Gale does not believe one of them to be a real gentleman, or come of gentle kin. "The old parsons is worth the

whole lump of college lads; they know what belangs good manners, and is kind to high and low."

"More bread!" cries Mr. Malone, in a tone which, though prolonged but to utter two syllables, proclaims him at once a native of the land of shamrocks and potatoes. Mrs. Gale hates Mr. Malone more than either of the other two, but she fears him also, for he is a tall, strongly-built personage, with real Irish legs and arms, and a face as genuinely national; not the Milesian face—not Daniel O'Connel's style, but the high-featured, North-American-Indian sort of visage, which belongs to a certain class of the Irish gentry, and has a petrified and proud look, better suited to the owner of an estate of slaves, than to the landlord of a free peasantry. Mr. Malone's father termed himself a gentleman: he was poor and in debt, and besottedly arrogant; and his son was like him.

Mrs. Gale offered the loaf.

"Cut it, woman," said her guest; and the "woman" cut it accordingly. Had she followed her inclinations, she would have cut the parson also; her Yorkshire soul revolted absolutely from his manner of command.

The curates had good appetites, and though the beef was "tough," they ate a great deal of it. They swallowed, too, a tolerable allowance of the "flat beer," while a dish of Yorkshire pudding, and two tureens of vegetables, disappeared like leaves before locusts. The cheese, too, received distinguished

marks of their attention; and a "spice-cake," which followed by way of dessert, vanished like a vision, and was no more found. Its elegy was chanted in the kitchen by Abraham, Mrs. Gale's son and heir, a youth of six summers; he had reckoned upon the reversion thereof, and when his mother brought down the empty platter, he lifted up his voice and wept sore.

The curates, meantime, sat and sipped their wine, a liquor of unpretending vintage, moderately enjoyed. Mr. Malone, indeed, would much rather have had whisky; but Mr. Donne, being an Englishman, did not keep the beverage. While they sipped, they argued, not on politics, nor on philosophy, nor on literature; these topics were now as ever totally without interest for them; not even on theology, practical or doctrinal; but on minute points of ecclesiastical discipline, frivolities which seemed empty as bubbles to all save themselves. Mr. Malone, who contrived to secure two glasses of wine, when his brethren contented themselves with one, waxed by degrees hilarious after his fashion; that is, he grew a little insolent, said rude things in a hectoring tone, and laughed clamorously at his own brilliancy.

Each of his companions became in turn his butt. Malone had a stock of jokes at their service, which he was accustomed to serve out regularly on convivial occasions like the present, seldom varying his wit; for which, indeed, there was no necessity, as he never appeared to consider himself monotonous, and

did not at all care what others thought. Mr. Donne, he favoured with hints about his extreme meagreness, allusions to his turned-up nose, cutting sarcasms on a certain threadbare chocolate surtout, which that gentleman was accustomed to sport whenever it rained, or seemed likely to rain, and criticisms on a choice set of cockney phrases, and modes of pronunciation, Mr. Donne's own property, and certainly deserving of remark for the elegance and finish they communicated to his style.

Mr. Sweeting was bantered about his stature, he was a little man, a mere boy in height and breadth compared with the athletic Malone, rallied on his musical accomplishments, he played the flute and sang hymns like a seraph (some young ladies of his parish thought), sneered at as "the lady's pet," teased about his mama and sisters, for whom poor Mr. Sweeting had some lingering regard, and of whom he was foolish enough now and then to speak in the presence of the priestly Paddy, from whose anatomy the bowels of natural affection had somehow been omitted.

The victims met these attacks each in his own way, Mr. Donne with a stilted self-complacency, and half-sullen phlegm, the sole props of his otherwise somewhat rickety dignity; Mr. Sweeting, with the indifference of a light, easy disposition, which never professed to have any dignity to maintain.

When Malone's raillery became rather too offensive, which it soon did, they joined in an attempt to

turn the tables on him, by asking him how many boys had shouted "Irish Peter!" after him, as he came along the road that day (Malone's name was Peter—the Rev. Peter Augustus Malone); requesting to be informed whether it was the mode in Ireland for clergymen to carry loaded pistols in their pockets, and a shillelagh in their hands, when they made pastoral visits; inquiring the signification of such words, as vele, firrum, hellum, storrum (so Mr. Malone invariably pronounced veil, firm, helm, storm,) and employing such other methods of retaliation as the innate refinement of their minds suggested.

This, of course, would not do. Malone, being neither good-natured nor phlegmatic, was presently in a towering passion. He vociferated, gesticulated; Donne and Sweeting laughed. He reviled them as Saxons and snobs at the very top pitch of his high Celtic voice; they taunted him with being the native of a conquered land. He menaced rebellion in the name of his "counthry," vented bitter hatred against English rule; they spoke of rags, beggary, and pestilence. The little parlour was in an uproar; you would have thought a duel must follow such virulent abuse; it seemed a wonder that Mr. and Mrs. Gale did not take alarm at the noise, and send for a constable to keep the peace. But they were accustomed to such demonstrations; they well knew that the curates never dined or took tea together without a little exercise of the sort, and were quite easy as to consequences; knowing that these clerical quarrels

were as harmless as they were noisy; that they resulted in nothing; and that, on whatever terms the curates might part to-night, they would be sure to meet the best friends in the world to-morrow morning.

As the worthy pair were sitting by their kitchen fire, listening to the repeated and sonorous contact of Malone's fist with the mahogany plane of the parlour table, and to the consequent start and jingle of decanters and glasses following each assault, to the mocking laughter of the allied English disputants, and the stuttering declamation of the isolated Hibernian,—as they thus sat, a foot was heard on the outer door-step, and the knocker quivered to a sharp appeal.

Mr. Gale went and opened.

"Whom have you up-stairs in the parlour?" asked a voice; a rather remarkable voice, nasal in tone, abrupt in utterance.

"Oh! Mr. Helstone, is it you, sir? I could hardly see you for the darkness; it is so soon dark now. Will you walk in, sir?"

"I want to know first whether it is worth my while walking in. Whom have you up-stairs?"

"The curates, sir."

"What! all of them?"

"Yes, sir."

"Been dining here?"

"Yes, sir."

"That will do."

With these words a person entered,—a middle-aged man, in black. He walked straight across the kitchen to an inner door, opened it, inclined his head forward, and stood listening. There was something to listen to, for the noise above was just then louder than ever.

"Hey!" he ejaculated to himself; then, turning to Mr. Gale,—"Have you often this sort of work?"

Mr. Gale had been a churchwarden, and was indulgent to the clergy.

"They're young, you know, sir,—they're young," said he, deprecatingly.

"Young! They want caning. Bad boys!—bad boys! and if you were a Dissenter, John Gale, instead of being a good Churchman, they'd do the like;—they'd expose themselves: but I'll ——"

By way of finish to this sentence, he passed through the inner door, drew it after him, and mounted the stair. Again he listened a few minutes when he arrived at the upper room. Making entrance without warning, he stood before the curates.

And they were silent; they were transfixed; and so was the invader. He,—a personage short of stature, but straight of port, and bearing on broad shoulders a hawk's head, beak, and eye, the whole surmounted by a Rheoboam, or shovel-hat, which he did not seem to think it necessary to lift or remove before the presence in which he then stood,—*he* folded his arms on his chest and surveyed his young friends—if friends they were—much at his leisure.

"What!" he began, delivering his words in a voice no longer nasal, but deep,—more than deep,—a voice made purposely hollow and cavernous; "What! has the miracle of Pentecost been renewed? Have the cloven tongues come down again? Where are they? The sound filled the whole house just now. I heard the seventeen languages in full action:—Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judæa, and Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians;—every one of these must have had its representative in this room two minutes since."

"I beg your pardon, Mr. Helstone," began Mr. Donne; "take a seat, pray, sir. Have a glass of wine?"

His civilities received no answer: the falcon in the black coat proceeded:—

"What do I talk about the gift of tongues? Gift, indeed! I mistook the chapter, and book, and testament:—Gospel for law, Acts for Genesis, the city of Jerusalem for the plain of Shinar. It was no gift, but the confusion of tongues which has gabbled me deaf as a post. *You*, apostles? What!—you three? Certainly not:—three presumptuous Babylonish masons,—neither more nor less!"

"I assure you, sir, we were only having a little chat together over a glass of wine, after a friendly dinner:—settling the Dissenters."

"Oh! settling the Dissenters—were you? Was Malone settling the Dissenters? It sounded to me much more like settling his co-apostles. You were quarrelling together; making almost as much noise —you three alone—as Moses Barraclough, the preaching tailor, and all his hearers, are making in the methodist chapel down yonder, where they are in the thick of a revival. I know whose fault it is—it is yours, Malone."

"Mine! sir?"

"Yours, sir. Donne and Sweeting were quiet before you came, and would be quiet if you were gone. I wish when you crossed the Channel, you had left your Irish habits behind you. Dublin student ways won't do here: the proceedings which might pass unnoticed in a wild bog and mountain district in Connaught will, in a decent English parish, bring disgrace on those who indulge in them, and, what is far worse, on the sacred institution of which they are merely the humble appendages."

There was a certain dignity in the little elderly gentleman's manner of rebuking these youths; though it was not, perhaps, quite the dignity most appropriate to the occasion. Mr. Helstone—standing straight as a ramrod—looking keen as a kite, presented, despite his clerical hat, black coat, and gaiters, more the air of a veteran officer chiding his subalterns, than of a venerable priest exhorting his sons in the faith. Gospel mildness — apostolic benignity, never seemed to have breathed their

influence over that keen brown visage; but firmness had fixed the features, and sagacity had carved her own lines about them.

"I met Supplehough," he continued, "plodding through the mud this wet night, going to preach at Milldean opposition shop. As I told you, I heard Barraclough bellowing in the midst of a conventicle like a possessed bull; and I find *you*, gentlemen, tarrying over your half pint of muddy port-wine, and scolding like angry old women. No wonder Supplehough should have dipped sixteen adult converts in a day—which he did a fortnight since; no wonder Barraclough, scamp and hypocrite as he is, should attract all the weaver-girls, in their flowers and ribbons, to witness how much harder are his knuckles than the wooden brim of his tub; as little wonder that *you*, when you are left to yourselves, without your rectors—myself, and Hall, and Boultby—to back you, should too often perform the holy service of our church to bare walls, and read your bit of a dry discourse to the clerk, and the organist, and the beadle. But enough of the subject: I came to see Malone—I have an errand unto thee, O captain!"

"What is it?" inquired Malone discontentedly; "there can be no funeral to take at this time of day."

"Have you any arms about you?"

"Arms, sir?—yes, and legs:" and he advanced the mighty members.

"Bah! weapons, I mean."

"I have the pistols you gave me yourself: I never part with them: I lay them ready cocked on a chair by my bedside at night. I have my blackthorn."

"Very good. Will you go to Hollow's-mill?"

"What is stirring at Hollow's-mill?"

"Nothing as yet, nor perhaps will be: but Moore is alone there. He has sent all the workmen he can trust to Stilbro'; there are only two women left about the place: it would be a nice opportunity for any of his well-wishers to pay him a visit, if they knew how straight the path was made before them."

"I am none of his well-wishers, sir: I don't care for him."

"Soh! Malone, you are afraid?"

"You know me better than that. If I really thought there was a chance of a row, I would go: but Moore is a strange, shy man, whom I never pretend to understand; and, for the sake of his sweet company only, I would not stir a step."

"But there *is* a chance of a row, if a positive riot does not take place—of which, indeed, I see no signs; yet it is unlikely this night will pass quite tranquilly. You know Moore has resolved to have the new machinery, and he expects two waggon loads of frames and shears from Stilbro' this evening. Scott, the overlooker, and a few picked men, are gone to fetch them."

"They will bring them in safely and quietly enough, sir."

"Moore says so, and affirms he wants nobody: some one, however, he must have, if it were only to bear evidence in case anything should happen. I call him very careless. He sits in the counting-house with the shutters unclosed; he goes out here and there after dark, wanders right up the hollow, down Fieldhead-lane, among the plantations, just as if he were the darling of the neighbourhood, or—being, as he is, its detestation—bore a 'charmed life' as they say in tale-books. He takes no warning from the fate of Pearson, nor from that of Armitage—shot one in his own house and the other on the moor."

"But he should take warning, sir, and use precautions too," interposed Mr. Sweeting; "and I think he would, if he heard what I heard the other day."

"What did you here, Davy?"

"You know Mike Hartley, sir?"

"The Antinomian weaver? Yes."

"When Mike has been drinking for a few weeks together, he generally winds up by a visit to Nunnely vicarage, to tell Mr. Hall a piece of his mind about his sermons, to denounce the horrible tendency of his doctrine of works, and warn him that he and all his hearers are sitting in outer darkness."

"Well—that has nothing to do with Moore."

"Besides being an Antinomian, he is a violent Jacobin and leveller, sir."

"I know. When he is very drunk, his mind is always running on regicide. Mike is not unacquainted with history, and it is rich to hear him going over the list of tyrants of whom, as he says, 'the revenger of blood has obtained satisfaction.' The fellow exults strangely in murder done on crowned heads, or on any head for political reasons. I have already heard it hinted that he seems to have a queer hankering after Moore: is that what you allude to, Sweeting?"

"You use the proper term, sir. Mr. Hall thinks he has no personal hatred of Moore; he says he even likes to talk to him, and run after him, but he has a *hankering* that he should be made an example of. He was extolling him to Mr. Hall the other day as the mill-owner with the most brains in Yorkshire, and for that reason he affirms he should be chosen as a sacrifice, an oblation of a sweet savour. Is Mike Hartley in his right mind, do you think, sir?" inquired Sweeting, simply.

"Can't tell, Davy; he may be crazed or he may be only crafty—or, perhaps, a little of both."

"He talks of seeing visions, sir."

"Ay! He is a very Ezekiel or Daniel for visions. He came just when I was going to bed, last Friday night, to describe one that had been revealed to him in Nunnely Park that very afternoon."

"Tell it, sir—what was it?" urged Sweeting.

"Davy, thou hast an enormous organ of Wonder

in thy cranium; Malone, you see, has none; neither murders nor visions interest him: see what a big, vacant Saph, he looks at this moment."

"Saph! Who was Saph, sir?"

"I thought you would not know: you may find it out: it is biblical. I know nothing more of him than his name and race; but from a boy upwards, I have always attached a personality to Saph. Depend on it he was honest, heavy, and luckless; he met his end at Gob, by the hand of Sibbechai."

"But the vision, sir?"

"Davy, thou shalt hear. Donne is biting his nails, and Malone yawning; so I will tell it but to thee. Mike is out of work, like many others, unfortunately; Mr. Grame, Sir Philip Nunnely's steward, gave him a job about the priory: according to his account, he was busy hedging rather late in the afternoon, but before dark, when he heard what he thought was a band at a distance, bugles, fifes, and the sound of a trumpet; it came from the forest, and he wondered that there should be music there. He looked up: all amongst the trees he saw moving objects, red, like poppies, or white, like May-blossom; the wood was full of them; they poured out and filled the park. He then perceived they were soldiers—thousands and tens of thousands, but they made no more noise than a swarm of midges on a summer evening. They formed in order, he affirmed, and marched, regiment after regiment, across the park; he followed them to Nunnely

Common; the music still played soft and distant. On the common he watched them go through a number of evolutions, a man clothed in scarlet stood in the centre and directed them; they extended, he declared, over fifty acres; they were in sight half an hour; then they marched away quite silently—the whole time he heard neither voice nor tread—nothing but the faint music playing a solemn march."

"Where did they go, sir?"

"Towards Briarfield; Mike followed them; they seemed passing Fieldhead, when a column of smoke, such as might be vomited by a park of artillery, spread noiseless over the fields, the road, the common, and rolled, he said, blue and dim to his very feet. As it cleared away he looked again for the soldiers, but they were vanished; he saw them no more. Mike, like a wise Daniel as he is, not only rehearsed the vision, but gave the interpretation thereof: it signifies, he intimated, bloodshed and civil conflict."

"Do you credit it, sir?" asked Sweeting.

"Do you, Davy? But come, Malone, why are you not off?"

"I am rather surprised, sir, you did not stay with Moore yourself; you like this kind of thing."

"So I should have done, had I not unfortunately happened to engage Boultby to sup with me on his way home from the Bible Society meeting at Nunnely. I promised to send you as my substi-

tute, for which, by-the-by, he did not thank me; he would much rather have had me than you, Peter. Should there be any real need of help, I shall join you; the mill-bell will give warning. Meantime go, unless (turning suddenly to Messrs. Sweeting and Donne),—unless Davy Sweeting or Joseph Donne prefers going. What do you say, gentlemen? The commission is an honourable one, not without the seasoning of a little real peril, for the country is in a queer state, as you all know, and Moore and his mill, and his machinery, are held in sufficient odium. There are chivalric sentiments, there is high-beating courage under those waistcoats of yours, I doubt not. Perhaps I am too partial to my favourite, Peter; little David shall be the champion or spotless Joseph. Malone, you are but a great floundering Saul after all, good only to lend your armour: out with your fire-arms, fetch your shillelagh; it is there—in the corner."

With a significant grin, Malone produced his pistols, offering one to each of his brethren: they were not readily seized on. With graceful modesty, each gentleman retired a step from the presented weapon.

"I never touch them: I never did touch anything of the kind," said Mr. Donne.

"I am almost a stranger to Mr. Moore," murmured Sweeting.

"If you never touched a pistol, try the feel of it now, great satrap of Egypt. As to the little min-

strel, he probably prefers encountering the Philistines with no other weapon than his flute. Get their hats, Peter; they'll both of 'em go."

"No, sir; no, Mr. Helstone; my mother wouldn't like it," pleaded Sweeting.

"And I make it a rule never to get mixed up in affairs of the kind," observed Donne.

Helstone smiled sardonically; Malone laughed a horse-laugh. He then replaced his arms, took his hat and cudgel, and saying that "he never felt more in tune for a shindy in his life, and that he wished a score of greasy cloth-dressers might beat up Moore's quarters that night," he made his exit, clearing the stairs at a stride or two, and making the house shake with the bang of the front-door behind him.

CHAPTER II.

THE WAGGONS.

THE evening was pitch-dark: star and moon were quenched in gray rain-clouds—gray they would have been by day; by night they looked sable. Malone was not a man given to close observation of Nature; her changes passed, for the most part, unnoticed by him; he could walk miles on the most varying April day, and never see the beautiful dallying of earth and heaven, never mark when a sunbeam kissed the hill-tops, making them smile clear in green light, or when a shower wept over them, hiding their crests with the low-hanging, dishevelled tresses of a cloud. He did not, therefore, care to contrast the sky as it now appeared—a muffled, streaming vault, all black, save where, towards the east, the furnaces of Stilbro iron-works threw a tremulous lurid shimmer on the horizon—with the same sky on an unclouded frosty night. He did not trouble himself to ask where the constellations and the planets were gone, or to regret the "black-blue" serenity of the air-ocean which those white islets stud, and which another ocean, of

heavier and denser element, now rolled below and concealed. He just doggedly pursued his way, leaning a little forward as he walked, and wearing his hat on the back of his head, as his Irish manner was. "Tramp, tramp," he went along the causeway, where the road boasted the privilege of such an accommodation; "splash, splash," through the mire-filled cart-ruts, where the flags were exchanged for soft mud. He looked but for certain landmarks, the spire of Briarfield church; further on, the lights of Red House. This was an inn; and when he reached it, the glow of a fire through a half-curtained window, a vision of glasses on a round table, and of revellers on an oaken settle had nearly drawn aside the curate from his course. He thought longingly of a tumbler of whisky-and-water: in a strange place, he would instantly have realized the dream; but the company assembled in that kitchen were Mr. Helstone's own parishioners; they all knew him. He sighed, and passed on.

The high road was now to be quitted, as the remaining distance to Hollow's-mill might be considerably reduced by a short cut across fields. These fields were level and monotonous: Malone took a direct course through them, jumping hedge and wall. He passed but one building here, and that seemed large and hall-like, though irregular: you could see a high gable, then a long front, then a low gable, then a thick, lofty stack of chimneys: there were some trees behind it. It was dark; not a candle shone

from any window; it was absolutely still: the rain running from the eaves, and the rather wild, but very low whistle of the wind round the chimneys and through the boughs, were the sole sounds in its neighbourhood.

This building passed, the fields, hitherto flat, declined in a rapid descent: evidently a vale lay below, through which you could hear the water run. One light glimmered in the depth: for that beacon Malone steered.

He came to a little white house—you could see it was white even through this dense darkness—and knocked at the door. A fresh-faced servant opened it; by the candle she held was revealed a narrow passage, terminating in a narrow stair. Two doors covered with crimson baize, a strip of crimson carpet down the steps, contrasted with light-coloured walls, and white floor, made the little interior look clean and fresh.

"Mr. Moore is at home, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, but he is not in."

"Not in! Where is he then?"

"At the mill—in the counting-house."

Here one of the crimson doors opened.

"Are the waggons come, Sarah?" asked a female voice, and a female head at the same time was apparent. It might not be the head of a goddess—indeed a screw of curl-paper on each side the temples quite forbade that supposition—but neither was it the head of a Gorgon; yet Malone seemed to take it

in the latter light. Big as he was, he shrank bashfully back into the rain at the view thereof; and saying, "I 'll go to him," hurried in seeming trepidation down a short lane, across an obscure yard, towards a huge black mill.

The work-hours were over; the "hands" were gone; the machinery was at rest; the mill shut up. Malone walked round it; somewhere in its great sooty flank he found another chink of light; he knocked at another door, using for the purpose the thick end of his shillelagh, with which he beat a rousing tattoo. A key turned; the door unclosed.

"Is it Joe Scott? What news of the waggons, Joe?"

"No,—it 's myself. Mr. Helstone would send me."

"Oh! Mr. Malone." The voice in uttering this name had the slightest possible cadence of disappointment. After a moment's pause, it continued, politely, but a little formally:—

"I beg you will come in, Mr. Malone. I regret extremely Mr. Helstone should have thought it necessary to trouble you so far; there was no necessity;—I told him so,—and on such a night—but walk forwards."

Through a dark apartment, of aspect undistinguishable, Malone followed the speaker into a light and bright room within; very light and bright indeed it seemed to eyes which for the last hour had been striving to penetrate the double darkness of night and fog; but except for its excellent fire, and

for a lamp of elegant design and vivid lustre burning on a table, it was a very plain place. The boarded floor was carpetless; the three or four stiff-backed green-painted chairs seemed once to have furnished the kitchen of some farm-house; a desk of strong, solid formation, the table aforesaid, and some framed sheets on the stone-coloured walls, bearing plans for building, for gardening, designs of machinery, &c., completed the furniture of the place.

Plain as it was, it seemed to satisfy Malone, who, when he had removed and hung up his wet surtout and hat, drew one of the rheumatic-looking chairs to the hearth, and set his knees almost within the bars of the red grate.

"Comfortable quarters you have here, Mr. Moore, and all snug to yourself."

"Yes; but my sister would be glad to see you, if you would prefer stepping into the house."

"Oh, no! the ladies are best alone. I never was a lady's man. You don't mistake me for my friend Sweeting, do you, Mr. Moore?"

"Sweeting!—which of them is that? The gentleman in the chocolate over-coat, or the little gentleman?"

"The little one;—he of Nunnely;—the cavalier of the Misses Sykes, with the whole six of whom he is in love, ha! ha!"

"Better be generally in love with all than specially with one, I should think, in that quarter."

"But he *is* specially in love with one besides, for

when I and Donne urged him to make a choice amongst the fair bevy, he named—which do you think?"

With a queer, quiet smile, Mr. Moore replied, "Dora, of course, or Harriet."

"Ha! ha! you've an excellent guess; but what made you hit on those two?"

"Because they are the tallest, the handsomest; and Dora, at least, is the stoutest; and as your friend, Mr. Sweeting, is but a little, slight figure, I concluded that, according to a frequent rule in such cases, he preferred his contrast."

"You are right; Dora it is: but he has no chance, has he, Moore?"

"What has Mr. Sweeting, besides his curacy?"

This question seemed to tickle Malone amazingly; he laughed for full three minutes before he answered it.

"What has Sweeting? Why David has his harp, or flute, which comes to the same thing. He has a sort of pinchbeck watch; ditto, ring; ditto, eyeglass: that's what he has."

"How would he propose to keep Miss Sykes in gowns only?"

"Ha! ha! Excellent! I'll ask him that next time I see him. I'll roast him for his presumption; but no doubt he expects old Christopher Sykes would do something handsome. He is rich, is he not? They live in a large house."

"Sykes carries on an extensive concern."

"Therefore he must be wealthy, eh?"

"Therefore he must have plenty to do with his wealth: and in these times would be about as likely to think of drawing money from the business to give dowries to his daughters, as I should be to dream of pulling down the cottage there, and constructing on its ruins a house as large as Fieldhead."

"Do you know what I heard, Moore, the other day?"

"No: perhaps that I *was* about to effect some such change. Your Briarfield gossips are capable of saying that or sillier things."

"That you were going to take Fieldhead on a lease—I thought it looked a dismal place, by-the-by, to-night, as I passed it—and that it was your intention to settle a Miss Sykes there as mistress; to be married, in short, ha! ha! Now, which is it? Dora—I am sure; you said she was the handsomest."

"I wonder how often it has been settled that I was to be married since I came to Briarfield! They have assigned me every marriageable single woman by turns in the district. Now it was the two Misses Wynns—first the dark, then the light one. Now the red-haired Miss Armitage, then the mature Ann Pearson; at present you throw on my shoulders all the tribe of the Misses Sykes. On what grounds this gossip rests, God knows. I visit nowhere—I seek female society about as assiduously as you do, Mr. Malone; if ever I go to Whinbury, it is only to give Sykes or Pearson a call in their counting-house, where

our discussions run on other topics than matrimony, and our thoughts are occupied with other things than courtships, establishments, dowries. The cloth we can't sell, the hands we can't employ, the mills we can't run, the perverse course of events generally, which we cannot alter, fill our hearts, I take it, pretty well at present, to the tolerably complete exclusion of such figments as love-making, &c."

"I go along with you completely, Moore. If there is one notion I hate more than another, it is that of marriage; I mean marriage in the vulgar weak sense, as a mere matter of sentiment; two beggarly fools agreeing to unite their indigence by some fantastic tie of feeling—humbug! But an advantageous connection, such as can be formed in consonance with dignity of views, and permanency of solid interests, is not so bad—eh?"

"No," responded Moore, in an absent manner; the subject seemed to have no interest for him: he did not pursue it. After sitting for some time gazing at the fire with a preoccupied air, he suddenly turned his head.

"Hark!" said he: "did you hear wheels?"

Rising, he went to the window, opened it, and listened. He soon closed it. "It is only the sound of the wind rising," he remarked, "and the rivulet a little swollen, rushing down the hollow. I expected those waggons at six; it is near nine now."

"Seriously, do you suppose that the putting up of this new machinery will bring you into danger?"

inquired Malone. "Helstone seems to think it will."

"I only wish the machines—the frames were safe here, and lodged within the walls of this mill. Once put up, I defy the framebreakers; let them only pay me a visit, and take the consequences: my mill is my castle."

"One despises such low scoundrels," observed Malone, in a profound vein of reflection. "I almost wish a party would call upon you to-night; but the road seemed extremely quiet as I came along: I saw nothing astir."

"You came by the Redhouse?"

"Yes."

"There would be nothing on that road: it is in the direction of Stilbro' the risk lies."

"And you think there is risk?"

"What these fellows have done to others, they may do to me. There is only this difference: most of the manufacturers seem paralyzed when they are attacked. Sykes, for instance, when his dressing-shop was set on fire and burned to the ground, when the cloth was torn from his tenters and left in shreds in the field, took no steps to discover or punish the miscreants; he gave up as tamely as a rabbit under the jaws of a ferret. Now I, if I know myself, should stand by my trade, my mill, and my machinery."

"Helstone says these three are your gods; that the 'Orders in Council' are with you another name

for the seven deadly sins; that Castlereagh is your Antichrist, and the war-party his legions."

"Yes; I abhor all these things because they ruin me; they stand in my way. I cannot get on—I cannot execute my plans because of them; I see myself baffled at every turn by their untoward effects."

"But you are rich and thriving, Moore?"

"I am very rich in cloth, I cannot sell; you should step into my warehouse yonder, and observe how it is piled to the roof with pieces. Roakes and Pearson are in the same condition; America used to be their market, but the Orders in Council have cut that off."

Malone did not seem prepared to carry on briskly a conversation of this sort; he began to knock the heels of his boots together, and to yawn.

"And then to think," continued Mr. Moore, who seemed too much taken up with the current of his own thoughts to note the symptoms of his guest's *ennui*, —"to think that these ridiculous gossips of Whinbury and Briarfield will keep pestering one about being married! As if there was nothing to be done in life but to 'pay attention,' as they say, to some young lady, and then to go to church with her, and then to start on a bridal tour, and then to run through a round of visits, and then, I suppose, to be 'having a family.'—Oh, que le diable emporte!"—He broke off the aspiration into which he was launching with a certain energy, and added, more calmly—"I believe

women talk and think only of these things, and they naturally fancy men's minds similarly occupied."

"Of course—of course," assented Malone; "but never mind them." And he whistled, looked impatiently round, and seemed to feel a great want of something. This time Moore caught, and, it appeared, comprehended his demonstrations.

"Mr. Malone," said he, "you must require refreshment after your wet walk; I forget hospitality."

"Not at all," rejoined Malone; but he looked as if the right nail was at last hit on the head, nevertheless. Moore rose and opened a cupboard.

"It is my fancy," said he, "to have every convenience within myself, and not to be dependent on the feminity in the cottage yonder for every mouthful I eat or every drop I drink. I often spend the evening and sup here alone, and sleep with Joe Scott in the mill. Sometimes I am my own watchman; I require little sleep, and it pleases me on a fine night to wander for an hour or two with my musket about the hollow.—Mr. Malone, can you cook a mutton-chop?"

"Try me: I've done it hundreds of times at college."

"There's a dishful, then, and there's the gridiron. Turn them quickly; you know the secret of keeping the juices in?"

"Never fear me—you shall see. Hand a knife and fork, please."

The curate turned up his coat-cuffs, and applied

himself to the cookery with vigour. The manufacturer placed on the table, plates, a loaf of bread, a black bottle, and two tumblers. He then produced a small copper kettle — still from the same well-stored recess, his cupboard—filled it with water from a large stone jar in a corner, set it on the fire beside the hissing gridiron, got lemons, sugar, and a small china punch-bowl; but while he was brewing the punch, a tap at the door called him away.

"Is it you, Sarah?"

"Yes, sir. Will you come to supper, please sir?"

"No; I shall not be in to-night: I shall sleep in the mill. So lock the doors, and tell your mistress to go to bed." He returned.

"You have your household in proper order," observed Malone approvingly, as, with his fine face ruddy as the embers over which he bent, he assiduously turned the mutton-chops. "You are not under petticoat-government, like poor Sweeting; a man — whew! — how the fat spits! — it has burnt my hand—destined to be ruled by women. Now you and I, Moore—there's a fine brown one for you, and full of gravy—you and I will have no grey mares in our stables when we marry."

"I don't know—I never think about it; if the grey mare is handsome and tractable, why not?"

"The chops are done: is the punch brewed?"

"There is a glassful: taste it. When Joe Scott and his minions return they shall have a share of this, provided they bring home the frames intact."

Malone waxed very exultant over the supper: he laughed aloud at trifles; made bad jokes and applauded them himself; and, in short, grew unmeaningly noisy. His host, on the contrary, remained quiet as before. It is time, reader, that you should have some idea of the appearance of this same host: I must endeavour to sketch him as he sits at table.

He is what you would probably call, at first view, rather a strange-looking man; for he is thin, dark, sallow; very foreign of aspect, with shadowy hair carelessly streaking his forehead: it appears that he spends but little time at his toilette, or he would arrange it with more taste. He seems unconscious that his features are fine, that they have a southern symmetry, clearness, regularity in their chiseling; nor does a spectator become aware of this advantage till he has examined him well, for an anxious countenance, and a hollow somewhat haggard outline of face disturb the idea of beauty with one of care. His eyes are large, and grave, and gray; their expression is intent and meditative, rather searching than soft, rather thoughtful than genial. When he parts his lips in a smile, his physiognomy is agreeable; not that it is frank or cheerful even then, but you feel the influence of a certain sedate charm, suggestive, whether truly or delusively, of a considerate, perhaps a kind nature; of feelings that may wear well at home; patient, forbearing, possibly faithful feelings. He is still young—not more than thirty; his stature is tall, his figure slender. His

manner of speaking displeases; he has an outlandish accent, which, notwithstanding a studied carelessness of pronunciation and diction, grates on a British, and especially on a Yorkshire ear.

Mr. Moore, indeed, was but half a Briton, and scarcely that. He came of a foreign ancestry by the mother's side, and was himself born, and partly reared, on a foreign soil. A hybrid in nature, it is probable he had a hybrid's feeling on many points—patriotism for one; it is likely that he was unapt to attach himself to parties, to sects, even to climes and customs; it is not impossible that he had a tendency to isolate his individual person from any community amidst which his lot might temporarily happen to be thrown, and that he felt it to be his best wisdom to push the interests of Robert Gérard Moore, to the exclusion of philanthropic consideration for general interests, with which he regarded the said Gérard Moore as in a great measure disconnected. Trade was Mr. Moore's hereditary calling. The Gérards of Antwerp had been merchants for two centuries back; once they had been wealthy merchants, but the uncertainties, the involvements of business had come upon them; disastrous speculations had loosened by degrees the foundations of their credit; the house had stood on a tottering base for a dozen years; and at last, in the shock of the French Revolution, it had rushed down a total ruin. In its fall was involved the English and Yorkshire firm of Moore, closely connected with the Antwerp house,

and of which one of the partners, resident in Antwerp, Robert Moore, had married Hortense Gérard, with the prospect of his bride inheriting her father Constantine Gérard's share in the business. She inherited, as we have seen, but his share in the liabilities of the firm; and these liabilities, though duly set aside by a composition with creditors, some said her son Robert accepted, in his turn, as a legacy; and that he aspired one day to discharge them, and to rebuild the fallen house of Gérard and Moore on a scale at least equal to its former greatness. It was even supposed that he took by-past circumstances much to heart, and if a childhood passed at the side of a saturnine mother, under foreboding of coming evil, and a manhood drenched and blighted by the pitiless descent of the storm, could painfully impress the mind, *his* probably was impressed in no golden characters.

If, however, he had a great end of restoration in view, it was not in his power to employ great means for its attainment; he was obliged to be content with the day of small things. When he came to Yorkshire, he whose ancestors had owned warehouses in this seaport, and factories in that inland town, had possessed their town-house and their country-seat, saw no way open to him but to rent a cloth-mill, in an out-of-the-way nook of an out-of-the-way district, to take a cottage adjoining it for his residence, and to add to his possessions, as pasture for his horse, and space for his cloth-tenters, a few acres of the

steep rugged land that lined the hollow through which his mill-stream brawled. All this he held at a somewhat high rent (for these war times were hard, and everything was dear), of the trustees of the Fieldhead estate, then the property of a minor.

At the time this history commences, he had lived but two years in the district, during which period he had at least proved himself possessed of the quality of activity. The dingy cottage was converted into a neat, tasteful residence. Of part of the rough land he had made garden-ground, which he cultivated with singular, even with Flemish, exactness and care. As to the mill, which was an old structure, and fitted up with old machinery, now become inefficient and out of date, he had from the first evinced the strongest contempt for all its arrangements and appointments; his aim had been to effect a radical reform, which he had executed as fast as his very limited capital would allow; and the narrowness of that capital, and consequent check on his progress, was a restraint which galled his spirit sorely. Moore ever wanted to push on. "Forward" was the device stamped upon his soul; but poverty curbed him; sometimes (figuratively) he foamed at the mouth when the reins were drawn very tight.

In this state of feeling, it is not to be expected that he would deliberate much as to whether his advance was or was not prejudicial to others. Not being a native, nor for any length of time a resident of the neighbourhood, he did not sufficiently care

when the new inventions threw the old work-people out of employ; he never asked himself where those to whom he no longer paid weekly wages found daily bread; and in this negligence he only resembled thousands besides, on whom the starving poor of Yorkshire seemed to have a closer claim.

The period of which I write was an overshadowed one in British history, and especially in the history of the northern provinces. War was then at its height. Europe was all involved therein. England, if not weary, was worn with long resistance; yes, and half her people were weary too, and cried out for peace on any terms. National honour was become a mere empty name of no value in the eyes of many, because their sight was dim with famine, and for a morsel of meat they would have sold their birthright.

The "Orders in Council," provoked by Napoleon's Milan and Berlin decrees, and forbidding neutral powers to trade with France, had, by offending America, cut off the principal market of the Yorkshire woollen trade, and brought it consequently to the verge of ruin. Minor foreign markets were glutted, and would receive no more. The Brazils, Portugal, Sicily, were all overstocked by nearly two years' consumption. At this crisis, certain inventions in machinery were introduced into the staple manufactures of the north, which, greatly reducing the number of hands necessary to be employed, threw thousands out of work, and left them without

legitimate means of sustaining life. A bad harvest supervened. Distress reached its climax. Endurance, over-goaded, stretched the hand of fraternity to sedition; the throes of a sort of moral earthquake were felt heaving under the hills of the northern counties. But, as is usual in such cases, nobody took much notice. When a food-riot broke out in a manufacturing town, when a gig-mill was burnt to the ground, or a manufacturer's house was attacked, the furniture thrown into the streets, and the family forced to flee for their lives, some local measures were or were not taken by the local magistracy; a ringleader was detected, or more frequently suffered to elude detection, newspaper paragraphs were written on the subject, and there the thing stopped. As to the sufferers, whose sole inheritance was labour, and who had lost that inheritance; who could not get work, and consequently could not get wages, and consequently could not get bread, they were left to suffer on, perhaps inevitably left; it would not do to stop the progress of invention, to damage science by discouraging its improvements; the war could not be terminated, efficient relief could not be raised; there was no help then, so the unemployed underwent their destiny—ate the bread, and drank the waters of affliction.

Misery generates hate; these sufferers hated the machines which they believed took their bread from them; they hated the buildings which contained those

machines; they hated the manufacturers who owned those buildings. In the parish of Briarfield, with which we have at present to do, Hollow's-mill was the place held most abominable; Gérard Moore, in his double character of semi-foreigner and thorough-going progressist, the man most abominated. And it perhaps rather agreed with Moore's temperament than otherwise to be generally hated, especially when he believed the thing for which he was hated a right and an expedient thing; and it was with a sense of warlike excitement he, on this night, sat in his counting-house waiting the arrival of his frame-laden waggons. Malone's coming and company were, it may be, most unwelcome to him; he would have preferred sitting alone, for he liked a silent, sombre, unsafe solitude; his watchman's musket would have been company enough for him; the full-flowing beck in the den would have delivered continuously the discourse most genial to his ear.

With the queerest look in the world, had the manufacturer for some ten minutes been watching the Irish curate, as the latter made free with the punch, when suddenly that steady gray eye changed, as if another vision came between it and Malone. He raised his hand.

"Chut!" he said, in his French fashion, as Malone made a noise with his glass. He listened a moment, then rose, put his hat on, and went out at the counting-house door.

The night was still, dark, and stagnant, the water yet rushed on full and fast; its flow almost seemed a flood in the utter silence. Moore's ear, however, caught another sound—very distant, but yet dissimilar—broken, and rugged; in short, a sound of heavy wheels crunching a stony road. He returned to the counting-house and lit a lantern, with which he walked down the mill-yard, and proceeded to open the gates. The big waggons were coming on; the dray-horses' huge hoofs were heard splashing in the mud and water. Moore hailed them.

