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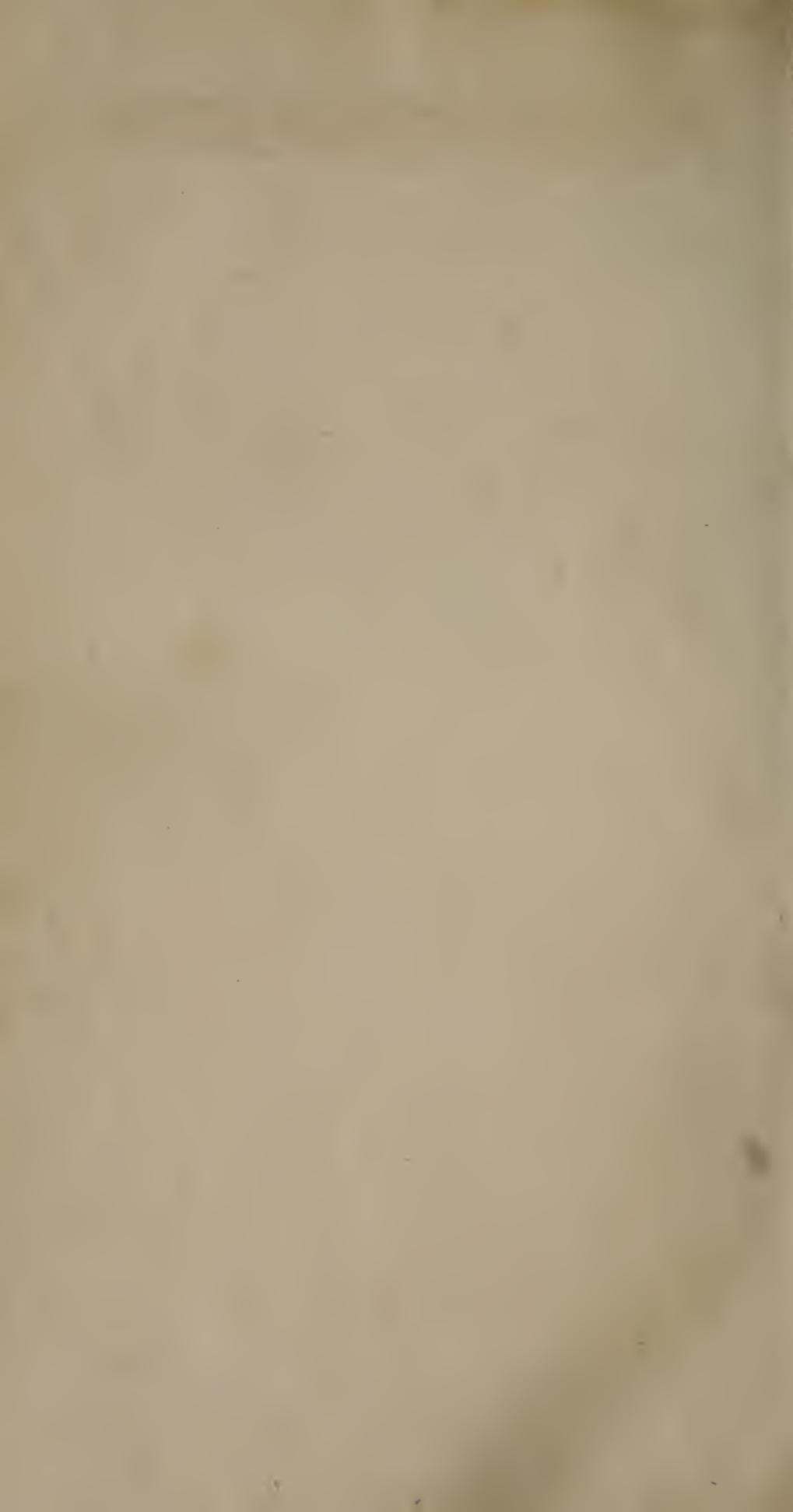
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# CECIL:

OR, THE

## ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

A NOVEL.

He was such a delight,—such a coxcomb,—such a jewel of a man!

BYRON'S JOURNAL.

Second Edition.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

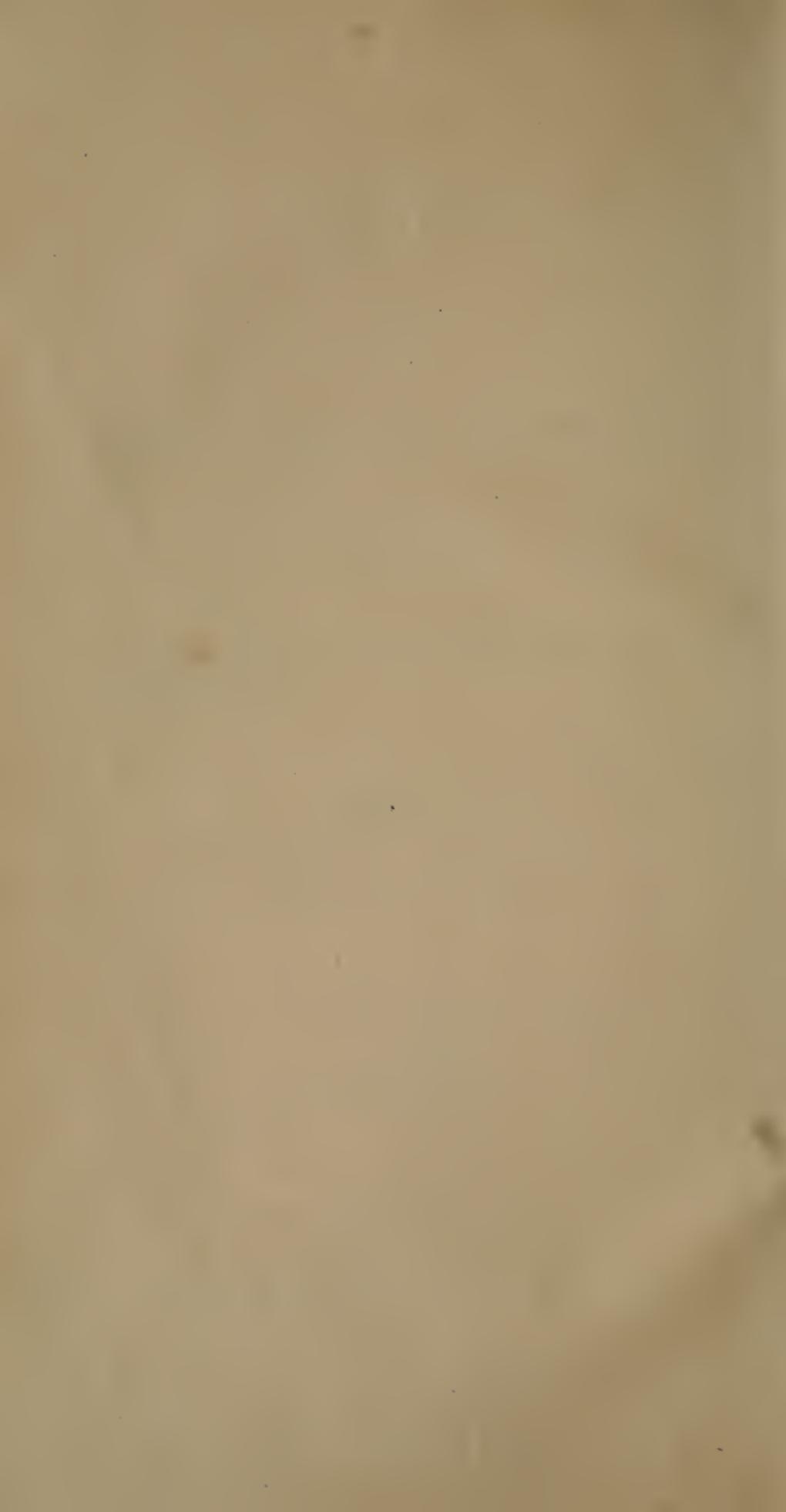
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LONDON:

RICHARD BENTLEY, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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## PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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### ADDRESS

FROM THE THRONE OF CECIL I.

KING OF THE COXCOMBS.

" MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

" IN meeting you again at the commencement of a New Edition, I have the satisfaction to acquaint you that I continue to receive from the leading critics of the day, ass-urances of their friendly disposition, and their earnest desire to maintain peace.

" The posture of affairs in the critical world had long been a cause of uneasiness and a source of danger to literary tranquillity. With a view to avert the evils which a continuance of this

state of things was calculated to occasion, I have concluded with the ‘Quarterly Review,’ the ‘Edinburgh Review,’ the ‘Westminster Review,’ the ‘Spectator,’ ‘Examiner,’ and ‘Athenæum,’ a convention intended to effect the pacification of New Burlington Street; to maintain the integrity and independence of the Empire of Coxcomby; and thereby afford a guarantee for the future entertainment of Europe and the European colonies.

“ In this, my ‘Second Edition,’ I lay the first evidence of the existence of this convention before you.

“ I rejoice to be able to inform you that the measures I have adopted in execution of these engagements, (by issuing cards of invitation for weekly literary dinners throughout the London season,) have been attended with signal success; and I trust that the objects which the contracting parties had in view, are on the eve of being happily accomplished.

“ In the course of these operations, my *Chefs*

*de cuisine* have co-operated with my Printer's devils, and have displayed upon all occasions their accustomed acumen and skill.

“ Having deemed it necessary to send to the Club of Crockford a friend of high standing in the world of fashion, to demand reparation and redress for certain injuries inflicted upon my reputation as a scholar, and certain indignities offered to my authority as a puppy, this plenipotentiary is still in negociation with the Committee of the Club ; and it will be a source of much gratification to me if that heterogeneous assemblage shall be induced, by its own sense of justice, to bring these matters to a speedy settlement by an amicable arrangement.

“ Serious differences have arisen between the ‘Spectator’ and the Publishers, about the execution of a tacit treaty between those Powers for regulating the preliminaries of Puffery. Both parties have accepted my mediation ; and I hope to be able to effect a reconciliation between them upon terms honourable to both.

“ I have concluded with the Daily Papers treaties for the suppression of the Martyrdom of Authors, which I have directed to be laid before you.

“ GENTLEMEN OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS  
(More especially Henry Pelham, Vivian Grey,  
and Brookside Milnes, Esquires),

“ I have directed the estimates of my authorship, gathered from the most authentic critical organs of the day, to be laid before you.

“ However sensible of the importance of according limited faith to such authorities, I feel it to be my duty to recommend that adequate indulgence be shown, by such established authorities as your honourable selves, towards the errors and infirmities of a new writer.

“ MY LORDS AND GENTLEMEN,

“ Measures will be submitted to you without delay, which have for their object the more speedy and effectual perpetuation of my literary

reign. The vital importance of this subject to the fashionable world, is sufficient to insure for it your early and most serious consideration.

“The powers of the Patronesses appointed under the Act for the better regulation of the manners and fashions of Almacks’, expire at the termination of the present season ; and I feel anxious that you should earnestly direct your attention to those enactments of exclusivism, which so deeply concern the *bon ton* of the community.

It is with entire confidence that I recur to the loyalty and good faith of my subjects. Though wavering in their notions of my identity, they have hitherto evinced, without exception, a becoming sense of the dignity of my throne ; a sentiment which I shall make it my duty to maintain inviolate by the inflexibility of my decrees, and a contemptuous disregard to the weak inventions of my enemies ; and thus effectually promote the happiness and welfare of my Self, and all classes of my subjects.”



## P R E F A C E.

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“Go little book!—(to Paternoster Row,)  
I cast thee on the waters,—go thy ways!  
And if, as I suspect, thy vein’s so-so,  
The world will find thee after many days.”

So sang a great poet!—So saith Cecil Danby.  
Timid authors, as yet unprivileged to address  
their readers in the plural number, are exceed-  
ingly apt to inscribe their *Nota Benes* to their  
“little book.” Mine, I flatter myself, is a  
prodigious one, and requires no patting on the  
back. I consequently do not hesitate to speak  
out to my public, like a man. No need of clap-  
trap speeches from the hustings. I am *sure* of  
my election; that is—if merit ever carries the  
day.

Nothing more absurd than to appeal to the indulgence of the public, or the leniency of the press. The public is about as indulgent as the head- usher of a preparatory school, or as her Majesty's Attorney-general ; while as to the press, its humanity shows " begrimed and black" beside that of Greenacre or Courvoisier.

Critics resemble Eastern mutes, who exist by bowstringing their fellow-creatures, and venting their envious spite on the beauties committed to their hands. Nothing generous,—nothing manly in their nature. The cleverest of them sees in the cleverest book only an occasion to let fly some well-hoarded joke ; like the schoolboy who, in a general illumination for some national victory, cares only for his little foolish squib or cracker, whizzing in a corner.

As to the various quarterlies, their articles are only so many sealed tenders sent in to Government for Under-secretaryships to the powers that be,—or want to be. Every now and then, indeed, when the public shows symptoms

of discovering that “ their bullets are made of lead, lead, lead,” they fire off articles of cork and feather.

But even these occasional explosions of gas, (which resemble the pink paper wherewith apothecaries embellish their vials and pillboxes by way of rendering the physic more palatable,) serve only to render darkness visible, like a sexton’s rushlight in a charnel-house. Better adhere to their dulness. *Ne sutor ultra crepidam.* No review beyond its heavy artillery : “ adeò nihil motum ex antiquo, probabile est.”

Such Tartuffes, too, as they are ; — highwaymen, who, like Robin Hood, pillage and plunder disguised in the demure weeds of a churchman ! Every now and then they raise an outcry of infection, as for the plague or cholera, and establish a *cordon sanitaire* as in the instance of the modern French novelists ; like coiners, who give out that some house is haunted, to pursue their fraudulent practices unsuspected in the cellars.

I discern from hence their puzzled look in perusing these accusations! — Like the young Sultan on the death of his father, they know not what attitude to take. Ten to one, they will try to Burke my book, and render it the prey of the resurrectionists; that is, instead of drawing attention to its merits by an impartial criticism, will take me, like Romeo, and “cut me out in little stars,” — dissecting me to ornament their hideous museum. Bless their five wits! Every inch of me would be discovered in their dull pages, glittering like diamonds on the brow of some dingy dowager!

It is some comfort that their denunciations are as little attended to as those of Cassandra,—or the striking of the parish clock,—or the morning gun of a garrison,—or the ringing for arrivals at Bath,— or the tolling for funerals at Hastings,—or Lord —’s promises to pay,—or any other matter of course. As to influencing the public taste, they have about as much power as the railway train upon the engine that impels it. The public taste drags them after it, like

so many baggage waggons, to which it consigns its goods and chattels. No author was ever written up, except by his publisher, (in a cheque,)—or written down, except by himself.

So now, having reviewed the reviewers, I dare their worst. They may “damn by faint praise,” —they may show the white feather, or goose-quill, by shirking my challenge;—they may immortalise themselves by my annihilation, like Major Sirr by the capture of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, or Bertrand de Gourdon by the manslaughter of Richard Cœur de Lion.

Let them only, I beseech, eschew excessive laudation. I am still in the swaddling sheets of infant authorship; and the Crowner’s Quests, as reported in the public journals, will instruct them how many promising babes are daily destroyed by excessive doses of Godfrey’s Cordial. Besides, that single act of honesty might get their hands out, and destroy their practice.

Meanwhile I am able to favour the public with a private view of a criticism promised me by a friend in the confidence of the “Times” news-

paper,—on payment of a small gratuity. It may have already appeared in that luminous journal, as editors keep this sort of article cut and dry for the first comical book sent in for reviewal.—I really cannot take upon me to say.—I never read the “Times,” unless when I have lost my poodle or a bunch of keys, and choose to ascertain that my advertisement has been correctly inserted. The notice is to run as follows:—

CECIL ; or the Adventures of a Coxcomb.—  
3 Vols. 8vo.—*Bentley.*

“ Flippancy, when it does not merely consist in spiting forth commonplaces, learned by heart at some early period in life, to form a stock-in-trade, from which payments may be thrown out *pro bono publico* whenever occasion shall require, and which, so paradoxical in its nature, is not at all diminished thereby, but still remains an inexhaustible source of pleasantries and dogmas,—flippancy, when more than this, is not necessarily a vice. Your dull, heavy, inanimate log cannot be flippant with good grace ; it requires talent to

skim a surface glibly, to dart among a number of ideas without fathoming one. Skating is an art as well as diving. To make a good flippant writer, there are many requisites: his mind must have been well educated; he must have acquired an easy versatility, a nice mixture of courage and caution, the one to startle his reader with some strange fantasy, the other to steer clear, while in his rapid course, of what may be dangerous, or at any rate, too much for him. If he knows nothing very profoundly, he must know something of a great many matters; and just that which will suit his purpose to fling into an image or point an allusion. He must also catch the tone of society, to pass off his little vagaries on the public; the good sense not to shock anybody, though occasionally tempted into irreverence; and, above all, a very tolerable opinion of himself, which he need be at no pains to conceal, but should rather put forward, as if his careless manner of dismissing objects half-considered did not at all proceed from his own incompetence to go deeper, but rather as if such little things as the interests of nations,

philosophy, science, literature, and the fine arts, were not of so much importance that his august self should take too much trouble about them, although very familiar with all, and perfectly ready to sport good-humouredly with any. In a word, your first-rate flippant writer must be a very pleasant, clever, well-bred, lively, smart, slippery, facetious, and last, not least, unblushing sort of person."

Such is the opinion entertained of me by the "Times." If, on the other hand, any gentleman find cause for offence in these my pages, I am to be found at the Traveller's any time from three to eight ; or at Crockey's any time from eleven to six in the morning. My weapons are Mantons.— my friends the two most long-winded K. C. Bs. of the United Service. Unless prosed to death previously by my seconds, I shall on the slightest summons, have the honour to be, their most obedient humble servant.

C. D.

# C E C I L ;

OR THE

## ADVENTURES OF A COXCOMB.

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### CHAPTER I.

“Vanitas,—vanitatis !”

BIOGRAPHERS are fond of attributing the dispositions of their heroes to heroic sources. Since it is my fate to tell my own story, I choose to tell it in my own way; and am free to confess that the leading trait of my character has its origin in the first glimpse I caught of myself, at twelve months old, in the swing-glass of my mother’s dressing-room. I looked, and became a coxcomb for life!

My Self consisted, at that epoch, of a splendid satin cockade, with a puny infant face thereunto attached; while a flowing robe of embroidered cambric, four feet by ten, disguised my nonentityism,—and veiled,—

Thought shrinks from all that lurked below!

The spectacle, enhanced by a showy sash of gorgeous ribbon, was the very thing to captivate a baby's eye; and it was soon discovered that Master Cecil was always screaming, unless danced up and down by the head nurse within view of the reflection of his own fascinating little person.

“Take him to the glass, nurse!” was my mother's invariable mode of pacifying my shrieks, when my fractiousness interrupted the process of her toilet, rendering it inconvenient to contemplate her beauties in her own. “Take him to the glass, poor little fellow! He loves to look at his ribbons fluttering in the light.”

I suspect that, even then, what I loved to

look at, was the same personal reflection that delighted the eyes of her ladyship. But no matter.

When my little self, or rather my great nurse, grew tired of the dancing system, there were other glittering objects in my mother's sanctum which I found almost equally attractive, —jewels, feathers, flowers, and frippery of all descriptions. I usually visited her at dressing-time. The baby was less in her ladyship's way while adoring,

With head uncover'd, the cosmetic pow'rs,  
than when adored, in her turn, by the men  
of wit and pleasure about town ; Colonels in  
the Guards, and Memberlings of parliament,  
who had the honour of being inscribed in the  
list of the young and fashionable Lady Orming-  
ton. As soon as I grew old enough to roll  
about the Axminster carpet, the rich garlands  
interwoven in whose soft tissue delighted my  
eyes by their gay colours, the nurse was desired  
to leave me ; and while the lady-mother and

the lady's-maid were engrossed in their mysteries, paying no more attention to *me* than *I* to my neglected rattle, I watched unnoticed the play of the waving satin train they were adjusting, the glitter of the diamond tiara, and the turn of the snowy feather. Gewgaws were my earliest playthings ; and my primer consisted of the flourishing capitals at the head of a milliner's bill.

I have described my face as puny ; but I know not why I pay it so poor a compliment, since there is no one to gainsay me and do it rightly ; for it was unquestionably to my personal charms I was indebted for my *entrée* into Lady Ormington's *sanctum sanctorum*. I was the first of her children admitted to be danced before her glass, or roll upon her soft carpet. Yet I had a brother and a sister ; a brother destined to inherit the honours of the family ; and a sister born, it was to be hoped, to share its affections. But the Honourable John squinted, and the Honourable Julia had red hair ; and our

lady-mother was as heartily ashamed of them both, as if they had been palmed upon her from the workhouse.

From the day of my birth, on the contrary, nurses and toadies were unanimous in protesting that *I* was the living image of my sweet mamma ; and as my sweet mamma was the daughter of a country Squire, whose face had been her fortune, and whose fortune it was to win the heart and hand, or rather the hand and coronet, of the Right Honourable Lord Ormington, she might be reasonably excused for some maternal partiality for her miniature, adorned with a satin cockade and twelve yards of superfine French cambric.

My mother's instinctive vocation was for the toilet. Her beauty had been her stepping-stone to distinction ; and she seemed to think too much care could not be bestowed on its adornment, as devotees erect a shrine to a favourite divinity. It was true, the worship was gratuitous. There was nothing further to gain ; no more hands, at

least, and no more coronets. As for hearts, it is to be hoped that Lady Ormington neither brandished the powder-puff, nor spread the rustling hoop, with any mal-intentions towards those fragile superfluities of the human frame divine.

But if fashionable notoriety constituted the object of her desires, the ambition was gratified. There was an Ormington *pouf*, and an Ormington *vis-à-vis*; an Ormington green and an Ormington minuet. In those unlettered times Annuals were not: but the languishing portrait, limned by Cosway, was charmingly engraved by Bartolozzi; and the Right Hon. Lady Ormington, leaning on a demi-column, with “Sacred to friendship” engraven on the plinth, a stormy sunset in the background, and a bantam-legged silken spaniel staring its eyes out in the foreground, figured in all the printsellers’ windows; immortalized by certain stanzas, silken as the spaniel and flat as the landscape, from what Dr. Johnson and courtesy used to call “the charming pen of Mrs. Greville.”

I recollect contriving to convert the favourite scarf of her ladyship into a bridle for my rocking-horse, on the day when the said engraving, richly framed, was first placed in her boudoir. So delighted was she with the print, (which, I concluded, was intended as a *cadeau*, for I never saw it again,) that she magnanimously overlooked my misdemeanour.

There was something else, by the way, which we all seemed inclined to overlook ; *i.e.* the Right Honourable Lord Ormington. I hardly recollect hearing his name mentioned, either in the dressing-room, drawing-room, or nursery. The scholarship derived from the important great letters heading the Christmas bill of Madame Lebrun, had not assisted me a sufficient number of steps up the ladder of learning to enable me to decipher the newspapers, even if my “ sweet mamma ” had not been too fine a lady to admit them into her boudoir ; or I might have found it written down there in malice, that his Lordship was one of the heaviest prosers, supporting, in the Upper

House, the country-gentleman interest of Great Britain. As it was, I knew nothing about him, except that there was a cross, gaunt, pig-tailed old fellow, much scouted by the livery of the house, who went by the name of “ my Lord’s own man ; ” and that every evening, as the under-nurse was hushing us off to sleep, the rumble of wheels from the door of our house in Hanover Square used to be hailed with a remark of — “ There he goes to the ’ouse ; — much good may it do ’em ! ” —

Upon *whom* his Lordship’s departure for the House was likely to confer a benefit, I was not of an age to trouble my head. Let us hope that the nurses pluralized the nation ; referring the collective interests of the three kingdoms to the collective wisdom of Parliament.

Time progressed. I had fallen in the world four feet and a cockade—from my nurse’s arms to a go-cart. To contemplate myself in the glass, I was now forced to climb into a chair. But I was rewarded for my pains. The puny face had expanded into a fine open countenance, surrounded

by hyacinthine curls. Impossible to see a more charming little fellow ! Lady Ormington seemed to fancy that everybody was as pleased to look at me, as *I* was to look at myself ; for I now superseded the spaniel in the Ormington *vis-à-vis*, and was as constantly seen lounging out of *one* window as Sir Lionel Dashwood lounging *in* at the other. Many people fancied they could discern a resemblance between us. For my part, I think Sir Lionel bore a much stronger affinity to the spaniel, my predecessor, both in point of fawning and foolishness. I don't know why I abuse him, though ; for, while he never alluded to John and Julia otherwise than as "those unfortunate creatures," he invariably qualified myself as "Cecil, my boy !" or,—"There's a darling!"—

I can scarcely say whether it were Lord Ormington's predilections, or my mother's, that kept us resident in town eight months of the year. The only point on which they seemed to feel in common, was a detestation of Ormington Hall : perhaps because, at the family place, there was no

pretext of parliament or parties to keep them asunder. My sweet mamma, however, usually spent her summers at Spa, occasionally visiting Paris ; and the breaking out of the war was a serious evil to a family which it reduced to the necessity of domestic peace. I remember feeling as strongly inclined to join the outcry against Pitt and Cobourg as the Convention ; for, while John and Julia were left safe at the Hall, I had always been promoted to the honours of La Sauvenière ; and the rooks, the avenue, and Dr. Droneby, were antipathetic to my nature. I was really in despair at the closing of the Continent ! *Bonbons, maréchale powder, chocolat de santé, pommade à la vanille*—how were we to exist without these necessaries of life ? What was to become of England, and her stupid martello-towers,—the Pitt-posts, as they were called—for which the country was to supply railing !—

A worse evil than war, however, impended over me. John had long disappeared from the nursery. On returning from our last expedition to Flan-

ders, we found that, during our absence, the young gentleman had been made over to roast mutton, Latin grammar, and Dr. Droneby; while Miss Julia was transferred to a school-room as cold as a church, and a governess as stately as the steeple. The head-nurse, who had presided over my cockade, seemed to think it a good rid-dance. A similar opinion was expressed by Lord Ormington and his own man, when, six months afterwards, the lady herself was postchaiséd off from the hall in one direction, while I was post-chaiséd off in another to a preparatory purgatory at Chiswick; where they began with me as in a lunatic asylum, by cutting off my curls, choosing my head to be as unfurnished without as within. I remember weeping bitterly for the loss of my nurse and my locks. I was ashamed to look myself in the face after being shorn thus vilely. But the only looking-glass within reach was a thing as large as a half-crown, in the lid of an enamel *bonbonnière*, given me at parting by my mother. Moreover,

I dared not cry too loud over my disfigurement ; for the horrible Dalilah by whom my clustering curls had been curtailed, talked of corduroys, highlows, and a leathern cap, in case I was refractory. The dread of seeing myself transformed into an errand-boy suppressed my tears.

Let me pass lightly over my school-days, though, Heaven knows, they passed heavily enough over me ! Biographers, whether of themselves or others, seem to luxuriate in pictures of academic innocence. For my part, I have a horror of birch and bread-and-milk, even in reminiscence. There is something excruciating to a well-born young gentleman in being reduced to the toilet of a Newfoundland dog ; viz. a rousing shake, a plunge into cold water, and the eternal rusty coat of the day before.

Even at Eton, I was a miserable dog. In the first place, because I was called Danby Junior (The Honourable John having the advantage of me) ; and in the second, because the duncehood, which had been passed over as a minor evil at the

preparatory, seemed likely to be flogged out of me among the antique towers where “grateful Science still adorns her Henry’s holy shade,” and where humbugging tutors still adore the flagellation of innocent defaulters in classic lore. John was a regular sap — Droneby and roast mutton had made a scholar of him. Ugly little brute ! what was *he* good for but Homer and corduroys ?—

At college, he obtained still further advantages over me. He was beginning, indeed, to have the best of it everywhere. From the date of the abrogation of my curls, I was out of favour, even in the boudoir. Sir Lionel Dashwood had been unable to repress an ejaculation of “little horror !” on seeing me again ; and by the time John was entered at college, a something of a paralytic attack seemed to remind my sweet mamma that the Right Honourable Lord Ormington was to survive in her elder son, when her noble spouse took up his rest in the family vault, instead of on the benches of St. Stephen’s.

Neither he, nor I, nor Dashwood, nor even Dash, were now admitted into the dressing-room. Matters were growing too serious there. With sons of eighteen, ladies who have stood godmother to a minuet or a taffeta, are not fond of exposing to investigation the mystery of their washes and pommades. The *flacons*, which formerly contained *bouquet de Florence* or *verveine*, now held the lights and shades of her ladyship's complexion. Blue veins were sealed in one packet, and a rising blush was corked up in a crystal phial. Eyebrows—eyelashes—lips—cheeks—chin—an ivory forehead, and a pearly row of teeth,—all were indebted for their irresistibilities to a certain Pandora's box of a dressing-case, furnished by Thévenot, which sent forth Lady Ormington, full-armed for conquest, like the goddess that emerged from the brain of the father of the gods.

But her ladyship was no longer the same woman as in the days of the spaniel and the cockade. It was not alone because Dashwood was in the Bench and I out of favour, that, I dis-

covered a change. But she was growing almost domestic, almost reasonable. She had given up balls,—would not hear of an opera-box,—and for a year and a half scarcely stirred out of her own boudoir. In place of Sir Lionel there was a pet apothecary, who came every day with his little budget of scandal, just as Madame Lebrun had formerly made her appearance with her little box of laces ; and though certain persons, to wit, two old-maidenly sisters of Lord Ormington, two card-playing, blue, Honourable Misses Danby, with brown-holland complexions and tongues of a still deeper dye, protested that the only disorder afflicting their noble sister-in-law was an ugly daughter, of an age to be presented at court, her ladyship resigned herself to the sacrifices exacted by an elegant valetudinarianism.