"Hey, Joe Scott! Is all right?"

Probably Joe Scott was yet at too great a distance to hear the inquiry; he did not answer it.

"Is all right, I say?" again asked Moore, when the elephant-like leader's nose almost touched his.

Some one jumped out from the foremost waggon into the road; a voice cried aloud, "Ay, ay, divil, all 's raight! We 've smashed 'em."

And there was a run. The waggons stood still; they were now deserted.

"Joe Scott!" No Joe Scott answered. "Murgatroyd! Pighills! Sykes!" No reply. Mr. Moore lifted his lantern, and looked into the vehicles; there was neither man nor machinery; they were empty and abandoned.

Now Mr. Moore loved his machinery. He had risked the last of his capital on the purchase of these frames and shears which to-night had been expected; speculations most important to his interests depended

on the results to be wrought by them; where were they?

The words "we've smashed 'em!" rung in his ears. How did the catastrophe affect him? By the light of the lantern he held, were his features visible, relaxing to a singular smile; the smile the man of determined spirit wears when he reaches a juncture in his life where this determined spirit is to feel a demand on its strength, when the strain is to be made, and the faculty must bear or break; yet he remained silent and even motionless, for at the instant he neither knew what to say nor what to do. He placed the lantern on the ground, and stood with his arms folded, gazing down and reflecting.

An impatient trampling of one of the horses made him presently look up; his eye, in the moment, caught the gleam of something white attached to a part of the harness. Examined by the light of the lantern, this proved to be a folded paper—a billet. It bore no address without; within was the superscription:—

"To the Divil of Hollow's-miln."

We will not copy the rest of the orthography, which was very peculiar, but translate it into legible English. It ran thus:—

"Your hellish machinery is shivered to smash on Stilbro' Moor, and your men are lying bound hand and foot in a ditch by the roadside. Take this as a warning from men that are starving, and have starving wives and children to go home to when

they have done this deed. If you get new machines, or if you otherwise go on as you have done, you shall hear from us again. Beware!"

"Hear from you again? Yes; I'll hear from you again, and you shall hear from me; I'll speak to you directly; on Stilbro' Moor you shall hear from me in a moment."

Having led the waggons within the gates, he hastened towards the cottage. Opening the door, he spoke a few words quickly but quietly to two females who ran to meet him in the passage. He calmed the seeming alarm of one by a brief palliative account of what had taken place; to the other he said, "Go into the mill, Sarah—there is the key—and ring the mill-bell as loud as you can: afterwards you will get another lantern and help me to light up the front."

Returning to his horses, he unharnessed, fed, and stabled them with equal speed and care, pausing occasionally, while so occupied, as if to listen for the mill-bell. It clanged out presently with irregular but loud and alarming din; the hurried agitated peal seemed more urgent than if the summons had been steadily given by a practised hand. On that still night, at that unusual hour, it was heard a long way round; the guests in the kitchen of the Redhouse were startled by the clangour; and declaring that "there must be summat more nor common to do at Hollow's-miln," they called for lanterns, and hurried to the spot in a body. And scarcely had they

thronged into the yard with their gleaming lights, when the tramp of horses was heard, and a little man in a shovel hat, sitting erect on the back of a shaggy pony, "rode lightly in," followed by an aide-de-camp mounted on a larger steed.

Mr. Moore, meantime, after stabling his dray-horses, had saddled his hackney, and with the aid of Sarah, the servant, lit up his mill, whose wide and long front now glared one great illumination, throwing a sufficient light on the yard to obviate all fear of confusion arising from obscurity. Already a deep hum of voices became audible: Mr. Malone had at length issued from the counting-house, previously taking the precaution to dip his head and face in the stone water-jar, and this precaution, together with the sudden alarm, had nearly restored to him the possession of those senses which the punch had partially scattered. He stood with his hat on the back of his head, and his shillelagh grasped in his dexter fist, answering much at random the questions of the newly-arrived party from the Redhouse. Mr. Moore now appeared, and was immediately confronted by the shovel hat and the shaggy pony.

"Well, Moore, what is your business with us? I thought you would want us to-night, me and the hetman here (patting his pony's neck), and Tom and his charger. When I heard your mill-bell, I could sit still no longer, so I left Boultby to finish his supper alone: but where is the enemy? I do not see a mask or a smutted face present; and there is

not a pane of glass broken in your windows. Have you had an attack, or do you expect one?"

"Oh, not at all! I have neither had one nor expect one," answered Moore, coolly. "I only ordered the bell to be rung because I want two or three neighbours to stay here in the Hollow, while I and a couple or so more go over to Stilbro' Moor."

"To Stilbro' Moor! What to do? To meet the waggons?"

"The waggons are come home an hour ago."

"Then all 's right. What more would you have?"

"They came home empty, and Joe Scott and Company are left on the moor, and so are the frames. Read that scrawl."

Mr. Helstone received and perused the document of which the contents have before been given.

"Hum! They 've only served you as they serve others. But, however, the poor fellows in the ditch will be expecting help with some impatience: this is a wet night for such a berth: I and Tom will go with you; Malone may stay behind and take care of the mill: what is the matter with him? His eyes seem starting out of his head."

"He has been eating a mutton-chop."

"Indeed! Peter Augustus, be on your guard. Eat no more mutton-chops to-night. You are left here in command of these premises; an honourable post!"

"Is anybody to stay with me?"

"As many of the present assemblage as choose.

My lads, how many of you will remain here, and how many will go a little way with me and Mr. Moore on the Stilbro'-road, to meet some men who have been waylaid and assaulted by frame-breakers?"

The small number of three volunteered to go; the rest preferred staying behind. As Mr. Moore mounted his horse, the rector asked him in a low voice, whether he had locked up the mutton-chops, so that Peter Augustus could not get at them? The manufacturer nodded an affirmative, and the rescue-party set out

CHAPTER III.

MR. YORKE.

CHEERFULNESS, it would appear, is a matter which depends fully as much on the state of things within, as on the state of things without and around us. I make this trite remark, because I happen to know that Messrs. Helstone and Moore trotted forth from the mill-yard gates, at the head of their very small company, in the best possible spirits. When a ray from a lantern (the three pedestrians of the party carried each one) fell on Mr. Moore's face, you could see an unusual, because a lively, spark dancing in his eyes, and a new-found vivacity mantling on his dark physiognomy; and when the rector's visage was illuminated, his hard features were revealed all agrin and ashine with glee. Yet a drizzling night, a somewhat perilous expedition, you would think, were not circumstances calculated to enliven those exposed to the wet, and engaged in the adventure. If any member or members of the crew who had been at work on Stilbro' Moor had caught a view of this party, they would have had great pleasure in shoot-

ing either of the leaders from behind a wall: and the leaders knew this, and, the fact is, being both men of steelly nerves and steady-beating hearts, were elate with the knowledge.

I am aware, reader, and you need not remind me, that it is a dreadful thing for a parson to be warlike: I am aware that he should be a man of peace: I have some faint outline of an idea of what a clergyman's mission is amongst mankind, and I remember distinctly whose servant he is, whose message he delivers, whose example he should follow; yet, with all this, if you are a parson-hater, you need not expect me to go along with you every step of your dismal, downward-tending, unchristian road; you need not expect me to join in your deep anathemas, at once so narrow and so sweeping—in your poisonous rancour, so intense and so absurd, against "the cloth;" to lift up my eyes and hands with a Supplehough, or to inflate my lungs with a Barraclough, in horror and denunciation of the diabolical rector of Briarfield.

He was not diabolical at all. The evil simply was—he had missed his vocation: he should have been a soldier, and circumstances had made him a priest. For the rest, he was a conscientious, hard-headed, hard-handed, brave, stern, implacable, faithful little man: a man almost without sympathy, ungentle, prejudiced, and rigid; but a man true to principle,—honourable, sagacious, and sincere. It seems to me, reader, that you cannot always cut out

men to fit their profession, and that you ought not to curse them because that profession sometimes hangs on them ungracefully—nor will I curse Helstone, clerical Cossack as he was. Yet he *was* cursed, and by many of his own parishioners, as by others he was adored, which is the frequent fate of men who show partiality in friendship, and bitterness in enmity; who are equally attached to principles and adherent to prejudices.

Helstone and Moore, being both in excellent spirits, and united for the present in one cause, you would expect that, as they rode side by side, they would converse amicably. Oh, no! These two men, of hard bilious natures both, rarely came into contact but they chafed each other's moods: their frequent bone of contention was the war. Helstone was a high Tory (there were Tories in those days) and Moore was a bitter Whig—a Whig, at least, as far as opposition to the war-party was concerned, that being the question which affected his own interest; and only on that question did he profess any British politics at all. He liked to infuriate Helstone by declaring his belief in the invincibility of Bonaparte; by taunting England and Europe with the impotence of their efforts to withstand him; and by coolly advancing the opinion that it was as well to yield to him soon as late, since he must in the end crush every antagonist, and reign supreme.

Helstone could not bear these sentiments: it was

only on the consideration of Moore being a sort of outcast and alien, and having but half measure of British blood to temper the foreign gall which corroded his veins, that he brought himself to listen to them without indulging the wish he felt to cane the speaker. Another thing, too, somewhat allayed his disgust; namely, a fellow-feeling for the dogged tone with which these opinions were asserted, and a respect for the consistency of Moore's crabbed contumacy.

As the party turned into the Stilbro' road, they met what little wind there was; the rain dashed in their faces. Moore had been fretting his companion previously, and now, braced up by the raw breeze, and perhaps irritated by the sharp drizzle, he began to goad him.

"Does your Peninsular news please you still?" he asked.

"What do you mean?" was the surly demand of the Rector.

"I mean have you still faith in that Baal of a Lord Wellington?"

"And what do you mean now?"

"Do you still believe that this wooden-faced and pebble-hearted idol of England has power to send fire down from heaven to consume the French holocaust you want to offer up?"

"I believe Wellington will flog Bonaparte's marshals into the sea, the day it pleases him to lift his arm."

"But, my dear sir, you can't be serious in what you say. Bonaparte's marshals are great men, who act under the guidance of an omnipotent master-spirit: your Wellington is the most humdrum of common-place martinets, whose slow mechanical movements are further cramped by an ignorant home-government."

"Wellington is the soul of England. Wellington is the right champion of a good cause; the fit representative of a powerful, a resolute, a sensible, and an honest nation."

"Your good cause, as far as I understand it, is simply the restoration of that filthy, feeble Ferdinand, to a throne which he disgraced: your fit representative of an honest people is a dull-witted drover, acting for a duller-witted farmer; and against these are arrayed victorious supremacy and invincible genius."

"Against legitimacy is arrayed usurpation: against modest, single-minded, righteous, and brave resistance to encroachment, is arrayed boastful, double-tongued, selfish, and treacherous ambition to possess. God defend the right!"

"God often defends the powerful."

"What! I suppose the handful of Israelites standing dry-shod on the Asiatic side of the Red Sea, was more powerful than the host of the Egyptians drawn up on the African side? Were they more numerous? Were they better appointed? Were they more mighty, in a word—eh? Don't speak,

or you'll tell a lie, Moore; you know you will. They were a poor over-wrought band of bondsmen. Tyrants had oppressed them through four hundred years; a feeble mixture of women and children diluted their thin ranks; their masters, who roared to follow them through the divided flood, were a set of pampered Ethiops, about as strong and brutal as the lions of Lybia. They were armed, horsed, and charioted, the poor Hebrew wanderers were a-foot; few of them, it is likely, had better weapons than their shepherds' crooks, or their masons' building-tools; their meek and mighty leader himself had only his rod. But bethink you, Robert Moore, right was with them; the God of battles was on their side; crime and the lost archangel generalled the ranks of Pharaoh, and which triumphed? We know that well: 'The Lord saved Israel that day out of the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead upon the sea-shore;' yea, 'the depths covered them, they sank to the bottom as a stone.' The right hand of the Lord became glorious in power; the right hand of the Lord dashed in pieces the enemy!"

"You are all right, only you forget the true parallel. France is Israel, and Napoleon is Moses. Europe, with her old over-gorged empires and rotten dynasties is corrupt Egypt; gallant France is the Twelve Tribes, and her fresh and vigorous Usurper the Shepherd of Horeb."

"I scorn to answer you."

Moore accordingly answered himself, at least he

subjoined to what he had just said an additional observation in a lower voice.

"Oh, in Italy he was as great as any Moses! He was the right thing there, fit to head and organize measures for the regeneration of nations. It puzzles me to this day how the conqueror of Lodi should have condescended to become an emperor, a vulgar, a stupid humbug; and still more how a people, who had once called themselves republicans, should have sunk again to the grade of mere slaves. I despise France! If England had gone as far on the march of civilization as France did, she would hardly have retreated so shamelessly."

"You don't mean to say that besotted imperial France is any worse than bloody republican France?" demanded Helstone, fiercely.

"I mean to say nothing, but I can think what I please, you know, Mr. Helstone, both about France and England, and about revolutions, and regicides, and restorations in general; and about the divine right of kings, which you often stickle for in your sermons, and the duty of non-resistance, and the sanity of war, and——"

Mr. Moore's sentence was here cut short by the rapid rolling up of a gig, and its sudden stoppage in the middle of the road; both he and the Rector had been too much occupied with their discourse to notice its approach till it was close upon them.

"Nah, maister, did th' waggons hit home?" demanded a voice from the vehicle.

"Can that be Joe Scott?"

"Ay, ay!" returned another voice, for the gig contained two persons, as was seen by the glimmer of its lamp—the men with the lanterns had now fallen into the rear, or rather the equestrians of the rescue-party had outridden the pedestrians. "Ay, Mr. Moore, it's Joe Scott. I'm bringing him back to you in a bonny pickle; I fand him on the top of the moor yonder, him and three others. What will you give me for restoring him to you?"

"Why, my thanks, I believe; for I could better have afforded to lose a better man. That is you, I suppose, Mr. Yorke, by your voice?"

"Ay, lad, it's me. I was coming home from Stilbro' market, and just as I got to the middle of the moor, and was whipping on as swift as the wind (for these, they say, are not safe times, thanks to a bad government!) I heard a groan. I pulled up, some would have whipt on faster; but I've naught to fear, that I know of. I don't believe there's a lad in these parts would harm me, at least I'd give them as good as I got if they offered to do it. I said, 'Is there aught wrong anywhere?' —'Deed is there,' somebody says, speaking out of the ground, like. 'What's to do? be sharp, and tell me,' I ordered.—"Nobbut four on us ligging in a ditch,' says Joe, as quiet as could be. I tell'd 'em, more shame to 'em, and bid them get up and move on, or I'd lend them a lick of the gig-whip; for my notion was, they were all fresh.—'We'd

ha' done that an hour sin'; but we're teed wi' a bit o' band,' says Joe. So in a while I got down and loosed 'em wi' my penknife; and Scott would ride wi' me, to tell me all how it happened; and t'others are coming on as fast as their feet will bring them."

"Well, I am greatly obliged to you, Mr. Yorke."

"Are you, my lad? you know you're not. However, here are the rest approaching. And here, by the Lord! is another set with lights in their pitchers, like the army of Gideon; and as we've th' parson wi' us,—good-evening, Mr. Helstone,—we'se do."

Mr. Helstone returned the salutation of the individual in the gig very stiffly indeed. That individual proceeded:—

"We're eleven strong men, and there's both horses and chariots amang us. If we could only fall in wi' some of these starved ragamuffins of frame breakers, we could win a grand victory; we could iv'ry one be a Wellington,—that would please ye, Mr. Helstone; and sich paragraphs as we could contrive for t' papers! Briarfield suld be famous; but we'se hev a column and a half i' th' *Stilbro' Courier* ower this job, as it is, I daresay: I'se expect no less."

"And I'll promise you no less, Mr. Yorke, for I'll write the article myself," returned the Rector.

"To be sure! sartainly! And mind ye recommend weel that them 'at brake t' bits o' frames, and

teed Joe Scott's legs wi' band, suld be hung without benefit o' clergy. It 's a hanging matter, or suld be; no doubt o' that."

"If I judged them, I 'd give them short shrift!" cried Moore; "but I mean to let them quite alone this bout, to give them rope enough, certain that in the end they will hang themselves."

"Let them alone, will ye, Moore? Do you promise that?"

"Promise? No. All I mean to say is, I shall give myself no particular trouble to catch them; but if one falls in my way——"

"You 'll snap him up, of course: only you would rather they would do something worse than merely stop a waggon before you reckon with them. Well, we 'll say no more on the subject at present. Here we are at my door, gentlemen, and I hope you and the men will step in: you will none of you be the worse of a little refreshment."

Moore and Helstone opposed this proposition as unnecessary; it was, however, pressed on them so courteously, and the night, besides, was so inclement, and the gleam from the muslin-curtained windows of the house before which they had halted, looked so inviting, that at length they yielded. Mr. Yorke, after having alighted from his gig, which he left in charge of a man who issued from an outbuilding on his arrival, led the way in.

It will have been remarked that Mr. Yorke varied a little in his phraseology; now he spoke broad

Yorkshire, and anon he expressed himself in very pure English. His manner seemed liable to equal alternations; he could be polite and affable, and he could be blunt and rough. His station then you could not easily determine by his speech or demeanour; perhaps the appearance of his residence may decide it.

The men, he recommended to take the kitchen way, saying that he would "see them served wi' summat to taste presently." The gentlemen were ushered in at the front entrance. They found themselves in a matted hall, lined almost to the ceiling with pictures; through this they were conducted to a large parlour, with a magnificent fire in the grate; the most cheerful of rooms it appeared as a whole, and when you came to examine details, the enlivening effect was not diminished. There was no splendour, but there was taste everywhere,—unusual taste,—the taste, you would have said, of a travelled man, a scholar, and a gentleman. A series of Italian views decked the walls; each of these was a specimen of true art; a connoisseur had selected them: they were genuine and valuable. Even by candlelight, the bright, clear skies, the soft distances, with blue air quivering between the eye and the hills, the fresh tints and well massed lights and shadows charmed the view. The subjects were all pastoral, the scenes were all sunny. There was a guitar and some music on a sofa; there were cameos, beautiful miniatures, a set of Grecian-looking vases on the mantelpiece;

there were books well arranged in two elegant book-cases.

Mr. Yorke bade his guests be seated; he then rang for wine; to the servant who brought it he gave hospitable orders for the refreshment of the men in the kitchen. The Rector remained standing; he seemed not to like his quarters; he would not touch the wine his host offered him.

"E'en as you will," remarked Mr. Yorke. "I reckon you're thinking of Eastern customs, Mr. Helstone, and you'll not eat nor drink under my roof, feared we suld be forced to be friends; but I'm not so particular or superstitious. You might sup the contents of that decanter, and you might give me a bottle of the best in your own cellar, and I'd hold myself free to oppose you at every turn still,—in every vestry-meeting and justice-meeting where we encountered one another."

"It is just what I should expect of you, Mr. Yorke."

"Does it agree wi' ye now, Mr. Helstone, to be riding out after rioters, of a wet night, at your age?"

"It always agrees with me to be doing my duty, and in this case my duty is a thorough pleasure. To hunt down vermin is a noble occupation,—fit for an Archbishop."

"Fit for ye, at ony rate: but where's t' curate? He's happen gone to visit some poor body in a sick gird, or he's happen hunting down vermin in another direction."

"He is doing garrison duty at Hollow's-mill."

"You left him a sup o' wine, I hope, Bob (turning to Mr. Moore), to keep his courage up?"

He did not pause for an answer, but continued, quickly, still addressing Moore, who had thrown himself into an old-fashioned chair by the fireside,—"Move it, Robert! Get up, my lad! That place is mine. Take the sofa, or three other chairs, if you will, but not this; it belangs to me, and nob'dy else."

"Why are you so particular to that chair, Mr. Yorke?" asked Moore, lazily vacating the place, in obedience to orders.

"My father war afore me, and that's all t' answer I sall gie thee; and it's as good a reason as Mr. Helstone can give for the main feck o' his notions."

"Moore, are you ready to go?" inquired the Rector.

"Nay; Robert's not ready; or rather, I'm not ready to part wi' him: he's an ill lad, and wants correcting."

"Why, sir? What have I done?"

"Made thyself enemies on every hand."

"What do I care for that? What difference does it make to me whether your Yorkshire louts hate me or like me?"

"Ay, there it is. The lad is a mak' of an alien amang us; his father would never have talked i' that way. Go back to Antwerp, where you were born and bred, mauvaise tête!"

"Mauvaise tête vous-même; je ne fais que mon

devoir: quant à vos lourdauds de paysans, je m'en moque!"

"En revanche, mon garçon, nos lourdauds de paysans se moqueront de toi; sois en certain," replied Yorke, speaking with nearly as pure a French accent as Gérard Moore.

"C'est bon! c'est bon! Et puisque cela m'est égal, que mes amis ne s'en inquiètent pas."

"Tes amis! Où sont-ils, tes amis?"

"Je fais écho, oùsont-ils? et je suis fort aise que l'écho seul y répond. Au diable les amis! Je me souviens encore du moment où mon père et mes oncles Gérard appellèrent autour d'eux leurs amis, et Dieu sait si les amis se sont empressés d'accourir à leur secours! Tenez, M. Yorke, ce mot, ami, m'irrite trop; ne m'en parlez plus."

"Comme tu voudras."

And here Mr. Yorke held his peace; and while he sits, leaning back in his three-cornered, carved oak chair, I will snatch my opportunity to sketch the portrait of this French-speaking Yorkshire gentleman.

CHAPTER III.

MR. YORKE (CONTINUED).

A YORKSHIRE gentleman he was par excellence, in every point. About fifty-five years old, but looking at first sight still older, for his hair was silver white. His forehead was broad, not high; his face fresh and hale; the harshness of the north was seen in his features, as it was heard in his voice; every trait was thoroughly English, not a Norman line anywhere; it was an inelegant, unclassic, unaristocratic mould of visage. Fine people would perhaps have called it vulgar; sensible people would have termed it characteristic; shrewd people would have delighted in it for the pith, sagacity, intelligence—the rude, yet real originality marked in every lineament, latent in every furrow. But it was an indocile, a scornful, and a sarcastic face; the face of a man difficult to lead, and impossible to drive. His stature was rather tall, and he was well-made and wiry, and had a stately integrity of port; there was not a suspicion of the clown about him anywhere.

I did not find it easy to sketch Mr. Yorke's person,

but it is more difficult to indicate his mind. If you expect to be treated to a Perfection, reader, or even to a benevolent, philanthropic old gentleman in him, you are mistaken. He has spoken with some sense, and with some good feeling, to Mr. Moore, but you are not thence to conclude that he always spoke and thought justly and kindly.

Mr. Yorke, in the first place, was without the organ of Veneration—a great want, and which throws a man wrong on every point where veneration is required. Secondly, he was without the organ of Comparison—a deficiency which strips a man of sympathy; and, thirdly, he had too little of the organs of Benevolence and Ideality, which took the glory and softness from his nature, and for him diminished those divine qualities throughout the universe.

The want of veneration made him intolerant to those above him: kings and nobles and priests, dynasties and parliaments and establishments, with all their doings, most of their enactments, their forms, their rights, their claims, were to him an abomination —all rubbish; he found no use or pleasure in them, and believed it would be clear gain, and no damage to the world, if its high places were razed, and their occupants crushed in the fall. The want of veneration, too, made him dead at heart to the electric delight of admiring what is admirable; it dried up a thousand pure sources of enjoyment; it withered a thousand vivid pleasures. He was not irreligious,

though a member of no sect, but his religion could not be that of one who knows how to venerate. He believed in God and heaven, but his God and heaven were those of a man in whom awe, imagination, and tenderness lack.

The weakness of his powers of comparison made him inconsistent; while he professed some excellent general doctrines of mutual toleration and forbearance, he cherished towards certain classes a bigoted antipathy: he spoke of "parsons" and all who belonged to parsons, of "lords" and the appendages of lords, with a harshness, sometimes an insolence, as unjust as it was insufferable. He could not place himself in the position of those he vituperated; he could not compare their errors with their temptations, their defects with their disadvantages; he could not realize the effect of such and such circumstances on himself similarly situated, and he would often express the most ferocious and tyrannical wishes regarding those who had acted, as he thought, ferociously and tyrannically. To judge by his threats, he would have employed arbitrary, even cruel, means to advance the cause of freedom and equality. Equality—yes, Mr. Yorke talked about equality, but at heart he was a proud man; very friendly to his workpeople, very good to all who were beneath him, and submitted quietly to be beneath him, but haughty as Beelzebub to whomsoever the world deemed (for he deemed no man) his superior. Revolt was in his blood; he could not bear control; his father, his grandfather

before him, could not bear it, and his children after him never could.

The want of general benevolence made him very impatient of imbecility, and of all faults which grated on his strong, shrewd nature: it left no check to his cutting sarcasm. As he was not merciful, he would sometimes wound and wound again, without noticing how much he hurt, or caring how deep he thrust.

As to the paucity of ideality in his mind, that can scarcely be called a fault: a fine ear for music, a correct eye for colour and form, left him the quality of taste, and who cares for imagination? Who does not think it a rather dangerous, senseless attribute—akin to weakness—perhaps partaking of frenzy—a disease rather than a gift of the mind?

Probably all think it so, but those who possess—or fancy they possess—it. To hear them speak, you would believe that their hearts would be cold if that elixir did not flow about them; that their eyes would be dim if that flame did not refine their vision; that they would be lonely if this strange companion abandoned them. You would suppose that it imparted some glad hope to spring, some fine charm to summer, some tranquil joy to autumn, some consolation to winter, which you do not feel. All illusion, of course; but the fanatics cling to their dream, and would not give it for gold.

As Mr. Yorke did not possess poetic imagination himself, he considered it a most superfluous quality in others. Painters and musicians he could tolerate,

and even encourage, because he could relish the results of their art; he could see the charm of a fine picture, and feel the pleasure of good music; but a quiet poet—whatever force struggled, whatever fire glowed, in his breast—if he could not have played the man in the counting-house, or the tradesman in the Piece Hall, might have lived despised, and died scorned, under the eyes of Hiram Yorke.

And as there are many Hiram Yorkes in the world, it is well that the true poet, quiet externally though he may be, has often a truculent spirit under his placidity, and is full of shrewdness in his meekness, and can measure the whole stature of those who look down on him, and correctly ascertain the weight and value of the pursuits they disdain him for not having followed. It is happy that he can have his own bliss, his own society with his great friend and goddess, Nature, quite independent of those who find little pleasure in him, and in whom he finds no pleasure at all. It is just, that while the world and circumstances often turn a dark, cold side to him—and properly, too, because he first turns a dark, cold, careless side to them—he should be able to maintain a festal brightness and cherishing glow in his bosom, which makes all bright and genial for him, while strangers, perhaps, deem his existence a Polar winter never gladdened by a sun. The true poet is not one whit to be pitied, and he is apt to laugh in his sleeve, when any misguided sympathizer whines over his wrongs. Even when utilitarians sit in

judgment on him, and pronounce him and his art useless, he hears the sentence with such a hard derision, such a broad, deep, comprehensive, and merciless contempt of the unhappy Pharisees who pronounce it, that he is rather to be chidden than condoled with. These, however, are not Mr. Yorke's reflections, and it is with Mr. Yorke we have at present to do.

I have told you some of his faults, reader; as to his good points, he was one of the most honourable and capable men in Yorkshire; even those who disliked him were forced to respect him. He was much beloved by the poor, because he was thoroughly kind and very fatherly to them. To his workmen he was considerate and cordial: when he dismissed them from an occupation, he would try to set them on to something else; or, if that was impossible, help them to remove with their families to a district where work might possibly be had. It must also be remarked that if, as sometimes chanced, any individual amongst his "hands" showed signs of insubordination, Yorke—who, like many who abhor being controlled, knew how to control with vigour—had the secret of crushing rebellion in the germ, of eradicating it like a bad weed, so that it never spread or developed within the sphere of his authority. Such being the happy state of his own affairs, he felt himself at liberty to speak with the utmost severity of those who were differently situated, to ascribe whatever was unpleasant in their position entirely to their

own fault, to sever himself from the masters, and advocate freely the cause of the operatives.

Mr. Yorke's family was the first and oldest in the district; and he, though not the wealthiest, was one of the most influential men. His education had been good; in his youth, before the French Revolution, he had travelled on the continent: he was an adept in the French and Italian languages. During a two years' sojourn in Italy, he had collected many good paintings and tasteful rarities, with which his residence was now adorned. His manners, when he liked, were those of a finished gentleman of the old school; his conversation, when he was disposed to please, was singularly interesting and original; and if he usually expressed himself in the Yorkshire dialect, it was because he chose to do so, preferring his native Doric to a more refined vocabulary. "A Yorkshire burr," he affirmed, "was as much better than a Cockney's lisp, as a bull's bellow than a ratton's squeak."

Mr. Yorke knew every one, and was known by every one for miles round, yet his intimate acquaintance were very few. Himself thoroughly original, he had no taste for what was ordinary; a racy, rough character, high or low, ever found acceptance with him; a refined, insipid personage, however exalted in station, was his aversion. He would spend an hour any time in talking freely with a shrewd workman of his own, or with some queer, sagacious old woman amongst his cottagers, when he would have

grudged a moment to a commonplace fine gentleman, or to the most fashionable and elegant, if frivolous, lady. His preferences on these points he carried to an extreme, forgetting that there may be amiable and even admirable characters amongst those who cannot be original. Yet he made exceptions to his own rule; there was a certain order of mind, plain, ingenuous, neglecting refinement, almost devoid of intellectuality, and quite incapable of appreciating what was intellectual in him; but which, at the same time, never felt disgust at his rudeness, was not easily wounded by his sarcasm, did not closely analyze his sayings, doings, or opinions; with which he was peculiarly at ease, and, consequently, which he peculiarly preferred. He was lord amongst such characters. They, while submitting implicitly to his influence, never acknowledged, because they never reflected on, his superiority; they were quite tractable, therefore, without running the smallest danger of being servile; and their unthinking, easy, artless insensibility was as acceptable, because as convenient to Mr. Yorke, as that of the chair he sat on, or of the floor he trod.

It will have been observed that he was not quite uncordial with Mr. Moore; he had two or three reasons for entertaining a faint partiality to that gentleman. It may sound odd, but the first of these was that Moore spoke English with a foreign, and French with a perfectly pure accent; and that his dark, thin face, with its fine though rather wasted

lines, had a most anti-British and anti-Yorkshire look. These points seem frivolous, unlikely to influence a character like Yorke's; but, the fact is, they recalled old, perhaps pleasurable associations; they brought back his travelling, his youthful days. He had seen, amidst Italian cities and scenes, faces like Moore's; he had heard, in Parisian cafés and theatres, voices like his; he was young then, and when he looked at, and listened to the alien, he seemed young again.

Secondly, he had known Moore's father, and had had dealings with him; that was a more substantial, though by no means a more agreeable tie; for, as his firm had been connected with Moore's in business, it had also, in some measure, been implicated in its losses.

Thirdly, he had found Robert himself a sharp man of business. He saw reason to anticipate that he would in the end, by one means or another, make money, and he respected both his resolution and acuteness, perhaps, also, his hardness. A fourth circumstance which drew them together was that of Mr. Yorke being one of the guardians of the minor on whose estate Hollow's-mill was situated; consequently Moore, in the course of his alterations and improvements, had frequent occasion to consult him.

As to the other guest now present in Mr. Yorke's parlour, Mr. Helstone, between him and his host there existed a double antipathy; the antipathy of

nature and that of circumstances. The free-thinker hated the formalist; the lover of liberty detested the disciplinarian; besides, it was said that in former years, they had been rival suitors of the same lady.

Mr. Yorke, as a general rule, was, when young, noted for his preference of sprightly and dashing women: a showy shape and air, a lively wit, a ready tongue, chiefly seemed to attract him. He never, however, proposed to any of these brilliant belles, whose society he sought, and all at once he seriously fell in love with, and eagerly wooed a girl who presented a complete contrast to those he had hitherto noticed: a girl with the face of a Madonna; a girl of living marble; stillness personified. No matter that, when he spoke to her, she only answered him in monosyllables; no matter that his sighs seemed unheard, that his glances were unreturned, that she never responded to his opinions, rarely smiled at his jests, paid him no respect and no attention; no matter that she seemed the opposite of everything feminine he had ever, in his whole life, been known to admire; for him Mary Cave was perfect, because somehow, for some reason—no doubt he had a reason—he loved her.

Mr. Helstone, at that time curate of Briarfield, loved Mary too; or, at any rate, he fancied her. Several others admired her, for she was beautiful as a monumental angel; but the clergyman was preferred for his office's sake; that office probably in-

vesting him with some of the illusion necessary to allure to the commission of matrimony, and which Miss Cave did not find in any of the young woolstaplers, her other adorers. Mr. Helstone neither had, nor professed to have Mr. Yorke's absorbing passion for her; he had none of the humble reverence which seemed to subdue most of her suitors; he saw her more as she really was than the rest did, he was, consequently, more master of her and himself. She accepted him at the first offer, and they were married.

Nature never intended Mr. Helstone to make a very good husband, especially to a quiet wife. He thought, so long as a woman was silent, nothing ailed her, and she wanted nothing. If she did not complain of solitude, solitude, however continued, could not be irksome to her. If she did not talk and put herself forward, express a partiality for this, an aversion to that, she had no partialities or aversions, and it was useless to consult her tastes. He made no pretence of comprehending women, or comparing them with men: they were a different, probably a very inferior order of existence; a wife could not be her husband's companion, much less his confidant, much less his stay. *His* wife, after a year or two, was of no great importance to him in any shape; and when she one day, as he thought, suddenly—for he had scarcely noticed her decline—but as others thought gradually, took her leave of him and of life, and there was only a still beautiful-

featured mould of clay left, cold and white, in the conjugal couch, he felt his bereavement—who shall say how little? Yet, perhaps, more than he seemed to feel it, for he was not a man from whom grief easily wrung tears.

His dry-eyed and sober mourning scandalized an old housekeeper, and likewise a female attendant, who had waited upon Mrs. Helstone in her sickness, and who, perhaps, had had opportunities of learning more of the deceased lady's nature, of her capacity for feeling and loving, than her husband knew: they gossiped together over the corpse, related anecdotes, with embellishments of her lingering decline, and its real or supposed cause; in short, they worked each other up to some indignation against the austere little man who sat examining papers in an adjoining room, unconscious of what opprobrium he was the object.

Mrs. Helstone was hardly under the sod when rumours began to be rife in the neighbourhood that she had died of a broken heart; these magnified quickly into reports of hard usage, and, finally, details of harsh treatment on the part of her husband; reports grossly untrue, but not the less eagerly received on that account. Mr. Yorke heard them, partly believed them. Already, of course, he had no friendly feeling to his successful rival; though himself a married man now, and united to a woman who seemed a complete contrast to Mary Cave in all respects, he could not forget the great disap-

pointment of his life, and when he heard that what would have been so precious to him had been neglected, perhaps abused by another, he conceived for that other a rooted and bitter animosity.

Of the nature and strength of this animosity, Mr. Helstone was but half aware: he neither knew how much Yorke had loved Mary Cave, what he had felt on losing her, nor was he conscious of the calumnies concerning his treatment of her, familiar to every ear in the neighbourhood but his own. He believed political and religious differences alone separated him and Mr. Yorke; had he known how the case really stood, he would hardly have been induced by any persuasion to cross his former rival's threshold.

Mr. Yorke did not resume his lecture of Robert Moore; the conversation ere long recommenced in a more general form, though still in a somewhat disputative tone. The unquiet state of the country, the various depredations lately committed on mill-property in the district, supplied abundant matter for disagreement, especially as each of the three gentlemen present differed more or less in his views on these subjects. Mr. Helstone thought the masters aggrieved, the workpeople unreasonable; he condemned sweepingly the wide-spread spirit of disaffection against constituted authorities, the growing indisposition to bear with patience evils he regarded as inevitable: the cures he prescribed were

vigorous government interference, strict magisterial vigilance; when necessary, prompt military coercion.

Mr. Yorke wished to know whether this interference, vigilance, and coercion would feed those who were hungry, give work to those who wanted work and whom no man would hire: he scouted the idea of inevitable evils; he said public patience was a camel, on whose back the last atom that could be borne had already been laid, and that resistance was now a duty: the wide-spread spirit of disaffection against constituted authorities, he regarded as the most promising sign of the times; the masters, he allowed, were truly aggrieved, but their main grievances had been heaped on them by a "corrupt, base, and bloody" government (these were Mr. Yorke's epithets). Madmen like Pitt, demons like Castlereagh, mischievous idiots like Perceval were the tyrants, the curses of the country, the destroyers of her trade. It was their infatuated perseverance in an unjustifiable, a hopeless, a ruinous war which had brought the nation to its present pass. It was their monstrously oppressive taxation, it was the infamous "Orders in Council"—the originators of which deserved impeachment and the scaffold, if ever public men did—that hung a mill-stone about England's neck.

"But where was the use of talking?" he demanded—"What chance was there of reason being heard in a land that was king-ridden, priest-ridden, peer-ridden—where a lunatic was the nominal

monarch, an unprincipled debauchee the real ruler; where such an insult to common sense as hereditary legislators was tolerated—where such a humbug as a bench of bishops—such an arrogant abuse as a pampered, persecuting established Church was endured and venerated—where a standing army was maintained, and a host of lazy parsons and their pauper families were kept on the fat of the land?"

Mr. Helstone, rising up and putting on his shovel-hat, observed in reply, "That in the course of his life he had met with two or three instances where sentiments of this sort had been very bravely maintained so long as health, strength, and worldly prosperity had been the allies of him who professed them; but there came a time," he said, "to all men, 'when the keepers of the house should tremble; when they should be afraid of that which is high, and fear should be in the way;' and that time was the test of the advocate of anarchy and rebellion, the enemy of religion and order. Ere now," he affirmed, he had been called upon to read "those prayers our Church has provided for the sick, by the miserable dying-bed of one of her most rancorous foes; he had seen such a one stricken with remorse, solicitous to discover a place for repentance, and unable to find any, though he sought it carefully with tears. He must forewarn Mr. Yorke, that blasphemy against God and the king was a deadly sin, and that there was such a thing as 'judgment to come.'"

Mr. Yorke "believed fully that there was such a thing as judgment to come. If it were otherwise, it would be difficult to imagine how all the scoundrels who seemed triumphant in this world, who broke innocent hearts with impunity, abused unmerited privileges, were a scandal to honourable callings, took the bread out of the mouths of the poor, brow-beat the humble, and truckled meanly to the rich and proud—were to be properly paid off, in such coin as they had earned. But," he added, "whenever he got low-spirited about such like goings-on, and their seeming success in this mucky lump of a planet, he just reached down t' owd book (pointing to a great Bible in the bookcase), opened it like at a chance, and he was sure to light of a verse blazing wi' a blue brimstone low that set all straight. He knew," he said, "where some folk war bound for, just as weel as if an angel, wi' great white wings, had come in ower t' door-stone and told him."

"Sir," said Mr. Helstone, collecting all his dignity. "Sir—the great knowledge of man is to know himself, and the bourne whither his own steps tend."

"Ay, ay! you 'll recollect, Mr. Helstone, that Ignorance was carried away from the very gates of heaven, borne through the air, and thrust in at a door in the side of the hill which led down to hell."

"Nor have I forgotten, Mr. Yorke, that Vain-Confidence, not seeing the way before him, fell into

a deep pit, which was on purpose there made by the prince of the grounds, to catch vain-glorious fools withal, and was dashed to pieces with his fall."