In winter, she seldom rose till candle-light ; in summer, the muslin curtains of her chamber were never undrawn. A perpetual *demi-jour* surrounded her. Though blessing her stars for not being hereditarily exposed to the cruel

revelations of the peerage, so as to be hopelessly branded with the shame of having attained her eight-and-thirtieth year, *she* could not blind herself to the fact, as betrayed in the very looking-glass which had exercised so singular an influence over my nature. Eight-and-thirty was written *there*, in words as terrible as those of Belshazzar's warning,—even in characters of crow's-feet!—

Eight-and-thirty is a frightful epoch in the life of a woman of fashion. Hot rooms and cosmetics place it on a level with fifty, in the lady of a country Squire. The struggle between departing youth and coming age is never more awful! A little older, and the case becomes too clear for dispute. At forty, she gives up the field, allowing that time has the best of it. But for the five preceding years, those years during which, though no longer pretty, a woman may be still handsome, the tug of war is terrific. A woman never prizes her beauty half so much as when it is forsaking

her ; never comprehends the value of raven locks till revealed by the contrast of the first grey hair ; never finds out that her waist was slim and her form graceful, till she has been accused of *enbonpoint*.

Brother coxcombs ! if you would have a proper value set upon your homage, pay your court to a woman of eight-and-thirty. The flutter of a little miss of sixteen, is nothing to the agitation with which the poor grateful soul uplifts her head above the waters of oblivion, in which she was succumbing. At that crisis a dreadful revolution occurs in the female heart. The finer sensibilities have lost their edge ; self-veneration is impaired by the slights of society : the injustice of the world, in scandalizing virtue and exalting vice, has produced, *par contrecoup*, a peevish misappreciation of the value of reputation. After all, was it worth while to break so many hearts ? Others, less cruel, are more respected. She puzzles herself in wondering whether they are more happy.

It is a dangerous thing to wonder on such subjects. It is like a hypochondriac feeling the edge of a razor.

At forty, she wonders no longer. She has resumed her trust in excellence, her reverence for the spotlessness of virtue; thanks Heaven for her escape; and renouncing for ever the influence of the puppies, betakes herself for consolation to the tabbies. Cards,—universal panacea! — cards that knit up the ravelled sleeve of care, boon Nature's kind restorer, balmy cards,—inspire her with a new insight into the purposes of existence! Lovelace himself might do his worst! The votary of whist

————— passes on,  
In matron meditation, fancy free!

One might almost fancy it easier to be a grandmother than a mother!—

Foreseeing no improvement to Lady Ormington's delicacy of health, my father at length decided that Julia should be introduced into society by his sisters. So much the better for

*her!* The poor girl, who was really plain, looked twenty times as well in contrast with *their* frightful faces, as when approximated with her sweet mamma's still lovely features. Julia was not altogether amiss, when seen between Miss Mary and Miss Agatha Danby.

Lord Ormington generously provided them with a family coach and an opera-box ; and the daughter, of whom his right honourable lady had seen so little during her schoolday martyrdom, took up her quarters with her maiden aunts in Queen Anne Street, almost without her absence being perceived ; leaving the woman of eight-and-thirty to hope that the *beau-monde* would not trouble itself to trace the connection between the beautiful Lady Ormington, and a Miss Danby in the enjoyment of red hair and eighteen years of age.

Of Julia, beyond this, I knew nothing. Having seen her banished by my mother, and sharing to the utmost her ladyship's abhorrence of the Judas complexion, I looked upon her as a species

of Paria. Of all physical defects, red hair is one of the least remediable. The blackest of wigs only renders the disfigurement more glaring. Apply what pigment you will to the eyebrows, the lashes remain a burning accusation. Nay, were even the eyelashes put in mourning, there is a peculiarity of complexion induced by the coating of the epidermis, as ineffaceable as the blackness of the Ethiopian or the spots of the leopard. I scarcely wondered that Lady Ormington should give up Julia as hopeless. Who would marry her?—Who perpetuate in his race a stigma so repellent?—Unless Miss Mary and Miss Agatha were kind enough to die, leaving her their heiress, she must inevitably succeed to their honours of honourable single blessedness.

I have survived to see wondrous reforms in Great Britain, even leaving out of the question that of its United Parliament. In the days of my cockadehood, it was cited as an exemplary thing on the part of the charming Lady Ormington, to have even one of her three children

sprawling about her dressing-room. The elegiac poets wrote verses about it ; and every other ugly little anecdote affecting her renown, was hushed at the clubs by the rejoinder of — “ but then she is *such* a mother ! ” —

The cockade generation of succeeding times is far better off in the world. The cockade generation of to-day is at a premium. One might fancy all the little boys one meets were heirs apparent,

“ For them, the Tyrian murrey swimmeth ; ” and all the little girls, countesses in embryo. They are not only clothed in purple and fine linen, Flanders lace and Oriental cashmeres, but we hear of nursery governesses, nursery footmen, the childrens’ carriage, the childrens’ pair of horses ! — Now that Turkey is brought down from her stilts, I am of opinion that the only despotism extant in Europe is the nursery-archy of Great Britain, with its viziers and janizaries,—head nurses and apothecaries,—ladies’ doctors and Lilliputian warehouses.— I thank

Heaven, I was born a coxcomb, for coxcombs are bachelors by prescriptive right ; and it would have stung me to the soul to find myself tied down like Gulliver, in my middle age, by the authority of a regiment of pygmies.

To return to my mother. No sooner had Julia grappled herself so fast to the fond bosoms of her maiden aunts that they proposed to her parents retaining her as a permanent inmate, than Lady Ormington was pleased to accomplish the recovery of her health. Luckily for her, a great revolution had occurred during her seclusion : and revolutions in politics have the singular faculty of accomplishing revolutions in dress,—as the moment-hand and hour-hand of a dial are actuated by the same movement. The Reign of Terror had frightened people out of their wits, and out of their hair-powder. Buckles had given place to shoe-ties ; and love-locks and *chignons* to crops *à la victime*, and *à la guillotine*. London, it is true, had not approached nearer to revolutionary terrors than

by making a bonfire of Lord Mansfield's wig and MSS. But being accustomed to accept its fashions from Paris, neat as imported, their powder went off, and their locks were polled, as though the clubs and the coteries of St. James's Street and Hanover Square, had prepared themselves for the cart or the scaffold.

The transformation thus effected was peculiarly favourable to Lady Ormington. The hair, so long snowed over by the powder-puff, came out a rich auburn; and in her Roman crop and a tunic *à l'Agrippine*, she was still a bewitching creature. Several of her adorers underwent a relapse; and we all know that a relapse is the most fatal period of a disorder.

All I now knew of her ladyship's triumphs, however, was derived from the newspapers. I was banished from her presence, from the moment of my degradation into a schoolboy: Even after being entered at Christ Church, I remained an exile from her good graces. On taking leave of her on my way to the Univer-

sity, she complained bitterly that my father should send me to Oxford. “ What was the use of college?—I should only become a brute of a fox-hunter!—It was quite enough for John to acquire a taste for buckskins and High Toryism, without infecting *me* with those Oxonian propensities. *She* wished me to go straight into the Guards. I knew quite enough for the Guards. The humiliation of maternity would be less galling, if she had a son in the Guards. In the Guards, I should be on the spot to swear at her chairmen when drunk, or her coachman if disorderly. John was unpresentable ; but, if properly drilled and tutored, dressed and *re*-dressed, she should not be so much ashamed of *me*, when on guard among the Guards ! ”—

An involuntary smile overspread my features while hinting my suspicions that I was intended by my father for the Church ; and a faint shriek burst from Lady Ormington’s lips at the announcement. The horror of being mother to a parson ! — a li-

censed dealer in sermons,—a privileged preacher of prose,—a fellow in a black coat, holding a patent to exhort her to repentance ! After all, I believe some feeling of maternal affection lingered at the bottom of her heart ; for, as I held the salts-bottle to her nose, she faintly ejaculated, “ Cecil ! were I to see you in a shovel-hat, I would not survive it ! ”—The idea of the cockade of my infancy, the Antinous’ curls of my boyhood, giving place to a shovel, was too much for her !—

It would have been *far* too much for *me* ! I, Cecil Danby, whose name was already whispered in St. James’s Street, as having taxed my bill at the Christopher on account of a semi-tone too much in the complexion of the *œil de perdrix*, at my last dinner-party,—I, to be swamped in a country-parsonage ! It is true, my father’s church patronage was such as a bishop might have envied ; it is true, his lordship’s parliamentary interest was such as might in time have made me a bishop—But the wig !—“ Angels and ministers

of grace" (and of the Church of England,) defend us,—the episcopal wig ! I could almost as soon have borne to defy the derision of puppy-life as a Judge or a Lord Chancellor !—

It did not much signify. Alma Mater proved as little in conceit with me as Lady Ormington. In less than a year of my matriculation, I was rusticated : why, it is not my province or pleasure to communicate to the reader. If my contemporary, he may happen to know ; if my junior, let him read, mark, and learn in the archives of my college. *Le secret d'ennuyer est celui de tout dire* ; and autobiographers are consequently the greatest bores of the press. I love a little mystery. So did the public, till Mrs. Radcliffe gave them a surfeit of it. The only mysteries in fashion now-a-days are speeches from the throne and visitation sermons. *Oh dear me*.

I commenced this chronicle of my adventures with a predetermination against "University Intelligence." College life,—a cursed vulgar, stupid thing in itself,—has been written down still lower

of late years by smart periodicals and fashionable novelists. Instead, therefore, of sketches of Christchurch in the year of (dis)grace 180—, suffer me to favour you, gentle public, with the “Portrait of a Young Gentleman,” as I figured that season in the eyes of the fair sex and the foul, in the city of high-churchmen and sausages.

Standing five feet seven in my pumps, and five feet ten in my boots, with a trifling hint of the Piping Faun softening the severity of my Roman nose and finely-chiselled mouth, I should, perhaps, have passed for effeminate, but that the sentimental school was just then in the ascendant. People went to the play to cry at the “Stranger” or “Penruddock,” and subscribed to a circulating-library to weep over “The Father and Daughter.” The severest poetry tolerated by May Fair was that of Hayley, William Spencer, and Samuel Rogers. In short, people had supped full of horrors during the Revolution, and were now devoted to elegiac measures. My languid smile and hazel eyes were the very

thing to settle the business of the devoted beings left for execution.

Self-reliance was one of the strong points of my character. I had always a predisposition to womanslaughter, with extenuating circumstances, as well as a stirring consciousness of the exterminating power. But, as the most tremendous-looking piece of ordnance is non-existent for her Majesty's service, till after progressing through the department of the proving-house at Woolwich Warren, I almost blushed for my own beauties, till they had been labelled with the fiat of “deadly poison” by the experience of the angelic sex.

I attained my majority without a catastrophe—the cause of much heart-burning, but not a single heart-break ! The plebeian conquests of the University, or the sighs of the lady's-maid and vicar's daughter at Ormington Hall are unworthy of record ; their sensibility being quite as much at the service of my elder brother, with his frightful phiz and ill-built coat. My pen lends itself

only to adventures proper and specific to the Honourable Cecil Danby, the arch-coxcomb of his coxcombical times.

Not that I was without rivals near the throne. At Oxford, where my acquaintance lay more among the moderns than the ancients, I picked up, or truth to say, was picked up, by a man—ay, a man!—though I, but six months his junior, remained a boy,—destined to play a distinguished part on the stage of puppyism. In the course of my first lounge down the High Street, I was rash enough to show my rawness by inquiring the name of a figure much resembling one of the models serving as signs to a Parisian clothes-shop; and, “Not know Jack Harris?” was the bitter reproof of my ignorance concerning one never, of course, heard of beyond the bounds of the University.

I did *not* know Jack Harris; and I suspect no one knew him less than my rebuker, who was no other than my whipper-snapper cousin Lord Squeamy. But I was willing to extend my

knowledge ; and Squeamy accordingly chirrupped in my ear that Harris was a nobody, who had made himself somebody, and gave the law to everybody. This was accomplished per force of some talent and much impudence. Squeamy did not call it impudence. The word was too substantive for his puny lips. *He* called it coolness. “ Jack Harris was the coolest fellow in the world ! ”

“ A man of family ? ”

“ Nobody knows.”

“ A man of fortune ? ”

“ Nobody has an idea.”

“ He must indeed be cool and clever then,” was my secret reflection, “ to have kept his secret among people so distinguished by inquisitiveness and ill-manners, as the academic youth of Britain.”

I soon discovered, in my proper person, that Jack Harris was something more than impudent. He was impertinent. Impudence is the quality of a footman ; impertinence, of his master. Im-

pudence is a thing to be rebutted with brute force ; impertinence requires wit for the putting down. Had Jack Harris been simply impudent, he would have been repaid with a kick ; he was impertinent, and his superiority was recognised with a low bow.

His talents, meanwhile, received still higher recognition. Some time previous to my rustication, Jack Harris took an honour. He had probably tact to perceive that he was not sufficiently well-born to aspire to the honours of duncehood. It sat well upon such fellows as Squeamy and myself to defy all pretence to scholarship ; for in college life there is no middle course for a nobleman. A lord must be cited either for the highest acquirements, or the boldest contempt of them ; whereas your Jack Harris, or your John Thompson, Esquire, is *bound* to afford evidence of possessing the plebeian use of his faculties. Harris quitted college, accordingly, with the reputation of being an excellent scholar, wanting only application to be the first

man of his year. No one had ever seen him with a book or a pen in his hand ; and my subsequent knowledge of him has often led me to conjecture how hard must have been the course of secret study, by which he enabled himself to reconcile the pursuits of a man of pleasure with the acquirements of a sap.

The first thing that startled me in Jack, was his refusing to make my acquaintance. I could detect the negative air with which he received a proposal to that effect, whispered by that ninny of ninnies, Squeamy. Involuntarily, his eyebrow became elevated, and his lip depressed ; saying as plain as lip and eyebrow could speak,—“ thank you—I know quite enough of the family.” At that moment I should have had much pleasure in knocking him down ; but, as I said before, it is impudence and not impertinence that challenges physical correction. I accordingly prepared myself for moral castigation of his offence.

Ten days afterwards, at the close of a supper-party in which I distinguished myself by the

display of certain saucinesses studied in my boyhood under Sir Lionel, Jack carelessly requested the favour of an introduction.

Squeamy's lack-lustre eye was upon me. I saw a smile of triumph almost irradiate his unmeaning face, evidently anticipating an act of retribution. Had he been at my elbow, he would doubtless have suggested a dead cut.

"With the greatest pleasure!" cried I, rising and offering my hand to the offender. "The acquaintance cannot fail to be a mutual benefit. I shall be proud to place my rawness under the tutorage of Mr. Harris, as regards the habits and customs of that part of His Majesty's dominions called Oxford; and equally pleased to afford *him* some hints concerning those of a less circumscrip<sup>t</sup> region, denominated the world."

The blow was felt, and resented as it deserved; that is, by a pressure of the hand denoting sympathy and bad fellowship. As Saladin and Cœur de Lion may have rushed into each other's embrace after the mutual trial of skill described

by Scott in “The Talisman,” the two coxcombs recognised each other’s merits by a secret sign, mystic as the tokens of free masonry.—We became allies for life !

Jack Harris was an amusing fellow,—that is, amusing for the University. I should never have got rusticated, but from the *ennui* consequent upon his quitting Oxford. In my own defence, I was forced to descend to the vulgar exploits of gownsmen to keep myself awake.

On arriving in town after undergoing the extreme penalty of the law (of the University), I underwent, of course, a further sentence of parental condemnation. Lord Ormington favoured me with a longer sentence than I had ever heard from his lips. “I expected no better of you,” said he; “you have disgraced yourself, and done justice to my prognostications.” Lady Ormington merely observed, “Rusticated!—What *is* rusticated?”—and on learning that the verb had no reference to rusticity, was satisfied

that it meant something very incomprehensible and very uninteresting ; like the capitals M.A. or D.D., which she had never been able to interpret otherwise, than a Double Dose of divinity, and More Anon of promised preferment.

But Jack Harris was better versed in the obliquities of the case, as well as more inclined to dissent thereon, than either my genitor or genitrix.

“ A sad affair ! ” said he, gravely, at the conclusion of my narrative. “ I fear, my dear Cec, (or as the Clubs would write it) Cis, you stand convicted of heinous vulgarisms. Think how your prospects in life might be injured by the rumour that you have condescended to break lamps, and carry your poodle to chapel, like any other blackguard of fashion. With respect to expulsion, to a man in your position in life it is rather a feather in your cap. Next to a high honour, it was your only mode of obtaining college eminence. You had no professional prospects to injure ; and people of the world attach

little importance to the pranks of a gentleman commoner, which implies only a sillier sort of schoolboy."

Instead of being affronted, I congratulated him in my turn upon the exquisiteness of the little London snuggery in which he had installed himself.

"I don't complain!" replied Jack, looking round with an air of ineffable coxcombry upon furniture composed of the richest foreign woods and marbles. "I am an easy fellow in these particulars. Provided things are clean and comfortable, I make no pretence to ostentation."

"I suspect you have a pretension to non-ostentation," said I,—"the less vulgar affectation, perhaps, of the two."

"Not so bad, for a beginning!" retorted Jack Harris, coolly. "You are, however, safe in venting your sarcasms on my establishment; for it will be long enough before you set up a household of your own, to incur retaliation. Yours, my dear Cis, will be the poet's and the younger brother's portion, an airy attic, containing three

cane-bottomed chairs and a painted chest of drawers."

"Had you heard the admonishment with which Lord Ormington received me this morning, you might have judged it problematical whether he would afford me either lodging or board," said I, laughing.

"You will be bored enough, I fancy, if he *should* afford you lodging!" cried Jack, knowingly; "or rather, his lordship's lodging will prove harder than board."

"I should be somewhat soft to accept it," replied I. "If I can persuade him to continue my Oxford allowance, I will look out a bachelor den, within distance of the Clubs and the Opera, and—"

"Get through the probation of your whelp-hood as best you may!" interrupted Jack. "Cis, my boy!—take my advice on the matter. As long as you can, live at free quarters. If I had Lord Ormington's house in Hanover Square to fall back upon, his man-cook, and choice cellar

of wines, (as the auctioneers have it,) would I mulct myself, think you, of rent and taxes at the rate of ten guineas per inch, for a snail-shell in Dean Street, Park Lane? — *I* have my way to make in town; yours is made for you. Between ourselves, Cis, it was my intention, on quitting Oxford, not to consort with a single fellow less than ten years my senior. At your age and mine, one must live for one's improvement. No man has a right to study his pleasure or convenience, till after thirty. It takes till then to make up his mind and his character. Once established, let him follow the bent of his inclinations.”

“ You intend, then,” cried I, interrupting him, “ to improve yourself by the society of fogrums? ”—

“ I intended,—but I recant. *You*, my old chum, shall march hand in hand with me in the path of perfectionment. We have been boys together,—we will cease to be boys together, or rather together we will learn to be men—”

“ Of fashion—” added I, “ for such I conceive

to be the object of what you call making up a character. But for my part, I frankly tell you that, having as you say Lord Ormington's house, cook, and cellar,—such as they are,—to fall back upon, I shall give myself no great trouble about the matter. You observed just now that I was able to dispense with scholarship. I consider myself at least as well able to dispense with the labour of ambition."

" Ambition ? "—reiterated Jack Harris.—

" What signifies the object to be attained ? *l'art de parvenir* is still the same, whether it be—

Th' applause of listening Senates to command,

or to conquer the plaudits of the Clubs. For my part, I despise both ! Provided I secure the roses of life, confound its laurels.—By the way, Harris, where did you get that love of a waist-coat ? " said I, perceiving that Jack was nettled at finding his affectation outdone, and his air of patronage discountenanced.

" It was got *for* me," he replied, with a pe-

culiar smile. “ These rumours of wars make one shudder to think how soon the Continent may close again, to the utter discouragement of our attempts at humanization. There is only Paris for a waistcoat! — London produces buckskins and boots,—Germany has its coats,— but nothing like Paris for a waistcoat! ”—

I saw he was determined I should inquire into the origin of *his*, and disappointed him. But I could scarcely support the *air avantageux* with which he first glanced at the pattern and then at me, as if with a tacit assertion of superiority. That the waistcoat was neither French nor a gift, I was persuaded. Jack would not, however, have troubled himself to assume the air of a man à *bonnes fortunes*, but for a fore-gone conclusion.

“ By the way, Cis,” said he, when, after taking leave of him, I was about to retread the miniature staircase carpeted in all directions to the brink, so that neither the blind mole nor Jack Harris could hear a foot fall,—“ one little

piece of advice,—the advice of a man who has six months the start of you on the *pavé*—in our case more than six years—the smart of my experience being yet recent.—Drop Oxford ! Be not a hint of the ‘damned spot’ perceptible, either in the garnish of your discourse or of your garments. A man fresh from the University is sure to be leavened with slang or pedantry. Avoid both!—Cut the college cut,—or prepare to be cut in your turn !”

I could have killed him for the protecting air with which he uttered this warning. I was Lord Ormington’s son, that is, I was Lady Ormington’s son. *Who* was Jack Harris, that he should assume to be a plummet over me? Alas ! it was less *who* he was, than *what* he was, that endowed him with the right ! He was a monstrous clever fellow ; or, with a problematical fortune and doubtful origin, he would not have come to be called Jack Harris by the best men of his time.

Next to the mortification of Harris’s non-

chalance, was the dryness of my father. Lord Ormington, indignant at losing in me the family incumbent of a family living of two thousand a year, referred me, in the fewest possible words, in the fewest possible days after my arrival in town, to his men of business, Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch, of Southampton-buildings, for intimation of his paternal projects for my settlement in life.

There is something offensive in being despatched, even by one's father, to Southampton-buildings. When a gentleman intends to shoot you, he refers you to his friend ; when to persecute you according to the law, to his man of business. I felt the menace as it was intended ; but I went. Old Hanmer was my father's man. In such firms, there is usually a thinking partner and a talking partner. Hanmer was the talker ; the partner who received orders from the clients, while Snatch gave orders to the clerks. I had seen him once or twice in my boyhood at Ormington Hall, when he brought down a post-

chaise full of deeds to be executed, and carried up a post-chaise full of venison or pheasants on which execution was to be done. Hanmer had a good-humoured jocular face, of most unlawyer-like promise ; and was especially odious to me as a man who made merry with a solemn subject. I never liked Shakspeare's grave-diggers ; and above all things I hate a comical physician or punning lawyer, whose good humour is as nauseous as the lump of sugar in a black dose prepared for the use of schools.

I was compelled to swallow him, however, or, at least, consult him as the way-post of my future career. Having borrowed a horse of Jack Harris, I sauntered, at an hour when least likely to find Christians in the streets, and most likely to find a lawyer at his office, towards what have since been facetiously denominated by the press, the wilds of Bloomsbury.

The irritation of my mind probably rendered me inarticulate in my inquiries of an odd sort

of pepper-and-salt nondescript that opened the door ; or, perhaps, my appearance announced a person somewhat different from the usual clients of Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch. For instead of conveying me into the chambers of the old lawyer, Pepper-and-salt ushered me to a barn on the first floor, which, I suppose, called itself by courtesy a drawing-room.

Having desired me to “ please to step in,” which I *did* please, a certain confusion at a table in one corner of the room made it apparent that some one else was pleased to step out. There was a lady seated at the table, writing, drawing, sketching — no matter what, who had her back towards me. But as there were petticoats in the case, I took Jack Harris’s advice, forgot Oxford, and was civil ; begging I might not disturb her, and feeling, with perfect sincerity, that whether old Hanmer’s drawing-room contained or not a piece of quizzical human furniture, in addition to its quizzical chairs and tables, mattered not a jot.

Advancing towards the fire-place, though it was April, and the weather balmy, I took up that national position on the hearth-rug, from which John Bull, like

Andes, giant of the western star,  
Looks from his throne of clouds o'er half the world.

In the present instance I looked over something, which was something worth looking at. The fire-place commanded the table where old Hanmer's better half, or quarter, his wife, or daughter, or niece, was fussing together her rattletreaps preparatory to escape. I suppose it was the recollection of Jack Harris's waistcoat that determined me to stare her out of countenance. For, to own the truth, my practice was to include in one vast horde (good to sew on buttons, get up fine linen, and compound cheese-cakes,) all that portion of the sex not entitled to walk at a coronation or kiss hands on a birthday. A single glance, however, at the beautiful creature who was shutting

up her writing-box in the corner of old Hanmer's humdrummery, brought a flush of surprise to my cheek and a stammering apology to my lips.

Never had I seen so sweet a face, so graceful a figure!—Falling shoulders, trimly waist, a profusion of chestnut curls, falling from the smallest head I had ever seen, on either side a throat as white as it was slender,—all were exquisite! There was an air of elegance, more distinguished than even the air of fashion, in the girl; and though her mourning-dress was simple to homeliness, she seemed far from oppressed by a sense of my affability, when I once more “begged that I might not disturb her, as I was merely waiting the arrival of Mr. Hanmer.” She requested me to take a seat, much as Lady Ormington might have offered the same courtesy to her apothecary, and left the room!

My first impulse, on her departure, was to

turn round and look in the glass ; no uncommon movement with me, certainly ; but, on the present occasion, it was accompanied by a note of interrogation, rather than of admiration. I wanted to ascertain why it was that girl of Hanmer's had been able to confront me without confusion. Had I, in anticipation of my fusty visit to my father's man of business, neglected to arm myself with my usual implements of destruction ?—No !—My tie was sublime, my shirt frill of “ lawn as white as driven snow ;” my buckskins and tops unimpeachable ! (Shudder not, gentle reader, and more especially reader fair ! remember that I write of a year whose decimal is zero, 180—!) There was every reason the young lady's civilities should be incoherent, and her curtsey tremulous. I felt, therefore, inexpressibly injuréd by her self-possession.

My meditations were interrupted by the entrance of old Hanmer, rubbing his hands and

drawing in his breath with a hissing inspiration, while good-humour shone upon his cushioned cheeks, and sparkled in the cold blue eyes, which looked as if they had frozen into icicles the shaggy white eyebrows overhanging them like stalactites. I abhor people who enter a room rubbing their hands, and drawing in their breath. It is the favourite *entrée en scène* of dentists, attorneys, and other excruciators of the public mind and body. My bow to the man of business was studiously indicative of repugnance.

“ Glad to see ye, Mr. Danby — glad to see ye ! Take a chair !” — cried he, not a whit abashed by the non-extension of my hand to meet the one he offered. I saw by his nonchalance that my father had invested him with some sort of authority over me, — that he was to be bully *en chef*, or *en second*.

“ My lord pretty well this morning ? ” — continued he, after I had fastidiously chosen a chair. “ I had the honour of seeing his lordship yesterday forenoon ; ” and he spoke with a sort of pro-

prietary feeling of my lord, as if in daily attendance upon his moral nature as the apothecary upon his gout.

“ Lord Ormington sent me hither, sir,” said I, as grandly as twenty and a half, with its modicum of beard and whiskers, is able to look at a barbose old monster of sixty-five, “ to learn his pleasure on the subject of my future career.” And I tried to insinuate into my tone an implication that my father’s pleasure and my own, need not necessarily be concorporate.

Old Hanmer regarded me with the complacent smile of pity with which the ogre may have examined the condition of Hop-o’-my-Thumb, ere he put him by in a child-coop to be killed when wanted for table. The man of business had no mind, perhaps, to grind my bones to make his bread, because at present my bones were marrowless as those of Banquo’s ghost. He saw that I should make prettier pickings hereafter.

“ My dear young gentleman,” said he, with

the most nauseous friendship, “ it grieves me much to be under the necessity of explaining, in the name of my noble client Lord Ormington, his heartfelt disappointment at the recent—”

I spare my readers the preamble. Most of them must be capable of figuring to themselves the sermon of a rich lord’s man of business, commissioned to inflict an exhortation upon a younger son. The pith of the argument was —“ You can’t go into the Church, Mr. Cecil Danby—you shan’t go into the army. If you choose to embrace a diplomatic career, there is an opening in the Foreign Office. But I will neither accept the obliging offers of my friend Lord Votefilch to advance you in diplomatic life, nor continue your present allowance of four hundred per annum, unless you pledge yourself to punctual rational habits, and submission to the powers that be.”

I seemed to have acquired one of the indispensables to my advancement in diplomatic life; for instead of closing with the offer, I replied,

with a countenance and voice most mysteriously inconclusive, that “ I would reflect upon the proposal, and have the honour of delivering my ultimatum in the course of a day or two.”

I had, of course, already made up my mind,—that is, as much mind as I had to make up,—to accept the offer. Nothing could have suited me better. I had anticipated a hundred horrors ; — a residence on my father’s Irish estates (where the agency was worth two thousand a-year and the rent-roll three) ; or extinction in a parsonage with a private tutor, during the half-year still to elapse previous to my coming of age. To a minor, half a year is half a century ! In that said month of April, with the London season before me, I would not have bartered the ensuing six months, against an eventual mitre or Mastership of the Rolls.

The career of diplomacy flattered my dearest ambitions. Diplomacy is almost the only profession where a man gains nothing by appearing a beast. Slovenliness is esteemed an evidence of

scholarship in almost every calling save that which renders one the mouthpiece of kings,—redeeming their gracious majesties from the trouble of communicating per speaking-trumpet from one end of Europe to the other. Downing-street, exchanged only for some foreign mission, enchanted me. The diplomatist's is a metropolitan existence. The diplomatist is fated to progress, like a child learning its alphabet, from capital to capital. His post lies in some focus, concentrating the rays of civilization ;—his place is the bull's-eye of the target. The diplomatist can never subside into the common-places of life.

Instead, however, of making these cogent reflections manifest to the man of business, I observed, rising at the same time to take leave, that I regretted to have been the means of driving Mrs. Hanmer from the room. I never knew an old fellow of sixty-five who was not pleased at having a pretty wife of eighteen ascribed to him, however inveterate his bachelorhood ; and a

glance towards the table and the writing-box served, of course, as note explanatory to my erroneous text.