"Now," interposed Mr. Moore, who had hitherto sat a silent but amused spectator of this wordy combat, and whose indifference to the party politics of the day, as well as to the gossip of the neighbourhood, made him an impartial, if apathetic, judge of the merits of such an encounter—"you have both sufficiently black-balled each other, and proved how cordially you detest each other, and how wicked you think each other. For my part, my hate is still running in such a strong current against the fellows who have broken my frames, that I have none to spare for my private acquaintance, and still less for such a vague thing as a sect or a government: but really, gentlemen, you both seem very bad, by your own shewing; worse than ever I suspected you to be. I dare not stay all night with a rebel and blasphemer, like you, Yorke; and I hardly dare ride home with a cruel and tyrannical ecclesiastic, like Mr. Helstone."

"I am going, however, Mr. Moore;" said the Rector sternly: "come with me or not, as you please."

"Nay, he shall not have the choice—he *shall* go with you," responded Yorke. "It 's midnight, and past; and I'll have nob'dy staying up i' my house any longer. Ye mun all go."

He rang the bell.

"Deb," said he to the servant who answered it, "clear them folk out o' t' kitchen, and lock t' doors, and be off to bed. Here is your way, gentlemen," he continued to his guests; and, lighting them through the passage, he fairly put them out at his front-door.

They met their party hurrying out pell-mell by the back way; their horses stood at the gate; they mounted, and rode off—Moore laughing at their abrupt dismissal, Helstone deeply indignant thereat.

CHAPTER V.

HOLLOW'S COTTAGE.

MOORE'S good spirits were still with him when he rose next morning. He and Joe Scott had both spent the night in the mill, availing themselves of certain sleeping accommodations producible from recesses in the front and back counting-houses: the master, always an early riser, was up somewhat sooner even than usual; he awoke his man by singing a French song as he made his toilet.

"Ye 're not custen dahm, then, maister?" cried Joe.

"Not a stiver, mon garçon—which means, my lad:—get up, and we 'll take a turn through the mill before the hands come in, and I 'll explain my future plans. We 'll have the machinery yet, Joseph: you never heard of Bruce, perhaps?"

"And th' arrand (spider)? Yes, but I hev: I 've read th' history o' Scotland, and happen knaw as mich on't as ye; and I understand ye to mean to say ye 'll persevere."

"I do."

"Is there mony o' your mak' i' your country?" inquired Joe, as he folded up his temporary bed, and put it away.

"In my country! Which is my country?"

"Why, France—isn't it?"

"Not it, indeed! The circumstance of the French having seized Antwerp, where I was born, does not make me a Frenchman."

"Holland, then?"

"I am not a Dutchman: now you are confounding Antwerp with Amsterdam."

"Flanders?"

"I scorn the insinuation, Joe! I, a Flamand! Have I a Flemish face?—the clumsy nose standing out—the mean forehead falling back—the pale blue eyes 'à fleur de tête?' Am I all body and no legs, like a Flamand? But you don't know what they are like—those Netherlanders. Joe—I 'm an Anversois: my mother was an Anversoise, though she came of French lineage, which is the reason I speak French."

"But your father war Yorkshire, which maks yé a bit Yorkshire too; and onybody may see ye 're akin to us, ye 're so keen o' making brass, and getting forrards."

"Joe, you 're an impudent dog; but I 've always been accustomed to a boorish sort of insolence from my youth up: the 'classe ouvrière'—that is, the working people, in Belgium—bear themselves brutally

towards their employers; and by *brutally*, Joe, I mean *brutalement*—which, perhaps, when properly translated, should be *roughly*."

"We allus speak our minds i' this country; and them young parsons and grand folk fro' London is shocked at wer '*incivility*,' and we like weel enow to gi'e 'em summat to be shocked at, 'cause it 's sport to us to watch 'em turn up the whites o' their een, and spreed out their bits o' hands, like as they 're flayed wi' bogards, and then to hear 'em say, nipping off their words short, like—'Dear! dear! Whet seveges! How very corse!'"

"You *are* savages, Joe; you don't suppose you 're civilized, do you?"

"Middling, middling, maister. I reckon 'at us manufacturing lads i' th' north is a deal more intelligent, and knaws a deal more nor th' farming folk i' th' south. Trade sharpens wer wits; and them that 's mechanics, like me, is forced to think. Ye know, what wi' looking after machinery and sich like, I 've getten into that way that when I see an effect, I look straight out for a cause, and I oft lig hold on't to purpose; and then I like reading, and I 'm curious to knaw what them that reckons to govern us aims to do for us and wi' us: and there 's many 'cuter nor me; there 's many a one amang them greasy chaps 'at smells o' oil, and amang them dyers wi' blue and black skins, that has a long head, and that can tell what a fooil of a law is, as well as ye or old Yorke, and a deal better nor soft uns like

Christopher Sykes o' Whinbury, and greet hectoring nowts like yond' Irish Peter, Helstone's curate."

"You think yourself a clever fellow, I know, Scott."

"Ay! I 'm fairish; I can tell cheese fro' chalk, and I 'm varry weel aware that I 've improved sich opportunities as I have had, a deal better nor some 'at reckons to be aboon me; but there 's thousands i' Yorkshire that 's as good as me, and a two-three that 's better."

"You 're a great man—you 're a sublime fellow; but you 're a prig, a conceited noodle with it all, Joe! You need not to think that because you 've picked up a little knowledge of practical mathematics, and because you have found some scantling of the elements of chemistry at the bottom of a dyeing vat, that therefore you 're a neglected man of science; and you need not to suppose that because the course of trade does not always run smooth, and you, and such as you, are sometimes short of work and of bread, that therefore your class are martyrs, and that the whole form of government under which you live is wrong. And, moreover, you need not for a moment to insinuate that the virtues have taken refuge in cottages and wholly abandoned slated houses. Let me tell you, I particularly abominate that sort of trash, because I know so well that human nature is human nature everywhere, whether under tile or thatch, and that in every specimen of human nature that breathes, vice and virtue are ever found blended,

in smaller or greater proportions, and that the proportion is not determined by station. I have seen villains who were rich, and I have seen villains who were poor, and I have seen villains who were neither rich nor poor, but who had realized Agar's wish, and lived in fair and modest competency. The clock is going to strike six: away with you, Joe, and ring the mill bell."

It was now the middle of the month of February; by six o'clock, therefore, dawn was just beginning to steal on night, to penetrate with a pale ray its brown obscurity, and give a demi-translucence to its opaque shadows. Pale enough that ray was on this particular morning; no colour tinged the east, no flush warmed it. To see what a heavy lid day slowly lifted, what a wan glance she flung along the hills, you would have thought the sun's fire quenched in last night's floods. The breath of this morning was chill as its aspect; a raw wind stirred the mass of night-cloud, and shewed, as it slowly rose—leaving a colourless, silver-gleaming ring all round the horizon—not blue sky, but a stratum of paler vapour beyond. It had ceased to rain, but the earth was sodden, and the pools and rivulets were full.

The mill-windows were alight, the bell still rung loud, and now the little children came running in, in too great a hurry, let us hope, to feel very much nipped by the inclement air; and, indeed, by contrast, perhaps the morning appeared rather favourable to them than otherwise; for they had often come to

their work that winter through snow-storms, through heavy rain, through hard frost.

Mr. Moore stood at the entrance to watch them pass: he counted them as they went by; to those who came rather late he said a word of reprimand, which was a little more sharply repeated by Joe Scott when the lingerers reached the work-rooms. Neither master nor overlooker spoke savagely; they were not savage men either of them, though it appeared both were rigid, for they fined a delinquent who came considerably too late; Mr. Moore made him pay his penny down ere he entered, and informed him that the next repetition of the fault would cost him twopence.

Rules, no doubt, are necessary in such cases, and coarse and cruel masters will make coarse and cruel rules, which, at the time we treat of at least, they used sometimes to enforce tyrannically; but, though I describe imperfect characters (every character in this book will be found to be more or less imperfect, my pen refusing to draw anything in the model line), I have not undertaken to handle degraded or utterly infamous ones. Child-torturers, slave masters and drivers, I consign to the hands of jailers; the novelist may be excused from sullying his page with the record of their deeds.

Instead, then, of harrowing up my reader's soul, and delighting his organ of Wonder, with effective descriptions of stripes and scourgings, I am happy to be able to inform him that neither Mr. Moore nor his

overlooker ever struck a child in their mill. Joe had, indeed, once very severely flogged a son of his own for telling a lie and persisting in it, but, like his employer, he was too phlegmatic, too calm, as well as too reasonable a man, to make corporeal chastisement other than the exception to his treatment of the young.

Mr. Moore haunted his mill, his mill-yard, his dye-house, and his warehouse, till the sickly dawn strengthened into day. The sun even rose,—at least a white disk, clear, tintless, and almost chill-looking as ice,—peeped over the dark crest of a hill, changed to silver the livid edge of the cloud above it, and looked solemnly down the whole length of the den, or narrow dale, to whose strait bounds we are at present limited. It was eight o'clock; the mill lights were all extinguished; the signal was given for breakfast; the children, released for half an hour from toil, betook themselves to the little tin cans which held their coffee, and to the small baskets which contained their allowance of bread. Let us hope they have enough to eat; it would be a pity were it otherwise.

And now, at last, Mr. Moore quitted the mill-yard, and bent his steps to his dwelling-house. It was only a short distance from the factory, but the hedge and high bank on each side of the lane which conducted to it seemed to give it something of the appearance and feeling of seclusion. It was a small, white-washed place, with a green porch over the

door; scanty brown stalks shewed in the garden soil near this porch, and likewise beneath the windows,—stalks budless and flowerless now, but giving dim prediction of trained and blooming creepers for summer days. A grass-plat and borders fronted the cottage; the borders presented only black mould yet, except where, in sheltered nooks, the first shoots of snowdrop or crocus peeped, green as emerald, from the earth. The spring was late; it had been a severe and prolonged winter; the last deep snow had but just disappeared before yesterday's rains; on the hills, indeed, white remnants of it yet gleamed, flecking the hollows and crowning the peaks: the lawn was not verdant, but bleached, as was the grass on the bank, and under the hedge in the lane. Three trees, gracefully grouped, rose beside the cottage; they were not lofty, but having no rivals near, they looked well and imposing where they grew. Such was Mr. Moore's home; a snug nest for content and contemplation, but one within which the wings of action and ambition could not long lie folded.

Its air of modest comfort seemed to possess no particular attraction for its owner; instead of entering the house at once, he fetched a spade from a little shed and began to work in the garden. For about a quarter of an hour he dug on uninterrupted; at length, however, a window opened, and a female voice called to him:—

"Eh, bien! Tu ne déjeûnes pas ce matin?"

The answer and the rest of the conversation was in French, but as this is an English book, I shall translate it into English.

"Is breakfast ready, Hortense?"

"Certainly; it has been ready half an hour."

"Then I am ready, too: I have a canine hunger."

He threw down his spade and entered the house: the narrow passage conducted him to a small parlour, where a breakfast of coffee and bread and butter, with the somewhat un-English accompaniment of stewed pears was spread on the table. Over these viands presided the lady who had spoken from the window. I must describe her before I go any further.

She seemed a little older than Mr. Moore, perhaps she was thirty-five, tall, and proportionately stout; she had very black hair, for the present twisted up in curl-papers; a high colour in her cheeks, a small nose, a pair of little black eyes. The lower part of her face was large in proportion to the upper; her forehead was small and rather corrugated; she had a fretful though not an ill-natured expression of countenance; there was something in her whole appearance one felt inclined to be half provoked with, and half amused at. The strangest point was her dress: a stuff petticoat and a striped cotton camisole. The petticoat was short, displaying well a pair of feet and ankles which left much to be desired in the article of symmetry.

You will think I have depicted a remarkable

slattern, reader;—not at all. Hortense Moore (she was Mr. Moore's sister) was a very orderly, economical person: the petticoat, camisole, and curl-papers were her morning costume, in which, of forenoons, she had always been accustomed to "go her household ways" in her own country. She did not choose to adopt English fashions because she was obliged to live in England; she adhered to her old Belgian modes, quite satisfied that there was a merit in so doing.

Mademoiselle had an excellent opinion of herself, an opinion not wholly undeserved, for she possessed some good and sterling qualities; but she rather over-estimated the kind and degree of these qualities, and quite left out of the account sundry little defects which accompanied them. You could never have persuaded her that she was a prejudiced and narrow-minded person, that she was too susceptible on the subject of her own dignity and importance, and too apt to take offence about trifles; yet all this was true. However, where her claims to distinction were not opposed, and where her prejudices were not offended, she could be kind and friendly enough. To her two brothers (for there was another Gérard Moore besides Robert), she was very much attached. As the sole remaining representatives of their decayed family, the persons of both were almost sacred in her eyes; of Louis, however, she knew less than of Robert; he had been sent to England when a mere boy, and had received his education at an Eng-

lish school. His education not being such as to adapt him for trade, perhaps, too, his natural bent not inclining him to mercantile pursuits, he had, when the blight of hereditary prospects rendered it necessary for him to push his own fortune, adopted the very arduous and very modest career of a teacher; he had been usher in a school, and was said now to be tutor in a private family. Hortense, when she mentioned Louis, described him as having what she called "des moyens," but as being too backward and quiet; her praise of Robert was in a different strain, less qualified; she was very proud of him; she regarded him as the greatest man in Europe; all he said and did was remarkable in her eyes, and she expected others to behold him from the same point of view; nothing could be more irrational, monstrous, and infamous, than opposition from any quarter to Robert, unless it were opposition to herself.

Accordingly, as soon as the said Robert was seated at the breakfast table, and she had helped him to a portion of stewed pears, and cut him a good-sized Belgian tartine, she began to pour out a flood of amazement and horror at the transaction of last night, the destruction of the frames.

"Quelle idée! to destroy them. Quelle action honteuse! On voyait bien que les ouvriers de ce pays étaient à la fois bêtes et méchants. C'etait absolument comme les domestiques Anglais, les servantes surtout: rien d'insupportable comme cette Sara, par exemple!"

"She looks clean and industrious," Mr. Moore remarked.

"Looks? I don't know how she looks; and I do not say that she is altogether dirty or idle: mais elle est d'une insolence! She disputed with me a quarter of an hour yesterday about the cooking of the beef; she said I boiled it to rags, that English people would never be able to eat such a dish as our bouilli, that the bouillon was no better than greasy warm water, and as to the choucroute, she affirms she cannot touch it! That barrel we have in the cellar—delightfully prepared by my own hands—she termed a tub of hog wash, which means food for pigs. I am harassed with the girl, and yet I cannot part with her lest I should get a worse. You are in the same position with your workmen,—pauvre cher frère!"

"I am afraid you are not very happy in England, Hortense."

"It is my duty to be happy where you are, brother; but otherwise, there are certainly a thousand things which make me regret our native town. All the world here appears to me ill-bred (mal-elevé). I find my habits considered ridiculous; if a girl out of your mill chances to come into the kitchen and find me in my jupon and camisole preparing dinner (for you know I cannot trust Sarah to cook a single dish), she sneers. If I accept an invitation out to tea, which I have done once or twice, I perceive I am put quite into the background; I have not that attention paid me which decidedly is my due; of

what an excellent family are the Gérards, as we know, and the Moores also! They have a right to claim a certain respect, and to feel wounded when it is withheld from them. In Antwerp, I was always treated with distinction; here, one would think that when I open my lips in company, I speak English with a ridiculous accent, whereas I am quite assured that I pronounce it perfectly."

"Hortense, in Antwerp we were known rich; in England we were never known but poor."

"Precisely, and thus mercenary are mankind. Again, dear brother, last Sunday, if you recollect, was very wet; accordingly, I went to church in my neat black sabots, objects one would not indeed wear in a fashionable city; but which in the country I have ever been accustomed to use for walking in dirty roads. Believe me, as I paced up the aisle, composed and tranquil, as I am always, four ladies, and as many gentlemen, laughed and hid their faces behind their prayer-books."

"Well, well! don't put on the sabots again. I told you before I thought they were not quite the thing for this country."

"But, brother, they are not common sabots, such as the peasantry wear. I tell you, they are sabots noirs, très propres, très convenables. At Mons and Leuze—cities not very far removed from the elegant capital of Brussels—it is very seldom that the respectable people wear anything else for walking in winter. Let any one try to wade the mud of the

Flemish chaussées in a pair of Paris brodequins, on m'en dirait des nouvelles!"

"Never mind Mons and Leuze, and the Flemish chaussées; do at Rome as the Romans do; and as to the camisole and jupon, I am not quite sure about them either. I never see an English lady dressed in such garments. Ask Caroline Helstone."

"Caroline! *I* ask Caroline? *I* consult her about my dress? It is *she* who on all points should consult *me;* she is a child."

"She is eighteen, or at the least seventeen; old enough to know all about gowns, petticoats, and chaussures."

"Do not spoil Caroline, I entreat you, brother; do not make her of more consequence than she ought to be. At present she is modest and unassuming: let us keep her so."

"With all my heart. Is she coming this morning?"

"She will come at ten, as usual, to take her French lesson."

"You don't find that she sneers at you, do you?"

"She does not, she appreciates me better than any one else here; but then she has more intimate opportunities of knowing me: she sees that I have education, intelligence, manner, principles; all, in short, which belongs to a person well-born and well-bred."

"Are you at all fond of her?"

"For *fond*—I cannot say: I am not one who is prone to take violent fancies, and, consequently, my

friendship is the more to be depended on. I have a regard for her as my relative; her position also inspires interest, and her conduct as my pupil has hitherto been such as rather to enhance than diminish the attachment that springs from other causes."

"She behaves pretty well at lessons?"

"To *me* she behaves very well; but you are conscious, brother, that I have a manner calculated to repel over-familiarity, to win esteem, and to command respect. Yet, possessed of penetration, I perceive clearly that Caroline is not perfect; that there is much to be desired in her."

"Give me a last cup of coffee, and while I am drinking it amuse me with an account of her faults."

"Dear brother, I am happy to see you eat your breakfast with relish, after the fatiguing night you have passed. Caroline, then, is defective; but, with my forming hand and almost motherly care, she may improve. There is about her an occasional something—a reserve, I think—which I do not quite like, because it is not sufficiently girlish and submissive; and there are glimpses of an unsettled hurry in her nature, which put me out. Yet she is usually most tranquil, too dejected and thoughtful indeed sometimes. In time, I doubt not, I shall make her uniformly sedate and decorous, without being unaccountably pensive. I ever disapprove what is not intelligible."

"I don't understand your account in the least; what do you mean by 'unsettled hurries,' for instance?"

"An example will, perhaps, be the most satisfactory explanation. I sometimes, you are aware, make her read French poetry by way of practice in pronunciation. She has, in the course of her lessons, gone through much of Corneille and Racine, in a very steady, sober spirit, such as I approve. Occasionally she showed, indeed, a degree of languor in the perusal of those esteemed authors, partaking rather of apathy than sobriety, and apathy is what I cannot tolerate in those who have the benefit of my instructions; besides, one should not be apathetic in studying standard works. The other day I put into her hands a volume of short fugitive pieces. I sent her to the window to learn one by heart, and when I looked up I saw her turning the leaves over impatiently, and curling her lip, absolutely with scorn, as she surveyed the little poems cursorily. I chid her. 'Ma cousine,' said she, 'tout cela m'ennuie à la mort.' I told her this was improper language.—'Dieu!' she exclaimed. 'Il n'y a donc pas deux lignes de poësie dans toute la littérature française?' I inquired what she meant. She begged my pardon with proper submission. Ere long she was still; I saw her smiling to herself over the book; she began to learn assiduously. In half an hour she came and stood before me, presented the volume, folded her hands, as I always require her

to do, and commenced the repetition of that short thing by Chénier, 'La Jeune Captive.' If you had heard the manner in which she went through this, and in which she uttered a few incoherent comments when she had done, you would have known what I meant by the phrase 'unsettled hurry.' One would have thought Chénier was more moving than all Racine and all Corneille. You, brother, who have so much sagacity, will discern that this disproportionate preference argues an ill-regulated mind; but she is fortunate in a preceptress. I will give her a system, a method of thought, a set of opinions; I will give her the perfect control and guidance of her feelings."

"Be sure you do, Hortense: here she comes. That was her shadow passed the window, I believe."

"Ah! truly. She is too early—half an hour before her time.—My child, what brings you here before I have breakfasted?"

This question was addressed to an individual who now entered the room, a young girl, wrapped in a winter mantle, the folds of which were gathered with some grace round an apparently slender figure.

"I came in haste to see how you were, Hortense, and how Robert was, too. I was sure you would be both grieved by what happened last night. I did not hear till this morning: my uncle told me at breakfast."

"Ah! it is unspeakable. You sympathize with us? Your uncle sympathizes with us?"

"My uncle is very angry; but he was with Robert, I believe: was he not? Did he not go with you to Stilbro' Moor?"

"Yes: we set out in very martial style, Caroline; but the prisoners we went to rescue met us half-way."

"Of course, nobody was hurt?"

"Why, no; only Joe Scott's wrists were a little galled with being pinioned too tightly behind his back."

"You were not there? You were not with the waggons when they were attacked?"

"No: one seldom has the fortune to be present at occurrences at which one would particularly wish to assist."

"Where are you going this morning? I saw Murgatroyd saddling your horse in the yard."

"To Whinbury: it is market-day."

"Mr. Yorke is going, too: I met him in his gig. Come home with him."

"Why?"

"Two are better than one, and nobody dislikes Mr. Yorke; at least, poor people do not dislike him."

"Therefore he would be a protection to me, who am hated?"

"Who are *misunderstood:* that, probably, is the word. Shall you be late?—Will he be late, cousin Hortense?"

"It is too probable: he has often much business

to transact at Whinbury. Have you brought your exercise-book, child?"

"Yes. What time will you return, Robert?"

"I generally return at seven. Do you wish me to be at home earlier?"

"Try rather to be back by six. It is not absolutely dark at six now; but by seven daylight is quite gone."

"And what danger is to be apprehended, Caroline, when daylight *is* gone? What peril do you conceive comes as the companion of darkness, for me?"

"I am not sure that I can define my fears; but we all have a certain anxiety at present about our friends. My uncle calls these times dangerous: he says, too, that mill-owners are unpopular."

"And I one of the most unpopular? Is not that the fact? You are reluctant to speak out plainly, but at heart you think me liable to Pearson's fate, who was shot at—not, indeed, from behind a hedge, but in his own house, through his staircase-window, as he was going to bed."

"Anne Pearson showed me the bullet in the chamber-door," remarked Caroline, gravely, as she folded her mantle, and arranged it and her muff on a side-table. "You know," she continued, "there is a hedge all the way along the road from here to Whinbury, and there are the Fieldhead plantations to pass; but you will be back by six—or before?"

"Certainly he will," affirmed Hortense. "And now, my child, prepare your lessons for repetition,

while I put the peas to soak for the purée at dinner."

With this direction, she left the room.

"You suspect I have many enemies then, Caroline?" said Mr. Moore; "and, doubtless, you know me to be destitute of friends?"

"Not destitute, Robert. There is your sister, your brother Louis—whom I have never seen—there is Mr. Yorke, and there is my uncle; besides, of course, many more."

Robert smiled. "You would be puzzled to name your 'many more,'" said he. "But show me your exercise-book. What extreme pains you take with the writing! My sister, I suppose, exacts this care: she wants to form you in all things after the model of a Flemish school-girl. What life are you destined for, Caroline? What will you do with your French, drawing, and other accomplishments when they are acquired?"

"You may well say, when they are acquired; for, as you are aware, till Hortense began to teach me, I knew precious little. As to the life I am destined for, I cannot tell: I suppose, to keep my uncle's house, till—" she hesitated.

"Till what? Till he dies?"

"No. How harsh to say that! I never think of his dying: he is only fifty-five. But till—in short, till events offer other occupations for me."

"A remarkably vague prospect! Are you content with it?"

"I used to be, formerly. Children, you know, have little reflection, or rather their reflections run on ideal themes. There are moments *now* when I am not quite satisfied."

"Why?"

"I am making no money—earning nothing."

"You come to the point, Lina; you, too, then, wish to make money?"

"I do: I should like an occupation; and if I were a boy, it would not be so difficult to find one. I see such an easy, pleasant way of learning a business, and making my way in life."

"Go on: let us hear what way."

"I could be apprenticed to your trade—the cloth-trade: I could learn it of you, as we are distant relations. I would do the counting-house work, keep the books, and write the letters, while you went to market. I know you greatly desire to be rich, in order to pay your father's debts; perhaps I could help you to get rich."

"Help *me?* You should think of yourself."

"I do think of myself; but must one for ever think only of one's self?"

"Of whom else do I think? Of whom else *dare* I think? The poor ought to have no large sympathies; it is their duty to be narrow."

"No, Robert ——"

"Yes, Caroline. Poverty is necessarily selfish, contracted, grovelling, anxious. Now and then a poor man's heart, when certain beams and dews visit

it, may swell like the budding vegetation in yonder garden on this spring day, may feel ripe to evolve in foliage—perhaps blossom; but he must not encourage the pleasant impulse; he must invoke prudence to check it, with that frosty breath of hers, which is as nipping as any north wind."

"No cottage would be happy then."

"When I speak of poverty, I do not so much mean the natural, habitual poverty of the working-man, as the embarrassed penury of the man in debt; my grub-worm is always a straitened, struggling, care-worn tradesman."

"Cherish hope, not anxiety. Certain ideas have become too fixed in your mind. It may be presumptuous to say it, but I have the impression that there is something wrong in your notions of the best means of attaining happiness; as there is in——" Second hesitation.

"I am all ear, Caroline."

"In—(courage! let me speak the truth)—in your manner—mind, I say only *manner*—to these Yorkshire workpeople."

"You have often wanted to tell me that, have you not?"

"Yes; often—very often."

"The faults of my manner are, I think, only negative. I am not proud: what has a man in my position to be proud of? I am only taciturn, phlegmatic, and joyless."

"As if your living cloth-dressers were all machines

like your frames and shears: in your own house you seem different."

"To those of my own house I am no alien, which I am to these English clowns. I might act the benevolent with them, but acting is not my *forte*. I find them irrational, perverse; they hinder me when I long to hurry forward. In treating them justly, I fulfil my whole duty towards them."

"You don't expect them to love you, of course?"

"Nor wish it."

"Ah!" said the monitress, shaking her head, and heaving a deep sigh. With this ejaculation, indicative that she perceived a screw to be loose somewhere, but that it was out of her reach to set it right, she bent over her grammar, and sought the rule and exercise for the day.

"I suppose I am not an affectionate man, Caroline; the attachment of a very few suffices me."

"If you please, Robert, will you mend me a pen or two before you go?"

"First, let me rule your book, for you always contrive to draw the lines aslant. . . . There now. . . . And now for the pens: you like a fine one, I think?"

"Such as you generally make for me and Hortense; not your own broad points."

"If I were of Louis's calling, I might stay at home and dedicate this morning to you and your studies; whereas I must spend it in Sykes' wool-warehouse."

"You will be making money."

"More likely losing it."

As he finished mending the pens, a horse, saddled and bridled, was brought up to the garden-gate.

"There, Fred. is ready for me; I must go. I'll take one look to see what the spring has done in the south border, too, first."

He quitted the room, and went out into the garden-ground behind the mill. A sweet fringe of young verdure and opening flowers—snowdrop, crocus, even primrose—bloomed in the sunshine under the hot wall of the factory. Moore plucked here and there a blossom and leaf, till he had collected a little bouquet; he returned to the parlour, pilfered a thread of silk from his sister's work-basket, tied the flowers, and laid them on Caroline's desk.

"Now, good-morning."

"Thank you, Robert; it is pretty; it looks, as it lies there, like sparkles of sunshine and blue sky: good-morning."

He went to the door—stopped—opened his lips as if to speak—said nothing, and moved on. He passed through the wicket, and mounted his horse: in a second, he had flung himself from the saddle again, transferred the reins to Murgatroyd, and re-entered the cottage.

"I forgot my gloves," he said, appearing to take something from the side-table; then, as an impromptu thought, he remarked, "You have no binding engagement at home, perhaps, Caroline?"

"I never have: some children's socks, which Mrs.

Ramsden has ordered, to knit for the Jew's basket; but they will keep."

"Jew's basket be —— sold! Never was utensil better named. Anything more Jewish than it—its contents, and their prices—cannot be conceived: but I see something, a very tiny curl, at the corners of your lip, which tells me that you know its merits as well as I do. Forget the Jew's basket, then, and spend the day here as a change. Your uncle won't break his heart at your absence?"

She smiled. "No."

"The old Cossack! I daresay not," muttered Moore. "Then stay and dine with Hortense; she will be glad of your company; I shall return in good time. We will have a little reading in the evening: the moon rises at half-past eight, and I will walk up to the rectory with you at nine. Do you agree?"

She nodded her head; and her eyes lit up.

Moore lingered yet two minutes: he bent over Caroline's desk and glanced at her grammar, he fingered her pen, he lifted her bouquet and played with it; his horse stamped impatient; Fred. Murgatroyd hemmed and coughed at the gate, as if he wondered what in the world his master was doing. "Good-morning," again said Moore, and finally vanished.

Hortense, coming in ten minutes after, found, to her surprise, that Caroline had not yet commenced her exercise.

CHAPTER VI.

CORIOLANUS.

MADEMOISELLE MOORE had that morning a somewhat absent-minded pupil. Caroline forgot, again and again, the explanations which were given to her; however, she still bore with unclouded mood the chidings her inattention brought upon her. Sitting in the sunshine, near the window, she seemed to receive with its warmth a kind influence, which made her both happy and good. Thus disposed, she looked her best, and her best was a pleasing vision.

To her had not been denied the gift of beauty; it was not absolutely necessary to know her in order to like her; she was fair enough to please, even at the first view. Her shape suited her age; it was girlish, light, and pliant; every curve was neat, every limb proportionate: her face was expressive and gentle; her eyes were handsome, and gifted at times with a winning beam that stole into the heart, with a language that spoke softly to the affections. Her mouth was very pretty; she had a delicate skin,

and a fine flow of brown hair, which she knew how to arrange with taste; curls became her, and she possessed them in picturesque profusion. Her style of dress announced taste in the wearer; very unobtrusive in fashion, far from costly in material, but suitable in colour to the fair complexion with which it contrasted, and in make to the slight form which it draped. Her present winter garb was of merino, the same soft shade of brown as her hair; the little collar round her neck lay over a pink ribbon, and was fastened with a pink knot: she wore no other decoration.

So much for Caroline Helstone's appearance; as to her character or intellect, if she had any, they must speak for themselves in due time.

Her connections are soon explained. She was the child of parents separated soon after her birth, in consequence of disagreement of disposition. Her mother was the half-sister of Mr. Moore's father; thus—though there was no mixture of blood—she was, in a distant sense, the cousin of Robert, Louis, and Hortense. Her father was the brother of Mr. Helstone—a man of the character friends desire not to recall, after death has once settled all earthly accounts. He had rendered his wife unhappy: the reports which were known to be true concerning him, had given an air of probability to those which were falsely circulated respecting his better-principled brother. Caroline had never known her mother, as she was taken from her in infancy, and

had not since seen her; her father died comparatively young, and her uncle, the Rector, had for some years been her sole guardian. He was not, as we are aware, much adapted, either by nature or habits, to have the charge of a young girl: he had taken little trouble about her education; probably, he would have taken none if she, finding herself neglected, had not grown anxious on her own account, and asked, every now and then, for a little attention, and for the means of acquiring such amount of knowledge as could not be dispensed with. Still, she had a depressing feeling that she was inferior, that her attainments were fewer than were usually possessed by girls of her age and station; and very glad was she to avail herself of the kind offer made by her cousin Hortense, soon after the arrival of the latter at Hollow's-mill, to teach her French and fine needlework. Mdlle. Moore, for her part, delighted in the task, because it gave her importance; she liked to lord it a little over a docile yet quick pupil. She took Caroline precisely at her own estimate, as an irregularly-taught, even ignorant girl; and when she found that she made rapid and eager progress, it was to no talent—no application in the scholar, she ascribed the improvement, but entirely to her own superior method of teaching; when she found that Caroline, unskilled in routine, had a knowledge of her own—desultory but varied, the discovery caused her no surprise, for she still imagined that from her conversation had the

girl unawares gleaned these treasures: she thought it even when forced to feel that her pupil knew much on subjects whereof she knew little: the idea was not logical, but Hortense had perfect faith in it.

Mademoiselle, who prided herself on possessing "un esprit positif," and on entertaining a decided preference for dry studies, kept her young cousin to the same as closely as she could. She worked her unrelentingly at the grammar of the French language, assigning her, as the most improving exercise she could devise, interminable "analyses logiques." These "analyses" were by no means a source of particular pleasure to Caroline; she thought she could have learned French just as well without them, and grudged excessively the time spent in pondering over "propositions, principales, et incidentes;" in deciding the "incidente determinative" and the "incidente applicative;" in examining whether the proposition was "pleine," "elliptique," or "implicite." Sometimes she lost herself in the maze, and when so lost, she would, now and then (while Hortense was rummaging her drawers up-stairs,—an unaccountable occupation in which she spent a large portion of each day, arranging, disarranging, rearranging and counter-arranging)—carry her book to Robert in the counting-house, and get the rough place made smooth by his aid. Mr. Moore possessed a clear, tranquil brain of his own; almost as soon as he looked at Caroline's little difficulties they seemed to

dissolve beneath his eye: in two minutes he would explain all; in two words give the key to the puzzle. She thought if Hortense could only teach like him, how much faster she might learn! Repaying him by an admiring and grateful smile, rather shed at his feet than lifted to his face, she would leave the mill reluctantly to go back to the cottage, and then, while she completed the exercise, or worked out the sum (for Mdlle. Moore taught her arithmetic, too,) she would wish nature had made her a boy instead of a girl, that she might ask Robert to let her be his clerk, and sit with him in the counting-house, instead of sitting with Hortense in the parlour.

Occasionally—but this happened very rarely—she spent the evening at Hollow's cottage. Sometimes during these visits, Moore was away, attending a market; sometimes he was gone to Mr. Yorke's; often he was engaged with a male visitor in another room; but sometimes, too, he was at home, disengaged, free to talk with Caroline. When this was the case, the evening hours passed on wings of light; they were gone before they were counted. There was no room in England so pleasant as that small parlour when the three cousins occupied it. Hortense, when she was not teaching, or scolding, or cooking, was far from ill-humoured; it was her custom to relax towards evening, and to be kind to her young English kinswoman. There was a means, too, of rendering her delightful, by inducing her to take her guitar and sing and play; she then became

quite good-natured; and as she played with skill, and had a well-toned voice, it was not disagreeable to listen to her: it would have been absolutely agreeable, except that her formal and self-important character modulated her strains, as it impressed her manners and moulded her countenance.

Mr. Moore, released from the business-yoke, was, if not lively himself, a willing spectator of Caroline's liveliness, a complacent listener to her talk, a ready respondent to her questions. He was something agreeable to sit near, to hover round, to address and look at. Sometimes he was better than this, — almost animated, quite gentle and friendly.

The drawback was, that by the next morning he was sure to be frozen up again; and however much he seemed, in his quiet way, to enjoy these social evenings, he rarely contrived their recurrence. This circumstance puzzled the inexperienced head of his cousin. "If I had a means of happiness at my command," she thought, "I would employ that means often; I would keep it bright with use, and not let it lie for weeks aside, till it gets rusty."

Yet she was careful not to put in practice her own theory. Much as she liked an evening visit to the cottage, she never paid one unasked. Often, indeed, when pressed by Hortense to come, she would refuse, because Robert did not second, or but slightly seconded the request. This morning was the first time he had ever, of his own unprompted will, given her an invitation; and then he had

spoken so kindly, that in hearing him she had received a sense of happiness sufficient to keep her glad for the whole day.

The morning passed as usual. Mademoiselle, ever breathlessly busy, spent it in bustling from kitchen to parlour—now scolding Sarah, now looking over Caroline's exercise or hearing her repetition-lesson. However faultlessly these tasks were achieved, she never commended: it was a maxim with her that praise is inconsistent with a teacher's dignity, and that blame, in more or less unqualified measure, is indispensable to it. She thought incessant reprimand, severe or slight, quite necessary to the maintenance of her authority; and if no possible error was to be found in the lesson, it was the pupil's carriage, or air, or dress, or mien, which required correction.

The usual affray took place about the dinner, which meal, when Sarah at last brought it into the room, she almost flung upon the table, with a look that expressed quite plainly: "I never dished such stuff i' my life afore; it 's not fit for dogs." Notwithstanding Sarah's scorn, it was a savoury repast enough. The soup was a sort of purée of dried peas, which Mademoiselle had prepared amidst bitter lamentations that in this desolate country of England no haricot beans were to be had. Then came a dish of meat—nature unknown, but supposed to be miscellaneous—singularly chopped up with crumbs of bread, seasoned uniquely though not unpleasantly, and baked in a mould; a queer, but by no means

unpalatable dish. Greens, oddly bruised, formed the accompanying vegetable; and a pâté of fruit, conserved after a receipt devised by Madame Gérard Moore's "grand' mère," and from the taste of which it appeared probable that "mélasse" had been substituted for sugar, completed the dinner.

Caroline had no objection to this Belgian cookery: indeed, she rather liked it for a change, and it was well she did so, for had she evinced any disrelish thereof, such manifestation would have injured her in Mademoiselle's good graces for ever; a positive crime might have been more easily pardoned than a symptom of distaste for the foreign comestibles.

Soon after dinner Caroline coaxed her governess-cousin up-stairs to dress: this manœuvre required management. To have hinted that the jupon, camisole, and curl-papers were odious objects, or indeed other than quite meritorious points, would have been a felony. Any premature attempt to urge their disappearance was therefore unwise, and would be likely to issue in the persevering wear of them during the whole day. Carefully avoiding rocks and quicksands, however, the pupil, on pretence of requiring a change of scene, contrived to get the teacher aloft, and, once in the bed-room, she persuaded her that it was not worth while returning thither, and that she might as well make her toilette now; and while Mademoiselle delivered a solemn homily on her own surpassing merit in disregarding all frivolities of fashion, Caroline denuded her of the

camisole, invested her with a decent gown, arranged her collar, hair, &c. and made her quite presentable. But Hortense would put the finishing touches herself, and these finishing touches consisted in a thick handkerchief tied round the throat, and a large, servant-like black apron, which spoiled everything. On no account would Mademoiselle have appeared in her own house without the thick handkerchief and the voluminous apron: the first was a positive matter of morality—it was quite improper not to wear a fichu; the second was the ensign of a good housewife—she appeared to think that by means of it she somehow effected a large saving in her brother's income. She had, with her own hands, made and presented to Caroline similar equipments; and the only serious quarrel they had ever had, and which still left a soreness in the elder cousin's soul, had arisen from the refusal of the younger one to accept of and profit by these elegant presents.

"I wear a high dress and a collar," said Caroline, "and I should feel suffocated with a handkerchief in addition; and my short aprons do quite as well as that very long one: I would rather make no change."

Yet Hortense, by dint of perseverance, would probably have compelled her to make a change, had not Mr. Moore chanced to overhear a dispute on the subject, and decided that Caroline's little aprons would suffice, and that, in his opinion, as she was still but a child, she might for the present dispense

with the fichu, especially as her curls were long, and almost touched her shoulders.

There was no appeal against Robert's opinion, therefore his sister was compelled to yield; but she disapproved entirely of the piquant neatness of Caroline's costume, and the lady-like grace of her appearance: something more solid and homely, she would have considered "beaucoup plus convenable."