“Mrs. Hanmer?—” repeated he, exactly in the tone I had anticipated. “Oh! ay,—you mean Emily. It was no interruption, my dear sir. I was expecting you this morning.—I had desired you should be shown in here.—It was her own fault if she did not choose to remain in her room.”

To me, the fault appeared a venial transgression. The case was clear. “Emily,” whether Miss Hanmer or Miss Anything else, had evidently heard of Cecil Danby, and wished to ascertain if common fame had been a flatterer. But then, since aware that the daughter of Lord Ormington’s man of business had the honour of standing in the presence of Lord Ormington’s son, pray why was not her deportment more demonstrative of her consciousness of the fact?

Determined to vouchsafe no interest in her favour, and looking unutterable solemnities at

old Hanmer, in rebuke to his voluble familiarity, I now made my parting bow.

On entering the house, I had taken little heed of the meanness of the staircase, or the unworthiness of the thing in pepper-and-salt ; considering it all highly becoming in the abode of my father's attorney. If attorneys *had* houses with staircases and serving men, such was probably *hoc genus omne* : but as I went out, it struck me with disgust that a being so inexpressibly lovely as Emily, nay, so thoroughly on a par, in manners and appearance, with any *Lady* Emily I had ever seen announced in my mother's drawing-room, should be condemned to so mediocre an existence. The creaking stair, the yellow paint, omitted in a central stripe intended for a carpet—though carpet there was none,—the dirty hall, with its worn-out floor-cloth ; the very street-door, with its unsightly bolts and chains, were such as should never have met those soft eyes, overshaded by such lashes, and gracing a countenance equally worthy of a diamond coronet or garland of roses.

Southampton Buildings, however, was not the place for a soliloquy. So, throwing a shilling to the boy holding Jack Harris's horse at old Hanmer's door, and trusting that Emily might be peeping from the window of her own room, I leaped into my saddle with the air of the Chevalier Bayard, and made the best of my way towards the haunts of civilization.

## CHAPTER II.

Immortalia mortali sermone notantes.—LUCRET. l. v.

Comme les gens dont la taille est bien prise, il s'habillait avec esprit, et se portait une espèce de culte.

MICHEL RAYMOND.

I HAD seen little of my brother during my college days. John was a Cambridge man. John, as became his ugliness, had taken honours; and John, as also became his ugliness, was not only devoted to study, but pursuing it at Ormington Hall. He usually remained there, long after the rest of the family were settled in Hanover Square; and even when in town, seemed to take delight in maintaining the same distance between himself and my mother now he was a man, that *she* had maintained betwixt herself and *him* when he was

a boy. With my father's sanction, he occupied sober lodgings of his own, not very far from the residence of his maiden aunts ; and, except when Lord Ormington gave a political dinner, seldom dined at home.

This suited me extremely. John was still the same ponderous lump of clay banished by its mamma to the nursery in its infancy, and self-banished to the study in its maturity ; and I felt that to be seen walking down St. James's Street, hooked to the arm of such an elder brother, would be to stand for my picture to Dighton. I accordingly established myself with him on the footing of “ How are you, John ? ”—“ How are you, Cecil ? ” and as such intimations of fraternal coolness are by no means uncommon in that model country of the domestic affections, Great Britain, no one was surprised to see us nod to each other in the street, aware that we must have nodded in each other's company in all other times and places.

Jack Harris noted with a smile, that “ 'twas no

wonder we should dislike each other, without a feature or idea in common ; ” and as Lord Ormington’s and his elder son’s ideas and features were not only in common, but uncommonly common, — *extraordinairement ordinaire* — I was by no means jealous of their sympathies.

My father was a man such as one rarely sees out of England ; reserved, without being contemplative,—convivial, without being social ; not mistrustful, yet having confidence in nobody ; cold, unexpansive, undemonstrative ; fulfilling his petty duties so gravely, as to impress people with a notion they were of some consequence ; and by his gravity of air and paucity of words imparting a tone of mystery to his insignificance.

He seemed afraid of letting himself know what he was about. Yet he had nothing to fear. God knows he never did anything worth speaking of ! He was a moral man. His business with Hanmer, with his banker, or with Lord Votefilch, might have been transacted at Charing Cross without injury to his fame or public virtue.

Yet he seemed to dread that even his own man should be aware on Tuesday that on Wednesday he had an appointment with either of the three ; and as to his wife—but for *that* reserve there was, perhaps, sufficient motive.

When, at the close of two days' cogitation, I approached him with the intention of signifying my acceptance of his terms, it did not surprise me to find myself a second time referred to Southampton Buildings : “on everything relating to business,” he said, “it was his wish to communicate with me through a third person.”

But that I anticipated some such regulation, I should not have volunteered my “ultimatum” to his lordship. It was my intention to make my way a second time up the creaking staircase, lacking a carpet ; and lest the *sang-froid* evinced by Emily at our last interview should prove the means of disappointing me, I rode straight to Hanmer’s door, without warning or appointment.

“ Mr. Hanmer was not at home, and Mr.

Snatch had quitted London on business, by the Leeds mail, the preceding night."

The murmured ejaculation, not intended to reach beyond my lips, unluckily caught the ear of Pepper-and-Salt.

"I could speak to the head-clerk if I liked. The head-clerk would be disengaged in the course of a quarter of an hour."

Satan, or some other of the invisible esquires of the body to Adam's grandsons, at that moment seemed to flourish before my eyes the waistcoat of Jack Harris, which I had seen dazzling the eyes of Fop's-alley the preceding night, at the Opera.

"Pray be so good as to inform Miss Emily," said I, "that I have a message to leave with her, from Lord Ormington."

The latter name had an instantaneous effect upon Pepper-and-Salt. It was that of the presiding divinity of the house of business of Hanmer and Snatch. The deed-boxes most reverentially lodged of their whole clieney, were those

inscribed with the designation of “the Right Honourable Lord Ormington,” — their solitary link with the peerage: It was from the park and preserves of Ormington Hall, that corn, wine and oil,—haunches of venison and leashes of pheasants,—reached the meagre kitchen of the firm. To Pepper-and-Salt, accordingly, his lordship appeared to be the fountain of all goodness,—the King of Cockaigne,—a man to be venerated even in the person of his messenger.

Without further hesitation, he conducted me once more into the drawing-room; then hurried off, observing, that he would see whether Miss Emily could be spoken to. For there was no Miss Emily in the chilly chamber, no fire in the grate, no writing-box on the little table. Her intrusion on the last occasion had perhaps excited the displeasure of her father, and brought down upon her a sentence of perpetual banishment. In that case, she would not now venture to obey my summons.

In so short a time, however, as to afford no

hope that she had added a single touch to her toilet on the announcement of my name, the graceful creature who had produced so startling an effect upon me at our first interview, glided into the room. Still, no embarrassment — still, no emotion! — Nay, she did not even request me to be seated ; and I stood, looking like an oaf, with my hat and riding-cane in my hand, like a subject receiving orders from his sovereign.

“ You wished to speak to me ? ” said the sweetest voice I ever heard, as if in compassion to my awkwardness.

“ Understanding that Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch were absent from town—” said I, wholly incapable of assuming the tone of superiority I had premeditated—

“ The clerks of the establishment, sir, are on the spot, to supply their place,” observed Emily, almost haughtily.

“ I was anxious,” I stammered, as if not noticing her interruption, “ to request the favour

that you would charge yourself with a confidential message to your father."

In a moment, every part of Emily's person, that was visible to eyes profane, became flushed by the deepest crimson ; and her eyes seemed to dilate with some inexplicable emotion,—surprise, or indignation,—or both.—I saw that I was somehow or other confoundedly in the wrong. She made no answer. But I neither dared reiterate my question, nor hazard another. I was conscious of looking like a pickpocket.

" What do you wish me to communicate to Mr. Hanmer on his return ?—" said she, after a minute's silence, and in so subdued a tone, that indignation, at all events, was not the passion I had excited.

" Simply that you signify 'my acceptance of the terms proposed to me through his mediation,'" said I, not daring to excite her surprise, by the preposterous fact that herself and Mr. Hanmer of Southampton Buildings, were the

chain of communication between a peer of the realm and his son, residing under the same roof.

“ I have the honour of speaking to Mr. Danby? — ” she inquired, coldly.

I bowed my affirmative.

“ I will not fail to deliver your message,” she continued, advancing her hand towards the bell, by way of an intimation, and not a very gracious one, that my audience was at an end. There was no remedy. Away I went, like a beaten dog ; having effected nothing by my impertinent intrusion, except a still deeper descent in Emily’s opinion,— and my own.

“ Southampton Buildings ! — an attorney’s daughter ! — ” muttered I, as if to revenge myself by the contemptuous inflexion with which I pronounced the words ; when, having attained by a northerly cut the New Road, I galloped off in the direction of the west-end. And again, the waistcoat of Jack Harris seemed to flutter before

my eyes, as a memento of my insignificance in the field whose myrtles are laurels.

On the strength of my “ultimatum,” I was now mounted on a horse of my own ; as I had good reason to discover, on encountering the smile of Jack Harris in Rotten Row. Harris was one of those who never break out into condemnation ; a withering glance or smile was sufficient. Towards myself, he affected indulgence. At *me*, he looked leniently, as much as to say, “poor fellow ! it is not *his* fault if taken in by a dealer to purchase a beast disgraceful to a gentleman’s stable.” At my elder brother, he would have sneered outright ; at such a fellow as old Hanmer, gazed with horror. But his clemency was far more galling than his utmost rigour of the law. A boy can never stand being treated as a boy, more especially by another boy assuming the importance of a man.

“ Who was that with whom you were riding to-day in the Park ?—” observed my mother,

(the Ormington *vis-a-vis*, now that Julia was rusticating with my aunts in the country, permitting itself to be seen once more in the ring.)

“A college chum.”

“A *what?*—” reiterated my mother, opening her eyes as wide as Emily had done that morning, but without the accompanying blush.

“Jack Harris, a Christchurch-man,” said I, not deigning to notice the shrug with which she listened to the announcement.

“Yet he had nothing of the horrible Oxford cut?—” observed my mother, as if muttering to the spaniel nestling under her white hand on the sofa. At that moment, Harris’s warning about dropping the University, recurred to my mind.

“It will give you pleasure, perhaps, to learn,” said I, perceiving that she was about to coax herself as well as her lap-dog into a doze,—“that Lord Ormington has procured me a clerkship in one of the public offices.”

“A *WHAT!*—” again reiterated my mother,

twenty times more shocked than at my Oxonianism.

“A clerkship. As soon as I can compass a legible hand and the rule of three, I am to be provided for by Government, at the rate of 75*l.* per annum.”

“ You have not surely accepted?—” exclaimed my mother, shoving away poor Bibiche with more vivacity than I had ever seen her exhibit. “ He has no right to expose you to such a degradation!—*that* were a breach of all our compacts !”

In compassion to her emotion, I condescended to expound, that the 75*l.* per annum, at twenty, was a necessary preliminary to the ambassadorial 12,000*l.* per annum crowning a diplomatic career; and that, of my brother clerks in the office, three were sons of Earls and four of Members of Parliament.

“ So that, some day or other, you will be an ambassador?—” said she, resuming her languor and her spaniel.

“*Deo, or rather, diabolo volente!*” I replied.

“In that case, I am glad you are going to stay in town,” said she. “I will give you one of my Opera-tickets, and introduce you to the Duchess of Moneymusk. I dare say you will get on very well. When Lord Ormington said something about the necessity for your living at home to redeem your character, after disgracing yourself at Oxford, I thought it would be a bore. But if you manage properly, you need not be in any one’s way!—You have only two things to avoid,—play and politics. Play and politics are for elder sons. It would be the making of John to go into Parliament or upon the turf. But John is such a stupid young man, that there is no doing anything with him! John does nothing but read. John was never intended to play a gentleman’s part in the world.”

“And how do you recommend me to fill up my time?—” said I, by way of humouring her absurdity.

"Not in exhibiting yourself as the companion of a Mr. Harris, whom one never heard of," she replied.—"Ah! my dear Lady Harriet, how are you?" cried she, interrupting herself, on perceiving that a pretty little woman had entered the room unnoticed by either of us. "You are come to take me to the Duchess's loo, and I have not even begun to dress!"

"Make haste, then," replied her friend, dragging a chair to the front of the fire, and seating herself as if at home. "You forgot your appointment, I suppose, in the pleasure of lecturing your son. Pray are *you* the young gentleman who has got himself expelled from Oxford?" she continued, addressing me over her shoulder, and extending her hand towards a fire-screen, as if to command me to reach it for her. The movement discovered to me the pretty, but somewhat *passé*, face of a woman half a dozen years younger than my mother, whom I had no difficulty in recognising as one of the intimates of the fashionable coterie collected round

Lady Ormington since my settlement at the University.

"And who cannot regret, still less repent, a step that procures him the honour of presenting himself to Lady Harriet Vandaleur," said I, offering the screen with an air of gallantry which I flattered myself was irresistible.

Her reply was a burst of laughter.

"Is the Grandison style of set compliment still in vogue, then, at our seats of learning?" cried she, turning and contemplating me from head to foot. "My dear Lady Ormington, off to your dressing-room, I beseech you, for we are late already: and *I* will continue your probation to this junior incumbrance of yours. He is not so ill-looking!—I was afraid we should find him much more of a cub.—Leave him in my hands, and I will see what is to be made of him."

I was again on the point of being betrayed into a set compliment, expressive of my delight at falling to the share of such a precep-

tress. But something in the arch eyes of Lady Harriet warned me to desist. She was an Irish-woman, with a *naïveté* bordering on effrontery. It *would* have been effrontery in an ugly woman ; but in the pretty, pouting, piquante Lady Harriet, it was almost enchanting.

“ Is the cub to sit or stand, or will you permit him to kneel ? ” said I, falling into her vein, the moment my mother quitted the room.

“ Your height and figure warrant my refusing you a chair,” she replied. “ But I have a mind to ascertain the colour of your eyes, which flashed so furiously just now, because I condescended to laugh at you. So even draw a chair and let me proceed in my investigation.”

I replied, of course, to the summons, by falling at her feet.

“ Not ill done, as regards attitude,” said she, examining me without embarrassment, “ but a blunder as regards intention. By hazarding a burlesque declaration, you admit your conviction that you shall never be tempted into

a serious one. In your ignorance whether I am maid, wife, or widow, you are right: any but the last, might take you at your word, and you would stand committed! So now rise;—gently,—or you will throw down the *déjeûner* of Chelsea china, with which Lady Ormington has the bad taste to encumber her rooms! Take your seat yonder, with the modesty becoming the junior member of the house; and contrive, if you can, not to look hampered in your own cravat."

The *étourderie* of Lady Harriet struck me dumb. I was tamed, as brutes are, by the coolness of their keepers. I had not even courage to inform her that I was perfectly aware of her being a rich widow; very much disposed to retain the right of having her own way,—that way not being matrimonially eligible.