The afternoon was devoted to sewing. Mademoiselle, like most Belgian ladies, was specially skilful with her needle. She by no means thought it waste of time to devote unnumbered hours to fine embroidery, sight-destroying lace-work, marvellous netting and knitting, and, above all, to most elaborate stocking-mending. She would give a day to the mending of two holes in a stocking any time, and think her "mission" nobly fulfilled when she had accomplished it. It was another of Caroline's troubles to be condemned to learn this foreign style of darning, which was done stitch by stitch so as exactly to imitate the fabric of the stocking itself; a wearifu' process, but considered by Hortense Gérard, and by her ancestresses before her for long generations back, as one of the first "duties of woman." She herself had had a needle, cotton, and a fearfully torn stocking put into her hand while she yet wore a child's coif on her little black head: her "hauts faits" in the darning line had been exhibited to company ere she was six years old, and when she first discovered that Caroline was profoundly ignorant of

this most essential of attainments, she could have wept with pity over her miserably neglected youth.

No time did she lose in seeking up a hopeless pair of hose, of which the heels were entirely gone, and in setting the ignorant English girl to repair the deficiency: this task had been commenced two years ago, and Caroline had the stockings in her work-bag yet. She did a few rows every day, by way of penance for the expiation of her sins: they were a grievous burden to her, she would much have liked to put them in the fire; and once Mr. Moore, who had observed her sitting and sighing over them, had proposed a private incremation in the counting-house, but to this proposal Caroline knew it would have been impolitic to accede—the result could only be a fresh pair of hose, probably in worse condition: she adhered, therefore, to the ills she knew.

All the afternoon the two ladies sat and sewed, till the eyes and fingers, and even the spirits of one of them were weary. The sky since dinner had darkened; it had begun to rain again, to pour fast: secret fears began to steal on Caroline that Robert would be persuaded by Mr. Sykes or Mr. Yorke to remain at Whinbury till it cleared, and of that there appeared no present chance. Five o'clock struck, and time stole on; still the clouds streamed: a sighing wind whispered in the roof-trees of the cottage; day seemed already closing; the parlour-fire shed on the clear hearth a glow ruddy as at twilight.

"It will not be fair till the moon rises," pro-

nounced Mademoiselle Moore; "consequently, I feel assured that my brother will not return till then: indeed, I should be sorry if he did. We will have coffee: it would be vain to wait for him."

"I am tired—may I leave my work now, cousin?"

"You may, since it grows too dark to see to do it well. Fold it up; put it carefully in your bag; then step into the kitchen, and desire Sarah to bring in the goûter, or tea, as you call it."

"But it has not yet struck six: he may still come."

"He will not, I tell you. I can calculate his movements. I understand my brother."

Suspense is irksome, disappointment bitter. All the world has, some time or other, felt that. Caroline, obedient to orders, passed into the kitchen. Sarah was making a dress for herself at the table.

"You are to bring in coffee," said the young lady, in a spiritless tone; and then she leaned her arm and head against the kitchen mantelpiece, and hung listlessly over the fire.

"How low you seem, Miss! But it's all because your cousin keeps you so close to work. It's a shame!"

"Nothing of the kind, Sarah," was the brief reply.

"Oh! but I know it is. You're fit to cry just this minute, for nothing else but because you've sat still the whole day. It would make a kitten dull to be mewed up so."

"Sarah, does your master often come home early from market when it is wet?"

"Never, hardly; but just to-day, for some reason, he has made a difference."

"What do you mean?"

"He is come: I am certain I saw Murgatroyd lead his horse into the yard by the back-way, when I went to get some water at the pump five minutes since. He was in the counting-house with Joe Scott, I believe."

"You are mistaken."

"What should I be mistaken for? I know his horse, surely?"

"But you did not see himself?"

"I heard him speak, though. He was saying something to Joe Scott about having settled all concerning ways and means, and that there would be a new set of frames in the mill before another week passed; and that this time he would get four soldiers from Stilbro' barracks to guard the waggon."

"Sarah, are you making a gown?"

"Yes: is it a handsome one?"

"Beautiful! Get the coffee ready. I'll finish cutting out that sleeve for you; and I'll give you some trimming for it. I have some narrow satin ribbon of a colour that will just match it."

"You 're very kind, Miss."

"Be quick, there 's a good girl; but first put your master's shoes on the hearth: he will take his boots off when he comes in. I hear him—he is coming."

"Miss! you 're cutting the stuff wrong."

"So I am; but it is only a snip: there is no harm done."

The kitchen-door opened; Mr. Moore entered, very wet and cold. Caroline half turned from her dressmaking occupation, but renewed it for a moment, as if to gain a minute's time for some purpose. Bent over the dress, her face was hidden; there was an attempt to settle her features and veil their expression, which failed: when she at last met Mr. Moore, her countenance beamed.

"We had ceased to expect you: they asserted you would not come," she said.

"But I promised to return soon: *you* expected me, I suppose?"

"No, Robert: I dared not when it rained so fast. And you are wet and chilled—change everything: if you took cold, I should—we should blame ourselves in some measure."

"I am not wet through: my riding-coat is waterproof. Dry shoes are all I require.—There . . . . the fire is pleasant after facing the cold wind and rain for a few miles."

He stood on the kitchen-hearth; Caroline stood beside him. Mr. Moore, while enjoying the genial glow, kept his eyes directed towards the glittering brasses on the shelf above. Chancing for an instant to look down, his glance rested on an uplifted face, flushed, smiling, happy, shaded with silky curls, lit with fine eyes. Sarah was gone into the parlour

with the tray: a lecture from her mistress detained her there. Moore placed his hand a moment on his young cousin's shoulder, stooped, and left a kiss on her forehead.

"Oh!" said she, as if the action had unsealed her lips, "I was miserable when I thought you would not come: I am almost too happy now. Are you happy, Robert? Do you like to come home?"

"I think I do; to-night, at least."

"Are you certain you are not fretting about your frames, and your business, and the war?"

"Not just now."

"Are you positive you don't feel Hollow's cottage too small for you, and narrow and dismal?"

"At this moment, no."

"Can you affirm that you are not bitter at heart because rich and great people forget you?"

"No more questions. You are mistaken if you think I am anxious to curry favour with rich and great people. I only want means—a position—a career."

"Which your own talent and goodness shall win you. You were made to be great—you *shall* be great."

"I wonder now, if you spoke honestly out of your heart, what receipt you would give me for acquiring this same greatness; but I know it—better than you know it yourself. Would it be efficacious? would it work? Yes—poverty, misery, bankruptcy. Oh! life is not what you think it, Lina!"

"But you are what I think you."

"I am not."

"You are better, then?"

"Far worse."

"No; far better. I know you are good."

"How do you know it?"

"You look so; and I feel you *are* so."

"Where do you feel it?"

"In my heart."

"Ah! you judge me with your heart, Lina; you should judge me with your head."

"I do; and then I am quite proud of you. Robert, you cannot tell all my thoughts about you."

Mr. Moore's dark face mustered colour; his lips smiled, and yet were compressed; his eyes laughed, and yet he resolutely knit his brow.

"Think meanly of me, Lina," said he. "Men, in general, are a sort of scum, very different to anything of which you have an idea; I make no pretension to be better than my fellows."

"If you did, I should not esteem you so much; it is because you are modest that I have such confidence in your merit."

"Are you flattering me?" he demanded, turning sharply upon her, and searching her face with an eye of acute penetration.

"No," she said, softly, laughing at his sudden quickness. She seemed to think it unnecessary to proffer any eager disavowal of the charge.

"You don't care whether I think you flatter me or not?"

"No."

"You are so secure of your own intentions?"

"I suppose so."

"What are they, Caroline?"

"Only to ease my mind by expressing for once part of what I think; and then to make you better satisfied with yourself."

"By assuring me that my kinswoman is my sincere friend?"

"Just so; I am your sincere friend, Robert."

"And I am—what chance and change shall make me, Lina."

"Not my enemy, however?"

The answer was cut short by Sarah and her mistress entering the kitchen together in some commotion. They had been improving the time which Mr. Moore and Miss Helstone had spent in dialogue by a short dispute on the subject of "café au lait," which Sarah said was the queerest mess she ever saw, and a waste of God's good gifts, as it was "the nature of coffee to be boiled in water;" and which Mademoiselle affirmed to be "un breuvage royal," a thousand times too good for the mean person who objected to it.

The former occupants of the kitchen now withdrew into the parlour. Before Hortense followed them thither, Caroline had only time again to question, "Not my enemy, Robert?" And Moore, quaker-like, had replied with another query, "Could I be?" and then, seating himself at the table, had settled Caroline at his side.

Caroline scarcely heard Mademoiselle's explosion of wrath when she rejoined them; the long declamation about the "conduite indigne de cette méchante créature," sounded in her ear as confusedly as the agitated rattling of the china. Robert laughed a little at it, in very subdued sort, and then, politely and calmly entreating his sister to be tranquil, assured her that if it would yield her any satisfaction, she should have her choice of an attendant amongst all the girls in his mill; only he feared they would scarcely suit her, as they were most of them, he was informed, completely ignorant of household work; and pert and self-willed as Sarah was, she was perhaps no worse than the majority of the women of her class.

Mademoiselle admitted the truth of this conjecture: according to her, "ces paysannes Anglaises étaient toutes insupportables." What would she not give for some "bonne cuisinière Anversoise," with the high cap, short petticoat, and decent sabots proper to her class: something better, indeed, than an insolent coquette in a flounced gown, and absolutely without cap! (for Sarah, it appears, did not partake the opinion of St. Paul, that "it is a shame for a woman to go with her head uncovered;" but, holding rather a contrary doctrine, resolutely refused to imprison in linen or muslin the plentiful tresses of her yellow hair, which it was her wont to fasten up smartly with a comb behind, and on Sundays to wear curled in front.)

"Shall I try and get you an Antwerp girl?" asked Mr. Moore, who—stern in public—was on the whole very kind in private.

"Merci du cadeau!" was the answer. "An Antwerp girl would not stay here ten days, sneered at as she would be by all the young coquines in your factory;" then softening, "you are very good, dear brother — excuse my petulance — but truly, my domestic trials are severe, yet they are probably my destiny; for I recollect that our revered mother experienced similar sufferings, though she had the choice of all the best servants in Antwerp: domestics are in all countries a spoiled and unruly set."

Mr. Moore had also certain reminiscences about the trials of his revered mother. A good mother she had been to him, and he honoured her memory, but he recollected that she kept a hot kitchen of it in Antwerp, just as his faithful sister did here in England. Thus, therefore, he let the subject drop, and when the coffee-service was removed, proceeded to console Hortense by fetching her music-book and guitar; and, having arranged the ribbon of the instrument round her neck with a quiet fraternal kindness he knew to be all-powerful in soothing her most ruffled moods, he asked her to give him some of their mother's favourite songs.

Nothing refines like affection. Family jarring vulgarizes—family union elevates. Hortense, pleased with her brother, and grateful to him, looked, as she

touched her guitar, almost graceful, almost handsome; her every-day fretful look was gone for a moment, and was replaced by a "sourire plein de bonté." She sang the songs he asked for, with feeling; they reminded her of a parent to whom she had been truly attached; they reminded her of her young days. She observed, too, that Caroline listened with naïve interest; this augmented her good-humour; and the exclamation at the close of the song, "I wish I could sing and play like Hortense!" achieved the business, and rendered her charming for the evening.

It is true, a little lecture to Caroline followed, on the vanity of *wishing*, and the duty of *trying*. "As Rome," it was suggested, "had not been built in a day, so neither had Mademoiselle Gérard Moore's education been completed in a week, or by merely *wishing* to be clever. It was effort that had accomplished that great work: she was ever remarkable for her perseverance, for her industry: her masters had remarked that it was as delightful as it was uncommon to find so much talent united with so much solidity, and so on. Once on the theme of her own merits, Mademoiselle was fluent.

Cradled at last in blissful self-complacency, she took her knitting and sat down tranquil. Drawn curtains, a clear fire, a softly shining lamp gave now to the little parlour its best—its evening charm. It is probable that the three there present felt this charm: they all looked happy.

"What shall we do now, Caroline?" asked Mr. Moore, returning to his seat beside his cousin.

"What shall we do, Robert?" repeated she playfully. "You decide."

"Not play at chess?"

"No."

"Nor draughts, nor backgammon?"

"No—no; we both hate silent games that only keep one's hands employed, don't we?"

"I believe we do: then, shall we talk scandal?"

"About whom? Are we sufficiently interested in anybody to take a pleasure in pulling their character to pieces?"

"A question that comes to the point. For my part—unamiable as it sounds—I must say, no."

"And I, too. But it is strange—though we want no third—fourth, I mean (she hastily and with contrition glanced at Hortense), living person among us—so selfish we are in our happiness—though we don't want to think of the present existing world, it would be pleasant to go back to the past; to hear people that have slept for generations in graves that are perhaps no longer graves now, but gardens and fields, speak to us and tell us their thoughts, and impart their ideas."

"Who shall be the speaker? What language shall he utter? French?"

"Your French forefathers don't speak so sweetly, nor so solemnly, nor so impressively as your English

ancestors, Robert. To-night you shall be entirely English: you shall read an English book."

"An old English book?"

"Yes, an old English book, one that you like; and I will choose a part of it that is toned quite in harmony with something in you. It shall waken your nature, fill your mind with music: it shall pass like a skilful hand over your heart, and make its strings sound. Your heart is a lyre, Robert; but the lot of your life has not been a minstrel to sweep it, and it is often silent. Let glorious William come near and touch it; you will see how he will draw the English power and melody out of its chords."

"I must read Shakspeare?"

"You must have his spirit before you; you must hear his voice with your mind's ear; you must take some of his soul into yours."

"With a view to making me better; is it to operate like a sermon?"

"It is to stir you; to give you new sensations. It is to make you feel your life strongly, not only your virtues, but your vicious, perverse points."

"Dìeu! que dit-elle?" cried Hortense, who hitherto had been counting stitches in her knitting, and had not much attended to what was said, but whose ear these two strong words caught with a tweak.

"Never mind her, sister: let her talk; now just let her say anything she pleases to-night. She likes

to come down hard upon your brother sometimes; it amuses me, so let her alone."

Caroline, who, mounted on a chair, had been rummaging the book-case, returned with a book.

"Here's Shakspeare," she said, "and there's Coriolanus. Now, read, and discover by the feelings the reading will give you at once how low and how high you are."

"Come then, sit near me, and correct when I mispronounce."

"I am to be the teacher then, and you my pupil?"

"Ainsi, soit-il!"

"And Shakspeare is our science, since we are going to study?"

"It appears so."

"And you are not going to be French, and sceptical, and sneering? You are not going to think it a sign of wisdom to refuse to admire?"

"I don't know."

"If you do, Robert, I'll take Shakspeare away; and I'll shrivel up within myself, and put on my bonnet and go home."

"Sit down; here I begin."

"One minute, if you please, brother," interrupted Mademoiselle, "when the gentleman of a family reads, the ladies should always sew. Caroline, dear child, take your embroidery; you may get three sprigs done to-night."

Caroline looked dismayed. "I can't see by lamp-

light; my eyes are tired, and I can't do two things well at once. If I sew, I cannot listen; if I listen, I cannot sew."

"Fi, donc! Quel enfantillage!" began Hortense. Mr. Moore, as usual, suavely interposed.

"Permit her to neglect the embroidery for this evening. I wish her whole attention to be fixed on my accent, and to ensure this, she must follow the reading with her eyes; she must look at the book."

He placed it between them, reposed his arm on the back of Caroline's chair, and thus began to read.

The very first scene in "Coriolanus" came with smart relish to his intellectual palate, and still as he read he warmed. He delivered the haughty speech of Caius Marcius to the starving citizens with unction; he did not say he thought his irrational pride right, but he seemed to feel it so. Caroline looked up at him with a singular smile.

"There 's a vicious point hit already," she said, "you sympathize with that proud patrician who does not sympathize with his famished fellow-men, and insults them; there, go on." He proceeded. The warlike portions did not rouse him much; he said all that was out of date, or should be; the spirit displayed was barbarous, yet the encounter single-handed between Marcius and Tullus Aufidius, he delighted in. As he advanced, he forgot to criticise; it was evident he appreciated the power, the truth of each portion; and, stepping out of the narrow line of private prejudices, began to revel

in the large picture of human nature, to feel the reality stamped upon the characters who were speaking from that page before him.

He did not read the comic scenes well, and Caroline, taking the book out of his hand, read these parts for him. From her he seemed to enjoy them, and indeed she gave them with a spirit no one could have expected of her, with a pithy expression with which she seemed gifted on the spot, and for that brief moment only. It may be remarked, in passing, that the general character of her conversation that evening, whether serious or sprightly, grave or gay, was as of something untaught, unstudied, intuitive, fitful; when once gone, no more to be reproduced as it had been, than the glancing ray of the meteor, than the tints of the dew-gem, than the colour or form of the sun-set cloud, than the fleeting and glittering ripple varying the flow of a rivulet.

Coriolanus in glory; Coriolanus in disaster; Coriolanus banished, followed like giant-shades one after the other. Before the vision of the banished man, Moore's spirit seemed to pause. He stood on the hearth of Aufidius's hall, facing the image of greatness fallen, but greater than ever in that low estate. He saw "the grim appearance," the dark face "bearing command in it," "the noble vessel with its tackle torn." With the revenge of Caius Marcius, Moore perfectly sympathized; he was not scandalized by it, and again Caroline whispered,

"There, I see another glimpse of brotherhood in error."

The march on Rome, the mother's supplication, the long resistance, the final yielding of bad passions to good, which ever must be the case in a nature worthy the epithet of noble, the rage of Aufidius at what he considered his ally's weakness, the death of Coriolanus, the final sorrow of his great enemy; all scenes made of condensed truth and strength, came on in succession, and carried with them in their deep, fast flow, the heart and mind of reader and listener.

"Now, have you felt Shakspeare?" asked Caroline, some ten minutes after her cousin had closed the book.

"I think so."

"And have you felt anything in Coriolanus like you?"

"Perhaps I have."

"Was he not faulty as well as great?"

Moore nodded. "And what was his fault? What made him hated by the citizens? What caused him to be banished by his countrymen?"

"What do you think it was?"

"I ask again—

> 'Whether was it pride,
> Which out of daily fortune ever taints
> The happy man? whether defect of judgment,
> To fail in the disposing of those chances
> Which he was lord of? or whether nature,
> Not to be other than one thing; not moving

> From the casque to the cushion, but commanding peace
> Even with the same austerity and garb
> As he controlled the war?'"

"Well, answer yourself, Sphynx."

"It was a spice of all: and you must not be proud to your workpeople; you must not neglect chances of soothing them, and you must not be of an inflexible nature, uttering a request as austerely as if it were a command."

"That is the moral you tack to the play. What puts such notions into your head?"

"A wish for your good, a care for your safety, dear Robert, and a fear caused by many things which I have heard lately, that you will come to harm."

"Who tells you these things?"

"I hear my uncle talk about you: he praises your hard spirit, your determined cast of mind, your scorn of low enemies, your resolution not 'to truckle to the mob,' as he says."

"And would you have me truckle to them?"

"No, not for the world: I never wish you to lower yourself; but somehow, I cannot help thinking it unjust to include all poor working people under the general and insulting name of 'the mob,' and continually to think of them and treat them haughtily."

"You are a little democrat, Caroline: if your uncle knew, what would he say?"

"I rarely talk to my uncle, as you know, and

never about such things: he thinks everything but sewing and cooking above women's comprehension, and out of their line."

"And do you fancy you comprehend the subjects on which you advise me?"

"As far as they concern you, I comprehend them. I know it would be better for you to be loved by your workpeople than to be hated by them, and I am sure that kindness is more likely to win their regard than pride. If you were proud and cold to me and Hortense, should we love you? When you are cold to me, as you *are* sometimes, can I venture to be affectionate in return?"

"Now, Lina, I've had my lesson both in languages and ethics, with a touch on politics; it is your turn. Hortense tells me you were much taken by a little piece of poetry you learned the other day, a piece by poor André Chénier—'La Jeune Captive,' do you remember it still?"

"I think so."

"Repeat it, then. Take your time and mind your accent: especially let us have no English u's."

Caroline, beginning in a low, rather tremulous voice, but gaining courage as she proceeded, repeated the sweet verses of Chénier:* the last three stanzas she rehearsed well.

* Caroline had never seen Millevoye's "Jeune Malade," otherwise she would have known that there is a better poem in the French language than Chénier's "Captive;" a poem worthy to have been

" Mon beau voyage encore est si loin de sa fin !
Je pars, et des ormeaux qui bordent le chemin
J'ai passé le premiers à peine.
Au banquet de la vie à peine commencé,
Un instant seulement mes lèvres ont pressé
La coupe en mes mains encore pleine.

" Je ne suis qu'au printemps—je veux voir la moisson ;
Et comme le soleil, de saison en saison,
Je veux achever mon année.
Brillante sur ma tige, et l'honneur du jardin
Je n'ai vu luire encore que les feux du matin,
Je veux achever ma journée ! "

Moore listened at first with his eyes cast down, but soon he furtively raised them: leaning back in his chair, he could watch Caroline without her perceiving where his gaze was fixed. Her cheek had a colour, her eyes a light, her countenance an expression, this evening, which would have made even plain features striking; but there was not the grievous defect of plainness to pardon in her case. The sunshine was not shed on rough barrenness; it fell on soft bloom. Each lineament was turned with grace; the whole aspect was pleasing. At the present moment—animated, interested, touched—she might be called beautiful. Such a face was calculated to awaken not only the calm sentiment of esteem, the distant one of admiration; but some feeling more tender, genial, intimate: friendship,

written in English,—an inartificial, genuine, impressive strain. To how many other samples of French verse can the same epithets be applied with truth ?

perhaps—affection, interest. When she had finished, she turned to Moore, and met his eye.

"Is that pretty well repeated?" she inquired, smiling like any happy, docile child.

"I really don't know."

"Why don't you know? Have you not listened?"

"Yes—and looked. You are fond of poetry, Lina?"

"When I meet with *real* poetry, I cannot rest till I have learned it by heart, and so made it partly mine."

Mr. Moore now sat silent for several minutes. It struck nine o'clock: Sarah entered, and said that Mr. Helstone's servant was come for Miss Caroline.

"Then the evening is gone already," she observed; "and it will be long, I suppose, before I pass another here."

Hortense had been for some time nodding over her knitting; fallen into a doze now, she made no response to the remark.

"You would have no objection to come here oftener of an evening?" inquired Robert, as he took her folded mantle from the side-table, where it still lay, and carefully wrapped it round her.

"I like to come here; but I have no desire to be intrusive. I am not hinting to be asked: you must understand that."

"Oh! I understand thee, child. You sometimes lecture me for wishing to be rich, Lina; but if I *were* rich, you should live here always: at any rate,

you should live with me wherever my habitation might be."

"That would be pleasant; and if you were poor —ever so poor—it would still be pleasant. Good-night, Robert."

"I promised to walk with you up to the Rectory."

"I know you did; but I thought you had forgotten, and I hardly knew how to remind you, though I wished to do it. But would you like to go? It is a cold night; and, as Fanny is come, there is no necessity—"

"Here is your muff—don't wake Hortense—come."

The half-mile to the Rectory was soon traversed. They parted in the garden without kiss, scarcely with a pressure of hands; yet Robert sent his cousin in excited and joyously troubled. He had been singularly kind to her that day: not in phrase, compliment, profession; but in manner, in look, and in soft and friendly tones.

For himself, he came home grave, almost morose. As he stood leaning on his own yard-gate, musing in the watery moonlight, all alone—the hushed, dark mill before him, the hill-environed hollow round—he exclaimed, abruptly:—

"This won't do! There's weakness—there's downright ruin in all this. However," he added, dropping his voice, "the phrenzy is quite temporary. I know it very well: I have had it before. It will be gone to-morrow."

CHAPTER VI.

THE CURATES AT TEA.

CAROLINE HELSTONE was just eighteen years old; and at eighteen the true narrative of life is yet to be commenced. Before that time, we sit listening to a tale, a marvellous fiction; delightful sometimes, and sad sometimes; almost always unreal. Before that time, our world is heroic; its inhabitants half-divine or semi-demon; its scenes are dream-scenes: darker woods, and stranger hills; brighter skies, more dangerous waters; sweeter flowers, more tempting fruits; wider plains, drearier deserts, sunnier fields than are found in nature, overspread our enchanted globe. What a moon we gaze on before that time! How the trembling of our hearts at her aspect bears witness to its unutterable beauty! As to our sun, it is a burning heaven—the world of gods.

At that time—at eighteen, drawing near the confines of illusive, void dreams, Elf-land lies behind us, the shores of Reality rise in front. These shores are yet distant: they look so blue, soft, gentle, we long to reach them. In sunshine we see a greenness

beneath the azure, as of spring meadows; we catch glimpses of silver lines, and imagine the roll of living waters. Could we but reach this land, we think to hunger and thirst no more; whereas many a wilderness, and often the flood of Death, or some stream of sorrow as cold and almost as black as Death, is to be crossed ere true bliss can be tasted. Every joy that life gives must be earned ere it is secured; and how hardly earned, those only know who have wrestled for great prizes. The heart's blood must gem with red beads the brow of the combatant, before the wreath of victory rustles over it.

At eighteen, we are not aware of this. Hope, when she smiles on us, and promises happiness to-morrow, is implicitly believed;—Love, when he comes wandering like a lost angel to our door, is at once admitted, welcomed, embraced: his quiver is not seen; if his arrows penetrate, their wound is like a thrill of new life: there are no fears of poison, none of the barb which no leech's hand can extract: that perilous passion—an agony ever in some of its phases; with many, an agony throughout—is believed to be an unqualified good: in short, at eighteen, the school of Experience is to be entered, and her humbling, crushing, grinding, but yet purifying and invigorating lessons are yet to be learnt.

Alas, Experience! No other mentor has so wasted and frozen a face as yours: none wears a robe so black, none bears a rod so heavy, none with hand so inexorable draws the novice so sternly to his task,

and forces him with authority so resistless to its acquirement. It is by your instructions alone that man or woman can ever find a safe track through life's wilds: without it, how they stumble, how they stray! On what forbidden grounds do they intrude, down what dread declivities are they hurled!

Caroline, having been convoyed home by Robert, had no wish to pass what remained of the evening with her uncle: the room in which he sat was very sacred ground to her; she seldom intruded on it, and to-night she kept aloof till the bell rung for prayers. Part of the evening church service was the form of worship observed in Mr. Helstone's household: he read it in his usual nasal voice, clear, loud, and monotonous. The rite over, his niece, according to her wont, stepped up to him.

"Good-night, uncle."

"Hey! You've been gadding abroad all day—visiting, dining out, and what not!"

"Only at the cottage."

"And have you learnt your lessons?"

"Yes."

"And made a shirt?"

"Only part of one."

"Well, that will do: stick to the needle—learn shirt-making and gown-making, and pie-crust-making, and you'll be a clever woman some day. Go to bed now: I'm busy with a pamphlet here."

Presently the niece was enclosed in her small bedroom; the door bolted, her white dressing-gown

assumed, her long hair loosened and falling thick, soft, and wavy to her waist; and, as, resting from the task of combing it out, she leaned her cheek on her hand and fixed her eyes on the carpet, before her rose, and close around her drew, the visions we see at eighteen years.

Her thoughts were speaking with her: speaking pleasantly, as it seemed, for she smiled as she listened. She looked pretty, meditating thus: but a brighter thing than she was in that apartment—the spirit of youthful hope. According to this flattering prophet, she was to know disappointment, to feel chill no more: she had entered on the dawn of a summer day—no false dawn, but the true spring of morning—and her sun would quickly rise. Impossible for her now to suspect that she was the sport of delusion: her expectations seemed warranted, the foundation on which they rested appeared solid.

"When people love, the next step is they marry," was her argument. "Now, I love Robert, and I feel sure that Robert loves me: I have thought so many a time before; to-day I *felt* it. When I looked up at him after repeating Chénier's poem, his eyes (what handsome eyes he has!) sent the truth through my heart. Sometimes I am afraid to speak to him, lest I should be too frank, lest I should seem forward: for I have more than once regretted bitterly, overflowing, superfluous words, and feared I had said more than he expected me to say, and that

ne would disapprove what he might deem my indiscretion; now, to-night, I could have ventured to express any thought, he was so indulgent. How kind he was, as we walked up the lane! He does not flatter or say foolish things; his love-making (friendship, I mean: of course I don't yet account him my lover, but I hope he will be so some day) is not like what we read of in books—it is far better—original, quiet, manly, sincere. I *do* like him: I would be an excellent wife to him if he did marry me: I would tell him of his faults (for he has a few faults), but I would study his comfort, and cherish him, and do my best to make him happy. Now, I am sure he will not be cold to-morrow: I feel almost certain that to-morrow evening he will either come here, or ask me to go there."

She recommenced combing her hair, long as a mermaid's; turning her head, as she arranged it, she saw her own face and form in the glass. Such reflections are soberizing to plain people: their own eyes are not enchanted with the image; they are confident then that the eyes of others can see in it no fascination; but the fair must naturally draw other conclusions: the picture is charming, and must charm. Caroline saw a shape, a head, that, daguerreotyped in that attitude and with that expression, would have been lovely: she could not choose but derive from the spectacle confirmation to her hopes: it was then in undiminished gladness she sought her couch.

And in undiminished gladness she rose the next day: as she entered her uncle's breakfast-room, and with soft cheerfulness wished him good-morning, even that little man of bronze himself thought, for an instant, his niece was growing "a fine girl." Generally she was quiet and timid with him: very docile, but not communicative; this morning, however, she found many things to say. Slight topics alone might be discussed between them; for with a woman—a girl—Mr. Helstone would touch on no other. She had taken an early walk in the garden, and she told him what flowers were beginning to spring there; she inquired when the gardener was to come and trim the borders; she informed him that certain starlings were beginning to build their nests in the church-tower (Briarfield church was close to Briarfield rectory); she wondered the tolling of the bells in the belfry did not scare them.

Mr. Helstone opined that "they were like other fools who had just paired; insensible to inconvenience just for the moment." Caroline, made perhaps a little too courageous by her temporary good spirits, here hazarded a remark of a kind she had never before ventured to make on observations dropped by her revered relative.

"Uncle," said she, "whenever you speak of marriage, you speak of it scornfully: do you think people shouldn't marry?"

"It is decidedly the wisest plan to remain single, especially for women."

"Are all marriages unhappy?"

"Millions of marriages are unhappy: if everybody confessed the truth, perhaps all are more or less so."

"You are always vexed when you are asked to come and marry a couple—why?"

"Because one does not like to act as accessory to the commission of a piece of pure folly."

Mr. Helstone spoke so readily, he seemed rather glad of the opportunity to give his niece a piece of his mind on this point. Emboldened by the impunity which had hitherto attended her questions, she went a little further:—

"But why," said she, "should it be pure folly? If two people like each other, why shouldn't they consent to live together?"

"They tire of each other—they tire of each other in a month. A yokefellow is not a companion; he or she is a fellow-sufferer."

It was by no means naïve simplicity which inspired Caroline's next remark: it was a sense of antipathy to such opinions, and of displeasure at him who held them.

"One would think you had never been married, uncle: one would think you were an old bachelor."

"Practically, I am so."

"But you have been married. Why were you so inconsistent as to marry?"

"Every man is mad once or twice in his life."

"So you tired of my aunt, and my aunt of you, and you were miserable together?"

Mr. Helstone pushed out his cynical lip, wrinkled his brown forehead, and gave an inarticulate grunt.

"Did she not suit you? Was she not good-tempered? Did you not get used to her? Were you not sorry when she died?"

"Caroline," said Mr. Helstone, bringing his hand slowly down to within an inch or two of the table, and then smiting it suddenly on the mahogany, "understand this: it is vulgar and puerile to confound generals with particulars: in every case, there is the rule, and there are the exceptions. Your questions are stupid and babyish. Ring the bell, if you have done breakfast."

The breakfast was taken away, and that meal over, it was the general custom of uncle and niece to separate, and not to meet again till dinner; but to-day the niece, instead of quitting the room, went to the window-seat, and sat down there. Mr. Helstone looked round uneasily once or twice, as if he wished her away, but she was gazing from the window, and did not seem to mind him; so he continued the perusal of his morning paper—a particularly interesting one it chanced to be, as new movements had just taken place in the Peninsula, and certain columns of the journal were rich in long despatches from General Lord Wellington. He little knew, meantime, what thoughts were busy in his niece's mind—thoughts the conversation of the past half-hour had revived, but not generated: tumultuous were they now, as disturbed

bees in a hive, but it was years since they had first made their cells in her brain.

She was reviewing his character, his disposition, repeating his sentiments on marriage. Many a time had she reviewed them before, and sounded the gulf between her own mind and his; and then, on the other side of the wide and deep chasm, she had seen, and she now saw, another figure standing beside her uncle's—a strange shape; dim, sinister, scarcely earthly: the half-remembered image of her own father, James Helstone, Matthewson Helstone's brother.

Rumours had reached her ear of what that father's character was; old servants had dropped hints: she knew, too, that he was not a good man, and that he was never kind to her. She recollected—a dark recollection it was—some weeks that she had spent with him in a great town somewhere, when she had had no maid to dress her or take care of her; when she had been shut up, day and night, in a high garret-room, without a carpet, with a bare uncurtained bed, and scarcely any other furniture; when he went out early every morning, and often forgot to return and give her her dinner during the day, and at night, when he came back, was like a madman, furious, terrible; or—still more painful—like an idiot, imbecile, senseless. She knew she had fallen ill in this place, and that one night when she was very sick, he had come raving into the room, and said he would kill her, for she was a burden to him; her screams

had brought aid, and from the moment she was then rescued from him she had never seen him, except as a dead man in his coffin.

That was her father: also she had a mother; though Mr. Helstone never spoke to her of that mother; though she could not remember having seen her: but that she was alive she knew. This mother was then the drunkard's wife: what had *their* marriage been? Caroline, turning from the lattice whence she had been watching the starlings (though without seeing them), in a low voice, and with a sad bitter tone, thus broke the silence of the room:—

"You term marriage, miserable, I suppose, from what you saw of my father's and mother's. If my mother suffered what I suffered when I was with papa, she must have had a dreadful life."

Mr. Helstone, thus addressed, wheeled about in his chair, and looked over his spectacles at his niece: he was taken aback.

Her father and mother! What had put it into her head to mention her father and mother, of whom he had never, during the twelve years she had lived with him, spoken to her? That the thoughts were self-matured; that she had any recollections or speculations about her parents, he could not fancy.

"Your father and mother? Who has been talking to you about them?"

"Nobody; but I remember something of what papa was, and I pity mama. Where is she?"

This "Where is she?" had been on Caroline's lips hundreds of times before; but till now she had never uttered it.

"I hardly know," returned Mr. Helstone; "I was little acquainted with her. I have not heard from her for years: but wherever she is, she thinks nothing of you; she never inquires about you; I have reason to believe she does not wish to see you. Come, it is school-time: you go to your cousin at ten, don't you? The clock has struck."

Perhaps Caroline would have said more; but Fanny coming in, informed her master that the churchwardens wanted to speak to him in the vestry. He hastened to join them, and his niece presently set out for the cottage.

The road from the Rectory to Hollow's mill inclined downwards, she ran, therefore, almost all the way. Exercise, the fresh air, the thought of seeing Robert, at least of being on his premises, in his vicinage, revived her somewhat depressed spirits quickly. Arriving in sight of the white house, and within hearing of the thundering mill and its rushing watercourse, the first thing she saw was Moore at his garden-gate. There he stood; in his belted Holland blouse, a light cap covering his head, which undress costume suited him: he was looking down the lane, not in the direction of his cousin's approach. She stopped, withdrawing a little behind a willow, and studied his appearance.

"He has not his peer," she thought; "he is as

handsome as he is intelligent. What a keen eye he has! What clearly cut, spirited features—thin and serious, but graceful! I do like his face—I do like his aspect—I do like him so much! Better than any of those shuffling curates, for instance,—better than anybody: bonnie Robert!"

She sought "bonnie Robert's" presence speedily. For his part, when she challenged his sight, I believe he would have passed from before her eyes like a phantom, if he could; but being a tall fact, and no fiction, he was obliged to stand the greeting. He made it brief: it was cousin-like, brother-like, friend-like, anything but lover-like. The nameless charm of last night had left his manner: he was no longer the same man; or, at any rate, the same heart did not beat in his breast. Rude disappointment! sharp cross! At first the eager girl would not believe in the change, though she saw and felt it. It was difficult to withdraw her hand from his, till he had bestowed at least something like a kind pressure; it was difficult to turn her eyes from his eyes, till his looks had expressed something more and fonder than that cool welcome.

A lover masculine so disappointed can speak and urge explanation, a lover feminine can say nothing: if she did the result would be shame and anguish, inward remorse for self-treachery. Nature would brand such demonstration as a rebellion against her instincts, and would vindictively repay it afterwards by the thunderbolt of self-contempt smiting sud-

denly in secret. Take the matter as you find it: ask no questions; utter no remonstrances: it is your best wisdom. You expected bread, and you have got a stone; break your teeth on it, and don't shriek because the nerves are martyrized: do not doubt that your mental stomach—if you have such a thing—is strong as an ostrich's—the stone will digest. You held out your hand for an egg, and fate put into it a scorpion. Show no consternation: close your fingers firmly upon the gift; let it sting through your palm. Never mind: in time, after your hand and arm have swelled and quivered long with torture, the squeezed scorpion will die, and you will have learned the great lesson how to endure without a sob. For the whole remnant of your life, if you survive the test—some, it is said, die under it—you will be stronger, wiser, less sensitive. This you are not aware of, perhaps, at the time, and so cannot borrow courage of that hope. Nature, however, as has been intimated, is an excellent friend in such cases; sealing the lips, interdicting utterance, commanding a placid dissimulation: a dissimulation often wearing an easy and gay mien at first, settling down to sorrow and paleness in time, then passing away and leaving a convenient stoicism, not the less fortifying because it is half-bitter.

Half-bitter! Is that wrong? No—it should be bitter: bitterness is strength—it is a tonic. Sweet mild force following acute suffering, you find nowhere: to talk of it is delusion. There may be

apathetic exhaustion after the rack; if energy remains, it will be rather a dangerous energy—deadly when confronted with injustice.

Who has read the ballad of "Puir Mary Lee?" —that old Scotch ballad, written I know not in what generation nor by what hand. Mary had been ill-used—probably in being made to believe that truth which was falsehood: she is not complaining, but she is sitting alone in the snow-storm, and you hear her thoughts. They are not the thoughts of a model-heroine under her circumstances, but they are those of a deeply-feeling, strongly-resentful peasant-girl. Anguish has driven her from the ingle-nook of home, to the white-shrouded and icy hills: crouched under the "cauld drift," she recalls every image of horror, —"the yellow-wymed ask," "the hairy adder," "the auld moon-bowing tyke," "the ghaist at e'en," "the sour bullister," "the milk on the taed's back:" she hates these, but "waur she hates Robin-a-Ree!"

"Oh! ance I lived happily by yon bonny burn—
The warld was in love wi' me;
But now I maun sit 'neath the cauld drift and mourn,
And curse black Robin-a-Ree!

"Then whudder awa' thou bitter biting blast,"

(Reader, do you hear the wild sound of this line, sweeping over the waste, piercing the winter-tempest?)

"And sough through the scrunty tree,
And smoor me up in the snaw fu' fast,
And ne'er let the sun me see!

" Oh, never melt awa, thou wreath o' snaw,
That's sae kind in graving me ;
But hide me frae the scorn and guffaw
O' villains like Robin-a-Ree ! "

But what has been said in the last page or two is not germane to Caroline Helstone's feelings, or to the state of things between her and Robert Moore. Robert had done her no wrong: he had told her no lie; it was she that was to blame, if any one was: what bitterness her mind distilled should and would be poured on her own head. She had loved without being asked to love,—a natural, sometimes an inevitable chance, but big with misery.