"Is it not a horrible vulgarism," said she, (again adverting to the china, that I might recover the breath of which her *sang-froid* had deprived me,) "to cram a habitable room with

little tables, showered over with trumpery, of which one risks the fracture of a hundred pounds' worth, at every turn? One might as well lay out, for show, one's stomacher and diamond necklace! Look at my friend Lady Ormington's confusion of cabinets and tables, rivalling an old curiosity shop, or Weeks's museum! Twenty years hence, I suppose, we shall see this vile system established, till even the little mouse-traps of Marylebone have their knick-knackery and Birmingham *virtù*."

In my boyish susceptibility, I fancied she was talking at *me*; my rooms at Oxford having been renowned for their foppery. I stood accountant for as great a sin as Lady Ormington, and consequently broke out bravely.

"As you say, an odious weakness!" cried I;—"dilettanteism at the wrong end of the telescope! If people *must* affect the fine arts, be it nobly. A fine Dominichino, a Giovanni di Bologna, delights the eye of a guest, and affords a diploma of taste to the possessor.

Whereas these less than nothings of Sèvres or enamel, require a microscopic eye. Were Nollekens's Venus, for instance, smiling upon her pedestal in yonder corner, I should adore her in the distance, without losing sight of Lady Harriet Vandeleur; and enable myself to decide at a glance whether the smallest foot in Europe, slipp'd by Taylor, be not a prettier sight than the same charming feature in its primeval symmetry."

"*A merveille!*!" cried Lady Harriet. "Another time don't call a foot a feature. It is William Spencerish. The school is obsolete. Try reality. We are all pretending to be natural with all our might, till the affectation of nature has become as natural as any other affectation. And now, pray what is Mr. Cecil Danby going to do with his younger sonship, after proving himself too wicked to become a son of the mother Church?—Not a man of wit and fashion about town, I trust?—The ranks are overflowing:—an inundation of the *nihil!*—The army,

too, is out of date. Since the renewal of the war, nobody has cared to go into anything but the Household brigade ; and the sort of creatures one used to country-quarter upon the bogs and moors, come down upon us in hundreds and tens of hundreds, even into the king's chamber. For pity's sake, don't let us find *you* in the squadron."

" I am about to devote myself to the cause of my country in a more modest capacity," said I, — " by sketching dogs and horses on His Majesty's blotting paper in Downing-street."

" Official ? "—cried Lady Harriet, withdrawing her feet from the fender, and throwing the lustre of her large dark eyes full upon my face, as a watchman turns the searching light of his lantern. " You are becoming natural indeed !—You are flinging away the poetry of life with a vengeance !—Official ?—Have you reflected on what it will be to extend your finger tips to mine, black with the inky business of the state ? Have you considered—"

" You authorize me then to decline a diplomatic career?—" cried I, starting up as if about to rush out of the room. " I have not heard Lord Ormington's carriage drive off. I shall perhaps be in time to catch him on his way to the House of Lords."

" Let me recommend you not to jest with Lord Ormington," said she gravely,—motioning me to be re-seated; " it is playing with edged tools. If you are to be pushed by *his* interest in public life, accept and be thankful.—Do you go with us to the Duchess's to-night?"

" Am I to have that honour?—I wait your Ladyship's orders!—" said I, again mistaking myself and her so far as to play the gallant.

" Then I order you to stay at home. Nay, I order you to stay at home till qualified for society. At present you do not approach within millions of miles of even the very small thing indispensable to obtain endurance among us. You would easily make a sensation,—but a sensation is a vulgar triumph. To keep up the

excitement of a sensation, you must always be standing on your head, (morally speaking,) and the attitude, like everything overstrained, would become fatiguing to yourself and tedious to others. Whereas, to obtain permanent favour, as an agreeable well-bred man, requires simply an exercise of the understanding. To ascertain whether you possess one, first get rid of your conceit. *Il faut apprendre à vous effacer.*"

"I will learn anything you deign to teach me," said I. "But how could *you* teach me to be humble; when the mere favour of your interest would a thousand-fold increase the self-conceit you reprobate?"—

"From Oxford, yet a logician?—I thought young men went to the University to get rid of their learning?—However, for my own sake, I shall take you in hand. For as it must be my fate to see a great deal of the pet son of my bosom friend, it would be a serious evil were I always to find him presuming, abrupt, and coxcombical as to-night. Don't bristle up so fu-

riously ; — you will gain nothing by it but being laughed at. I tell you again, that the *brusquerie* which sits well upon me, or rather which my *beaux yeux*, and the *beaux yeux de ma cassette* united, cause to be *excused* in me, would be detestable in a very young man whose eyes are not particularly fine, and whose *cassette* is more than questionable. To succeed among us, you must reduce your laugh to a smile, your voice to a whisper, your assertions to surmises. For some years to come, you have no right to have an opinion of your own. You will be coughed down by the ‘most potent, grave, and reverend signors,’ who are ten years older than yourself. For it is of *them* the jury is composed. The men of thirty carry all before them in London ; men old enough to pretend to tact, but not to wisdom. As soon as we grow really wise, we become indulgent, — witness myself, who am three and thirty, — yet kind enough, in quoting your deformities, to wish you may amend them. And now, good night. I hear the rustling of Lady

Ormington's sarsnet ; for which signal I am grateful, as I perceive that you are about to explode."

I had in fact been making sundry efforts to interrupt her, but without success. There was no putting down her audacity.

"Good night!"—said she, kissing her hand in the Italian fashion. "You are not yet sufficiently in my good graces to admit of accepting your arm to the carriage. Prove your docility by staying at home, while we proceed to throw away our time, money, and tempers at the card table. Read some improving book,—Grammont's Memoirs, or one of Madame de Souza's novels,—which will teach you good French and better manners."

When, in spite of her prohibition, I had conducted her to the carriage, and taken remarkably fast hold of the hand which she placed on mine as she stepped in, I found myself almost out of breath with pique and wonder.

I was a Christchurch man; yet here was a pretty woman, who had both looked and talked

me down. There was only one word of her rambling discourse, which operated as a saving grace in Lady Harriet's favour. I should have called her bold,—I should have called her flighty,—I should have called her flippant,—nay, I would have repeated after her own authority, that she was three-and-thirty, and after my own, that she looked her age; but for the monosyllable “yet!”—That “yet” was a peacemaker! She did not “yet” like me sufficiently, to put up with my boorishness.

This was throwing down the gauntlet. This was challenging a pretension. The ambitions of the Foreign Office were too prolix for the hot blood of twenty and six months. I might be an ambassador at forty,—an ambassador with a bald head and chinchilla whiskers. The prospect was too remote! But a pretty woman who told me so frankly, that she did not “yet” like me, was a more immediate incentive. I swore,—as my uncle Toby swore, that Lefevre should not die,—that she should **not** like me!—that,

by Heavens ! she should *love* me,—to desperation,—to madness !—

But to effect this, I recollect that I must begin with falling in love myself. As I sauntered into the book-room, to take down an edition of Grammont, which in its gaudy suit of scarlet and gold, looked wonderfully like a militia captain dressed for the levée, I muttered to myself the ejaculation, which immortalized poor stupid Rocca, by eventually uniting him with Madame de Staël. “*Je l’aimerai tellement qu’elle finira par m’épouser !*”— I am not sure that I said épouser ; but it was *à peu-près*.—The fact is, that marriage is no word for the lips of a younger brother.

Next day, I contemplated Jack Harris’s waistcoat with calmness. I felt myself on the road to preferment. I was convinced that there were waistcoats in the loom for me ; and consequently discovered that his was frightful :— a waistcoat calculated, according to Lady Harriet’s system, to produce a sensation,—to induce questions.—I

had already ordered myself half a dozen of the plainest pattern, and simplest fashion ; such as would enable no one to swear half an hour after parting from me, whether I had a waistcoat on or not.

I took care not to utter a syllable to him, either of my over-haughty attorney's daughter, or my over-familiar, fashionable widow. Time enough to talk about them when I had something to boast of. To talk about them prematurely, and to a Jack Harris, might prevent my ever having cause for boasting. I told him therefore, that I had not accompanied Lady Ormington to the Duchess of Moneymusk, “because it was a bore.”

It was the fashion in those days, to call one's mother a bore. Mothers have rather risen in the market since, and fathers have gone down. Fathers soon afterwards came to be called “the governor ;” but all this was by the generation that grew up in the nursery, before the nursery became council-chamber to the house. The

creatures who are cockading it now-a-days, have every reason to call their parents your Majesties, and address them on their knees,—I mean the children on their own knees, not upon the knees of their parents.

Jack Harris sank a fathom in my esteem, by the frankness with which he allowed me to discern his surprise, that any one should think it a bore to go to the loo party of a Duchess of Moneymusk!—I was unaffectedly surprised that any one should think a duchess worth thinking of; not only because my head and heart were running upon pretty widows and attorneys' daughters, but because the habits of my youth familiarized me with social distinctions; and it would have been as difficult for a mere duchess to impose upon the sprawling pet of Lady Ormington's *boudoir*, as for a man to be a hero to his *valet-de-chambre*. Jack was no longer to me the infallible,—the Solon,—the Lycurgus,—who had imposed his high-sounding code upon my boyish inexperience.

His *à plomb* delighted me no longer. It was the *à plomb* of the adroit mountebank, not of the graceful opera dancer. His vivacity had lost its charm ; there was a brazen twang in its note. The pirouettes and *entrechats* of Lady Harriet, on the contrary, kept me constantly on the *quievive*, and her sallies, if they had not quite a silver sound, were at least Corinthian metal. I saw that though Jack Harris might do very well to launch me on the waves of the great world, it was Lady Harriet who must officiate as my pilot. Of the three modes in which society may be contemplated, from above, below, or level ground, I preferred the last. Since I was to live with those of my own class, it was better to examine them on a fair footing, and not from the point of view appropriate to a *parvenu*, like Jack Harris.

Quod petiit, spernit ; repetit quod nuper omisit  
Aestuat, et vitae disconvenit ordine toto.

In the existing order of things, which condemned *him* to an Ishmael's portion in the land,

there was everything to provoke his animosities or rouse his envy ; but for *me*, the son of the free woman, an aristocrat, one of the privileged, the malediction that became *his* lips, or the petty arts indispensable to *his* progress in life, would have been out of place. Our principles of action could never be in common. He might be honest, — *I* must be honourable. Generosity might become *him* ; from me, nothing short of magnanimity would suffice. All this, at least, I whispered to myself, as a plea for paying a long visit on the morrow to Lady Harriet Vandeleur, and for merely nodding to Jack Harris, as we crossed each other at a brisk trot on Constitution Hill.

That night, I received a professional letter from Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch. If there be an object in this world from which every particle of the poetry of life is excluded—the very *caput mortuum* of the crucible of common-place—it is a lawyer's letter. There is a savour of pounce about it, a dryness,—a sententiousness,—as if a

pen plucked from the wing of that dullest of birds, the owl, had ministered to its indictment. Yet, strange to say, I tore open old Hanmer's long, narrow, wire-wove, wafered epistle, his thirteen-and-two-pennyworth of epistolary civilities, with an impatience savouring of the lover. “*Je ne suis pas la rose, mais j'ai vécu avec elle!*”—Gods! that ever the poetry of Hafiz should attach itself to a missive conveyed by the twopenny post from Southampton Buildings!—

Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch, (for old Hanmer addressed me as Wolsey addressed the Pope, in the first person, though hooking in *rex meus* into a parenthesis, “for partner and self,”) Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch informed me, that Messrs. Drummond and Company had orders to pay one hundred pounds a quarter to self or order; and that I was to present self, without further orders, on the Monday next ensuing, at the office of His Majesty’s Secretary for Foreign Affairs, in Downing Street, where Lord Votefilch would have the honour of explaining to me the nature of my

duties, and introducing me into the department to which my services were devoted.

I did not pause to exult in the petty triumph of being handed into office by one of His Majesty's ministers, while Jack Harris would probably have been shouldered forward by some junior clerk. I was examining the date of the letter, as if there were magic in the words "13, Southampton Buildings!"—The sight of the Lesbian promontory would scarcely have excited more emotion in the heart of a young gentleman well grounded in his Ovid!—I certainly had no reason to expect that old Hanmer, in writing to me professionally, would hazard mention of "Emily:" yet, strange to say, I did not reach the signature of the letter without a sensation of disappointment. Some emanation, some hint, some reference, some something, of *her*, ought to have intermingled itself imperceptibly with that soulless epistle! —

Such was my mode of characterizing, at twenty-and-a-half, a letter conveying a permanent in-

come of four hundred per annum, and an appointment leading in a direct line to an embassy!—

I know better now!—Now, I can discern more poetry in such a despatch, than in the collected works of Crabbe, Scott, Byron, Wordsworth, Moore, Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley, and the Countess of Blessington.—Ahem!—

## CHAPTER III.

“ Ca ! quelle figure allons nous prendre, Don Juan ou Lovelace ?—Don Juan est usé comme la soutane d'un seminariste. Lovelace est un peu plus inédit. Dans sa perruque poudrée, il a bien meilleur air que Don Juan, ce mauvais râcleur de guitare.”

Nam quodcunque suis mutatum finibus exit  
Continuò hoc mors est illius quod fuit ante.

LUCRET.

SHAKSPEARE's commentators, who, by the way, have originated more rubbish than either the demolition of Swallow Street or the construction of Regent Street,—“the force of rubbish can no further go,”—have disputed much in dissenting on Othello's tender rhapsody, whether the whitened-brown generalissimo originally complained that his “*way* of life,” or his “*May* of life,” had “fallen into the sere and yellow leaf.” The quarto edition says one thing, the

folio edition says another thing, and the various buzz-wigs, who have overlaid the great poet with their leaden weight, say a hundred other contradictory things.

I, Cecil Danby, decide for the “MAY of life;” for what so characteristic of youth and hope as MAY,—the summer-month of the soul, whatever the calendar may say to the contrary?

It was MAY when I took possession of my liberty, and the town; and what a month it was to me!—Though, in point of fact, I became, for the first time, a slave, the slave of the nation, on the trifling acknowledgment of seventy-five pounds per annum, paid quarterly, I fancied myself, for the first time, my own master. For I had youth, health, spirits; and the world,—that ugly, old, brown, leathery, football of Fate,—seemed to me *then*, young, healthy, happy, hopeful as myself. I looked upon it as a fresh flower, bursting from its calyx, and exhaling a thousand perfumes!—Pah! I would hold my nose now, at the mere thought of its festering exhalations!—

Yet the world, errors and steam excepted, remains, I suppose, pretty much as I found it. The eye of twenty-and-a-half discerned only its passions and its picturesque ; while the eye of —ty-and-a-half descries its turnpike-roads and conventionalities.

Pass a sloe-leaf plucked from the nearest hedge through the hands of half-a-dozen different men, and each shall see it in a various point of view. The first, if a botanist, will note its specific character ; the second, if a chemist, will opine upon its juices ; the third, an artist, will descant upon its colouring ; and the fourth, a teaman, will examine its eligibility to become Souchong or Bohea. Even so differently do men decide upon the phases of society !—At that time, I regarded London as the garden of the Hesperides, where demi-goddesses and the golden apples of preferment awaited the all-subduing club of that great Alcides, Cecil Danby. To Jack Harris, it was a game of skill, where the cleverest player wins the greatest number of court-cards,—*Anglice*, where

a low-born man consorts with the greatest number of lords and ladies. My brother looked upon it as an unmeaning hubbub, interrupting the great business of life; *i.e.* the study of dusty, fusty, musty tomes, in a musty, fusty, dusty library: and my father, as a place where a man was compelled every Christmas to the unprofitable waste of certain monies, carefully screwed out of his tenants four times a-year.