Robert, indeed, had sometimes seemed to be fond of her—but why? Because she had made herself so pleasing to him, he could not, in spite of all his efforts, help testifying a state of feeling his judgment did not approve, nor his will sanction. He was about to withdraw decidedly from intimate communication with her, because he did not choose to have his affections inextricably entangled, nor to be drawn, despite his reason, into a marriage he believed imprudent. Now, what was she to do?—to give way to her feelings, or to vanquish them? To pursue him, or to turn upon herself? If she is weak, she will try the last expedient,—will lose his esteem and win his aversion; if she has sense, she will be her own governor, and resolve to subdue and bring under guidance the disturbed realm of her emotions. She will determine to look on life

steadily, as it is; to begin to learn its severe truths seriously, and to study its knotty problems closely, conscientiously.

It appeared she had a little sense, for she quitted Robert quietly, without complaint or question—without the alteration of a muscle or the shedding of a tear,—betook herself to her studies under Hortense as usual, and at dinner-time went home without lingering.

When she had dined, and found herself in the Rectory drawing-room alone, having left her uncle over his temperate glass of port wine, the difficulty that occurred to, and embarrassed her, was—"How am I to get through this day?"

Last night she had hoped it would be spent as yesterday was,—that the evening would be again passed with Happiness and Robert: she had learned her mistake this morning, and yet she could not settle down, convinced that no chance would occur to recall her to Hollow's cottage, or to bring Moore again into her society.

He had walked up after tea, more than once, to pass an hour with her uncle: the door-bell had rung, his voice had been heard in the passage just at twilight, when she little expected such a pleasure; and this had happened twice after he had treated her with peculiar reserve; and, though he rarely talked to her in her uncle's presence, he had looked at her relentingly, as he sat opposite her work-table during his stay: the few words he had spoken to her were

comforting; his manner on bidding her good-night was genial. Now, he might come this evening, said False Hope: she almost knew it was False Hope which breathed the whisper, and yet she listened.

She tried to read—her thoughts wandered; she tried to sew—every stitch she put in was an ennui, the occupation was insufferably tedious; she opened her desk, and attempted to write a French composition—she wrote nothing but mistakes.

Suddenly the door-bell sharply rang—her heart leaped—she sprang to the drawing-room door, opened it softly, peeped through the aperture: Fanny was admitting a visitor—a gentleman—a tall man—just the height of Robert. For one second she thought it was Robert—for one second she exulted; but the voice asking for Mr. Helstone undeceived her: that voice was an Irish voice, consequently not Moore's but the curate's—Malone's. He was ushered into the dining-room, where, doubtless, he speedily helped his Rector to empty the decanters.

It was a fact to be noted, that at whatever house in Briarfield, Whinbury, or Nunnely, one curate dropped in to a meal—dinner or tea, as the case might be—another presently followed; often two more. Not that they gave each other the rendezvous, but they were usually all on the run at the same time; and when Donne, for instance, sought Malone at his lodgings and found him not, he inquired whither he had posted, and having learned of the

landlady his destination, hastened with all speed after him: the same causes operated in the same way with Sweeting. Thus it chanced on that afternoon that Caroline's ears were three times tortured with the ringing of the bell, and the advent of undesired guests: for Donne followed Malone, and Sweeting followed Donne; and more wine was ordered up from the cellar into the dining-room (for though old Helstone chid the inferior priesthood when he found them "carousing," as he called it, in their own tents, yet at his hierarchical table he ever liked to treat them to a glass of his best), and through the closed doors Caroline heard their boyish laughter, and the vacant cackle of their voices. Her fear was lest they should stay to tea; for she had no pleasure in making tea for that particular trio. What distinctions people draw! These three were men—young men—educated men like Moore: yet, for her, how great the difference! Their society was a bore—his a delight.

Not only was she destined to be favoured with their clerical company, but Fortune was at this moment bringing her four other guests—lady-guests, all packed in a pony-phæton now rolling somewhat heavily along the road from Whinbury: an elderly lady, and three of her buxom daughters, were coming to see her "in a friendly way," as the custom of that neighbourhood was. Yes, a fourth time the bell clanged: Fanny brought the present announcement to the drawing-room—

"Mrs. Sykes and the three Misses Sykes."

When Caroline was going to receive company, her habit was to wring her hands very nervously, to flush a little, and come forward hurriedly yet hesitatingly, wishing herself meantime at Jericho. She was, at such crises, sadly deficient in finished manner, though she had once been at school a year. Accordingly, on this occasion, her small white hands sadly maltreated each other, while she stood up, waiting the entrance of Mrs. Sykes.

In stalked that lady, a tall bilious gentlewoman, who made an ample and not altogether insincere profession of piety, and was greatly given to hospitality towards the clergy; in sailed her three daughters, a showy trio, being all three well grown, and more or less handsome.

In English country ladies there is this point to be remarked. Whether young or old, pretty or plain, dull or sprightly, they all (or almost all) have a certain expression stamped on their features, which seems to say, "I know—I do not boast of it—but I *know* that I am the standard of what is proper; let every one therefore whom I approach, or who approaches me, keep a sharp look-out, for wherein they differ from me—be the same in dress, manner, opinion, principle, or practice — therein they are wrong."

Mrs. and Misses Sykes, far from being exceptions to this observation, were pointed illustrations of its truth. Miss Mary—a well-looked, well-meant, and on the whole, well-dispositioned girl—wore her com-

placency with some state, though without harshness; Miss Harriet—a beauty—carried it more overbearingly: she looked high and cold; Miss Hannah, who was conceited, dashing, pushing, flourished hers consciously and openly; the mother evinced it with the gravity proper to her age and religious fame.

The reception was got through somehow. Caroline "was glad to see them" (an unmitigated fib), hoped they were well, hoped Mrs. Sykes's cough was better (Mrs. Sykes had had a cough for the last twenty years), hoped the Misses Sykes had left their sisters at home well; to which inquiry, the Misses Sykes, sitting on three chairs opposite the music-stool, whereon Caroline had undesignedly come to anchor, after wavering for some seconds between it and a large arm-chair, into which she at length recollected she ought to induct Mrs. Sykes: and indeed that lady saved her the trouble by depositing herself therein; the Misses Sykes replied to Caroline by one simultaneous bow, very majestic and mighty awful. A pause followed: this bow was of a character to ensure silence for the next five minutes, and it did. Mrs. Sykes then inquired after Mr. Helstone, and whether he had had any return of rheumatism, and whether preaching twice on a Sunday fatigued him, and if he was capable of taking a full service now; and on being assured he was, she and all her daughters, combining in chorus, expressed their opinion that he was "a wonderful man of his years."

Pause second.

Miss Mary, getting up the steam in her turn, asked whether Caroline had attended the Bible Society Meeting which had been held at Nunnely last Thursday night: the negative answer which truth compelled Caroline to utter—for last Thursday evening she had been sitting at home, reading a novel which Robert had lent her—elicited a simultaneous expression of surprise from the lips of the four ladies.

"We were all there," said Miss Mary; "mama and all of us; we even persuaded papa to go: Hannah would insist upon it; but he fell asleep while Mr. Langweilig, the German Moravian minister, was speaking: I felt quite ashamed, he nodded so."

"And there was Dr. Broadbent," cried Hannah, "such a beautiful speaker! You couldn't expect it of him, for he is almost a vulgar looking man."

"But such a dear man," interrupted Mary.

"And such a good man, such a useful man," added her mother.

"Only like a butcher in appearance," interposed the fair, proud Harriet. "I couldn't bear to look at him: I listened with my eyes shut."

Miss Helstone felt her ignorance and incompetency; not having seen Dr. Broadbent, she could not give her opinion. Pause third came on. During its continuance, Caroline was feeling at her heart's core what a dreaming fool she was; what an un-

practical life she led; how little fitness there was in her for ordinary intercourse with the ordinary world. She was feeling how exclusively she had attached herself to the white cottage in the Hollow; how in the existence of one inmate of that cottage she had pent all her universe: she was sensible that this would not do, and that some day she would be forced to make an alteration: it could not be said that she exactly wished to resemble the ladies before her, but she wished to become superior to her present self, so as to feel less scared by their dignity.

The sole means she found of reviving the flagging discourse, was by asking them if they would all stay to tea; and a cruel struggle it cost her to perform this piece of civility. Mrs. Sykes had begun—"We are much obliged to you, but——" when in came Fanny once more.

"The gentlemen will stay the evening, ma'am," was the message she brought from Mr. Helstone.

"What gentlemen have you?" now inquired Mrs. Sykes. Their names were specified; she and her daughters interchanged glances: the curates were not to them what they were to Caroline. Mr. Sweeting was quite a favourite with them; even Mr. Malone rather so, because he was a clergyman. "Really, since you have company already, I think we will stay," remarked Mrs. Sykes. "We shall be quite a pleasant little party: I always like to meet the clergy."

And now Caroline had to usher them up-stairs,

to help them to unshawl, smooth their hair and make themselves smart; to reconduct them to the drawing-room, to distribute amongst them books of engravings, or odd things purchased from the Jew-basket: she was obliged to be a purchaser, though she was but a slack contributor, and if she had possessed plenty of money, she would rather, when it was brought to the Rectory—an awful incubus!—have purchased the whole stock, than contributed a single pincushion.

It ought perhaps to be explained in passing, for the benefit of those who are not "au fait" to the mysteries of the "Jew-basket" and "Missionary-basket," that these "meubles" are willow-repositories, of the capacity of a good-sized family clothes-basket, dedicated to the purpose of conveying from house to house a monster collection of pincushions, needle-books, card-racks, work-bags, articles of infant-wear, &c. &c. &c., made by the willing or reluctant hands of the Christian ladies of a parish, and sold per force to the heathenish gentlemen thereof, at prices unblushingly exorbitant. The proceeds of such compulsory sale are applied to the conversion of the Jews, the seeking up of the ten missing tribes, or to the regeneration of the interesting coloured population of the globe. Each lady-contributor takes it in her turn to keep the basket a month, to sew for it, and to foist off its contents on a shrinking male public. An exciting time it is when that turn comes round: some active-minded women, with a good

trading spirit, like it, and enjoy exceedingly the fun of making hard-handed worsted-spinners cash up, to the tune of four or five hundred per cent. above cost price, for articles quite useless to them; other—feebler souls object to it, and would rather see the prince of darkness himself at their door any morning, than that phantom-basket, brought with "Mrs. Rouse's compliments, and please ma'am she says it 's your turn now."

Miss Helstone's duties of hostess performed, more anxiously than cheerily, she betook herself to the kitchen, to hold a brief privy council with Fanny and Eliza about the tea.

"What a lot on 'em!" cried Eliza, who was cook. "And I put off the baking to-day because I thought there would be bread plenty to fit while morning: we shall never have enow."

"Are there any tea-cakes?" asked the young mistress.

"Only three and a loaf. I wish these fine folk would stay at home till they 're asked: and I want to finish trimming my hat" (bonnet she meant).

"Then," suggested Caroline, to whom the importance of the emergency gave a certain energy, "Fanny must run down to Briarfield and buy some muffins and crumpets, and some biscuits: and don't be cross, Eliza, we can't help it now."

"And which tea-things are we to have?"

"Oh, the best, I suppose: I 'll get out the silver service," and she ran up-stairs to the plate-closet,

and presently brought down tea-pot, cream-ewer, and sugar-basin.

"And mun we have th' urn?"

"Yes; and now get it ready as quickly as you can, for the sooner we have tea over, the sooner they will go—at least, I hope so. Heigho! I wish they were gone," she sighed as she returned to the drawing-room. "Still," she thought, as she paused at the door ere opening it, "if Robert would but come even now how bright all would be! How comparatively easy the task of amusing these people, if he were present! There would be an interest in hearing him talk (though he never says much in company) and in talking in his presence: there can be no interest in hearing any of them, or in speaking to them. How they will gabble when the curates come in, and how weary I shall grow with listening to them! But I suppose I am a selfish fool: these are very respectable gentlefolks; I ought no doubt to be proud of their countenance: I don't say they are not as good as I am—far from it—but they are different from me."

She went in.

Yorkshire people, in those days, took their tea round the table; sitting well into it, with their knees duly introduced under the mahogany. It was essential to have a multitude of plates of bread and butter, varied in sorts and plentiful in quantity: it was thought proper, too, that on the centre-plate should stand a glass dish of marmalade; among the

viands were expected to be found a small assortment of cheesecakes and tarts; if there was also a plate of thin slices of pink ham garnished with green parsley, so much the better.

Eliza, the Rector's cook, fortunately knew her business as provider: she had been put out of humour a little at first, when the invaders came so unexpectedly in such strength; but it appeared that she regained her cheerfulness with action, for in due time the tea was spread forth in handsome style; and neither ham, tarts, nor marmalade were wanting among its accompaniments.

The curates, summoned to this bounteous repast, entered joyous; but at once, on seeing the ladies, of whose presence they had not been forewarned, they came to a stand in the door-way. Malone headed the party; he stopped short and fell back, almost capsizing Donne, who was behind him. Donne, staggering three paces in retreat, sent little Sweeting into the arms of old Helstone, who brought up the rear. There was some expostulation, some tittering: Malone was desired to mind what he was about, and urged to push forward; which at last he did, though colouring to the top of his peaked forehead a bluish purple. Helstone, advancing, set the shy curates aside, welcomed all his fair guests, shook hands and passed a jest with each, and seated himself snugly between the lovely Harriet and the dashing Hannah; Miss Mary he requested to move to the seat opposite to him, that he might see her

if he couldn't be near her. Perfectly easy and gallant, in his way, were his manners always to young ladies; and most popular was he amongst them: yet, at heart, he neither respected nor liked the sex, and such of them as circumstances had brought into intimate relation with him had ever feared rather than loved him.

The curates were left to shift for themselves. Sweeting, who was the least embarrassed of the three, took refuge beside Mrs. Sykes; who, he knew, was almost as fond of him as if he had been her son. Donne, after making his general bow with a grace all his own, and saying in a high pragmatical voice, "How d' ye do, Miss Helstone?" dropped into a seat at Caroline's elbow: to her unmitigated annoyance, for she had a peculiar antipathy to Donne, on account of his stultified and unmoveable self-conceit, and his incurable narrowness of mind. Malone, grinning most unmeaningly, inducted himself into the corresponding seat on the other side: she was thus blessed in a pair of supporters; neither of whom, she knew, would be of any mortal use, whether for keeping up the conversation, handing cups, circulating the muffins, or even lifting the plate from the slop-basin. Little Sweeting, small and boyish as he was, would have been worth twenty of them.

Malone, though a ceaseless talker when there were only men present, was usually tongue-tied in the presence of ladies: three phrases, however, he

had ready cut and dried, which he never failed to produce:—

1stly.—"Have you had a walk to-day, Miss Helstone?"

2ndly.—"Have you seen your cousin, Moore, lately?"

3rdly.—"Does your class at the Sunday-school keep up its number?"

These three questions being put and responded to, between Caroline and Malone reigned silence.

With Donne it was otherwise: he was troublesome, exasperating. He had a stock of small-talk on hand, at once the most trite and perverse that can well be imagined: abuse of the people of Briarfield; of the natives of Yorkshire generally; complaints of the want of high society; of the backward state of civilization in these districts; murmurings against the disrespectful conduct of the lower orders in the north toward their betters; silly ridicule of the manner of living in these parts,—the want of style, the absence of elegance,—as if he, Donne, had been accustomed to very great doings indeed: an insinuation which his somewhat underbred manner and aspect failed to bear out. These strictures he seemed to think must raise him in the estimation of Miss Helstone, or of any other lady who heard him; whereas with her, at least, they brought him to a level below contempt: though sometimes, indeed, they incensed her; for, a Yorkshire girl herself, she

hated to hear Yorkshire abused by such a pitiful prater; and when wrought up to a certain pitch, she would turn and say something of which neither the matter nor the manner recommended her to Mr. Donne's good-will. She would tell him it was no proof of refinement to be ever scolding others for vulgarity; and no sign of a good pastor to be eternally censuring his flock. She would ask him what he had entered the church for, since he complained there were only cottages to visit, and poor people to preach to?—whether he had been ordained to the ministry merely to wear soft clothing, and sit in king's houses? These questions were considered by all the curates as, to the last degree, audacious and impious.

Tea was a long time in progress: all the guests gabbled as their hostess had expected they would. Mr. Helstone, being in excellent spirits,—when, indeed, was he ever otherwise in society, attractive female society?—it being only with the one lady of his own family that he maintained a grim taciturnity,—kept up a brilliant flow of easy prattle with his right-hand and left-hand neighbours, and even with his *vis-à-vis*, Miss Mary: though as Mary was the most sensible, the least coquettish of the three, to her the elderly widower was the least attentive. At heart, he could not abide sense in women: he liked to see them as silly, as light-headed, as vain, as open to ridicule as possible; because they were then in reality what he held them to be, and wished them to

be,—inferior: toys to play with, to amuse a vacant hour and to be thrown away.

Hannah was his favourite. Harriet, though beautiful, egotistical, and self-satisfied, was not quite weak enough for him: she had some genuine self-respect amidst much false pride, and if she did not talk like an oracle, neither would she babble like one crazy: she would not permit herself to be treated quite as a doll, a child, a plaything; she expected to be bent to like a queen.

Hannah, on the contrary, demanded no respect; only flattery: if her admirers only *told* her that she was an angel, she would let them *treat* her like an idiot. So very credulous and frivolous was she; so very silly did she become when besieged with attention, flattered and admired to the proper degree, that there were moments when Helstone actually felt tempted to commit matrimony a second time, and to try the experiment of taking her for his second help-meet: but, fortunately, the salutary recollection of the ennuis of his first marriage, the impression still left on him of the weight of the millstone he had once worn round his neck, the fixity of his feelings respecting the insufferable evils of conjugal existence, operated as a check to his tenderness, suppressed the sigh heaving his old iron lungs, and restrained him from whispering to Hannah proposals it would have been high fun and great satisfaction to her to hear.

It is probable she would have married him if he

had asked her; her parents would have quite approved the match: to them his fifty-five years, his bend-leather heart, could have presented no obstacles; and, as he was a rector, held an excellent living, occupied a good house, and was supposed even to have private property (though in that the world was mistaken: every penny of the 5,000*l.* inherited by him from his father had been devoted to the building and endowing of a new church at his native village in Lancashire—for he could show a lordly munificence when he pleased, and, if the end was to his liking, never hesitated about making a grand sacrifice to attain it),—her parents, I say, would have delivered Hannah over to his lovingkindness and his tender mercies without one scruple; and the second Mrs. Helstone, inversing the natural order of insect existence, would have fluttered through the honeymoon a bright, admired butterfly, and crawled the rest of her days a sordid, trampled worm.

Little Mr. Sweeting, seated between Mrs. Sykes and Miss Mary, both of whom were very kind to him, and having a dish of tarts before him, and marmalade and crumpet upon his plate, looked and felt more content than any monarch. He was fond of all the Misses Sykes; they were all fond of him: he thought them magnificent girls, quite proper to mate with one of his inches. If he had a cause of regret at this blissful moment, it was that Miss Dora happened to be absent; Dora being the one whom he secretly hoped one day to call Mrs. David Sweeting, with

whom he dreamt of taking stately walks, leading her like an empress through the village of Nunnely: and an empress she would have been, if size could make an empress. She was vast, ponderous: seen from behind, she had the air of a very stout lady of forty; but withal she possessed a good face, and no unkindly character.

The meal at last drew to a close: it would have been over long ago, if Mr. Donne had not persisted in sitting with his cup half full of cold tea before him, long after the rest had finished, and after he himself had discussed such allowance of viands as he felt competent to swallow—long, indeed, after signs of impatience had been manifested all round the board: till chairs were pushed back; till the talk flagged; till silence fell. Vainly did Caroline inquire repeatedly if he would have another cup; if he would take a little hot tea, as that must be cold, &c.: he would neither drink it nor leave it. He seemed to think that this isolated position of his gave him somehow a certain importance: that it was dignified and stately to be the last; that it was grand to keep all the others waiting. So long did he linger, that the very urn died: it ceased to hiss. At length, however, the old Rector himself, who had hitherto been too pleasantly engaged with Hannah to care for the delay, got impatient.

"For whom are we waiting?" he asked.

"For me, I believe," returned Donne, complacently; appearing to think it much to his credit that a

party should thus be kept dependent on his movements.

"Tut!" cried Helstone; then standing up, "Let us return thanks," said he; which he did forthwith, and all quitted the table. Donne, nothing abashed, still sat ten minutes quite alone, whereupon Mr. Helstone rang the bell for the things to be removed; the curate at length saw himself forced to empty his cup, and to relinquish the *rôle* which, he thought, had given him such a felicitous distinction, drawn upon him such flattering general notice.

And now, in the natural course of events (Caroline, knowing how it would be, had opened the piano, and produced music-books in readiness), music was asked for. This was Mr. Sweeting's chance for showing off: he was eager to commence; he undertook, therefore, the arduous task of persuading the young ladies to favour the company with an air—a song. Con amore, he went through the whole business of begging, praying, resisting excuses, explaining away difficulties, and at last succeeded in persuading Miss Harriet to allow herself to be led to the instrument. Then out came the pieces of his flute (he always carried them in his pocket, as unfailingly as he carried his handkerchief). They were screwed and arranged; Malone and Donne meantime herding together, and sneering at him, which the little man, glancing over his shoulder, saw, but did not heed at all: he was persuaded their sarcasm all arose from envy; they could not accom-

pany the ladies as he could; he was about to enjoy a triumph over them.

The triumph began. Malone, much chagrined at hearing him pipe up in most superior style, determined to earn distinction, too, if possible, and all at once assuming the character of a swain (which character he had endeavoured to enact once or twice before, but in which he had not hitherto met with the success he doubtless opined his merits deserved), approached a sofa on which Miss Helstone was seated, and depositing his great Irish frame near her, tried his hand (or rather tongue) at a fine speech or two, accompanied by grins the most extraordinary and incomprehensible. In the course of his efforts to render himself agreeable, he contrived to possess himself of the two long sofa cushions and a square one; with which, after rolling them about for some time with strange gestures, he managed to erect a sort of barrier between himself and the object of his attentions. Caroline, quite willing that they should be sundered, soon devised an excuse for stepping over to the opposite side of the room, and taking up a position beside Mrs. Sykes; of which good lady she entreated some instruction in a new stitch in ornamental knitting, a favour readily granted, and thus Peter Augustus was thrown out.

Very sullenly did his countenance lower when he saw himself abandoned: left entirely to his own resources, on a large sofa, with the charge of three small cushions on his hands. The fact was, he felt dis-

posed seriously to cultivate acquaintance with Miss Helstone; because he thought, in common with others, that her uncle possessed money, and concluded, that since he had no children, he would probably leave it to his niece. Gérard Moore was better instructed on this point: he had seen the neat church that owed its origin to the Rector's zeal and cash, and more than once, in his inmost soul, had cursed an expensive caprice which crossed his wishes.

The evening seemed long to one person in that room. Caroline at intervals dropped her knitting on her lap, and gave herself up to a sort of brain-lethargy—closing her eyes and depressing her head—caused by what seemed to her the unmeaning hum round her: the inharmonious, tasteless rattle of the piano keys, the squeaking and gasping notes of the flute, the laughter and mirth of her uncle and Hannah and Mary, she could not tell whence originating, for she heard nothing comic or gleeful in their discourse; and, more than all, by the interminable gossip of Mrs. Sykes murmured close at her ear; gossip which rang the changes on four subjects: her own health and that of the various members of her family; the Missionary and Jew-baskets and their contents; the late meeting at Nunnely, and one which was expected to come off next week at Whinbury.

Tired at length to exhaustion, she embraced the opportunity of Mr. Sweeting coming up to speak to Mrs. Sykes, to slip quietly out of the apartment,

and seek a moment's respite in solitude. She repaired to the dining-room, where the clear but now low remnant of a fire still burnt in the grate. The place was empty and quiet, glasses and decanters were cleared from the table, the chairs were put back in their places, all was orderly. Caroline sank into her uncle's large easy chair, half shut her eyes, and rested herself—rested at least her limbs, her senses, her hearing, her vision—weary with listening to nothing, and gazing on vacancy. As to her mind, that flew directly to the Hollow: it stood on the threshold of the parlour there, then it passed to the counting-house, and wondered which spot was blessed by the presence of Robert. It so happened that neither locality had that honour; for Robert was half a mile away from both, and much nearer to Caroline than her deadened spirit suspected: he was at this moment crossing the churchyard, approaching the rectory garden-gate: not, however, coming to see his cousin, but intent solely on communicating a brief piece of intelligence to the rector.

Yes, Caroline; you hear the wire of the bell vibrate: it rings again for the fifth time this afternoon: you start, and you are certain now that this must be him of whom you dream. Why you are so certain you cannot explain to yourself, but you know it. You lean forward, listening eagerly as Fanny opens the door: right! that is *the* voice—low —with the slight foreign accent, but so sweet, as you fancy: you half rise: "Fanny will tell him Mr.

Helstone is with company, and then he will go away." Oh! she cannot let him go: in spite of herself—in spite of her reason she walks half across the room; she stands ready to dart out in case the step should retreat: but he enters the passage. "Since your master is engaged," he says, "just show me into the dining-room; bring me pen and ink: I will write a short note and leave it for him."

Now, having caught these words, and hearing him advance, Caroline, if there was a door within the dining-room, would glide through it and disappear. She feels caught, hemmed in; she dreads her unexpected presence may annoy him. A second since, she would have flown to him; that second passed, she would flee from him. She cannot; there is no way of escape: the dining-room has but one door, through which now enters her cousin. The look of troubled surprise she expected to see in his face has appeared there, has shocked her, and is gone. She has stammered a sort of apology:—

"I only left the drawing-room a minute for a little quiet."

There was something so diffident and downcast in the air and tone with which she said this, any one might perceive that some saddening change had lately passed over her prospects, and that the faculty of cheerful self-possession had left her. Mr. Moore, probably, remembered how she had formerly been accustomed to meet him with gentle ardour and hopeful confidence; he must have seen how the

check of this morning had operated: here was an opportunity for carrying out his new system with effect, if he chose to improve it. Perhaps he found it easier to practise that system in broad daylight, in his mill-yard, amidst busy occupations, than in a quiet parlour, disengaged, at the hour of eventide. Fanny lit the candles, which before had stood unlit on the table, brought writing materials, and left the room: Caroline was about to follow her. Moore, to act consistently, should have let her go; whereas he stood in the doorway, and, holding out his hand, gently kept her back: he did not ask her to stay, but he would not let her go.

"Shall I tell my uncle you are here?" asked she, still in the same subdued voice.

"No: I can say to you all I had to say to him. You will be my messenger?"

"Yes, Robert."

"Then you may just inform him that I have got a clue to the identity of one, at least, of the men who broke my frames; that he belongs to the same gang who attacked Sykes and Pearson's dressing-shop; and that I hope to have him in custody to-morrow. You can remember that?"

"Oh! yes." These two monosyllables were uttered in a sadder tone than ever; and, as she said them, she shook her head slightly, and sighed. "Will you prosecute him?"

"Doubtless."

"No, Robert."

"And why no, Caroline?"

"Because it will set all the neighbourhood against you more than ever."

"That is no reason why I should not do my duty, and defend my property. This fellow is a great scoundrel, and ought to be incapacitated from perpetrating further mischief."

"But his accomplices will take revenge on you. You do not know how the people of this country bear malice: it is the boast of some of them that they can keep a stone in their pocket seven years, turn it at the end of that time, keep it seven years longer, and hurl it, and hit their mark 'at last.'"

Moore laughed.

"A most pithy vaunt," said he; "one that redounds vastly to the credit of your dear Yorkshire friends. But don't fear for me, Lina: I am on my guard against these lamb-like compatriots of yours: don't make yourself uneasy about me."

"How can I help it? You are my cousin. If anything happened—" she stopped.

"Nothing will happen, Lina. To speak in your own language, there is a Providence above all—is there not?"

"Yes, dear Robert. May He guard you!"

"And if prayers have efficacy, yours will benefit me: you pray for me sometimes?"

"Not *sometimes*, Robert: you, and Louis, and Hortense are *always* remembered."

"So I have often imagined: it has occurred to

me, when, weary and vexed, I have myself gone to bed like a heathen, that another had asked forgiveness for my day, and safety for my night. I don't suppose such vicarial piety will avail much; but the petitions come out of a sincere breast, from innocent lips: they should be acceptable as Abel's offering; and doubtless would be, if the object deserved them."

"Annihilate that doubt: it is groundless."

"When a man has been brought up only to make money, and lives to make it, and for nothing else, and scarcely breathes any other air than that of mills and markets, it seems odd to utter his name in a prayer, or to mix his idea with anything divine; and very strange it seems, that a good, pure heart should take him in and harbour him, as if he had any claim to that sort of nest. If I could guide that benignant heart, I believe I should counsel it to exclude one who does not profess to have any higher aim in life than that of patching up his broken fortune, and wiping clean from his bourgeois scutcheon the foul stain of bankruptcy."

The hint, though conveyed thus tenderly and modestly (as Caroline thought), was felt keenly and comprehended clearly.

"Indeed, I only think—or I *will only* think—of you as my cousin," was the quick answer. "I am beginning to understand things better than I did, Robert, when you first came to England: better than I did, a week—a day ago. I know it is your

duty to try to get on, and that it won't do for you to be romantic; but in future you must not misunderstand me, if I seem friendly. You misunderstood me this morning, did you not?"

"What made you think so?"

"Your look—your manner."

"But look at me now—"

"Oh! you are different now: at present, I dare speak to you."

"Yet I am the same, except that I have left the tradesman behind me in the Hollow: your kinsman alone stands before you."

"My cousin, Robert; not Mr. Moore."

"Not a bit of Mr. Moore. Caroline—"

Here the company was heard rising in the other room; the door was opened; the pony-carriage was ordered; shawls and bonnets were demanded; Mr. Helstone called for his niece.

"I must go, Robert."

"Yes, you must go, or they will come in, and find us here; and I, rather than meet all that host in the passage, will take my departure through the window: luckily, it opens like a door. One minute only—put down the candle an instant—good-night! I kiss you because we are cousins; and, being cousins, one—two—three kisses are allowable. Caroline, good-night!"

CHAPTER VII.

NOAH AND MOSES.

THE next day, Moore had risen before the sun, and had taken a ride to Whinbury and back ere his sister had made the café au lait, or cut the tartines for his breakfast. What business he transacted there, he kept to himself. Hortense asked no questions: it was not her wont to comment on his movements, nor his to render an account of them. The secrets of business—complicated and often dismal mysteries—were buried in his breast, and never came out of their sepulchre, save now and then to scare Joe Scott, or give a start to some foreign correspondent: indeed, a general habit of reserve on whatever was important seemed bred in his mercantile blood.

Breakfast over, he went to his counting-house. Henry, Joe Scott's boy, brought in the letters and the daily papers; Moore seated himself at his desk, broke the seals of the documents, and glanced them over. They were all short, but not—it seemed—

sweet; probably rather sour on the contrary, for as Moore laid down the last, his nostrils emitted a derisive and defiant snuff; and, though he burst into no soliloquy, there was a glance in his eye which seemed to invoke the devil, and lay charges on him to sweep the whole concern to Gehenna. However, having chosen a pen and stripped away the feathered top in a brief spasm of finger-fury—only finger-fury, his face was placid—he dashed off a batch of answers, sealed them, and then went out and walked through the mill: on coming back, he sat down to read his newspaper.

The contents seemed not absorbingly interesting; he more than once laid it across his knee, folded his arms, and gazed into the fire; he occasionally turned his head towards the window; he looked at intervals at his watch: in short, his mind appeared pre-occupied. Perhaps he was thinking of the beauty of the weather—for it was a fine and mild morning for the season—and wishing to be out in the fields enjoying it. The door of his counting-house stood wide open, the breeze and sunshine entered freely; but the first visitant brought no spring perfume on its wings, only an occasional sulphur-puff from the soot-thick column of smoke rushing sable from the gaunt mill-chimney.

A dark blue apparition (that of Joe Scott, fresh from a dyeing vat) appeared momentarily at the open

door, uttered the words "He's comed, sir," and vanished.

Mr. Moore raised not his eyes from the paper. A large man, broad-shouldered and massive-limbed, clad in fustian garments and grey-worsted stockings, entered, who was received with a nod, and desired to take a seat; which he did, making the remark—as he removed his hat (a very bad one), stowed it away under his chair, and wiped his forehead with a spotted cotton handkerchief extracted from the hat-crown—that it was "Raight dahn warm for Febe-werry." Mr. Moore assented: at least he uttered some slight sound, which, though inarticulate, might pass for an assent. The visitor now carefully deposited in the corner beside him an official-looking staff which he bore in his hand; this done, he whistled, probably by way of appearing at his ease.

"You have what is necessary, I suppose," said Mr. Moore.

"Ay! ay! all's raight."

He renewed his whistling, Mr. Moore his reading: the paper apparently had become more interesting. Presently, however, he turned to his cupboard, which was within reach of his long arm, opened it without rising, took out a black bottle—the same he had produced for Malone's benefit—a tumbler, and a jug, placed them on the table, and said to his guest,—

"Help yourself; there's water in that jar in the corner."

"I dunnut knaw that there's mich need, for all a body is dry (thirsty) in a morning," said the fustian gentleman, rising and doing as requested.

"Will you tak' naught yourseln, Mr. Moore?" he inquired, as with skilled hand he mixed a portion, and having tested it by a deep draught, sank back satisfied and bland in his seat. Moore—chary of words—replied by a negative movement and murmur.

"Yah'd as good," continued his visitor; "it 'uld set ye up, wald a sup o' this stuff. Uncommon good Hollands! ye get it fro' furrin' parts, I'se think?"

"Ay!"

"Tak' my advice, and try a glass on't; them lads 'at 's coming 'll keep ye talking, nob'dy knows how long: ye 'll need propping."

"Have you seen Mr. Sykes this morning?" inquired Moore.

"I seed him a hauf an hour—nay—happen a quarter of an hour sin', just afore I set off: he said he aimed to come here, and I sudn't wonder but ye 'll have old Helstone too; I seed 'em saddling his little nag as I passed at back o' t' Rectory."

The speaker was a true prophet, for the trot of a little nag's hoofs were, five minutes after, heard in the yard; it stopped, and a well-known nasal voice cried aloud — "Boy (probably addressing Harry

Scott, who usually hung about the premises from nine A. M. to five P. M.), take my horse and lead him into the stable."

Helstone came in, marching nimbly and erect, looking browner, keener, and livelier than usual.

"Beautiful morning, Moore: how do, my boy? Ha! Whom have we here (turning to the personage with the staff)? Sugden! What! you're going to work directly? On my word, you lose no time: but I come to ask explanations: your message was delivered to me; are you sure you are on the right scent? How do you mean to set about the business? Have you got a warrant?"

"Sugden has."

"Then you are going to seek him now? I'll accompany you."

"You will be spared that trouble, sir; he is coming to seek me. I'm just now sitting in state, waiting his arrival."

"And who is it? One of my parishioners?"

Joe Scott had entered unobserved; he now stood, a most sinister phantom, half his person being dyed of the deepest tint of indigo, leaning on the desk. His master's answer to the Rector's question was a smile; Joe took the word; putting on a quiet but pawky look, he said,—

"It's a friend of yours, Mr. Helstone; a gentleman you often speak of."

"Indeed! His name, Joe?—You look well this morning."

"Only the Rev. Moses Barraclough: t' tub orator you call him sometimes, I think."

"Ah!" said the Rector, taking out his snuff-box, and administering to himself a very long pinch—"Ah! couldn't have supposed it. Why, the 'pious man never was a workman of yours, Moore? He 's a tailor by trade."

"And so much the worse grudge I owe him, for interfering, and setting my discarded men against me."

"And Moses was actually present at the battle of Stilbro' Moor? He went there—wooden leg and all?"

"Ay, sir," said Joe; "he went there on horse-back, that his leg mightn't be noticed: he was the captain and wore a mask; the rest only had their faces blacked."

"And how was he found out?"

"I 'll tell you, sir," said Joe: "t' maister 's not so fond of talking; I 've no objections. He courted Sarah, Mr. Moore's sarvant lass, and so it seems she would have nothing to say to him; she either didn't like his wooden leg, or she 'd some notion about his being a hypocrite. Happen (for women is queer hands—we may say that amang werseln when there none of 'em nigh) she 'd have encouraged him, in

spite of his leg and his deceit—just to pass time like; I 've known some on 'em do as mich, and some o' t' bonniest and mimest looking too — ay! I 've seen clean, trim young things, that looked as denty and pure as daisies, and wi' time a body fun' 'em out to be nowt but stinging, venomed nettles."

"Joe 's a sensible fellow," interjected Helstone.

"Howsiver, Sarah had another string to her bow: Fred. Murgatroyd, one of our lads, is for her, and as women judge men by their faces—and Fred. has a middling face, while Moses is none so handsome, as we all knaw—the lass took on wi' Fred. A two-three months sin', Murgatroyd and Moses chanced to meet one Sunday night; they 'd both come lurking about these premises wi' the notion of counselling Sarah to tak' a bit of a walk wi' them; they fell out, had a tussel, and Fred. was worsted: for he 's young and small, and Barraclough, for all he has only one leg, is almost as strong as Sugden there; indeed, anybody that hears him roaring at a revival or a love-feast, may be sure he 's no weakling."

"Joe, you 're insupportable," here broke in Mr. Moore. "You spin out your explanation as Moses spins out his sermons. The long and short of it is, Murgatroyd was jealous of Barraclough, and last night, as he and a friend took shelter in a barn from a shower, they heard and saw Moses conferring with some associates within. From their discourse, it

was plain he had been the leader, not only at Stilbro' Moor, but in the attack on Sykes's property; moreover they planned a deputation to wait on me this morning, which the tailor is to head, and which, in the most religious and peaceful spirit, is to entreat me to put the accursed thing out of my tent. I rode over to Whinbury this morning, got a constable and a warrant, and I am now waiting to give my friend the reception he deserves: here, meantime, comes Sykes: Mr. Helstone, you must spirit him up; he feels timid at the thoughts of prosecuting."

A gig was heard to roll into the yard: Mr. Sykes entered; a tall stout man of about fifty, comely of feature, but feeble of physiognomy: he looked anxious.

"Have they been? Are they gone? Have you got him? Is it over?" he asked.

"Not yet," returned Moore with phlegm. "We are waiting for them."

"They 'll not come; it 's near noon: better give it up; it will excite bad feeling—make a stir—cause perhaps fatal consequences."

"*You* need not appear," said Moore. "I shall meet them in the yard when they come; *you* can stay here."

"But my name must be seen in the law proceedings: a wife and family, Mr. Moore—a wife and family make a man cautious."

Moore looked disgusted. "Give way, if you please," said he; "leave me to myself; I have no objection to act alone: only be assured you will not find safety in submission; your partner, Pearson, gave way, and conceded, and forebore — well, that did not prevent them from attempting to shoot him in his own house."

"My dear sir, take a little wine and water," recommended Mr. Helstone. The wine and water was Hollands-and-water, as Mr. Sykes discovered when he had compounded and swallowed a brimming tumbler thereof: it transfigured him in two minutes, brought the colour back to his face, and made him at least *word*-valiant. He now announced that he hoped he was above being trampled on by the common people; he was determined to endure the insolence of the working-classes no longer; he had considered of it and made up his mind to go all lengths; if money and spirit could put down these rioters, they should be put down; Mr. Moore might do as he liked, but *he*—Christie Sykes—would spend his last penny in law before he would be beaten: he 'd settle them, or he 'd see."

"Take another glass," urged Moore.

Mr. Sykes didn't mind if he did; this was a cold morning (Sugden had found it a warm one); it was necessary to be careful at this season of the year—it was proper to take something to keep the damp out;

he had a little cough already (here he coughed in attestation of the fact); something of this sort (lifting the black bottle) was excellent taken medicinally (he poured the physic into his tumbler); he didn't make a practice of drinking spirits in a morning, but occasionally it really was prudent to take precautions.

"Quite prudent, and take them by all means," urged the host.

Mr. Sykes now addressed Mr. Helstone, who stood on the hearth, his shovel-hat on his head, watching him significantly with his little keen eyes.

"You, sir, as a clergyman," said he, "may feel it disagreeable to be present amidst scenes of hurry and flurry, and, I may say, peril: I dare say your nerves won't stand it; you 're a man of peace, sir, but we manufacturers, living in the world and always in turmoil, get quite belligerent. Really there 's an ardour excited by the thoughts of danger that makes my heart pant. When Mrs. Sykes is afraid of the house being attacked and broke open—as she is every night—I get quite excited. I couldn't describe to you, sir, my feelings: really, if anybody was to come—thieves or anything—I believe I should enjoy it, such is my spirit."

The hardest of laughs, though brief and low, and by no means insulting, was the response of the Rector. Moore would have pressed upon the heroic

millowner a third tumbler, but the clergyman, who never transgressed, nor would suffer others in his presence to transgress the bounds of decorum, checked him.

"Enough is as good as a feast, is it not, Mr. Sykes?" he said, and Mr. Sykes assented; and then sat and watched Joe Scott remove the bottle at a sign from Helstone, with a self-satisfied simper on his lips, and a regretful glisten in his eye. Moore looked as if he should have liked to fool him to the top of his bent. What would a certain young kinswoman of his have said, could he have seen her dear, good, great Robert — her Coriolanus—just now? Would she have acknowledged in that mischievous sardonic visage the same face to which she had looked up with such love, which had bent over her with such gentleness last night? Was that the man who had spent so quiet an evening with his sister and his cousin—so suave to one, so tender to the other—reading Shakspeare and listening to Chénier?

Yes, it was the same man, only seen on a different side; a side Caroline had not yet fairly beheld, though perhaps she had enough sagacity faintly to suspect its existence. Well, Caroline had, doubtless, her defective side too: she was human, she must then have been very imperfect, and had she seen Moore on his very worst side, she would pro-

bably have said this to herself and excused him. Love can excuse anything except Meanness; but Meanness kills Love, cripples even Natural Affection: without Esteem, True Love cannot exist. Moore with all his faults might be esteemed; for he had no moral scrofula in his mind, no hopeless polluting taint, such, for instance, as that of falsehood; neither was he the slave of his appetites; the active life to which he had been born and bred had given him something else to do than to join the futile chase of the pleasure-hunter: he was a man undegraded, the disciple of Reason, *not* the votary of Sense. The same might be said of old Helstone: neither of these two would look, think, or speak a lie; for neither of them had the wretched black bottle which had just been put away any charms; both might boast a valid claim to the proud title of "lord of the creation," for no animal vice was lord of them: they looked and were superior beings to poor Sykes.

A sort of gathering and trampling sound was heard in the yard, and then a pause. Moore walked to the window, Helstone followed; both stood on one side, the tall junior behind the under-sized senior, looking forth carefully, so that they might not be visible from without, their sole comment on what they saw was a cynical smile flashed into each other's stern eyes.

A flourishing oratorical cough was now heard,

followed by the interjection, "Whisht!" designed, as it seemed, to still the hum of several voices. Moore opened his casement an inch or two to admit sound more freely.

"Joseph Scott," began a snuffling voice—Scott was standing sentinel at the counting-house door —"might we inquire if your master be within, and is to be spoken to!"

"He's within, ay!" said Joe, nonchalantly.

"Would you, then, if *you* please (emphasis on 'you'), have the goodness to tell *him* that twelve gentlemen wants to see him."

"He'd happen ax what for," suggested Joe. "I mught as weel tell him that at t' same time."

"For a purpose," was the answer. Joe entered.

"Please, sir, there's twelve gentlemen wants to see ye 'for a purpose.'"

"Good, Joe; I'm their man. Sugden, come when I whistle."

Moore went out, chuckling drily. He advanced into the yard, one hand in his pocket, the other in his waistcoat, his cap brim over his eyes, shading in some measure their deep dancing ray of scorn. Twelve men waited in the yard, some in their shirt-sleeves, some in blue aprons: two figured conspicuously in the van of the party. One, a little dapper strutting man, with a turned-up nose; the other, a broad-shouldered fellow, distinguished no less by

his demure face and cat-like, trustless eyes, than by a wooden leg and stout crutch: there was a kind of leer about his lips, he seemed laughing in his sleeve at some person or thing, his whole air was anything but that of a true man.

"Good-morning, Mr. Barraclough," said Moore debonnairely, for him.

"Peace be unto you!" was the answer: Mr. Barraclough entirely closing his naturally half-shut eyes as he delivered it.

"I'm obliged to you: peace is an excellent thing; there's nothing I more wish for myself; but that is not all you have to say to me, I suppose? I imagine peace is not your purpose?"

"As to our purpose," began Barraclough, "it's one that may sound strange, and perhaps foolish to ears like yours, for the childer of this world is wiser in their generation than the childer of light."

"To the point, if you please, and let me hear what it is."

"Ye'se hear, sir; if I cannot get it off, there's eleven behint can help me. It is a grand purpose, and (changing his voice from a half-sneer to a whine) it's the Looard's own purpose, and that's better."

"Do you want a subscription to a new Ranter's chapel, Mr. Barraclough? Unless your errand be something of that sort, I cannot see what you have to do with it."

"I hadn't that duty on my mind, sir; but as Providence has led ye to mention the subject, I'll make it i' my way to tak' ony trifle ye may have to spare, the smallest contribution will be acceptable."

With that he doffed his hat, and held it out as a begging-box; a brazen grin at the same time crossing his countenance.

"If I gave you sixpence, you would drink it."

Barraclough uplifted the palms of his hands and the whites of his eyes, evincing in the gesture a mere burlesque of hypocrisy.

"You seem a fine fellow," said Moore, quite coolly and drily; "you don't care for shewing me that you are a double-dyed hypocrite, that your trade is fraud: you expect indeed to make me laugh at the cleverness with which you play your coarsely farcical part, while at the same time you think you are deceiving the men behind you."

Moses' countenance lowered; he saw he had gone too far: he was going to answer, when the second leader, impatient of being hitherto kept in the background, stepped forward. This man did not look like a traitor, though he had an exceedingly self-confident and conceited air.

"Mr. Moore," commenced he, speaking also in his throat and nose, and enunciating each word very slowly, as if with a view to giving his audience

time to appreciate fully the uncommon elegance of the phraseology; "it might, perhaps, justly be said that, reason rather than peace is our purpose. We come, in the first place, to request you to hear reason, and should *you* refuse, it is my duty to warn *you*, in very decided terms, that measures will be had resort to (he meant recourse), which will probably terminate in—in bringing *you* to a sense of the unwisdom, of the—the foolishness, which seems to guide and guard your perceedings as a tradesman in this—this manufacturing part of the country. Hem! . . . . sir, I would beg to allude that as a furriner, coming from a distant coast, another quarter and hemisphere of this globe, thrown, as I may say, a perfect outcast on these shores—the cliffs of Albion—you have not that understanding of huz and wer ways which might conduce to the benefit of the working-classes. If, to come at once to partic'lars, you 'd consider to give up this here miln, and go without further protractions straight home to where you belong, it 'ud happen be as well. I can see naught ageean such a plan. What hev ye to say tull 't, lads?" turning round to the other members of the deputation, who responded unanimously, "Hear! hear!"

"Brayvo, Noah o' Tim's!" murmured Joe Scott, who stood behind Mr. Moore. "Moses 'll niver beat that—Cliffs 'o Albion, and t 'other hemisphere!

my certy! Did ye come fro' th' Antarctic Zone, maister? Moses is dished."

Moses, however, refused to be dished; he thought he would try again. Casting a somewhat ireful glance at "Noah o' Tim's," he launched out in his turn: and now he spoke in a serious tone, relinquishing the sarcasm which he found had not answered.

"Or iver you set up the pole o' your tent amang us, Mr. Moore, we lived i' peace and quietness; yea, I may say, in all loving-kindness. I am not myself an aged person as yet, but I can remember as far back as maybe some twenty year, when hand-labour were encouraged and respected, and no mischief-maker had ventured to introduce these here machines, which is so pernicious. Now, I 'm not a cloth-dresser myself, but by trade a tailor; howsiver, my heart is of a softish natur': I 'm a very feeling man, and when I see my brethren oppressed, like my great namesake of old, I stand up for 'em; for which intent, I this day speak with you face to face, and advises you to part wi' your infernal machinery, and tak' on more hands."

"What if I don't follow your advice, Mr. Barraclough?"

"The Looard pardon you. The Looard soften your heart, sir!"

"Are you in connection with the Wesleyans now, Mr. Barraclough?"

"Praise God! Bless His Name! I'm a joined Methody!"

"Which in no respect prevents you from being at the same time a drunkard and a swindler. I saw you one night a week ago laid dead-drunk by the roadside, as I returned from Stilbro' market; and while you preach peace, you make it the business of your life to stir up dissension. You no more sympathize with the poor who are in distress, than you sympathize with me: you incite them to outrage for bad purposes of your own; so does the individual called Noah o' Tim's. You two are restless, meddling, impudent scoundrels, whose chief motive-principle is a selfish ambition, as dangerous as it is puerile. The persons behind you are some of them honest though misguided men; but you two I count altogether bad."

Barraclough was going to speak.

"Silence! You have had your say, and now I will have mine. As to being dictated to by you, or any Jack, Jem, or Jonathan on earth, I shall not suffer it for a moment. You desire me to quit the country; you request me to part with my machinery; in case I refuse, you threaten me. I *do* refuse—point-blank! Here I stay; and by this mill I stand; and into it will I convey the best machinery inventors can furnish. What will you do? The utmost you *can* do—and this you will never *dare* to do—is to

burn down my mill, destroy its contents, and shoot me. What then? Suppose that building was a ruin and I was a corpse, what then?—you lads behind these two scamps, would that stop invention or exhaust science?—Not for the fraction of a second of time! Another and better gig-mill would rise on the ruins of this, and perhaps a more enterprising owner come in my place. Hear me!—I'll make my cloth as I please, and according to the best lights I have. In its manufacture I will employ what means I choose. Whoever, after hearing this, shall dare to interfere with me, may just take the consequences. An example shall prove I'm in earnest."

He whistled shrill and loud. Sugden, his staff and warrant came on to the scene.

Moore turned sharply to Barraclough: "You were at Stilbro'," said he; "I have proof of that. You were on the moor,—you wore a mask,—you knocked down one of my men with your own hand,—you! a preacher of the Gospel! Sugden, arrest him!"

Moses was captured. There was a cry and a rush to rescue, but the right hand which all this while had lain hidden in Moore's breast, reappearing, held out a pistol.

"Both barrels are loaded," said he. "I'm quite determined!—keep off!"

Stepping backwards, facing the foe as he went, he guarded his prey to the counting-house. He ordered Joe Scott to pass in with Sugden and the prisoner,

and to bolt the door inside. For himself, he walked backwards and forwards along the front of the mill, looking meditatively on the ground, his hand hanging carelessly by his side, but still holding the pistol. The eleven remaining deputies watched him some time, talking under their breath to each other: at length one of them approached. This man looked very different from either of the two who had previously spoken: he was hard-favoured, but modest, and manly-looking.

"I 've not much faith i' Moses Barraclough," said he; "and I would speak a word to you myseln, Mr. Moore. It 's out o' no ill-will that I 'm here, for my part; it 's just to mak' a effort to get things straightened, for they 're sorely a crooked. Ye see we 're ill off,—varry ill off: wer families is poor and pined. We 're thrown out o' work wi' these frames: we can get nought to do: we can earn nought. What is to be done? Mun we say, wisht! and lig us down and dee? Nay: I 've no grand words at my tongue's end, Mr. Moore, but I feel that it wad be a low principle for a reasonable man to starve to death like a dumb cratur': — I will n't do 't. I 'm not for shedding blood: I 'd neither kill a man nor hurt a man; and I 'm not for pulling down mills and breaking machines: for, as ye say, that way o' going on 'll niver stop invention; but I 'll talk,—I 'll mak' as big a din as ever I can. Invention may be all

right, but I know it is n't right for poor folks to starve. Them that governs mun find a way to help us: they mun mak' fresh orderations. Ye 'll say that 's hard to do:—so mich louder mun we shout out then, for so much slacker will t' Parliament-men be to set on to a tough job."

"Worry the Parliament-men as much as you please," said Moore; "but to worry the mill-owners is absurd; and I, for one, won't stand it."

"Ye 're a raight hard 'un!" returned the workman. "Will n't ye gie us a bit o' time?—Will n't ye consent to mak' your changes rather more slowly?"

"Am I the whole body of clothiers in Yorkshire? Answer me that!"

"Ye 're yourseln."

"And only myself; and if I stopped by the way an instant, while others are rushing on, I should be trodden down. If I did as you wish me to do, I should be bankrupt in a month: and would my bankruptcy put bread into your hungry children's mouths? William Farren, neither to your dictation, nor to that of any other, will I submit. Talk to me no more about machinery; I will have my own way. I shall get new frames in to-morrow:—If you broke these, I would still get more. *I'll never give in.*"

Here the mill-bell rang twelve o'clock: it was the dinner hour. Moore abruptly turned from the deputation and re-entered his counting-house.

His last words had left a bad, harsh impression: he, at least, had "failed in the disposing of a chance he was lord of." By speaking kindly to William Farren,—who was a very honest man, without envy or hatred of those more happily circumstanced than himself; thinking it no hardship and no injustice to be forced to live by labour; disposed to be honourably content if he could but get work to do,—Moore might have made a friend. It seemed wonderful how he could turn from such a man without a conciliatory or a sympathizing expression. The poor fellow's face looked haggard with want: he had the aspect of a man who had not known what it was to live in comfort and plenty for weeks, perhaps months past; and yet there was no ferocity, no malignity in his countenance: it was worn, dejected, austere, but still patient. How could Moore leave him thus, with the words "I'll never give in," and not a whisper of good-will, or hope, or aid?

Farren, as he went home to his cottage,—once, in better times, a decent, clean, pleasant place; but now, though still clean, very dreary, because so poor—asked himself this question. He concluded that the foreign mill-owner was a selfish, an unfeeling, and, he thought, too, a foolish man. It appeared to him that emigration, had he only the means to emigrate, would be preferable to service under such a master. He felt much cast down,—almost hopeless.

On his entrance, his wife served out, in orderly sort, such dinner as she had to give him and the bairns: it was only porridge, and too little of that. Some of the younger children asked for more when they had done their portion—an application which disturbed William much: while his wife quieted them as well as she could, he left his seat, and went to the door. He whistled a cheery stave, which did not, however, prevent a broad drop or two (much more like the "first of a thunder-shower" than those which oozed from the wound of the gladiator) from gathering on the lids of his gray eyes, and plashing thence to the threshold. He cleared his vision with his sleeve, and the melting mood over, a very stern one followed.

He still stood brooding in silence, when a gentleman in black came up—a clergyman, it might be seen at once; but neither Helstone, nor Malone, nor Donne, nor Sweeting. He might be forty years old; he was plain-looking, dark-complexioned, and already rather gray-haired. He stooped a little in walking. His countenance, as he came on, wore an abstracted and somewhat doleful air; but, in approaching Farren, he looked up, and then a hearty expression illuminated the preoccupied, serious face.

"Is it you, William? How are you?" he asked.

"Middling, Mr. Hall: how are *ye?* Will ye step in and rest ye?"

Mr. Hall, whose name the reader has seen mentioned before, (and who, indeed, was vicar of Nunnely, of which parish Farren was a native, and from whence he had removed but three years ago to reside in Briarfield, for the convenience of being near Hollow's-mill, where he had obtained work) entered the cottage, and, having greeted the goodwife and the children, sat down. He proceeded to talk very cheerfully about the length of time that had elapsed since the family quitted his parish, the changes which had occurred since; he answered questions touching his sister Margaret, who was inquired after with much interest; he asked questions in his turn, and at last, glancing hastily and anxiously round through his spectacles (he wore spectacles, for he was short-sighted) at the bare room, and at the meagre and wan faces of the circle about him—for the children had come round his knee, and the father and mother stood before him—he said, abruptly,—

"And how are you all? How do you get on?"

Mr. Hall, be it remarked, though an accomplished scholar, not only spoke with a strong northern accent, but, on occasion, used freely north-country expressions.

"We get on poorly," said William: "we 're all out of work. I 've selled most o' t' household stuff, as ye may see; and what we 're to do next, God knows."

"Has Mr. Moore turned you off?"

"He has turned us off; and I've sich an opinion of him now, that I think, if he 'd tak' me on again to-morrow, I wouldn't work for him."

"It is not like you to say so, William."

"I know it isn't; but I'm getting different to mysel': I feel I am changing. I wadn't heed, if t' bairns and t' wife had enough to live on; but they 're pinched—they 're pined——"

"Well, my lad, and so are you; I see you are. These are grievous times; I see suffering wherever I turn. William, sit down; Grace, sit down; let us talk it over."

And in order the better to talk it over, Mr. Hall lifted the least of the children on to his knee, and placed his hand on the head of the next least; but when the small things began to chatter to him, he bid them "Whisht!" and, fixing his eyes on the grate, he regarded the handful of embers which burnt there very gravely.

"Sad times!" he said, "and they last long. It is the will of God: His will be done! but He tries us to the utmost."

Again he reflected.

"You 've no money, William, and you 've nothing you could sell to raise a small sum?"

"No; I 've selled t' chest o' drawers, and t' clock, and t' bit of a mahogany stand, and t' wife's bonny

tea-tray and set o' cheeney 'at she brought for a portion when we were wed."

"And if somebody lent you a pound or two, could you make any good use of it? Could you get into a new way of doing something?"

Farren did not answer; but his wife said quickly, "Ay, I'm sure he could, sir; he's a very contriving chap, is our William. If he'd two or three pounds, he could begin selling stuff."

"Could you, William?"

"Please God," returned William, deliberately, "I could buy groceries, and bits o' tapes, and thread, and what I thought would sell, and I could begin hawking at first."

"And you know, sir," interposed Grace, "you're sure William would neither drink, nor idle, nor waste in any way. He's my husband, and I should n't praise him, but I *will* say, there's not a soberer, honester man i' England nor he is."

"Well, I'll speak to one or two friends, and I think I can promise to let him have 5*l.* in a day or two: as a loan, ye mind, not a gift: he must pay it back."

"I understand, sir: I'm quite agreeable to that."

"Meantime, there's a few shillings for you, Grace, just to keep the pot boiling till custom comes. Now, bairns, stand up in a row and say your cate-

chism, while your mother goes and buys some dinner: for you 've not had much to-day, I 'll be bound. You begin, Ben. What is your name?"

Mr. Hall stayed till Grace came back; then he hastily took his leave, shaking hands with both Farren and his wife: just at the door, he said to them a few brief but very earnest words of religious consolation and exhortation: with a mutual "God bless you, sir!" "God bless you, my friends!" they separated.

CHAPTER VIII.

BRIARMAINS.

Messrs. Helstone and Sykes began to be extremely jocose and congratulatory with Mr. Moore when he returned to them after dismissing the deputation; he was so quiet, however, under their compliments upon his firmness, &c., and wore a countenance so like a still, dark day, equally beamless and breezeless, that the Rector, after glancing shrewdly into his eyes, buttoned up his felicitations with his coat, and said to Sykes, whose senses were not acute enough to enable him to discover unassisted where his presence and conversation were a nuisance:—

"Come, sir; your road and mine lie partly together: had we not better bear each other company? We'll bid Moore good-morning, and leave him to the happy fancies he seems disposed to indulge."

"And where is Sugden?" demanded Moore, looking up.

"Ah, ha!" cried Helstone. "I've not been quite idle while you were busy. I've been helping you a little: I flatter myself, not injudiciously. I thought it better not to lose time; so, while you were parleying with that down-looking gentleman, Farren, I think his name is, I opened this back window, shouted to Murgatroyd, who was in the stable, to bring Mr. Sykes's gig round; then I smuggled Sugden and brother Moses—wooden leg and all—through the aperture, and saw them mount the gig (always with our good friend Sykes's permission, of course). Sugden took the reins—he drives like Jehu, and in another quarter of an hour, Barraclough will be safe in Stilbro' jail."

"Very good: thank you," said Moore, "and good-morning, gentlemen," he added, and so politely conducted them to the door and saw them clear of his premises.

He was a taciturn, serious man the rest of the day: he did not even bandy a repartee with Joe Scott; who, for his part, said to his master only just what was absolutely necessary to the progress of business, but looked at him a good deal out of the corners of his eyes, frequently came to poke the counting-house fire for him, and once, as he was locking up for the day (the mill was then working short-time, owing to the slackness of trade), observed that it was a grand evening, and he "could wish

Mr. Moore to tak' a bit of a walk up th' Hollow; it would do him good."

At this recommendation, Mr. Moore burst into a short laugh, and after demanding of Joe what all this solicitude meant, and whether he took him for a woman or a child, seized the keys from his hand, and shoved him by the shoulders out of his presence. He called him back, however, ere he had reached the yard-gate.

"Joe, do you know those Farrens? They are not well off, I suppose?"

"They cannot be well off, sir, when they 've not had work as a three month. Ye 'd see yoursel' 'at William 's sorely changed, — fair pared: they 've selled most o' t' stuff out o' th' house."

"He was not a bad workman?"

"Ye never had a better, sir, sin' ye began trade."

"And decent people—the whole family?"

"Niver dacenter: th' wife 's a raight cant body, and as clean ——! ye mught eat your porridge of th' house floor: they 're sorely comed down. I wish William could get a job as gardener or summat i' that way; he understands gardening weel. He once lived wi' a Scotchman that tached him the mysteries o' that craft, as they say."

"Now, then, you can go, Joe; you need not stand there staring at me."

"Ye 've no orders to give, sir?"

"None, but for you to take yourself off."

Which Joe did accordingly.

Spring evenings are often cold and raw, and though this had been a fine day, warm even in the morning and meridian sunshine, the air chilled at sunset, the ground crisped, and ere dusk, a hoar frost was insidiously stealing over growing grass and unfolding bud. It whitened the pavement in front of Briarmains (Mr. Yorke's residence), and made silent havoc among the tender plants in his garden, and on the mossy level of his lawn. As to that great tree, strong-trunked and broad-armed, which guarded the gable nearest the road, it seemed to defy a spring-night frost to harm its still bare boughs; and so did the leafless grove of walnut-trees rising tall behind the house.

In the dusk of the moonless if starry night, lights from windows shone vividly: this was no dark or lonely scene, nor even a silent one. Briarmains stood near the highway; it was rather an old place, and had been built ere that highway was cut, and when a lane winding up through fields was the only path conducting to it. Briarfield lay scarce a mile off; its hum was heard, its glare distinctly seen. Briar-chapel, a large, new, raw, Wesleyan place of worship, rose but a hundred yards distant; and, as there was even now a prayer-meeting being

held within its walls, the illumination of its windows cast a bright reflection on the road, while a hymn of a most extraordinary description, such as a very Quaker might feel himself moved by the spirit to dance to, roused cheerily all the echoes of the vicinage. The words were distinctly audible by snatches: here is a quotation or two from different strains; for the singers passed jauntily from hymn to hymn and from tune to tune, with an ease and buoyancy all their own.

"Oh! who can explain
This struggle for life,
This travail and pain,
This trembling and strife?
Plague, earthquake, and famine,
And tumult and war,
The wonderful coming
Of Jesus declare!

"For every fight
Is dreadful and loud,—
The warrior's delight
Is slaughter and blood;
His foes overturning,
Till all shall expire,—
And this is with burning,
And fuel, and fire!"

Here followed an interval of clamorous prayer, accompanied by fearful groans. A shout of "I've found liberty!" "Doad o' Bill's has fun' liberty!"

rung from the chapel, and out all the assembly broke again.

" What a mercy is this!
What a heaven of bliss!
How unspeakably happy am I!
Gathered into the fold,
With thy people enroll'd,
With thy people to live and to die!

" Oh! the goodness of God
In employing a clod
His tribute of glory to raise;
His standard to bear,
And with triumph declare
His unspeakable riches of grace!

" Oh, the fathomless love,
That has deigned to approve
And prosper the work of my hands;
With my pastoral crook,
I went over the brook,
And behold I am spread into bands!

" Who, I ask in amaze,
Hath begotten me these?
And inquire from what quarter they came;
My full heart it replies,
They are born from the skies,
And gives glory to God and the Lamb!"

The stanza which followed this, after another and longer interregnum of shouts, yells, ejaculations, frantic cries, agonized groans, seemed to cap the climax of noise and zeal.

" Sleeping on the brink of sin,
Tophet gaped to take us in;
Mercy to our rescue flew,—
Broke the snare, and brought us through.

" Here, as in a lion's den,
Undevoured we still remain;
Pass secure the watery flood,
Hanging on the arm of God.

" Here "——

(Terrible, most distracting to the ear was the strained shout in which the last stanza was given).

" Here we raise our voices higher,
Shout in the refiner's fire;
Clap our hands amidst the flame,
Glory give to Jesus' name!"

The roof of the chapel did *not* fly off; which speaks volumes in praise of its solid slating.

But if Briar-chapel seemed alive, so also did Briarmains: though certainly the mansion appeared to enjoy a quieter phase of existence than the temple; some of its windows too were a-glow: the lower casements opened upon the lawn, curtains concealed the interior, and partly obscured the ray of the candles which lit it, but they did not entirely muffle the sound of voice and laughter. We are privileged to enter that front-door, and to penetrate to the domestic sanctum.

It is not the presence of company which makes

Mr. Yorke's habitation lively, for there is none within it save his own family, and they are assembled in that farthest room to the right, the back-parlour.

This is the usual sitting-room of an evening. Those windows would be seen by daylight to be of brilliantly-stained glass — purple and amber the predominant hues, glittering round a gravely-tinted medallion in the centre of each, representing the suave head of William Shakspeare, and the serene one of John Milton. Some Canadian views hang on the walls—green forest and blue water-scenery—and in the midst of them blazes a night-eruption of Vesuvius; very ardently it glows, contrasted with the cool foam and azure of cataracts, and the dusky depths of woods.

The fire illuminating this room, reader, is such as, if you be a southern, you do not often see burning on the hearth of a private apartment; it is a clear, hot, coal fire, heaped high in the ample chimney. Mr. Yorke *will* have such fires even in warm summer weather: he sits beside it with a book in his hand, a little round stand at his elbow supporting a candle—but he is not reading, he is watching his children. Opposite to him sits his lady—a personage whom I might describe minutely, but I feel no vocation to the task. I see her, though, very plainly before me: a large woman of the gravest aspect, care on her

front and on her shoulders—but not overwhelming, inevitable care—rather the sort of voluntary, exemplary cloud and burden people ever carry who deem it their duty to be gloomy. Ah, well-a-day! Mrs. Yorke had that notion, and grave as Saturn she was morning, noon, and night; and hard things she thought of any unhappy wight—especially of the female sex—who dared in her presence to show the light of a gay heart on a sunny countenance. In her estimation, to be mirthful was to be profane; to be cheerful was to be frivolous: she drew no distinctions. Yet she was a very good wife, a very careful mother, looked after her children unceasingly, was sincerely attached to her husband; only, the worst of it was, if she could have had her will, she would not have permitted him to have any friend in the world beside herself: all his relations were insupportable to her, and she kept them at arm's length.

Mr. Yorke and she agreed perfectly well; yet he was naturally a social, hospitable man—an advocate for family unity—and in his youth, as has been said, he liked none but lively cheerful women. Why he chose her—how they contrived to suit each other, is a problem puzzling enough, but which might soon be solved if one had time to go into the analysis of the case. Suffice it here to say, that Yorke had a shadowy as well as a sunny side to his character, and

that his shadowy side found sympathy and affinity in the whole of his wife's uniformly overcast nature. For the rest, she was a strong-minded woman; never said a weak or a trite thing; took stern, democratic views of society, and rather cynical ones of human nature; considered herself perfect and safe, and the rest of the world all wrong. Her main fault was a brooding, eternal, immitigable suspicion of all men, things, creeds, and parties: this suspicion was a mist before her eyes, a false guide in her path, wherever she looked, wherever she turned.

It may be supposed that the children of such a pair were not likely to turn out quite ordinary, common-place beings; and they were not. You see six of them, reader: the youngest is a baby on the mother's knee; it is all her own yet—and that one she has not yet begun to doubt, suspect, condemn; it derives its sustenance from her, it hangs on her, it clings to her, it loves her above everything else in the world: she is sure of that, because, as it lives by her, it cannot be otherwise, therefore she loves it.

The two next are girls, Rose and Jessy; they are both now at their father's knee; they seldom go near their mother, except when obliged to do so. Rose, the elder, is twelve years old; she is like her father,—the most like him of the whole group,—but it is a granite head copied in ivory; all is softened in colour and line. Yorke himself has a harsh face;

his daughter's is not harsh, neither is it quite pretty; it is simple,—childlike in feature; the round cheeks bloom: as to the gray eyes, they are otherwise than childlike,—a serious soul lights them,—a young soul yet, but it will mature, if the body lives; and neither father nor mother have a spirit to compare with it. Partaking of the essence of each, it will one day be better than either,—stronger, much purer, more aspiring. Rose is a still, sometimes, a stubborn girl now: her mother wants to make of her such a woman as she is herself,—a woman of dark and dreary duties,—and Rose has a mind full-set, thick sown with the germs of ideas her mother never knew. It is agony to her often to have these ideas trampled on and repressed. She has never rebelled yet; but if hard driven, she will rebel one day, and then it will be once for all. Rose loves her father: her father does not rule her with a rod of iron; he is good to her. He sometimes fears she will not live, so bright are the sparks of intelligence which, at moments, flash from her glance, and gleam in her language. This idea makes him often sadly tender to her.

He has no idea that little Jessy will die young, she is so gay and chattering, arch—original even now; passionate when provoked, but most affectionate if caressed; by turns gentle and rattling; exacting yet generous; fearless—of her mother for

instance, whose irrationally hard and strict rule she has often defied—yet reliant on any who will help her. Jessy, with her little piquant face, engaging prattle, and winning ways, is made to be a pet; and her father's pet she accordingly is. It is odd that the doll should resemble her mother feature by feature, as Rose resembles her father, and yet the physiognomy—how different!

Mr. Yorke, if a magic mirror were now held before you, and if therein were shown you your two daughters as they will be twenty years from this night, what would you think? The magic mirror is here: you shall learn their destinies—and first that of your little life, Jessy.

"Do you know this place? No, you never saw it; but you recognise the nature of these trees, this foliage,—the cypress, the willow, the yew. Stone crosses like these are not unfamiliar to you, nor are these dim garlands of everlasting flowers. Here is the place; green sod and a gray marble headstone—Jessy sleeps below. She lived through an April day; much loved was she, much loving. She often, in her brief life, shed tears, she had frequent sorrows; she smiled between, gladdening whatever saw her. Her death was tranquil and happy in Rose's guardian arms, for Rose had been her stay and defence through many trials: the dying and the watching English girls were at that hour alone in a

foreign country, and the soil of that country gave Jessy a grave.

Now, behold Rose, two years later. The crosses and garlands looked strange, but the hills and woods of this landscape look still stranger. This, indeed, is far from England: remote must be the shores which wear that wild, luxuriant aspect. This is some virgin solitude: unknown birds flutter round the skirts of that forest; no European river this, on whose banks Rose sits thinking. The little, quiet Yorkshire girl is a lonely emigrant in some region of the southern hemisphere. Will she ever come back?

The three eldest of the family are all boys: Matthew, Mark, and Martin. They are seated together in that corner, engaged in some game. Observe their three heads: much alike at a first glance; at a second, different; at a third, contrasted. Dark-haired, dark-eyed, red-cheeked, are the whole trio; small English features they all possess; all own a blended resemblance to sire and mother, and yet a distinctive physiognomy, mark of a separate character, belongs to each.

I shall not say much about Matthew, the first-born of the house; though it is impossible to avoid gazing at him long, and conjecturing what qualities that visage hides or indicates. He is no plain-looking boy: that jet-black hair, white brow, high-coloured

cheek, those quick, dark eyes, are good points in their way. How is it that, look as long as you will, there is but one object in the room, and that the most sinister, to which Matthew's face seems to bear an affinity, and of which, ever and anon, it reminds you strangely—the eruption of Vesuvius. Flame and shadow seem the component parts of that lad's soul: no daylight in it, and no sunshine, and no pure, cool moonbeam ever shone there. He has an English frame, but, apparently, not an English mind: you would say, an Italian stiletto in a sheath of British workmanship. He is crossed in the game—look at his scowl. Mr. Yorke sees it, and what does he say? In a low voice, he pleads: "Mark and Martin, don't anger your brother." And this is ever the tone adopted by both parents. Theoretically, they decry partiality; no rights of primogeniture are to be allowed in that house; but Matthew is never to be vexed, never to be opposed: they avert provocation from him as assiduously as they would avert fire from a barrel of gunpowder. "Concede, conciliate," is their motto wherever he is concerned. The republicans are fast making a tyrant of their own flesh and blood. This the younger scions know and feel, and at heart they all rebel against the injustice: they cannot read their parents' motives; they only see the difference of treatment. The dragon's-teeth are already sown amongst Mr. Yorke's

young olive-branches: discord will one day be the harvest.

Mark is a bonnie looking boy, the most regular-featured of the family; he is exceedingly calm; his smile is shrewd; he can say the driest, most cutting things in the quietest of tones. Despite his tranquillity, a somewhat heavy brow speaks temper, and reminds you that the smoothest waters are not always the safest. Besides, he is too still, unmoved, phlegmatic, to be happy. Life will never have much joy in it for Mark: by the time he is five-and-twenty, he will wonder why people ever laugh, and think all fools who seem merry. Poetry will not exist for Mark, either in literature or in life; its best effusions will sound to him mere rant and jargon: enthusiasm will be his aversion and contempt. Mark will have no youth: while he looks juvenile and blooming, he will be already middle-aged in mind. His body is now fourteen years of age, but his soul is already thirty.

Martin, the youngest of the three, owns another nature. Life may, or may not, be brief for him; but it will certainly be brilliant: he will pass through all its illusions, half believe in them, wholly enjoy them, then outlive them. That boy is not handsome—not so handsome as either of his brothers: he is plain; there is a husk upon him, a dry shell, and he will wear it till he is near twenty; then he will

put it off: about that period, he will make himself handsome. He will wear uncouth manners till that age, perhaps homely garments; but the chrysalis will retain the power of transfiguring itself into the butterfly, and such transfiguration will, in due season, take place. For a space, he will be vain, probably a downright puppy, eager for pleasure, and desirous of admiration; athirst, too, for knowledge. He will want all that the world can give him, both of enjoyment and lore; he will, perhaps, take deep draughts at each fount. That thirst satisfied—what next? I know not. Martin might be a remarkable man: whether he will or not, the seer is powerless to predict: on that subject, there has been no open vision.

Take Mr. Yorke's family in the aggregate, there is as much mental power in those six young heads, as much originality, as much activity and vigour of brain, as—divided amongst half a dozen commonplace broods—would give to each rather more than an average amount of sense and capacity. Mr. Yorke knows this, and is proud of his race. Yorkshire has such families here and there amongst her hills and wolds—peculiar, racy, vigorous; of good blood and strong brain; turbulent somewhat in the pride of their strength, and intractable in the force of their native powers; wanting polish, wanting consideration, wanting docility, but sound, spirited, and

true-bred as the eagle on the cliff or the steed in the steppe.

A low tap is heard at the parlour door; the boys have been making such a noise over their game, and little Jessy, besides, has been singing so sweet a Scotch song to her father—who delights in Scotch and Italian songs, and has taught his musical little daughter some of the best—that the ring at the outer door was not observed.

"Come in," says Mrs. Yorke, in that conscientiously constrained and solemnized voice of hers; which ever modulates itself to a funereal dreariness of tone, though the subject it is exercised upon be but to give orders for the making of a pudding in the kitchen, to bid the boys hang up their caps in the hall, or to call the girls to their sewing: "Come in!" And in came Robert Moore.

Moore's habitual gravity, as well as his abstemiousness (for the case of spirit-decanters is never ordered up when he pays an evening visit), has so far recommended him to Mrs. Yorke, that she has not yet made him the subject of private animadversions with her husband: she has not yet found out that he is hampered by a secret intrigue which prevents him from marrying, or that he is a wolf in sheep's clothing; discoveries which she made at an early date after marriage concerning most of her husband's bachelor friends, and excluded them from her board

accordingly: which part of her conduct, indeed, might be said to have its just and sensible, as well as its harsh side.

"Well, is it you?" she says to Mr. Moore, as he comes up to her and gives his hand. "What are you roving about at this time of night for? You should be at home."

"Can a single man be said to have a home, madam?" he asks.

"Pooh!" says Mrs. Yorke, who despises conventional smoothness quite as much as her husband does, and practises it as little, and whose plain speaking, on all occasions, is carried to a point calculated, sometimes, to awaken admiration, but oftener alarm—"Pooh! you need not talk nonsense to me; a single man can have a home if he likes. Pray, does not your sister make a home for you?"

"Not she," joined in Mr. Yorke. "Hortense is an honest lass; but when I was Robert's age, I had five or six sisters, all as decent and proper as she is, but you see, Hesther, for all that, it did not hinder me from looking out for a wife."

"And sorely he has repented marrying me," added Mrs. Yorke, who liked occasionally to crack a dry jest against matrimony, even though it should be at her own expense. "He has repented it in sackcloth and ashes, Robert Moore, as you may well believe when you see his punishment (here she pointed to

her children). Who would burden themselves with such a set of great, rough lads as those, if they could help it? It is not only bringing them into the world, though that is bad enough, but they are all to feed, to clothe, to rear, to settle in life. Young sir, when you feel tempted to marry, think of our four sons and two daughters, and look twice before you leap."

"I am not tempted now, at any rate: I think these are not times for marrying or giving in marriage."

A lugubrious sentiment of this sort was sure to obtain Mrs. Yorke's approbation: she nodded and groaned acquiescence; but in a minute she said:—

"I make little account of the wisdom of a Solomon of your age; it will be upset by the first fancy that crosses you. Meantime, sit down, sir: you can talk, I suppose, as well sitting as standing?"

This was her way of inviting her guest to take a chair; he had no sooner obeyed her, than little Jessy jumped from her father's knee, and ran into Mr. Moore's arms, which were very promptly held out to receive her.

"You talk of marrying him," said she to her mother, quite indignantly, as she was lifted lightly to his knee, "and he is married now, or as good: he promised that I should be his wife last summer, the first time he saw me in my new white frock and blue sash. Didn't he, father?" (These children were not

accustomed to say papa and mama; their mother would allow no such "namby-pamby.")

"Ay, my little lassie, he promised; I'll bear witness. But make him say it over again now, Jessy: such as he are only false loons."

"He is not false: he is too bonnie to be false," said Jessy, looking up to her tall sweetheart with the fullest confidence in his faith.

"Bonnie!" cried Mr. Yorke; "that's the reason that he should be, and proof that he is—a scoundrel."