Let posterity decide which was the greatest blockhead!—Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch would have stood out for the wisdom of my father. The ghosts of Scaliger or Dr. Valpy might have backed the Honourable John. The parson of the parish, and Mr. N. P. Willis, would have sided with Jack Harris. But, for *my* part, I had on my side St. James's Street and the charming Lady Harriet Vandeleur!—

On second thoughts, I am not so sure that London *is* altogether now as then. When I said “steam excepted,” I should have added “smoke.” Every year, the atmosphere as well

as the plot, thickens. Every year, manufactories arise in the Borough of Southwark, to suffocate the denizens of London and Westminster. We no longer send to Birmingham for our buttons, or Dorchester for our ale. Like some bumpkin Squire, we take pride in brewing at home. “London’s column,” though still “a tall bully,” has rivals in a forest of steam-chimneys t’other side the water ; and, like other old foxes, we may end in being smoked out.

The suburbs, too, like a lady’s hoop, have extended themselves so widely, as to treble the dimensions of the body they enclose. The lungs of London are compressed by the enlargement of the circumjacent membranes ; and the atmosphere assigned her is not only less clear and salubrious, but her breathing pores are stopped up, and air-vessels abridged. Her gardens are built over. Paddington-fields smoke, like a cigar-divan, from thousands of ignominious issues ; and Willan’s farm, instead of feeding hundreds of cows, affords lawn to five villas, dens to twenty

lions, and areas and dust-holes to five hundred genteel residences, “for the reception of small families of respectability.” The solitary tree in St. Paul’s Churchyard, will soon be the only green thing left to exalt the imaginations of our sparrows by the rustling of its leaves ; for, lo ! the builders have passed like a swarm of locusts over the land, and left all barren.

At the period of my *début*, I swear there was occasionally seen a glimpse of blue sky over Hyde Park ! — Our recent ambassador, M. le Doctrinaire Guizot, who, during his first fortnight in London, was continually passing his hand before his eyes, convinced by the mistiness of his vision that cataract was impending, might have seen his way clearly then to the *affaires étrangères*, in a physical as well as in a moral sense.

I enlarge on all this, lest the dandies of to-day may find it difficult to account for my boasted enjoyment of good health and spirits. As regards the former, there was less quackery

in the world,—no homœopathy, no dephlogistication; as regards the latter, less smother in the air. People in general were more agreeable. Knowledge did not pretend to be useful. Society, now so blue, was *couleur de rose*. There were almost as many courteous readers as there are now writers; and authors were a sort of people who dined with a great man on a Sunday, in their best clothes, when, indeed, they had a coat to boast of. Like mothers, they have since risen amazingly in the market. They owe *that* to Scott and Byron. Sir Walter was the first who wrote up authorship; and, to quote the words of his lordly contemporary, “it was not the least conquest of his fertilizing and mighty genius.”

But if there was little good writing in London during the first half dozen years of the nineteenth century, there was a prodigious quantity of good talking. In war-time, the dinners, from the hands of native cooks, were so infernally bad, that diners-out were forced to have

recourse to colloquial entertainment. In the best days of Conversation S—— and Lord ——, and ——, ——, (fill up the blanks for yourself, good sir, as you do your assessed tax-papers, but more honestly ; for in *them* you write down your pointer a cur, and yourself an ass, by protesting that the demi-lions on your tea-spoons are not armorial bearings,) in the days, I say, when these blanks were prizes at a dinner-party,

Roast was the saddle, and the pudding boil'd ;

and *entrées*, or, as the female cooks denominate them, “made-dishes,” implied four anomalous compounds placed at the angles of the table, and rarely impinged, emitting savours of something between a perfumer’s and an apothecary’s shop,—black, spicy, opaque, and mysterious, as one of Radcliffe’s romances. Some such diet probably constituted

th’ insane food  
That took her reason prisoner,  
ere she concocted “The Italian.”

Now that these peppery substitutes for savoury viands have given place to *épigrammes d'agneau à pointes d'asperges*, the epigrams of the table-talkers have become far less pointed.

The fools who come to talk, remain to eat ;

and the light *soufflés* and piquant *Mayonnaise* stop their mouths with a *bonne bouche*, instead of a *bon mot*.

I have proved to my own satisfaction, at least, (by way of taper burnt to the memory of the dead,) that those in possession of the ear of the town were better worth hearing. I would fain prove, in order that a tribute to the fair sex may keep in countenance my tribute to the foul, that those in possession of its eyes were better worth looking at. Who will deny the beauty of the Mannerses,—Villierses,—two Lady Williamses whom I could name, and two or three Lady Others, whom I can *not* ; to say nothing of my friend Lady ——, next to Fountain's Abbey, the finest ruin now extant.—They

were loveliness itself! — Witness the miniatures of Mrs. Mee,—witness the journals of Sir Lumley,—or the ghost of Sir Harry —. It is true they enabled one to judge somewhat too accurately of their symmetry. In the scanty gowns into which they were squeezed, like pillows into their cases, little was left for the imagination ; whereas, in the present day, beauty in her five-and-twenty breadths of petticoat, lies concealed, like the mummy of Cheops within the labyrinths of the great pyramid.—

Lady Harriet Vandeleur was just the fairy on whom these tight-fitting habiliments sat to admiration ! — With her snow white skin, fair ringlets, *nez retroussé*, and large, luminous dark eyes, she reminded me of one of those French *bichons*, which look so earnest about nothing, perched on a silken cushion in a lady's chamber, or lying among the folds of her lawn apron. Nothing angulous or unsightly was revealed by the winding-sheet in which she was swathed. A single row of pearls, or *rivière* of brilliants,

adorned her white neck in the ball-room ; an almost invisible Venetian chain, on minor occasions. How preferable to the harness-like ponderosity of modern carcanets, allowing as little of the human frame divine of a pretty woman to remain perceptible as one sees of the table-cloth at a country christening !—

Coquette,—jilt,—flirt,—angel,—Lady Harriet excelled in refinement of taste. Her house was charming ; neither overloaded like my mother's with *bijouterie* and gaudes ; nor affectedly simple, like the matter-of-factory of Jack Harris. Fancy had some scope, but her wings were clipped. She was allowed a flutter, not a flight. Intuition seemed to have dictated my code of *virtù* on our first acquaintance ; for the little widow's rooms were adorned with a few *chef-d'œuvre* by the first masters ; a few cabinets, in their places, not thrusting themselves importunately forward, like a young member in the House, or a young miss in a ball-room ; and a sufficiency of rich furniture, as studiously *en*

*suite* as that of my poor mother was mismatched and fanciful.

Poor Lady Ormington had, in fact, never recovered her first glimpse of the *chinoiseries* of the boudoirs of Paris and Trianon, in Marie Antoinette's time ; when my father, under the domination of her bright eyes, was weak enough to pass his honeymoon on the banks of the Seine. Snatched from the simplicity of a country parsonage into a paradise of buhl and ormolu, her ladyship's ideas received an ineffaceable impression, which produced and re-produced itself in her tawdry domain in Hanover Square. Apple-green and turquoise-blue,—lacquer and Japan,—Chelsea and Sèvres,—ebony encrusted with ivory or mother-of-pearl,—dainty *bonbonnières* of Dutch enamel,—curious snuff-boxes, which, on the lid, displayed the lady wife, and by a secret spring, the lady fair of the Lauzuns and Richelieus of their day,—abounded in her brittle domain. Her existence was all Watteau,—all *à vignette*,—all Pompadour,—all powder-

puff, all musk, all ambergris ! Time need have had gold sand in his glass, and an agate handle to his scythe, to deal with such a life of trifling !—

There was more trait in the frivolity of her friend. It was Greuze, rather than Watteau—it was Voltaire, not Parny. I am speaking, *bien entendu*, of Lady Harriet as I saw her, face to face, not as I recollect her, reminiscence to reminiscence. To the Cecil Danby of twenty-and-a-half, she was irresistible—an epitome of all that was pleasant (but wrong) in woman.

I was never sure of her. Compared with *her*, a weather-cock was a fixture and a cameleon permanent.—A bevy of those

Gay creatures of the elements  
That in the colours of the rainbow live ;

a swarm of humming-birds—a French brocade—a Neapolitan brigand—an edition of Horace Walpole,—do not combine a greater variety of hues and fantasticalities. After uttering a series of brilliant repartees and biting truths, that

would have made the fortune of Conversation S., or a witty parody like Canning's Pocket-book, she was indignant if one presumed to consider her anything but a fool; yet, after behaving like one for four-and-twenty hours, (by angling for gudgeons, such as my cousin Lord Squeamy or Sir Moulton Drewe, and flinging them back, when caught, into the waters,) she would not suffer *me* to presume one half-quarter of an inch upon her folly. On the slightest act of forwardness, Lady Harriet made me draw in my horns and sulk back into my shell; like any other wretched snail, who, presuming to trail itself upon a rose, gets a thorn in its side for its pains.

It was like poetry after prose,—it was like grace after meat,—it was like a ballet with Angiolini after an opera without Catalani,—when, at the close of my official day, I was admitted into the charming drawing-rooms in Grosvenor Place; confronting the elms of Buckingham gardens, and opening into a gay conservatory fresh with a

profusion of the sweetest flowers. Pimlico was then a remote suburb of London, losing itself in gravel-pits and fields covered with scrubby herbage, vainly endeavouring to look green. Lady Harriet preferred the situation, as the thing in town that most resembled the country ; a place where the houses affected rurality, with laburnum bushes, and other odd conceits, trained over their frontage. I remember that, in my short cut across the Park, along the Birdcage-walk to Buckingham-gate, I always felt as though I were living in the reign of Queen Anne, and as if Lady Harriet were living at the Antipodes. On the days I paid my court to her, there was no getting near St. James's Street ; for Downing Street, Grosvenor Place, and the Clubs, formed the extremities of a triangle.

The lovely tyrant was never visible till four o'clock ; but rising at noon (*l'aurore des jolies femmes*), how did she employ the interim ?—In the circle I usually found assembled round her, consisting of about a dozen of the *élite* of the

day, there was no one to excite my jealousy: the men were chiefly old *roués*, men of forty,—men who, in the eyes of twenty-and-a-half, possessed about the attraction that a venerable classic, though printed by Aldus and bound by Du Seuil possesses in those of a schoolboy, compared with some new romance by M. G. Lewis, in gaudy accoutrements of modern calf. Lady Harriet might as well have selected, as an object of jealousy, one of the wrinkled and painted cats abounding in her loo-playing coterie, as *I* one of the *ci-devant jeunes gens*, contemporaries of Sir Lionel Dashwood, who were the Celadons of the *bergerie* in Grosvenor Place. Like some boy-navigator, who, with

Youth at the prow and Pleasure at the helm,  
neglects the lead, I was close upon the Goodwin  
Sands, and fancied myself in fifty fathom water.

But how, then, *did* she fill up the hours when I was idling through the business of the state in Downing Street? — How was it with her from noon till four o'clock? — I had seen in

my cockadehood Lady Ormington devote half-a-dozen consecutive hours to the toilet—painting, patching, frizzing,—fastidious in the turn of a feather,—irresolute in the disposal of a *repentir* (I allude, of course, to the curl of that name). But those were the days of elaboracy, when the mere act of lacing was the affair of an hour; whereas Lady Harriet was one of the least dressy of the present school of dishabille. Morning, noon, or night,—I lie, afternoon or night being the only epochs at which I saw her,—she was invariably attired in a muslin dress of exquisite whiteness and fineness; having her hair dressed in the simplest fashion, without trinkets or ribbons to set off face or figure.—Her simplicity amounted almost to the puritanical.

It was clearly, therefore, not her toilet's fragrant task which caused her door to be denied; though, at the happy hour appointed for her manifestation to eyes profane, when I was admitted into her presence, she had just the bright *enjoué* look of a person who has been spending her time to

her heart's content ; — eyes beaming with intelligence, — lips vivid with quickened circulation, — cheeks brightened by the consciousness of beauty. Dull or cunning indeed must be the woman's countenance, that does not betray to a jealous man whether she has been too well amused during his absence! —

I had no opportunity of resolving my doubts. Chance had favoured me with a *tête-à-tête* at our first interview ; but from that period I never saw her alone. We met in the throng of the world, or at her own house ; but I could never manage to arrive there till between four and five, when her rooms were crowded. Nay, once, when by dint of shirking my officialities and crossing the Park at the pace of pedestrian Barclay, I managed to arrive in Grosvenor Place as the clock was striking four, I found myself distanced by a certain Colonel Morley, a fellow in the Guards, ugly as the devil, and, like that great potentate, extremely well-mannered and prepossessing.

I do not mean that Morley was prepossessing

to me. There was something in his shrewd glance that cut me to the soul. The superiority affected by Jack Harris roused my indignation ; but the unaffected contempt of the guardsman depressed me to the earth. So sure as I entered Lady Harriet's presence with something witty or agreeable in *petto*, the calm, investigating eye of Morley threw a fatal damp over my spirits. My squibs were damaged, and would not go off; my fireworks exploded in my own face : and, when floundering in the midst of an entertaining anecdote which his malice marred in the telling, he used quietly to ask me, what next ?—had I not forgotten something ?—was that all ?—How could I do otherwise than detest such a man !—He was my evil genius,—and an evil genius I was sure to meet at Philippi.

One morning, when several of the *habitués* of the house had taken leave of Lady Harriet on the threshold of her little conservatory, at the ringing of the postman's bell,—the usual signal for her airing,—I managed to linger a moment

behind the rest, and was rewarded for the quiet way in which I accomplished my little manœuvre, by the gift of a branch of heliotrope.

“A token of approbation and encouragement, Mr. Cecil Danby,” said she, still continuing to examine her flowers and occupy herself with their arrangement. “You have made fair progress. You have almost mastered the most difficult of London lessons,—to subside into a fraction of the multitude, and satisfy yourself with being a mere link in the chain of society. Those who pretend to more, will never become even that. You have no right, at present, to individualize; but must live and move, and have your being, in the life, movement, and sensibility of the mass.”

“In one respect, I certainly feel with the mass!” cried I, with warmth; “in my adoration of—”

“My carriage is at the door,” interrupted Lady Harriet; “and if you have no better acknowledgment to offer for my graciousness than such platitudes—”

“ Your graciousness ! — ” I ejaculated, with an appropriate sigh of reproach.

“ Don’t treat it too lightly,” she replied ; “ for it is more the result of my indulgence than of your merits. You are doing pretty well. You have learned to dress simply, to ride a quiet hack, and place yourself in the background of the picture. But you have still worlds of wisdom to acquire. You talk too much ; you laugh too much.—Your teeth are good, and your spirits high ; but this does not suffice as an excuse for being heard in company, when others, with greater minds and smaller voices, are compelled to silence by your chattering.—Look at Colonel Morley.”