"But he looks too sorrowful to be false," here interposed a quiet voice from behind the father's chair. "If he were always laughing, I should think he forgot promises soon, but Mr. Moore never laughs."

"Your sentimental buck is the greatest cheat of all, Rose," remarked Mr. Yorke.

"He 's not sentimental," said Rose.

Mr. Moore turned to her with a little surprise, smiling at the same time.

"How do you know I am not sentimental, Rose?"

"Because I heard a lady say you were not."

"Voilà, qui devient intéressant!" exclaimed Mr. Yorke, hitching his chair nearer the fire. "A lady! That has quite a romantic twang: we must guess who it is. Rosy, whisper the name low to your father: don't let *him* hear."

"Rose, don't be too forward to talk," here interrupted Mrs. Yorke, in her usual kill-joy fashion; "nor Jessy either: it becomes all children, especially girls, to be silent in the presence of their elders."

"Why have we tongues, then?" asked Jessy, pertly; while Rose only looked at her mother with an expression that seemed to say, she should take that maxim in, and think it over at her leisure. After two minutes' grave deliberation, she asked,—

"And why especially girls, mother?"

"Firstly, because I say so; and secondly, because discretion and reserve is a girl's best wisdom."

"My dear madam," observed Moore, "what you say is excellent: it reminds me, indeed, of my dear sister's observations; but really it is not applicable to these little ones. Let Rose and Jessy talk to me freely, or my chief pleasure in coming here is gone. I like their prattle: it does me good."

"Does it not?" asked Jessy. "More good than if the rough lads came round you: you call them rough, mother, yourself."

"Yes, mignonne, a thousand times more good: I have rough lads enough about me all day long, poulet."

"There are plenty of people," continued she, "who take notice of the boys: all my uncles and

aunts seem to think their nephews better than their nieces; and when gentlemen come here to dine, it is always Matthew, and Mark, and Martin, that are talked to, and never Rose and me. Mr. Moore is *our* friend, and we 'll keep him: but, mind Rose, he 's not so much your friend as he is mine: he is my *particular acquaintance;* remember that!" And she held up her small hand with an admonitory gesture.

Rose was quite accustomed to be admonished by that small hand; her will daily bent itself to that of the impetuous little Jessy: she was guided — overruled by Jessy in a thousand things. On all occasions of show and pleasure, Jessy took the lead, and Rose fell quietly into the background; whereas, when the disagreeables of life — its work and privations were in question, Rose instinctively took upon her, in addition to her own share, what she could of her sister's. Jessy had already settled it in her mind that she, when she was old enough, was to be married; Rose, she decided, must be an old maid, to live with her, look after her children, keep her house. This state of things is not uncommon between two sisters, where one is plain and the other pretty; but in this case, if there *was* a difference in external appearance, Rose had the advantage: her face was more regular-featured than that of the piquant little Jessy. Jessy, however,

was destined to possess, along with sprightly intelligence and vivacious feeling, the gift of fascination, the power to charm when, where, and whom she would. Rose was to have a fine, generous soul, a noble intellect profoundly cultivated, a heart as true as steel, but the manner to attract was not to be hers.

"Now, Rose, tell me the name of this lady who denied that I was sentimental," urged Mr. Moore.

Rose had no idea of tantalization, or she would have held him a while in doubt; she answered briefly:—

"I can't: I don't know her name."

"Describe her to me: what was she like? Where did you see her?"

"When Jessy and I went to spend the day at Whinbury with Kate and Susan Pearson, who were just come home from school, there was a party at Mrs. Pearson's, and some grown-up ladies were sitting in a corner of the drawing-room talking about you."

"Did you know none of them?"

"Hannah, and Harriet, and Dora, and Mary Sykes."

"Good. Were they abusing me, Rosy?"

"Some of them were: they called you a misanthrope: I remember the word—I looked for it in the dictionary when I came home: it means a man-hater."

"What besides?"

"Hannah Sykes said you were a solemn puppy."

"Better!" cried Mr. Yorke, laughing. "Oh! excellent! Hannah—that 's the one with the red hair: a fine girl, but half-witted."

"She has wit enough for me, it appears," said Moore. "A solemn puppy, indeed! Well, Rose, go on."

"Miss Pearson said she believed there was a good deal of affectation about you, and that with your dark hair and pale face, you looked to her like some sort of a sentimental noodle."

Again Mr. Yorke laughed: Mrs. Yorke even joined in this time. "You see in what esteem you are held behind your back," said she; "yet I believe *that* Miss Pearson would like to catch you: she set her cap at you when you first came into the country, old as she is."

"And who contradicted her, Rosy?" inquired Moore.

"A lady whom I don't know, because she never visits here, though I see her every Sunday at church; she sits in the pew near the pulpit. I generally look at her, instead of looking at my prayer-book; for she is like a picture in our dining-room, that woman with the dove in her hand: at least she has eyes like it, and a nose too, a straight nose, that makes all her face look, somehow, what I call clear."

"And you don't know her!" exclaimed Jessy, in a tone of exceeding surprise. "That's so like Rose. Mr. Moore, I often wonder in what sort of a world my sister lives; I am sure she does not live all her time in this: one is continually finding out that she is quite ignorant of some little matter which everybody else knows. To think of her going solemnly to church every Sunday, and looking all service-time at one particular person, and never so much as asking that person's name! She means Caroline Helstone, the Rector's niece: I remember all about it. Miss Helstone was quite angry with Anne Pearson: she said, 'Robert Moore is neither affected nor sentimental; you mistake his character utterly, or rather not one of you here knows anything about it.' Now, shall I tell you what she is like? I can tell what people are like, and how they are dressed better than Rose can."

"Let us hear."

"She is nice; she is fair; she has a pretty white slender throat; she has long curls, not stiff ones, they hang loose and soft, their colour is brown but not dark; she speaks quietly, with a clear tone; she never makes a bustle in moving; she often wears a grey silk dress; she is neat all over: her gowns, and her shoes, and her gloves always fit her. She is what I call a lady, and when I am as tall as

she is, I mean to be like her. Shall I suit you if I am? Will you really marry me?"

Moore stroked Jessy's hair: for a minute he seemed as if he would draw her nearer to him, but instead he put her a little farther off.

"Oh! you won't have me? You push me away."

"Why, Jessy, you care nothing about me: you never come to see me now at the Hollow."

"Because you don't ask me."

Hereupon Mr. Moore gave both the little girls an invitation to pay him a visit next day, promising, that as he was going to Stilbro' in the morning, he would buy them each a present, of what nature he would not then declare, but they must come and see. Jessy was about to reply, when one of the boys unexpectedly broke in.

"I know that Miss Helstone you have all been palavering about: she's an ugly girl. I hate her! I hate all womenites. I wonder what they were made for."

"Martin!" said his father—for Martin it was—the lad only answered by turning his cynical young face, half-arch, half-truculent, towards the paternal chair. "Martin, my lad, thou'rt a swaggering whelp, now; thou wilt some day be an outrageous puppy: but stick to those sentiments of thine. See, I'll write down the words now i' my pocket-book. (The

senior took out a morocco-covered book, and deliberately wrote therein.) Ten years hence, Martin, if thou and I be both alive at that day, I'll remind thee of that speech."

"I'll say the same then: I mean always to hate women; they're such dolls: they do nothing but dress themselves finely, and go swimming about to be admired. I'll never marry: I'll be a bachelor."

"Stick to it! stick to it! Hesther (addressing his wife) I was like him when I was his age, a regular misogamist; and, behold! by the time I was three-and-twenty,—being then a tourist in France and Italy, and the Lord knows where!—I curled my hair every night before I went to bed, and wore a ring i' my ear, and would have worn one i' my nose if it had been the fashion—and all that I might make mysel' pleasing and charming to the ladies. Martin will do the like."

"Will I? Never! I've more sense. What a Guy you were, father! As to dressing, I make this vow: I'll never dress more finely than as you see me at present. Mr. Moore, I'm clad in blue cloth from top to toe, and they laugh at me, and call me sailor at the grammar-school. I laugh louder at them, and say they are all magpies and parrots, with their coats one colour, and their waistcoats another, and their trousers a third. I'll always wear blue cloth, and nothing but blue cloth: it is beneath a human

being's dignity to dress himself in particoloured garments."

"Ten years hence, Martin, no tailor's shop will have choice of colours varied enough for thy exacting taste; no perfumer's stores essences exquisite enough for thy fastidious senses."

Martin looked disdain, but vouchsafed no further reply. Meantime Mark, who for some minutes had been rummaging amongst a pile of books on a side-table, took the word. He spoke in a peculiarly slow, quiet voice, and with an expression of still irony in his face not easy to describe.

"Mr. Moore," said he, "you think perhaps it was a compliment on Miss Caroline Helstone's part to say you were not sentimental. I thought you appeared confused when my sisters told you the words, as if you felt flattered: you turned red, just like a certain vain little lad at our school, who always thinks proper to blush when he gets a rise in the class. For your benefit, Mr. Moore, I've been looking up the word 'sentimental' in the dictionary, and I find it to mean 'tinctured with sentiment.' On examining further, 'sentiment' is explained to be thought, idea, notion. A sentimental man, then, is one who has thoughts, ideas, notions; an unsentimental man is one destitute of thought, idea, or notion."

And Mark stopped: he did not smile, he did not

look round for admiration: he had said his say, and was silent.

"Ma foi! mon ami," observed Mr. Moore to Yorke; "ce sont vraiment des enfants terribles, que les vôtres!"

Rose, who had been listening attentively to Mark's speech, replied to him:—

"There are different kinds of thoughts, ideas, and notions," said she, "good and bad: sentimental must refer to the bad, or Miss Helstone must have taken it in that sense, for she was not blaming Mr. Moore; she was defending him."

"That's my kind little advocate!" said Moore, taking Rose's hand.

"She was defending him," repeated Rose, "as I should have done had I been in her place, for the other ladies seemed to speak spitefully."

"Ladies always do speak spitefully," observed Martin; "it is the nature of womenites to be spiteful."

Matthew now, for the first time, opened his lips:—

"What a fool Martin is, to be always gabbling about what he does not understand."

"It is my privilege, as a freeman, to gabble on whatever subject I like," responded Martin.

"You use it, or rather abuse it, to such an extent," rejoined the elder brother, "that you prove you ought to have been a slave."

"A slave! a slave! That to a Yorke, and from a Yorke! This fellow," he added, standing up at the table, and pointing across it to Matthew,—"this fellow forgets, what every cottier in Briarfield knows, that all born of our house have that arched instep under which water can flow—proof that there has not been a slave of the blood for three hundred years."

"Mountebank!" said Matthew.

"Lads, be silent!" exclaimed Mr. Yorke. "Martin, you are a mischief-maker: there would have been no disturbance, but for you."

"Indeed! Is that correct? Did I begin, or did Matthew? Had I spoken to him when he accused me of gabbling like a fool?"

"A presumptuous fool!" repeated Matthew.

Here Mrs. Yorke commenced rocking herself—rather a portentous movement with her, as it was occasionally followed, especially when Matthew was worsted in a conflict, by a fit of hysterics.

"I don't see why I should bear insolence from Matthew Yorke, or what right he has to use bad language to me," observed Martin.

"He has no right, my lad; but forgive your brother until seventy and seven times," said Mr. Yorke soothingly.

"Always alike, and theory and practice always adverse!" murmured Martin as he turned to leave the room.

"Where art thou going, my son?" asked the father.

"Somewhere where I shall be safe from insult: if in this house I can find any such place."

Matthew laughed very insolently: Martin threw a strange look at him, and trembled through all his slight lad's frame, but he restrained himself.

"I suppose there is no objection to my withdrawing?" he inquired.

"No; go, my lad: but remember not to bear malice."

Martin went, and Matthew sent another insolent laugh after him. Rose, lifting her fair head from Moore's shoulder, against which, for a moment, it had been resting, said, as she directed a steady gaze to Matthew—"Martin is grieved, and you are glad; but I would rather be Martin than you: I dislike your nature."

Here Mr. Moore, by way of averting, or at least escaping, a scene—which a sob from Mrs. Yorke warned him was likely to come on—rose, and putting Jessy off his knee, he kissed her and Rose; reminding them, at the same time, to be sure and come to the Hollow in good time to-morrow afternoon: then, having taken leave of his hostess, he said to Mr. Yorke—"May I speak a word with you?" and was followed by him from the room. Their brief conference took place in the hall.

"Have you employment for a good workman?" asked Moore.

"A nonsense question in these times, when you know that every master has many good workmen to whom he cannot give full employment."

"You must oblige me by taking on this man, if possible."

"My lad, I can take on no more hands to oblige all England."

"It does not signify; I must find him a place somewhere."

"Who is he?"

"William Farren."

"I know William; a right-down honest man is William."

"He has been out of work three months; he has a large family: we are sure they cannot live without wages: he was one of a deputation of cloth-dressers who came to me this morning to complain and threaten. William did not threaten: he only asked me to give them rather more time,—to make my changes more slowly. You know I cannot do that: straitened on all sides as I am, I have nothing for it but to push on. I thought it would be idle to palaver long with them. I sent them away, after arresting a rascal amongst them, whom I hope to transport—a fellow who preaches at the chapel yonder sometimes."

"Not Moses Barraclough?"

"Yes."

"Ah! you've arrested him? Good! Then out of a scoundrel you're going to make a martyr: you've done a wise thing."

"I've done a right thing. Well, the short and the long of it is, I'm determined to get Farren a place, and I reckon on you to give him one."

"This is cool, however!" exclaimed Mr. Yorke. "What right have you to reckon on me to provide for your dismissed workmen? What do I know about your Farrens and your Williams? I've heard he's an honest man; but am I to support all the honest men in Yorkshire? You may say that would be no great charge to undertake; but great or little, I'll none of it."

"Come, Mr. Yorke, what can you find for him to do?"

"*I* find! You'll make me use language I'm not accustomed to use. I wish you would go home—here is the door—set off."

Moore sat down on one of the hall chairs.

"You can't give him work in your mill—good—but you have land: find him some occupation on your land, Mr. Yorke."

"Bob, I thought you cared nothing about our 'lourdauds de paysans:' I don't understand this change."

"I do: the fellow spoke to me nothing but truth and sense. I answered him just as roughly as I did the rest, who jabbered mere gibberish. I couldn't make distinctions there and then: his appearance told what he had gone through lately clearer than his words: but where is the use of explaining? Let him have work."

"Let him have it yourself. If you are so very much in earnest, strain a point."

"If there was a point left in my affairs to strain, I would strain it till it cracked again; but I received letters this morning which show me pretty nearly where I stand, and it is not far off the end of the plank. My foreign market, at any rate, is gorged. If there is no change—if there dawns no prospect of peace—if the Orders in Council are not, at least, suspended, so as to open our way in the West—I do not know where I am to turn. I see no more light than if I were sealed in a rock; so that for me to pretend to offer a man a livelihood would be to do a dishonest thing."

"Come, let us take a turn on the front: it is a starlight night," said Mr. Yorke.

They passed out, closing the front-door after them, and, side by side, paced the frost-white pavement to and fro.

"Settle about Farren at once," urged Mr. Moore.

"You have large fruit-gardens at Yorke Mills: he is a good gardener: give him work there."

"Well, so be it. I'll send for him to-morrow, and we'll see. And now, my lad, you're concerned about the condition of your affairs?"

"Yes: a second failure—which I may delay, but which, at this moment, I see no way finally to avert—would blight the name of Moore completely; and you are aware I had fine intentions of paying off every debt, and re-establishing the old firm on its former basis."

"You want capital—that's all you want."

"Yes; but you might as well say that breath is all a dead man wants to live."

"I know—I know capital is not to be had for the asking; and if you were a married man, and had a family, like me, I should think your case pretty nigh desperate; but the young and unencumbered have chances peculiar to themselves. I hear gossip now and then about your being on the eve of marriage with this miss and that; but I suppose it is none of it true?"

"You may well suppose that: I think I am not in a position to be dreaming of marriage. Marriage! I cannot bear the word: it sounds so silly and utopian. I have settled it decidedly that marriage and love are superfluities, intended only for the rich, who live at ease, and have no need to take thought

for the morrow; or desperations, the last and reckless joy of the deeply wretched, who never hope to rise out of the slough of their utter poverty."

"I should not think so if I were circumstanced as you are: I should think I could very likely get a wife with a few thousands, who would suit both me and my affairs."

"I wonder where?"

"Would you try, if you had a chance?"

"I don't know: it depends on—in short, it depends on many things."

"Would you take an old woman?"

"I 'd rather break stones on the road."

"So would I. Would you take an ugly one?"

"Bah! I hate ugliness and delight in beauty: my eyes and heart, Yorke, take pleasure in a sweet, young, fair face, as they are repelled by a grim, rugged, meagre one: soft delicate lines and hues please—harsh ones prejudice me. I won't have an ugly wife."

"Not if she were rich."

"Not if she were dressed in gems. I could not love—I could not fancy—I could not endure her. My taste must have satisfaction, or disgust would break out in despotism—or worse—freeze to utter iciness."

"What, Bob, if you married an honest, good-natured, and wealthy lass, though a little hard-

favoured, couldn't you put up with the high cheek-bones, the rather wide mouth, and reddish hair?"

"I'll never try, I tell you. Grace at least I *will* have, and youth and symmetry—yes, and what I call beauty."

"And poverty, and a nursery full of bairns you can neither clothe nor feed, and very soon an anxious faded mother—and then bankruptcy, discredit—a life-long struggle."

"Let me alone, Yorke."

"If you are romantic, Robert, and especially if you are already in love, it is of no use talking."

"I am not romantic. I am stript of romance as bare as the white tenters in that field are of cloth."

"Always use such figures of speech, lad; I can understand them: and there is no love-affair to disturb your judgment?"

"I thought I had said enough on that subject before. Love for me? Stuff!"

"Well, then; if you are sound both in heart and head, there is no reason why you should not profit by a good chance if it offers: therefore, wait and see."

"You are quite oracular, Yorke."

"I think I am a bit i' that line. I promise ye naught and I advise ye naught; but I bid ye keep your heart up, and be guided by circumstances."

"My namesake—the physician's almanack could not speak more guardedly."

"In the mean time, I care naught about ye, Robert Moore: ye are nothing akin to me or mine, and whether ye lose or find a fortune it mak's no difference to me. Go home, now: it has stricken ten. Miss Hortense will be wondering where ye are."

CHAPTER IX.

OLD MAIDS.

TIME wore on, and spring matured. The surface of England began to look pleasant: her fields grew green, her hills fresh, her gardens blooming; but at heart she was no better: still her poor were wretched, still their employers were harassed: commerce, in some of its branches, seemed threatened with paralysis, for the war continued; England's blood was shed and her wealth lavished: all, it seemed, to attain most inadequate ends. Some tidings there were indeed occasionally of successes in the Peninsula, but these came in slowly: long intervals occurred between, in which no note was heard but the insolent self-felicitations of Bonaparte on his continued triumphs. Those who suffered from the results of the war felt this tedious, and—as they thought—hopeless, struggle against what

their fears or their interests taught them to regard as an invincible power, most insufferable: they demanded peace on any terms: men like Yorke and Moore—and there were thousands whom the war placed where it placed them, shuddering on the verge of bankruptcy—insisted on peace with the energy of desperation.

They held meetings; they made speeches; they got up petitions to extort this boon: on what terms it was made, they cared not.

All men, taken singly, are more or less selfish; and taken in bodies they are intensely so. The British merchant is no exception to this rule: the mercantile classes illustrate it strikingly. These classes certainly think too exclusively of making money: they are too oblivious of every national consideration but that of extending England's (*i. e.* their own) commerce. Chivalrous feeling, disinterestedness, pride in honour, is too dead in their hearts. A land ruled by them alone would too often make ignominious submission—not at all from the motives Christ teaches, but rather from those Mammon instils. During the late war, the tradesmen of England would have endured buffets from the French on the right cheek and on the left; their cloak they would have given to Napoleon, and then have politely offered him their coat also, nor would they have withheld their waistcoat if urged: they would have

prayed permission only to retain their one other garment, for the sake of the purse in its pocket. Not one spark of spirit, not one symptom of resistance would they have shown till the hand of the Corsican bandit had grasped that beloved purse; *then*, perhaps, transfigured at once into British bulldogs, they would have sprung at the robber's throat, and there they would have fastened, and there hung —inveterate, insatiable, till the treasure had been restored. Tradesmen, when they speak against war, always profess to hate it because it is a bloody and barbarous proceeding: you would think, to hear them talk, that they are peculiarly civilized—especially gentle and kindly of disposition to their fellow-men. This is not the case. Many of them are extremely narrow and cold-hearted, have no good feeling for any class but their own, are distant —even hostile to all others; call them useless; seem to question their right to exist; seem to grudge them the very air they breathe, and to think the circumstance of their eating, drinking, and living in decent houses, quite unjustifiable. They do not know what others do in the way of helping, pleasing, or teaching their race; they will not trouble themselves to inquire: whoever is not in trade is accused of eating the bread of idleness, of passing a useless existence. Long may it be ere England really becomes a nation of shopkeepers!

We have already said that Moore was no self-sacrificing patriot, and we have also explained what circumstances rendered him specially prone to confine his attention and efforts to the furtherance of his individual interest; accordingly, when he felt himself urged a second time to the brink of ruin, none struggled harder than he against the influences which would have thrust him over. What he *could* do towards stirring agitation in the north against the war, he did, and he instigated others whose money and connections gave them more power than he possessed. Sometimes, by flashes, he felt there was little reason in the demands his party made on Government: when he heard of all Europe threatened by Bonaparte, and of all Europe arming to resist him; when he saw Russia menaced, and beheld Russia rising, incensed and stern, to defend her frozen soil, her wild provinces of serfs, her dark native despotism, from the tread, the yoke, the tyranny of a foreign victor, he knew that England, a free realm, could not *then* depute her sons to make concessions and propose terms to the unjust, grasping French leader. When news came from time to time of the movements of that MAN then representing England in the Peninsula; of his advance from success to success—that advance so deliberate but so unswerving, so circumspect but so certain, so "unhasting" but so "unresting;" when he read Lord

Wellington's own despatches in the columns of the newspapers, documents written by Modesty to the dictation of Truth—Moore confessed at heart that a power was with the troops of Britain, of that vigilant, enduring, genuine, unostentatious sort, which must win victory to the side it led, in the end. In the end! but that end, he thought, was yet far off; and meantime he, Moore, as an individual, would be crushed, his hopes ground to dust: it was himself he had to care for, his hopes he had to pursue, and he would fulfil his destiny.

He fulfilled it so vigorously that ere long he came to a decisive rupture with his old Tory friend, the Rector. They quarrelled at a public meeting, and afterwards exchanged some pungent letters in the newspapers. Mr. Helstone denounced Moore as a Jacobin, ceased to see him, would not even speak to him when they met: he intimated also to his niece, very distinctly, that her communications with Hollow's cottage must for the present cease; she must give up taking French lessons. The language, he observed, was a bad and frivolous one at the best, and most of the works it boasted were bad and frivolous, highly injurious in their tendency to weak female minds. He wondered (he remarked parenthetically) what noodle first made it the fashion to teach women French: nothing was more improper for them; it was like feeding a rickety child on

chalk and water-gruel: Caroline must give it up, and give up her cousins too: they were dangerous people.

Mr. Helstone quite expected opposition to this order: he expected tears. Seldom did he trouble himself about Caroline's movements, but a vague idea possessed him that she was fond of going to Hollow's cottage: also he suspected that she liked Robert Moore's occasional presence at the Rectory. The Cossack had perceived that whereas if Malone stepped in of an evening to make himself sociable and charming, by pinching the ears of an aged black cat, which usually shared with Miss Helstone's feet the accommodation of her footstool, or by borrowing a fowlingpiece, and banging away at a tool-shed door in the garden while enough of daylight remained to show that conspicuous mark — keeping the passage and sitting-room doors meantime uncomfortably open, for the convenience of running in and out to announce his failures and successes with noisy brusquerie—he had observed that under such entertaining circumstances, Caroline had a trick of disappearing, tripping noiselessly up-stairs, and remaining invisible till called down to supper. On the other hand, when Robert Moore was the guest, though he elicited no vivacities from the cat, did nothing to it, indeed, beyond occasionally coaxing it from the stool to his knee, and there letting it purr, climb to his

shoulder and rub its head against his cheek; though there was no ear-splitting cracking off of firearms, no diffusion of sulphurous gunpowder perfume, no noise, no boasting during his stay, that still Caroline sat in the room, and seemed to find wondrous content in the stitching of Jew-basket pincushions, and the knitting of Missionary-basket socks.

She was very quiet, and Robert paid her little attention, scarcely ever addressing his discourse to her; but Mr. Helstone, not being one of those elderly gentlemen who are easily blinded, on the contrary, finding himself on all occasions extremely wide-awake, had watched them when they bade each other good-night: he had just seen their eyes meet once—only once. Some natures would have taken pleasure in the glance then surprised, because there was no harm and some delight in it. It was by no means a glance of mutual intelligence, for mutual love-secrets existed not between them: there was nothing then of craft and concealment to offend; only Mr. Moore's eyes, looking into Caroline's, felt they were clear and gentle, and Caroline's eyes, encountering Mr. Moore's, confessed they were manly and searching: each acknowledged the charm in his or her own way. Moore smiled slightly, and Caroline coloured as slightly. Mr. Helstone could, on the spot, have rated them both: they annoyed him; why?—impossible to say. If you had asked him

what Moore merited at that moment, he would have said "a horsewhip;" if you had inquired into Caroline's deserts, he would have adjudged her a box on the ear; if you had further demanded the reason of such chastisements, he would have stormed against flirtation and love-making, and vowed he would have no such folly going on under his roof.

These private considerations, combined with political reasons, fixed his resolution of separating the cousins. He announced his will to Caroline one evening, as she was sitting at work near the drawing-room window: her face was turned towards him, and the light fell full upon it. It had struck him a few minutes before that she was looking paler and quieter than she used to look; it had not escaped him either that Robert Moore's name had never, for some three weeks past, dropped from her lips; nor during the same space of time had that personage made his appearance at the Rectory. Some suspicion of clandestine meetings haunted his mind; having but an indifferent opinion of women, he always suspected them: he thought they needed constant watching. It was in a tone drily significant he desired her to cease her daily visits to the Hollow; he expected a start, a look of deprecation: the start he saw, but it was a very slight one; no look whatever was directed to him.

"Do you hear me?" he asked.

"Yes, uncle."

"Of course, you mean to attend to what I say."

"Yes, certainly."

"And there must be no letter-scribbling to your cousin Hortense: no intercourse whatever. I do not approve of the principles of the family; they are Jacobinical."

"Very well," said Caroline quietly. She acquiesced then: there was no vexed flushing of the face, no gathering tears: the shadowy thoughtfulness which had covered her features ere Mr. Helstone spoke remained undisturbed: she was obedient.

Yes, perfectly; because the mandate coincided with her own previous judgment; because it was now become pain to her to go to Hollow's cottage; nothing met her there but disappointment: hope and love had quitted that little tenement, for Robert seemed to have deserted its precincts. Whenever she asked after him—which she very seldom did, since the mere utterance of his name made her face grow hot—the answer was, he was from home, or he was quite taken up with business: Hortense feared he was killing himself by application: he scarcely ever took a meal in the house; he lived in the counting-house.

At church only Caroline had the chance of seeing him, and there she rarely looked at him: it was both

too much pain and too much pleasure to look: it excited too much emotion; and that it was all wasted emotion, she had learned well to comprehend.

Once, on a dark, wet Sunday, when there were few people at church, and when especially certain ladies were absent, of whose observant faculties and tomahawk tongues Caroline stood in awe, she had allowed her eye to seek Robert's pew, and to rest a while on its occupant. He was there alone: Hortense had been kept at home by prudent considerations relative to the rain and a new spring "chapeau." During the sermon, he sat with folded arms and eyes cast down, looking very sad and abstracted. When depressed, the very hue of his face seemed more dusk than when he smiled, and to-day cheek and forehead wore their most tintless and sober olive. By instinct Caroline knew, as she examined that clouded countenance, that his thoughts were running in no familiar or kindly channel; that they were far away, not merely from her, but from all which she could comprehend, or in which she could sympathize. Nothing that they had ever talked of together was now in his mind: he was wrapt from her by interests and responsibilities in which it was deemed such as she could have no part.

Caroline meditated in her own way on the subject; speculated on his feelings, on his life, on his fears, on

his fate; mused over the mystery of "business," tried to comprehend more about it than had ever been told her—to understand its perplexities, liabilities, duties, exactions; endeavoured to realize the state of mind of a "man of business," to enter into it, feel what he would feel, aspire to what he would aspire. Her earnest wish was to see things as they were, and not to be romantic. By dint of effort she contrived to get a glimpse of the light of truth here and there, and hoped that scant ray might suffice to guide her.

"Different, indeed," she concluded, "is Robert's mental condition to mine: I think only of him; he has no room, no leisure to think of me. The feeling called love is and has been for two years the predominant emotion of my heart; always there, always awake, always astir: quite other feelings absorb his reflections, and govern his faculties. He is rising now, going to leave the church, for service is over. Will he turn his head towards this pew?—no—not once—he has not one look for me: that is hard: a kind glance would have made me happy till to-morrow: I have not got it; he would not give it; he is gone. Strange that grief should now almost choke me, because another human being's eye has failed to greet mine."

That Sunday evening, Mr. Malone coming, as usual, to pass it with his Rector, Caroline withdrew after tea to her chamber. Fanny, knowing her

habits, had lit her a cheerful little fire, as the weather was so gusty and chill. Closeted there, silent and solitary, what could she do but think? She noiselessly paced to and fro the carpeted floor; her head drooped, her hands folded: it was irksome to sit: the current of reflection ran rapidly through her mind: to-night she was mutely excited.

Mute was the room,—mute the house. The double-door of the study muffled the voices of the gentlemen: the servants were quiet in the kitchen, engaged with books their young mistress had lent them; books which she had told them were "fit for Sunday reading." And she herself had another of the same sort open on the table, but she could not read it: its theology was incomprehensible to her, and her own mind was too busy, teeming, wandering, to listen to the language of another mind.

Then, too, her imagination was full of pictures: images of Moore; scenes where he and she had been together; winter fireside sketches; a glowing landscape of a hot summer afternoon passed with him in the bosom of Nunnely wood; divine vignettes of mild spring or mellow autumn moments, when she had sat at his side in Hollow's copse, listening to the call of the May cuckoo, or sharing the September treasure of nuts and ripe blackberries,—a wild dessert which it was her morning's pleasure to collect in a little basket, and cover with green leaves and

fresh blossoms, and her afternoon's delight to administer to Moore, berry by berry, and nut by nut, like a bird feeding its fledgling.

Robert's features and form were with her; the sound of his voice was quite distinct in her ear; his few caresses seemed renewed. But these joys being hollow, were, ere long, crushed in: the pictures faded, the voice failed, the visionary clasp melted chill from her hand, and where the warm seal of lips had made impress on her forehead, it felt now as if a sleety rain-drop had fallen. She returned from an enchanted region to the real world: for Nunnely wood in June, she saw her narrow chamber; for the songs of birds in alleys, she heard the rain on her casement; for the sigh of the south wind, came the sob of the mournful east; and for Moore's manly companionship, she had the thin illusion of her own dim shadow on the wall. Turning from the pale phantom which reflected herself in its outline, and her reverie in the drooped attitude of its dim head and colourless tresses, she sat down—inaction would suit the frame of mind into which she was now declining—she said to herself:—

"I have to live, perhaps, till seventy years. As far as I know, I have good health: half a century of existence may lie before me. How am I to occupy it? What am I to do to fill the interval of time which spreads between me and the grave?"

She reflected.

"I shall not be married, it appears," she continued. "I suppose, as Robert does not care for me, I shall never have a husband to love, nor little children to take care of. Till lately I had reckoned securely on the duties and affections of wife and mother to occupy my existence. I considered, somehow, as a matter of course, that I was growing up to the ordinary destiny, and never troubled myself to seek any other; but now, I perceive plainly, I may have been mistaken. Probably I shall be an old maid. I shall live to see Robert married to some one else, some rich lady: I shall never marry. What was I created for, I wonder? Where is my place in the world?"

She mused again.

"Ah! I see," she pursued presently, "that is the question which most old maids are puzzled to solve: other people solve it for them by saying, 'Your place is to do good to others, to be helpful whenever help is wanted.' That is right in some measure, and a very convenient doctrine for the people who hold it; but, I perceive, that certain sets of human beings are very apt to maintain that other sets should give up their lives to them and their service, and then they requite them by praise: they call them devoted and virtuous. Is this enough? Is it to live? Is there not a terrible

hollowness, mockery, want, craving, in that existence which is given away to others, for want of something of your own to bestow it on? I suspect there is. Does virtue lie in abnegation of self? I do not believe it. Undue humility makes tyranny; weak concession creates selfishness. The Romish religion especially teaches renunciation of self, submission to others, and nowhere are found so many grasping tyrants as in the ranks of the Romish priesthood. Each human being has his share of rights. I suspect it would conduce to the happiness and welfare of all, if each knew his allotment, and held to it as tenaciously as the martyr to his creed. Queer thoughts these, that surge in my mind: are they right thoughts? I am not certain.

"Well, life is short at the best: seventy years, they say, pass like a vapour, like a dream when one awaketh; and every path trod by human feet terminates in one bourne—the grave: the little chink in the surface of this great globe—the furrow where the mighty husbandman with the scythe deposits the seed he has shaken from the ripe stem; and there it falls, decays, and thence it springs again, when the world has rolled round a few times more. So much for the body: the soul meantime wings its long flight upward, folds its wings on the brink of the sea of fire and glass, and gazing down through the burning clearness, finds there mirrored the vision of the Chris-

tian's triple Godhead: the Sovereign Father; the Mediating Son; the Creator Spirit. Such words, at least, have been chosen to express what is inexpressible: to describe what baffles description. The soul's real hereafter, who shall guess?"

Her fire was decayed to its last cinder; Malone had departed; and now the study-bell rang for prayers.

The next day Caroline had to spend altogether alone, her uncle being gone to dine with his friend Dr. Boultby, vicar of Whinbury. The whole time she was talking inwardly in the same strain: looking forwards, asking what she was to do with life. Fanny, as she passed in and out of the room occasionally, intent on housemaid errands, perceived that her young mistress sat very still. She was always in the same place, always bent industriously over a piece of work: she did not lift her head to speak to Fanny, as her custom was, and when the latter remarked that the day was fine, and she ought to take a walk, she only said—"It is cold."

"You are very diligent at that sewing, Miss Caroline," continued the girl, approaching her little table.

"I am tired of it, Fanny."

"Then why do you go on with it? Put it down: read, or do something to amuse you."

"It is solitary in this house, Fanny: don't you think so?"

"I don't find it so, Miss. Me and Eliza are company for one another; but you are quite too still—you should visit more. Now, be persuaded; go up stairs and dress yourself smart, and go and take tea, in a friendly way, with Miss Mann or Miss Ainley: I am certain either of those ladies would be delighted to see you."

"But their houses are dismal: they are both old maids. I am certain old maids are a very unhappy race."

"Not they, Miss: they can't be unhappy; they take such care of themselves. They are all selfish."

"Miss Ainley is not selfish, Fanny: she is always doing good. How devotedly kind she was to her stepmother, as long as the old lady lived; and now when she is quite alone in the world, without brother or sister, or any one to care for her, how charitable she is to the poor, as far as her means permit. Still nobody thinks much of her, or has pleasure in going to see her: and how gentlemen always sneer at her!"

"They should n't, Miss; I believe she is a good woman: but gentlemen think only of ladies' looks."

"I 'll go and see her," exclaimed Caroline, starting up: "and if she asks me to stay to tea, I 'll

stay. How wrong it is to neglect people because they are not pretty, and young, and merry! And I will certainly call to see Miss Mann, too: she may not be amiable; but what has made her unamiable? What has life been to her?"

Fanny helped Miss Helstone to put away her work, and afterwards assisted her to dress.

"*You*'ll not be an old maid, Miss Caroline," she said, as she tied the sash of her brown-silk frock, having previously smoothed her soft, full, and shining curls; "there are no signs of an old maid about you."

Caroline looked at the little mirror before her, and she thought there were some signs. She could see that she was altered within the last month; that the hues of her complexion were paler, her eyes changed—a wan shade seemed to circle them, her countenance was dejected: she was not, in short, so pretty or so fresh as she used to be. She distantly hinted this to Fanny, from whom she got no direct answer, only a remark that people did vary in their looks; but that at her age a little falling away signified nothing,—she would soon come round again, and be plumper and rosier than ever. Having given this assurance, Fanny showed singular zeal in wrapping her up in warm shawls and handkerchiefs, till Caroline, nearly smothered with the weight, was fain to resist further additions.

She paid her visits: first to Miss Mann, for this was the most difficult point: Miss Mann was certainly not quite a loveable person. Till now, Caroline had always unhesitatingly declared she disliked her, and more than once she had joined her cousin Robert in laughing at some of her peculiarities. Moore was not habitually given to sarcasm, especially on anything humbler or weaker than himself; but he had once or twice happened to be in the room when Miss Mann had made a call on his sister, and after listening to her conversation and viewing her features for a time, he had gone out into the garden where his little cousin was tending some of his favourite flowers, and while standing near and watching her, he had amused himself with comparing fair youth—delicate and attractive—with shrivelled eld, livid and loveless, and in jestingly repeating to a smiling girl the vinegar discourse of a cankered old maid. Once on such an occasion, Caroline had said to him, looking up from the luxuriant creeper she was binding to its frame,—

"Ah! Robert, you do not like old maids. I, too, should come under the lash of your sarcasm, if I were an old maid."

"You an old maid!" he had replied. "A piquant notion suggested by lips of that tint and form. I can fancy you, though, at forty, quietly dressed, pale and sunk, but still with that straight nose,

white forehead, and those soft eyes. I suppose, too, you will keep your voice, which has another "timbre" than that hard, deep organ of Miss Mann's. Courage, Cary!—even at fifty you will not be repulsive."

"Miss Mann did not make herself, or tune her voice, Robert."

"Nature made her in the mood in which she makes her briars and thorns; whereas for the creation of some women, she reserves the May morning hours when with light and dew she wooes the primrose from the turf, and the lily from the wood-moss."

Ushered into Miss Mann's little parlour, Caroline found her as she always found her, surrounded by perfect neatness, cleanliness, and comfort; (after all, is it not a virtue in old maids that solitude rarely makes them negligent or disorderly?) no dust on her polished furniture, none on her carpet, fresh flowers in the vase on her table, a bright fire in the grate. She herself sat primly and somewhat grimly-tidy in a cushioned rocking-chair, her hands busied with some knitting: this was her favourite work, as it required the least exertion. She scarcely rose as Caroline entered; to avoid excitement was one of Miss Mann's aims in life: she had been composing

herself ever since she came down in the morning, and had just attained a certain lethargic state of tranquillity when the visitor's knock at the door startled her, and undid her day's work. She was scarcely pleased, therefore, to see Miss Helstone: she received her with reserve, bade her be seated, with austerity, and when she had got her placed opposite, she fixed her with her eye.

This was no ordinary doom—to be fixed with Miss Mann's eye. Robert Moore had undergone it once, and had never forgotten the circumstance.

He considered it quite equal to anything Medusa could do: he professed to doubt whether, since that infliction, his flesh had been quite what it was before, —whether there was not something stony in its texture. The gaze had had such an effect on him as to drive him promptly from the apartment and house; it had even sent him straightway up to the Rectory, where he had appeared in Caroline's presence with a very queer face, and amazed her by demanding a cousinly salute on the spot, to rectify a damage that had been done him.

Certainly Miss Mann had a formidable eye for one of the softer sex: it was prominent, and showed a great deal of the white, and looked as steadily, as unwinkingly, at you as if it were a steel ball soldered in her head; and when, while looking, she began to talk in an indescribably dry monotonous tone—a

tone without vibration or inflection—you felt as if a graven image of some bad spirit were addressing you. But it was all a figment of fancy, a matter of surface. Miss Mann's goblin-grimness scarcely went deeper than the angel-sweetness of hundreds of beauties. She was a perfectly honest, conscientious woman, who had performed duties in her day from whose severe anguish many a human Peri, gazelle-eyed, silken-tressed, and silver-tongued, would have shrunk appalled: she had passed alone through protracted scenes of suffering, exercised rigid self-denial, made large sacrifices of time, money, health for those who had repaid her only by ingratitude, and now her main—almost her sole—fault was, that she was censorious.

Censorious she certainly was. Caroline had not sat five minutes, ere her hostess, still keeping her under the spell of that dread and Gorgon gaze, began flaying alive certain of the families in the neighbourhood. She went to work at this business in a singularly cool, deliberate manner, like some surgeon practising with his scalpel on a lifeless subject: she made few distinctions; she allowed scarcely any one to be good; she dissected impartially almost all her acquaintance. If her auditress ventured now and then to put in a palliative word, she set it aside with a certain disdain. Still, though thus pitiless in moral anatomy, she was no scandal-monger: she

never disseminated really malignant or dangerous reports: it was not her heart so much as her temper that was wrong.

Caroline made this discovery for the first time to-day; and, moved thereby to regret divers unjust judgments she had more than once passed on the crabbed old maid, she began to talk to her softly, not in sympathizing words, but with a sympathizing voice. The loneliness of her condition struck her visitor in a new light; as did also the character of her ugliness: a bloodless pallor of complexion, and deeply worn lines of feature. The girl pitied the solitary and afflicted woman; her looks told what she felt: a sweet countenance is never so sweet as when the moved heart animates it with compassionate tenderness. Miss Mann, seeing such a countenance raised to her, was touched in her turn: she acknowledged her sense of the interest thus unexpectedly shown in her, who usually met with only coldness and ridicule, by replying to her candidly. Communicative on her own affairs she usually was not, because no one cared to listen to her; but to-day she became so, and her confidant shed tears as she heard her speak: for she told of cruel, slow-wasting, obstinate sufferings. Well might she be corpse-like; well might she look grim, and never smile; well might she wish to avoid excitement, to gain and retain composure! Caroline, when she knew all, acknowledged that Miss Mann

was rather to be admired for fortitude than blamed for moroseness. Reader! when you behold an aspect for whose constant gloom and frown you cannot account, whose unvarying cloud exasperates you by its apparent causelessness, be sure that there is a canker somewhere, and a canker not the less deeply corroding because concealed.

Miss Mann felt that she was understood partly, and wished to be understood further; for however old, plain, humble, desolate, afflicted we may be, so long as our hearts preserve the feeblest spark of life, they preserve also, shivering near that pale ember, a starved, ghostly longing for appreciation and affection. To this extenuated spectre, perhaps, a crumb is not thrown once a year; but when ahungered and athirst to famine—when all humanity has forgotten the dying tenant of a decaying house—Divine Mercy remembers the mourner, and a shower of manna falls for lips that earthly nutriment is to pass no more. Biblical promises, heard first in health, but then unheeded, come whispering to the couch of sickness: it is felt that a pitying God watches what all mankind have forsaken; the tender compassion of Jesus is recalled and relied on: the faded eye, gazing beyond Time, sees a Home, a Friend, a Refuge in Eternity.

Miss Mann, drawn on by the still attention of her listener, proceeded to allude to circumstances in her

past life. She spoke like one who tells the truth—simply, and with a certain reserve: she did not boast, nor did she exaggerate. Caroline found that the old maid had been a most devoted daughter and sister, an unwearied watcher by lingering deathbeds; that to prolonged and unrelaxing attendance on the sick, the malady that now poisoned her own life owed its origin; that to one wretched relative she had been a support and succour in the depths of self-earned degradation, and that it was still her hand which kept him from utter destitution. Miss Helstone stayed the whole evening, omitting to pay her other intended visit; and when she left Miss Mann, it was with the determination to try in future to excuse her faults, never again to make light of her peculiarities or to laugh at her plainness; and, above all things, not to neglect her, but to come once a-week, and to offer her, from one human heart at least, the homage of affection and respect: she felt she could now sincerely give her a small tribute of each feeling.

Caroline, on her return, told Fanny she was very glad she had gone out, as she felt much better for the visit. The next day she failed not to seek Miss Ainley. This lady was in narrower circumstances than Miss Mann, and her dwelling was more humble: it was, however, if possible, yet more exquisitely clean; though the decayed gentlewoman could not

afford to keep a servant, but waited on herself, and had only the occasional assistance of a little girl who lived in a cottage near.

Not only was Miss Ainley poorer, but she was even plainer than the other old maid. In her first youth she must have been ugly; now, at the age of fifty, she was *very* ugly. At first sight, all but peculiarly well-disciplined minds were apt to turn from her with annoyance; to conceive against her a prejudice, simply on the ground of her unattractive look. Then she was prim in dress and manner: she looked, spoke, and moved the complete old maid.

Her welcome to Caroline was formal, even in its kindness—for it was kind; but Miss Helstone excused this. She knew something of the benevolence of the heart which beat under that starched kerchief; all the neighbourhood—at least all the female neighbourhood—knew something of it: no one spoke against Miss Ainley except lively young gentlemen, and inconsiderate old ones, who declared her hideous.

Caroline was soon at home in that tiny parlour; a kind hand took from her her shawl and bonnet, and installed her in the most comfortable seat near the fire. The young and the antiquated woman were presently deep in kindly conversation, and soon Caroline became aware of the power a most serene, unselfish, and benignant mind could exercise over those to

whom it was developed. She talked never of herself—always of others. Their faults she passed over; her theme was their wants, which she sought to supply; their sufferings, which she longed to alleviate. She was religious—a professor of religion—what some would call "a saint," and she referred to religion often in sanctioned phrase—in phrase which those who possess a perception of the ridiculous, without owning the power of exactly testing and truly judging character, would certainly have esteemed a proper subject for satire: a matter for mimicry and laughter. They would have been hugely mistaken for their pains. Sincerity is never ludicrous; it is always respectable. Whether truth—be it religious or moral truth—speak eloquently and in well-chosen language or not, its voice should be heard with reverence. Let those who cannot nicely, and with certainty, discern the difference between the tones of hypocrisy and those of sincerity, never presume to laugh at all, lest they should have the miserable misfortune to laugh in the wrong place, and commit impiety when they think they are achieving wit.

Not from Miss Ainley's own lips did Caroline hear of her good works; but she knew much of them nevertheless: her beneficence was the familiar topic of the poor in Briarfield. They were not works of almsgiving: the old maid was too poor to give much, though she straitened herself to privation that she

might contribute her mite when needful: they were the works of a Sister of Charity, far more difficult to perform than those of a Lady Bountiful. She would watch by any sickbed: she seemed to fear no disease; she would nurse the poorest whom none else would nurse: she was serene, humble, kind, and equable through everything.

For this goodness she got but little reward in this life. Many of the poor became so accustomed to her services that they hardly thanked her for them: the rich heard them mentioned with wonder, but were silent, from a sense of shame at the difference between her sacrifices and their own. Many ladies, however, respected her deeply: they could not help it; one gentleman—one only—gave her his friendship and perfect confidence: this was Mr. Hall, the vicar of Nunnely. He said, and said truly, that her life came nearer the life of Christ, than that of any other human being he had ever met with. You must not think, reader, that in sketching Miss Ainley's character, I depict a figment of imagination —no—we seek the originals of such portraits in real life only.

Miss Helstone studied well the mind and heart now revealed to her. She found no high intellect to admire: the old maid was merely sensible; but she discovered so much goodness, so much usefulness, so much mildness, patience, truth, that she bent her

own mind before Miss Ainley's in reverence. What was her love of nature, what was her sense of beauty, what were her more varied and fervent emotions, what was her deeper power of thought, what her wider capacity to comprehend, compared to the practical excellence of this good woman? Momently, they seemed only beautiful forms of selfish delight; mentally, she trod them under foot.

It is true, she still felt with pain that the life which made Miss Ainley happy could not make her happy: pure and active as it was, in her heart she deemed it deeply dreary because it was so loveless—to her ideas, so forlorn. Yet, doubtless, she reflected, it needed only habit to make it practicable and agreeable to any one: it was despicable, she felt, to pine sentimentally, to cherish secret griefs, vain memories; to be inert, to waste youth in aching languor, to grow old doing nothing.

"I will bestir myself," was her resolution, "and try to be wise if I cannot be good."

She proceeded to make inquiry of Miss Ainley, if she could help her in anything. Miss Ainley, glad of an assistant, told her that she could, and indicated some poor families in Briarfield that it was desirable she should visit; giving her likewise, at her further request, some work to do

for certain poor women who had many children, and who were unskilled in using the needle for themselves.

Caroline went home, laid her plans, and took a resolve not to swerve from them. She allotted a certain portion of her time for her various studies, and a certain portion for doing anything Miss Ainley might direct her to do; the remainder was to be spent in exercise: not a moment was to be left for the indulgence of such fevered thoughts as had poisoned last Sunday evening.

To do her justice she executed her plans conscientiously, perseveringly. It was very hard work at first—it was even hard work to the end, but it helped her to stem and keep down anguish: it forced her to be employed; it forbade her to brood; and gleams of satisfaction chequered her gray life here and there when she found she had done good, imparted pleasure, or allayed suffering.

Yet I must speak truth; these efforts brought her neither health of body nor continued peace of mind: with them all, she wasted, grew more joyless and more wan; with them all, her memory kept harping on the name of Robert Moore: an elegy over the past still rung constantly in her ear; a funereal inward cry haunted and harassed her: the heaviness

of a broken spirit, and of pining and palsying faculties, ettled slow on her buoyant youth. Winter seemed conquering her spring: the mind's soil and its treasures were freezing gradually to barren stagnation.

CHAPTER X.

FIELDHEAD.

YET Caroline refused tamely to succumb: she had native strength in her girl's heart, and she used it. Men and women never struggle so hard as when they struggle alone, without witness, counsellor, or confidant; unencouraged, unadvised, and unpitied.

Miss Helstone was in this position. Her sufferings were her only spur; and being very real and sharp, they roused her spirit keenly. Bent on victory over a mortal pain, she did her best to quell it. Never had she been seen so busy, so studious, and, above all, so active. She took walks in all weathers —long walks in solitary directions. Day by day she came back in the evening, pale and wearied-looking, yet seemingly not fatigued; for still, as soon as she had thrown off her bonnet and shawl, she would, instead of resting, begin to pace her apartment: sometimes she would not sit down till she was

literally faint. She said she did this to tire herself well, that she might sleep soundly at night. But if that was her aim it was unattained, for at night, when others slumbered, she was tossing on her pillow, or sitting at the foot of her couch in the darkness, forgetful apparently of the necessity of seeking repose. Often, unhappy girl! she was crying—crying in a sort of intolerable despair; which, when it rushed over her, smote down her strength, and reduced her to childlike helplessness.

When thus prostrate, temptations besieged her: weak suggestions whispered in her weary heart to write to Robert, and say that she was unhappy because she was forbidden to see him and Hortense, and that she feared he would withdraw his friendship (not love) from her, and forget her entirely, and begging him to remember her and, sometimes, to write to her. One or two such letters she actually indited, but she never sent them: shame and good sense forbade.

At last the life she led reached the point when it seemed she could bear it no longer; that she must seek and find a change somehow, or her heart and head would fail under the pressure which strained them. She longed to leave Briarfield, to go to some very distant place. She longed for something else:

the deep, secret, anxious yearning to discover and know her mother strengthened daily; but with the desire was coupled a doubt, a dread—if she knew her, could she love her? There was cause for hesitation, for apprehension on this point: never in her life had she heard that mother praised: whoever mentioned her, mentioned her coolly. Her uncle seemed to regard his sister-in-law with a sort of tacit antipathy; an old servant, who had lived with Mrs. James Helstone for a short time after her marriage, whenever she referred to her former mistress, spoke with chilling reserve: sometimes she called her "queer," sometimes she said she did not understand her. These expressions were ice to the daughter's heart; they suggested the conclusion that it was perhaps better never to know her parent, than to know her and not like her.

But one project could she frame whose execution seemed likely to bring her a hope of relief; it was to take a situation, to be a governess—she could do nothing else. A little incident brought her to the point, when she found courage to break her design to her uncle.

Her long and late walks lay always, as has been said, on lonely roads; but in whatever direction she had rambled, whether along the drear skirts of

Stilbro' Moor, or over the sunny stretch of Nunnely Common, her homeward path was still so contrived as to lead her near the Hollow. She rarely descended the den, but she visited its brink at twilight almost as regularly as the stars rose over the hill-crests. Her resting-place was at a certain stile under a certain old thorn: thence she could look down on the cottage, the mill, the dewy garden-ground, the still, deep dam; thence was visible the well-known counting-house window, from whose panes at a fixed hour shot, suddenly bright, the ray of the well-known lamp. Her errand was to watch for this ray: her reward to catch it, sometimes sparkling bright in clear air, sometimes shimmering dim through mist, and anon flashing broken between slant lines of rain —for she came in all weathers.

There were nights when it failed to appear: she knew then that Robert was from home, and went away doubly sad; whereas its kindling rendered her elate, as though she saw in it the promise of some indefinite hope. If, while she gazed, a shadow bent between the light and lattice, her heart leaped—that eclipse was Robert: she had seen him. She would return home comforted, carrying in her mind a clearer vision of his aspect, a distincter recollection of his voice, his smile, his bearing; and, blent with

these impressions, was often a sweet persuasion that, if she could get near him, his heart might welcome her presence yet: that at this moment he might be willing to extend his hand and draw her to him, and shelter her at his side as he used to do. That night, though she might weep as usual, she would fancy her tears less scalding; the pillow they watered seemed a little softer; the temples pressed to that pillow ached less.

The shortest path from the Hollow to the Rectory wound near a certain mansion, the same under whose lone walls Malone passed on that night-journey mentioned in an early chapter of this work—the old and tenantless dwelling yclept Fieldhead. Tenantless by the proprietor it had been for ten years, but it was no ruin: Mr. Yorke had seen it kept in good repair, and an old gardener and his wife had lived in it, cultivated the grounds, and maintained the house in habitable condition.

If Fieldhead had few other merits as a building, it might at least be termed picturesque: its irregular architecture, and the gray and mossy colouring communicated by time, gave it a just claim to this epithet. The old latticed windows, the stone porch, the walls, the roof, the chimney-stacks, were rich in crayon touches and sepia lights and shades. The

trees behind were fine, bold, and spreading; the cedar on the lawn in front was grand, and the granite urns on the garden wall, the fretted arch of the gateway, were, for an artist, as the very desire of the eye.

One mild May evening, Caroline passing near about moon-rise, and feeling, though weary, unwilling yet to go home, where there was only the bed of thorns and the night of grief to anticipate, sat down on the mossy ground near the gate, and gazed through towards cedar and mansion. It was a still night—calm, dewy, cloudless: the gables, turned to the west, reflected the clear amber of the horizon they faced; the oaks behind were black; the cedar was blacker; under its dense, raven boughs a glimpse of sky opened gravely blue: it was full of the moon, which looked solemnly and mildly down on Caroline from beneath that sombre canopy.

She felt this night and prospect mournfully lovely. She wished she could be happy: she wished she could know inward peace: she wondered Providence had no pity on her, and would not help or console her. Recollections of happy trystes of lovers, commemorated in old ballads, returned on her mind: she thought such tryste in such scene would be blissful.

Where now was Robert? she asked: not at the Hollow: she had watched for his lamp long, and had not seen it. She questioned within herself whether she and Moore were ever destined to meet and speak again. Suddenly the door within the stone porch of the Hall opened, and two men came out; one elderly and white-headed, the other young, dark-haired, and tall. They passed across the lawn, out through a portal in the garden wall: Caroline saw them cross the road, pass the stile, descend the fields; she saw them disappear. Robert Moore had passed before her with his friend Mr. Yorke: neither had seen her.

The apparition had been transient—scarce seen ere gone; but its electric passage left her veins kindled, her soul insurgent. It found her despairing; it left her desperate—two different states.

"Oh! had he but been alone! Had he but seen me!" was her cry, "he would have said something: he would have given me his hand. He *does*, he *must* love me a little: he would have shown some token of affection: in his eye, on his lips, I should have read comfort: but the chance is lost. The wind—the cloud's shadow does not pass more silently, more emptily than he. I have been mocked, and Heaven is cruel!"

Thus, in the utter sickness of longing and disappointment, she went home.

The next morning at breakfast, where she appeared, white-cheeked and miserable-looking as one who had seen a ghost, she inquired of Mr. Helstone,—

"Have you any objection, uncle, to my inquiring for a situation in a family?"

Her uncle, ignorant as the table supporting his coffee-cup of all his niece had undergone and was undergoing, scarcely believed his ears.

"What whim now?" he asked. "Are you bewitched? What can you mean?"

"I am not well, and need a change," she said.

He examined her. He discovered she had *experienced* a change, at any rate. Without his being aware of it, the rose had dwindled and faded to a mere snowdrop: bloom had vanished, flesh wasted; she sat before him drooping, colourless, and thin. But for the soft expression of her brown eyes, the delicate lines of her features, and the flowing abundance of her hair, she would no longer have possessed a claim to the epithet — pretty.

"What on earth is the matter with you?"

he asked. "What is wrong? How are you ailing?"

No answer, only the brown eyes filled, the faintly-tinted lips trembled.

"Look out for a situation, indeed! For what situation are you fit? What have you been doing with yourself? You are not well."

"I should be well if I went from home."

"These women are incomprehensible. They have the strangest knack of startling you with unpleasant surprises. To-day you see them bouncing, buxom, red as cherries, and round as apples; to-morrow they exhibit themselves effete as dead weeds, blanched and broken down. And the reason of it all? that's the puzzle. She has her meals, her liberty, a good house to live in, and good clothes to wear as usual: a while since that sufficed to keep her handsome and cheery, and there she sits now a poor little pale, puling, chit enough. Provoking! Then comes the question, what is to be done? I suppose I must send for advice. Will you have a doctor, child?"

"No, uncle; I don't want one: a doctor could do me no good. I merely want change of air and scene."

"Well, if that be the caprice it shall be gratified.

You shall go to a watering-place: I don't mind the expense: Fanny shall accompany you."

"But, uncle, some day I must do something for myself: I have no fortune. I had better begin now."

"While I live, you shall not turn out as a governess, Caroline. I will not have it said that my niece is a governess."

"But the later in life one makes a change of that sort, uncle, the more difficult and painful it is. I should wish to get accustomed to the yoke before any habits of ease and independence are formed."

"I beg you will not harass me, Caroline. I mean to provide for you. I have always meant to provide for you: I will purchase an annuity. Bless me! I am but fifty-five; my health and constitution are excellent: there is plenty of time to save and take measures. Don't make yourself anxious respecting the future: is that what frets you?"

"No, uncle; but I long for a change."

He laughed. "There speaks the woman!" cried he, "the very woman! A change! a change! Always fantastical and whimsical! Well, it's in her sex."

"But it is not fantasy and whim, uncle."

"What is it then?"

"Necessity, I think. I feel weaker than formerly. I believe I should have more to do."

"Admirable! She feels weak, and *therefore* she should be set to hard labour—'clair comme le jour'—as Moore—confound Moore! You shall go to Cliff-bridge; and there are two guineas to buy a new frock. Come, Cary, never fear; we'll find balm in Gilead."

"Uncle, I wish you were less generous, and more——"

"More what?"

Sympathizing was the word on Caroline's lips, but it was not uttered: she checked herself in time: her uncle would indeed have laughed if that namby-pamby word had escaped her. Finding her silent, he said,—

"The fact is, you don't know precisely what you want."

"Only to be a governess."

"Pooh! mere nonsense! I'll not hear of governessing. Don't mention it again. It is rather too feminine a fancy. I have finished breakfast, ring the bell: put all crotchets out of your head and run away and amuse yourself."

"What with? My doll?" asked Caroline to herself as she quitted the room.

A week or two passed; her bodily and mental health neither grew worse nor better. She was now precisely in that state, when, if her constitution had contained the seeds of consumption, decline or slow fever, those diseases would have been rapidly developed, and would soon have carried her quietly from the world. People never die of love or grief alone; though some die of inherent maladies, which the tortures of those passions prematurely force into destructive action. The sound by nature undergo these tortures, and are racked, shaken, shattered: their beauty and bloom perish, but life remains untouched. They are brought to a certain point of dilapidation; they are reduced to pallor, debility, and emaciation. People think, as they see them gliding languidly about, that they will soon withdraw to sickbeds, perish there, and cease from among the healthy and happy. This does not happen: they live on; and though they cannot regain youth and gaiety, they may regain strength and serenity. The blossom which the March wind nips, but fails to sweep away, may survive to hang a withered apple on the tree late into autumn: having braved the last frosts of spring, it may also brave the first of winter.

Every one noticed the change in Miss Helstone's

appearance, and most people said she was going to die. She never thought so herself: she felt in no dying case; she had neither pain nor sickness. Her appetite was diminished; she knew the reason: it was because she wept so much at night. Her strength was lessened; she could account for it: sleep was coy and hard to be won; dreams were distressing and baleful. In the far future she still seemed to anticipate a time when this passage of misery should be got over, and when she should once more be calm, though perhaps never again happy.

Meanwhile her uncle urged her to visit; to comply with the frequent invitations of their acquaintance: this she evaded doing; she could not be cheerful in company: she felt she was observed there with more curiosity than sympathy. Old ladies were always offering her their advice, recommending this or that nostrum; young ladies looked at her in a way she understood, and from which she shrank. Their eyes said they knew she had been "disappointed," as custom phrases it: by whom, they were not certain.

Commonplace young ladies can be quite as hard as commonplace young gentlemen,—quite as worldly and selfish. Those who suffer should always avoid

them; grief and calamity they despise: they seem to regard them as the judgments of God on the lowly. With them to "love" is merely to contrive a scheme for achieving a good match: to be "disappointed" is to have their scheme seen through and frustrated. They think the feelings and projects of others on the subject of love, similar to their own, and judge them accordingly.

All this Caroline knew, partly by instinct, partly by observation: she regulated her conduct by her knowledge, keeping her pale face and wasted figure as much out of sight as she could. Living thus in complete seclusion, she ceased to receive intelligence of the little transactions of the neighbourhood.

One morning her uncle came into the parlour, where she sat endeavouring to find some pleasure in painting a little group of wild flowers, gathered under a hedge at the top of the Hollow fields, and said to her in his abrupt manner:—

"Come, child, you are always stooping over palette, or book, or sampler: leave that tinting work. By-the-by, do you put your pencil to your lips when you paint?"

"Sometimes, uncle, when I forget."

"Then it is that which is poisoning you. The

paints are deleterious, child: there is white lead, and red lead, and verdigris, and gamboge, and twenty other poisons in those colour cakes. Lock them up! lock them up! Get your bonnet on: I want you to make a call with me."

"With *you*, uncle?"

This question was asked in a tone of surprise. She was not accustomed to make calls with her uncle: she never rode or walked out with him on any occasion.

"Quick! quick! I am always busy, you know: I have no time to lose."

She hurriedly gathered up her materials, asking, meantime, where they were going.

"To Fieldhead."

"Fieldhead! What, to see old James Booth, the gardener? Is he ill?"

"We are going to see Miss Shirley Keeldar?"

"Miss Keeldar! Is she come to Yorkshire? Is she at Fieldhead?"

"She is. She has been there a week. I met her at a party last night:—that party to which you would not go. I was pleased with her: I choose that you shall make her acquaintance: it will do you good."

"She is now come of age, I suppose?"

"She is come of age, and will reside for a time on her property. I lectured her on the subject: I showed her her duty: she is not intractable: she is rather a fine girl; she will teach you what it is to have a sprightly spirit: nothing lackadaisical about *her*."

"I don't think she will want to see me, or to have me introduced to her. What good can I do her? How can I amuse her?"

"Pshaw! Put your bonnet on."

"Is she proud, uncle?"

"Don't know. You hardly imagine she would show her pride to me, I suppose? A chit like that would scarcely presume to give herself airs with the Rector of her parish, however rich she might be."

"No,—but how did she behave to other people?"

"Didn't observe. She holds her head high, and probably can be saucy enough where she dare,—she wouldn't be a woman otherwise. There,—away now for your bonnet at once!"

Not naturally very confident, a failure of physical strength and a depression of spirits had not tended to increase Caroline's presence of mind and ease of manner, or to give her additional courage to face strangers, and she quailed, in spite of self-remon-

strance, as she and her uncle walked up the broad, paved approach leading from the gateway of Fieldhead to its porch. She followed Mr. Helstone reluctantly through that porch into the sombre old vestibule beyond.

Very sombre it was; long, vast, and dark: one latticed window lit it but dimly; the wide old chimney contained now no fire, for the present warm weather needed it not; it was filled instead with willow-boughs. The gallery on high, opposite the entrance, was seen but in outline, so shadowy became this hall towards its ceiling; carved stags' heads, with real antlers, looked down grotesquely from the walls. This was neither a grand nor a comfortable house: within as without it was antique, rambling, and incommodious. A property of a thousand a year belonged to it; which property had descended, for lack of male heirs, on a female. There were mercantile families in the district boasting twice the income, but the Keeldars, by virtue of their antiquity, and their distinction of lords of the manor, took the precedence of all.

Mr. and Miss Helstone were ushered into a parlour: of course, as was to be expected in such a gothic old barrack, this parlour was lined with oak: fine, dark, glossy panels compassed the walls gloomily

and grandly. Very handsome, reader, these shining, brown panels are: very mellow in colouring and tasteful in effect, but—if you know what a "Spring-clean" is—very execrable and inhuman. Whoever, having the bowels of humanity, has seen servants scrubbing at these polished wooden walls with bees-waxed cloths on a warm May day, must allow that they are "tolerable and not to be endured;" and I cannot but secretly applaud the benevolent barbarian who had painted another and larger apartment of Fieldhead—the drawing-room to-wit, formerly also an oak-room—of a delicate pinky white; thereby earning for himself the character of a Hun, but mightily enhancing the cheerfulness of that portion of his abode, and saving future housemaids a world of toil.

The brown-panelled parlour was furnished all in old style, and with real old furniture. On each side of the high mantelpiece stood two antique chairs of oak, solid as sylvan thrones, and in one of these sat a lady. But if this were Miss Keeldar, she must have come of age at least some twenty years ago: she was of matronly form, and though she wore no cap, and possessed hair of quite an undimmed auburn, shading small and naturally young-looking features, she had no youthful aspect, nor apparently the wish to

assume it. You could have wished her attire of a newer fashion: in a well-cut, well-made gown, hers would have been no uncomely presence. It puzzled you to guess why a garment of handsome materials should be arranged in such scanty folds, and devised after such an obsolete mode: you felt disposed to set down the wearer as somewhat eccentric at once.

This lady received the visitors with a mixture of ceremony and diffidence quite English: no middle-aged matron who was not an Englishwoman *could* evince precisely the same manner; a manner so uncertain of herself, of her own merits, of her power to please; and yet so anxious to be proper, and, if possible, rather agreeable than otherwise. In the present instance, however, more embarrassment was shewn than is usual even with diffident Englishwomen: Miss Helstone felt this, sympathized with the stranger, and, knowing by experience what was good for the timid, took a seat quietly near her, and began to talk to her with a gentle ease, communicated for the moment by the presence of one less self-possessed than herself.

She and this lady would, if alone, have at once got on extremely well together. The lady had the clearest voice imaginable: infinitely softer and more

tuneful than could have been reasonably expected from forty years, and a form decidedly inclined to embonpoint. This voice Caroline liked; it atoned for the formal, if correct, accent and language: the lady would soon have discovered she liked it and her, and in ten minutes they would have been friends. But Mr. Helstone stood on the rug looking at them both; looking especially at the strange lady with his sarcastic, keen eye, that clearly expresssed impatience of her chilly ceremony, and annoyance at her want of aplomb. His hard gaze and rasping voice discomfited the lady more and more; she tried, however, to get up little speeches about the weather, the aspect of the country, &c., but the impracticable Mr. Helstone presently found himself somewhat deaf: whatever she said, he affected not to hear distinctly, and she was obliged to go over each elaborately constructed nothing twice. The effort soon became too much for her; she was just rising in a perplexed flutter, nervously murmuring that she knew not what detained Miss Keeldar—that she would go and look for her, when Miss Keeldar saved her the trouble by appearing: it was to be presumed at least that she who now came in through a glass-door from the garden owned that name.

There is real grace in ease of manner, and so old

Helstone felt when an erect, slight girl walked up to him, retaining with her left hand her little silk apron full of flowers, and, giving him her right hand, said pleasantly :—

" I knew you would come to see me, though you *do* think Mr. Yorke has made me a Jacobin. Good-morning."

" But we'll not have you a Jacobin," returned he. " No, Miss Shirley, they shall not steal the flower of my parish from me: now that you are amongst us, you shall be my pupil in politics and religion: I'll teach you sound doctrine on both points."

" Mrs. Pryor has anticipated you," she replied, turning to the elder lady. " Mrs. Pryor, you know, was my governess, and is still my friend; and of all the high and rigid Tories, she is queen; of all the stanch churchwomen, she is chief. I have been well drilled both in theology and history, I assure you, Mr. Helstone."

The Rector immediately bowed very low to Mrs. Pryor, and expressed himself obliged to her.

The ex-governess disclaimed skill either in political or religious controversy, explained that she thought such matters little adapted for female minds, but avowed herself in general terms the

advocate of order and loyalty, and, of course, truly attached to the Establishment. She added, she was ever averse to change under any circumstances; and something scarcely audible about the extreme danger of being too ready to take up new ideas, closed her sentence.

"Miss Keeldar thinks as you think, I hope, madam."

"Difference of age and difference of temperament occasion difference of sentiment," was the reply. "It can scarcely be expected that the eager and young should hold the opinions of the cool and middle-aged."

"Oh! oh! we are independent: we think for ourselves!" cried Mr. Helstone. "We are a little Jacobin, for anything I know: a little free-thinker, in good earnest. Let us have a confession of faith on the spot."

And he took the heiress's two hands—causing her to let fall her whole cargo of flowers—and seated her by him on the sofa.

"Say your creed," he ordered.

"The Apostles' Creed?"

"Yes."

She said it like a child.

"Now for St. Athanasius's: that's the test!"

"Let me gather up my flowers: here is Tartar coming, he will tread upon them."

Tartar was a rather large, strong, and fierce-looking dog, very ugly, being of a breed between mastiff and bull-dog, who at this moment entered through the glass door, and posting directly to the rug, snuffed the fresh flowers scattered there. He seemed to scorn them as food; but probably thinking their velvety petals might be convenient as litter, he was turning round preparatory to depositing his tawny bulk upon them, when Miss Helstone and Miss Keeldar simultaneously stooped to the rescue.

"Thank you," said the heiress, as she again held out her little apron for Caroline to heap the blossoms into it. "Is this your daughter, Mr. Helstone?" she asked.

"My niece, Caroline."

Miss Keeldar shook hands with her, and then looked at her. Caroline also looked at her hostess.

Shirley Keeldar (she had no christian name but Shirley: her parents, who had wished to have a son, finding that, after eight years of marriage, Providence had granted them only a daughter, bestowed on her the same masculine family cognomen they would have bestowed on a boy, if with a boy

they had been blessed)—Shirley Keeldar was no ugly heiress: she was agreeable to the eye. Her height and shape were not unlike Miss Helstone's: perhaps in stature she might have the advantage by an inch or two; she was gracefully made, and her face, too, possessed a charm as well described by the word grace as any other. It was palé naturally, but intelligent, and of varied expression. She was not a blonde, like Caroline: clear and dark were the characteristics of her aspect as to colour: her face and brow were clear, her eyes of the darkest gray: no green lights in them,—transparent, pure, neutral gray; and her hair of the darkest brown. Her features were distinguished; by which I do not mean that they were high, bony, and Roman, being indeed rather small and slightly marked than otherwise, but only that they were, to use a few French words, "fins, gracieux, spirituels:" mobile they were and speaking; but their changes were not to be understood, nor their language interpreted all at once. She examined Caroline seriously, inclining her head a little to one side, with a thoughtful air.

"You see she is only a feeble chick," observed Mr. Helstone.

"She looks young—younger than I. How old

are you?" she inquired, in a manner that would have been patronizing if it had not been extremely solemn and simple.

"Eighteen years and six months."

"And I am twenty-one."

She said no more; she had now placed her flowers on the table, and was busied in arranging them.

"And St. Athanasius's creed?" urged the Rector; "you believe it all—don't you?"

"I can't remember it quite all. I will give you a nosegay, Mr. Helstone, when I have given your niece one."

She had selected a little bouquet of one brilliant, and two or three delicate flowers, relieved by a spray of dark verdure: she tied it with silk from her work-box, and placed it on Caroline's lap; and then she put her hands behind her, and stood, bending slightly towards her guest, still regarding her, in the attitude and with something of the aspect of a grave but gallant little cavalier. This temporary expression of face was aided by the style in which she wore her hair, parted on one temple and brushed in a glossy sweep above the forehead, whence it fell in curls that looked natural, so free were their wavy undulations.

"Are you tired with your walk?" she inquired.

"No—not in the least; it is but a short distance—but a mile."

"You look pale. Is she always so pale?" she asked, turning to the Rector.

"She used to be as rosy as the reddest of your flowers."

"Why is she altered? What has made her pale? Has she been ill?"

"She tells me she wants a change."

"She ought to have one: you ought to give her one: you should send her to the sea-coast."

"I will, ere summer is over. Meantime, I intend her to make acquaintance with you, if you have no objection."

"I am sure Miss Keeldar will have no objection," here observed Mrs. Pryor. "I think I may take it upon me to say that Miss Helstone's frequent presence at Fieldhead will be esteemed a favour."

"You speak my sentiments precisely, ma'am," said Shirley, "and I thank you for anticipating me. Let me tell you," she continued, turning again to Caroline, "that you also ought to thank my governess; it is not every one she would welcome as she has welcomed you: you are distinguished more than you think. This morning, as soon as you are gone, I shall ask Mrs. Pryor's opinion of you. I am apt to

rely on her judgment of character, for hitherto I have found it wondrous accurate. Already I foresee a favourable answer to my inquiries: do I not guess rightly, Mrs. Pryor?"

"My dear—you said but now you would ask my opinion when Miss Helstone was gone; I am scarcely likely to give it in her presence."

"No—and perhaps it will be long enough before I obtain it. I am sometimes sadly tantalized, Mr. Helstone, by Mrs. Pryor's extreme caution: her judgments ought to be correct when they come, for they are often as tardy of delivery as a lord-chancellor's: on some people's characters I cannot get her to pronounce sentence, entreat as I may."

Mrs. Pryor here smiled.

"Yes," said her pupil, "I know what that smile means: you are thinking of my gentleman-tenant. Do you know Mr. Moore of the Hollow?" she asked Mr. Helstone.

"Ay! ay! your tenant—so he is: you have seen a good deal of him, no doubt, since you came?"

"I have been obliged to see him: there was business to transact. Business! Really the word makes me conscious I am indeed no longer a girl, but quite a woman, and something more. I am an esquire: Shirley Keeldar, Esquire, ought to be my style and

title. They gave me a man's name; I hold a man's position: it is enough to inspire me with a touch of manhood; and when I see such people as that stately Anglo-Belgian — that Gérard Moore before me, gravely talking to me of business, really I feel quite gentlemanlike. You must choose me for your churchwarden, Mr. Helstone, the next time you elect new ones: they ought to make me a magistrate and a captain of yeomanry: Tony Lumpkin's mother was a colonel, and his aunt a justice of the peace—why shouldn't I be?"

"With all my heart. If you choose to get up a requisition on the subject, I promise to head the list of signatures with my name. But you were speaking of Moore?"

"Ah! yes. I find it a little difficult to understand Mr. Moore—to know what to think of him: whether to like him or not. He seems a tenant of whom any proprietor might be proud—and proud of him I am, in that sense—but as a neighbour, what is he? Again and again I have entreated Mrs. Pryor to say what she thinks of him, but she still evades returning a direct answer. I hope you will be less oracular, Mr. Helstone, and pronounce at once: do you like him?"

"Not at all, just now: his name is entirely blotted from my good books."

"What is the matter? What has he done?"

"My uncle and he disagree on politics," interposed the low voice of Caroline. She had better not have spoken just then: having scarcely joined in the conversation before, it was not apropos to do it now: she felt this, with nervous acuteness, as soon as she had spoken, and coloured to the eyes.

"What are Moore's politics?" inquired Shirley.

"Those of a tradesman," returned the Rector; "narrow, selfish, and unpatriotic. The man is eternally writing and speaking against the continuance of the war: I have no patience with him."

"The war hurts his trade. I remember he remarked that only yesterday. But what other objection have you to him?"

"That is enough."

"He looks the gentleman, in my sense of the term," pursued Shirley, "and it pleases me to think he is such."

Caroline rent the Tyrian petals of the one brilliant flower in her bouquet, and answered, in distinct tones —"Decidedly he is." Shirley, hearing this courageous affirmation, flashed an arch, searching glance at the speaker from her deep, expressive eyes.

"*You* are his friend, at any rate," she said; "you defend him in his absence."

"I am both his friend and his relative," was the prompt reply. "Robert Moore is my cousin."

"Oh, then, you can tell me all about him. Just give me a sketch of his character."

Insuperable embarrassment seized Caroline when this demand was made: she could not, and did not attempt to comply with it. Her silence was immediately covered by Mrs. Pryor, who proceeded to address sundry questions to Mr. Helstone regarding a family or two in the neighbourhood, with whose connections in the south she said she was acquainted. Shirley soon withdrew her gaze from Miss Helstone's face. She did not renew her interrogations, but returning to her flowers, proceeded to choose a nosegay for the Rector. She presented it to him as he took leave, and received the homage of a salute on the hand in return.

"Be sure you wear it for my sake," said she.

"Next my heart, of course," responded Helstone. "Mrs. Pryor, take care of this future magistrate, this churchwarden in perspective, this captain of yeomanry, this young squire of Briarfield, in a word: don't let him exert himself too much: don't let him break his neck in hunting: especially, let him mind how he rides down that dangerous hill near the Hollow."

"I like a descent," said Shirley—"I like to clear it rapidly; and especially I like that romantic Hollow, with all my heart."

"Romantic—with a mill in it?"

"Romantic with a mill in it. The old mill and the white cottage are each admirable in its way."

"And the counting-house, Mr. Keeldar?"

"The counting-house is better than my bloom-coloured drawing-room: I adore the counting-house."

"And the trade? The cloth—the greasy wool—the polluting dyeing-vats?"

"The trade is to be thoroughly respected."

"And the tradesman is a hero? Good!"

"I am glad to hear you say so: I thought the tradesman looked heroic."

Mischief, spirit, and glee sparkled all over her face as she thus bandied words with the old Cossack, who almost equally enjoyed the tilt.

"Captain Keeldar, you have no mercantile blood in your veins: why are you so fond of trade?"

"Because I am a mill-owner, of course. Half my income comes from the works in that Hollow."

"Don't enter into partnership, that's all."

"You've put it into my head! you've put it into my head!" she exclaimed, with a joyous laugh. "It

will never get out: thank you." And waving her hand, white as a lily and fine as a fairy's, she vanished within the porch, while the Rector and his niece passed out through the arched gateway.

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