“ Thank you ; I had rather *not*.—He is better to listen to than look at—”

“ A case directly contrary to your own,” was her provoking retort upon my impertinence. “ You would do well, however, to study and take pattern by the well-bred *insouciance* with which he contents himself to remain unnoticed, in order that a cleverish lad, who has his way to make in the world, may have a fair field for his *début*.”

Was this sufficiently insulting?—But for the dimples softening the sarcastic smile accompanying her attack, and for the exquisite whiteness of the little hand that withdrew itself out of a verbena-bush to emphasize her harangue, I think, I should,—I scarcely knew what!—

“Where is the flower I gave you?” said Lady Harriet; discerning, perhaps, something of the vacillation of my feelings in the expression of my face.

I replied by laying my hand, with an expressive gesture, upon my heart.

“Be so good as to put it in your button-hole,” said she, coolly. “Do you suppose I like you well enough to give you a flower, which I do not intend you to make a show of?—I gave it as the French Emperor bestowed a *décoration*. The Legion of Honour would cease to create heroes, if worn *en cachette*.”

On my arrival in town, an order from Lady Harriet Vandeleur to make an exhibition of her *cadeau* would have flattered my vanity. I knew

better now. I saw that she had no fear of being compromised by me ; and scarcely was I in the street, before I flung down the sprig of heliotrope upon the pavement, trusting Lady Harriet would note it lying there, on her way to the carriage.

Nam cupidè conculecatur nimis antè metutum.

Young gentlemen of tender years, when in love, are almost as susceptible about being laughed at, as very elderly gentlemen labouring under the same distemper. I was angry. I assured myself that I was not going to be made a plaything by a coquette :—that I would not remain the butt of a Colonel Morley.—For a week,—for a fortnight,—(ten days I believe in reality, but the profound *ennui* to which I was a victim, made me fancy it a fortnight,)—I abstained from the house ; secretly flattering myself with a hope of receiving one of those little three-cornered notes, scribbled à *pattes de mouche*, which I had seen lying superscribed with other names, on her ladyship's table.

But I waited in vain ! — No note,— not even a message !—I contrived to make myself apparent twice a week to the inmates of Lady Harriet's opera-box ; and posted myself resolutely at the opposite side of the room, whenever we met at assemblies. But this was not often. She belonged to a set which rarely forfeited *caste* in the indiscriminate mobs of large parties ; and to the small ones, I was not yet sufficiently in fashion to obtain an *entrée*.

I could bear it no longer. Lady Harriet's piquant society was as essential to me, as a pinch of macauba to a snuff-taker. I found myself growing lethargic ; yawned in the face of Lord Votefilch, while he was pointing out to me, that I neglected to dot my *i*'s, in a *précis* ; and in that of my mother, while informing me that Dr. Blaine had cruelly insinuated into her mind that poor Bibiche was suffering from a liver complaint. Still smarting under these double reprimands, I rushed to Grosvenor Place.

“ When did you come to town, Mr. Danby ?”

inquired Lady Harriet, in a patronising tone, breaking off her conversation with the young Marchioness of Devereux, the prettiest of the brides of the season.

"I have not left London," said I, provoked at being compelled to proclaim a fact, of which I knew her to be perfectly aware.

"I mistook, then, what Lady Ormington told me about you. I am sure she said something about absence. I dare say she spoke of your being absent and out of spirits, and I mistook it, for absent and out of town."

"I must still plead not guilty,"—said I,— "having enjoyed excellent health and spirits; and not the less for having ascertained by ocular demonstration, at the Opera and elsewhere, that your Ladyship was enjoying the same advantages."

"How very bad the Opera is getting!—Unless they do something better for us before the close of the season, I shall give up my box next

year," said Lady Harriet, suddenly addressing her fair visitor.

"People always say so—nothing better is done,—yet they renew their engagement!" replied the Marchioness, smiling. "However bad the Opera may be, I believe we can better spare a better thing."

"At the beginning and end of the season, when there is nothing going on," observed Lady Harriet; "but just now, one has as little time for it, as patience."

I had no patience with her hypocrisy; for never was she known to miss an opera! — I went that night, and planted myself, as usual, opposite her box, with the view of bringing her, if not to shame, to remorse. As I expected, she was there; as I did not expect, the pretty Marchioness was her companion.

"I thought you were *l'ami de la maison* of the pretty widow," observed Jack Harris, accosting me familiarly, as I directed my moody looks towards the box of Lady Harriet; which, being

on the pit tier, allowed the curious in fashionable movements, to obtain a suspicion of Colonel Morley and Sir Moulton Drewe, occupying the back-ground. “ How come you to be standing here, with your eyes fixed upon her like those of Romeo on Juliet’s balcony, while others, armed, ‘ with love’s light wings,’ have overtopped the barrier ? — ”

“ Because I am fonder of the warbling of Catalani, than of the gabbling of even the prettiest woman in the world.”

“ But the *divertissement*, my dear fellow ! — The *divertissement* is the *providence des âmes tendres*,” cried Jack Harris. And as he spoke, I saw him glance at a new waistcoat, in nature and origin evidently an improvement on the last !

I would have given worlds, at that moment, to have been in possession of a sprig of heliotrope, even in my button-hole.

Lady Harriet was right. Such a trophy was not without its value. Still more would I have given for the privilege of intruding into her box,

which I had forfeited by my foolish irascibility. Three weeks before, I might have laid Jack Harris low with envy, and shrivelled up his gay waistcoat at a glance, by my familiar attitude in that envied spot. But now, I dared no more confront the scrutinising eye of Morley or the reprehensions of Lady Harriet, than leap on the stage and take a part in the ballet !—I was inexpressibly vexed. For boys such as we then were, half the agonies of life arise from petty rubs of vanity. Self-consequence is our idol ; an idol that imposes a perpetual hair-shirt and never-ending flagellation upon its votaries !

I saw that Lady Harriet was contemptuously regarding us ; and not to afford her the triumph of fancying she imposed upon me, affected to talk and laugh familiarly with the companion she had pointed out to my avoidance ; passing in review the beauties present, with all the impertinence of a novice. When, lo ! while affecting to run my eye along the several tiers, it rested suddenly upon a face, half hidden by the curtain of

one of the upper boxes, which put a period to my mirth ! “ Aut Erasmus, aut diabolus.” It was either Emily’s or an angel’s;—beautiful as ever,—so beautiful, that the surprise of seeing her there, was quickly followed by still greater surprise, when I reflected that I had allowed nearly a month to elapse without recalling her to my recollection.

Freely as we had been discussing the women present, (and Jack Harris belonged to the class of men superabounding in London, who, without access to good society, familiarize themselves at public places with the names and persons of those between whom and them there is a great gulph fixed, but concerning whom they assume the privilege of uttering the grossest scandals,) I recoiled from exposing Emily to the blasphemies of his sacrilegious tongue. Nay, when following the direction of my eye, and noticing my sudden flush, he exclaimed,—but I will not record what he exclaimed,—further than that it contained a fitting tribute to the loveliness of the fair *inconnue*.

I forbore to hazard a syllable implying knowledge of her name or person ; but I was now more eager than ever to shake him off. Nay, my eagerness was dictated by a feeling so much more genuine than the dread of exposing myself to the quizzing of a Lady Harriet Vandeleur, that I succeeded. I was intent upon a nearer survey of Emily's box ; for, if there with her father alone, Lord Ormington's son had every pretext for intruding upon Lord Ormington's man of business.

Having hurried up one stair case, accordingly, and down another, in order to give the slip to Jack Harris, who in spite of his assumption of superiority, neglected no opportunity of clinging in public to my arm, I made my way to the upper tier of boxes ; pigeon-holes, to which I had occasionally glanced upwards from Fop's Alley, as a boy looks upon a kite traversing the fields of air, and with about as much idea of ever finding myself elevated to the same enviable attitude.

No sooner had the box-keeper complied with

my request, and opened an empty box for me, than I ascertained that old Hanmer was not on guard. Emily's chaperon was an elderly woman, arrayed like herself in mourning of the simplest fashion, and stationed behind her as if in studious concealment ; perhaps to command a better view of the stage,—perhaps because too homely to warrant display at the opera. I had little leisure, however, for conjectures. My whole attention was engrossed by the beauty of her companion. I had thought her handsome as she stood, cold and contemptuous, in the dull drawing-room in Southampton Buildings. But now, with the brilliant light of the chandelier irradiating her fair face and tinging with gold her chestnut ringlets, I was startled by her surpassing loveliness.

For a month past, my eyes had rested upon nothing but those withered complexions and hardened countenances of fashionable life, which, when viewed in a mass, with their paint and varnish of *ton* fresh upon the surface, excite

neither surprise nor disgust. But the aspect of this young, bright, innocent-looking creature, so impressed me with admiration of its freshness and purity, that there needed no severer criticism upon the deficiencies of Lady Harriet and her companions.

Unconscious that she was the object of peculiar attention, Emily's eyes were fixed upon the stage; and her smiling face seemed to reflect back all the brightness and interest of the ballét of "*Anacréon ; ou l'Amour fugitif,*" in which Deshayes and his wife were displaying their matchless graces. She was a study for an artist; with her white, gracile, swan-like throat, stretched forward, so that the auburn ringlets hung tendril-like over the hand supporting her cheek.

Without even so much excuse for the liberty of a visit to her box as to that of Lady Harriet, I found it impossible to resist temptation.—No reminiscence of Jack Harris's waistcoat, however, among my motives. My feelings were for once genuine! —

I could have found it in my heart to reward with a sufficient kick, the insolent smile of the box-keeper, when pointing out the box I desired him to open the door. I saw, as plainly as though he had spoken, the vile surmises passing in his mind concerning its inmates.

But that his key was already in the door of the box, methinks I should have rescinded my order. Another moment, however, and I had passed the Rubicon ; and was blending with my incoherent excuses the most courteous inquiries after the health of Mr. Hanmer, whom had I met in the street I should have found some difficulty in recognising.

Emily's answers were as cold as succinct. There is a favourite phrase of “ putting people in their place.” If it was in my place she put me, it proved to be a very humble one ; for after encountering her chilling glances, I swear I could have crept into a nut-shell.

I attempted the remarks that were probably made in every other box that night, to every

other woman present, concerning the prodigious voice of Catalani, and the victorious rashness of her genius. But Emily would not be beguiled into more than monosyllables in reply. She evidently considered me as much out of place in her aërial den at the Opera, as in her horrible drawing-room in Southampton Buildings ; and after flinging a word or two at my head, as if throwing a stone, turned suddenly towards her venerable companion, to whom she had made no movement to present me, and began to converse cheerfully with her in some unknown tongue. Ignorant as most young men who have received a first-rate education, I knew not exactly what. It might be Spanish,—it might be Portuguese,— it might be Polish, Hungarian, or Russ. All I knew was, that it was neither French nor English,— German nor Italian ; and further, neither Eton nor Oxford enabled me to determine.

In the mouth of the elder lady, it was a grave, sonorous language ; in that of Emily, rich and

flowing. Her countenance brightened as she talked, till it became almost as intelligent as before my arrival in the box. Even though she deigned not to notice my presence, it was a sufficient enjoyment to listen to her melodious intonation and watch the “liquid lustre melting from her eyes.”

Rather from awkwardness than audacity,—rather because I knew not how to retreat, than because resolved to stay in her despite, I stood my ground; and upon a sudden exclamation of delight, whereby she directed the attention of her chaperon to what was passing on the stage, I even deliberately took possession of the unoccupied chair, immediately opposite to Emily, on pretext of sudden interest in the performance. Perhaps I wished to draw a little nearer to her,—perhaps I wanted to exhibit myself to the *roué* world in the pit, in company with the most beautiful woman in the house,—perhaps I was even anxious to attract the attention of Lady Harriet Vandeleur to my superior good fortune. At all

events, the movement afforded me an excuse for expressing to Emily my regret that she should occupy so vile a box, where seeing or hearing were alike out of the question.

“Would you permit me,” I added, in my most insinuating tone, “to send you, some night, my mother’s box, which is on the ground tier, half a dozen from the stage, and commanding an excellent *coup d’œil* of the ballet?—”

She gazed at me with a calmly inquiring eye; but uttered not a syllable.

“Had Lord Ormington been aware,” said I, by way of recalling to her mind the exact nature of the link connecting us with each other, “that you were fond of the Opera, I am convinced he would long ago have had the honour of offering it to Mr. Hanmer.”

I was convinced of no such thing; for Lord Ormington would just as soon have thought of interfering with my mother’s Opera-box, as *she* of disposing of his service of plate. But I chose Hanmer’s daughter to bear in mind the

courtesy due to the son of her father's favourite client.

Again, after a very slight bend of the head by way of acknowledgment, did she turn towards the grave old matron in black, with a thousand lively comments upon what was going on, either in her own box or in the ballet. With the vulgar susceptibility of ignorance, I was convinced, at every fresh smile and ejaculation, that they were talking of *me*! At length, I felt so thoroughly uncomfortable, that I hazarded no further attempt at softening her rigour beyond a deferential bow, and hastily departed.

“ You were scarcely fair with me, Cis, in allowing me to run on unchecked, while passing my opinion just now upon your lovely friend ! ” cried Jack Harris, whom I encountered in the lobby of the fifth tier ; and who, I saw plainly, had ascended so much above his usual Opera altitude, only that he might interrogate the box-keeper touching the two mysterious ladies. “ Another time, my dear fellow, spare my feel-

ings and your own, by saying ‘I can’t be explicit, but I won’t be unfriendly. Do not persist in your inquiries.’”

“ I should have been sorry to excite your curiosity by any prohibition half so mysterious !” replied I, assuming the tone of coolness with which he so often martyred *me*. “ Nor was I aware that it was essential you should be warned, to a day and a minute, whenever I had occasion to form an agreeable acquaintance.”

Having uttered these oracular words, I left him, looking vexed and malicious ; and, in the recklessness caused by the triumph of the moment, made my way straight to the box of Lady Harriet ; having noticed, from the opposite post, that Drewe and Morley had quitted her, as even the most devoted men are apt to quit the most charming of women, when the back of their box does not command a view of the dancing.

Why was it that both the Marchioness and her friend received me so affably ?—Why was it that, throughout the remainder of the night,

their conversation with me was so unintermittingly kept up, that it would have been difficult to find a moment for leaving them?—Had my recent emotion imparted unusual expression to features not altogether deficient in merit?—Had the ambition of conquering in the fifth tier, endowed me with the power of conquest in the first? — Had they noticed me leaning familiarly over the box of that lovely creature? — or were they, after all, simply intent upon avenging the base desertion of their recreant knights by a manifest flirtation?—

The latter supposition presented itself in time to prevent my making a fool of myself. The dread of being accepted as a *pis aller*, saved me. The torch might burn and sparkle as brightly as it listed, but they should see that Cecil Danby was not the silly moth to singe his wings. I made myself irresistible. The jargon of London life, which at first appeared so difficult of acquirement, is as easy as lying, when studied by an enlightened mind. Early education had taught

me the rudiments. I had stood in the stocks of fashion in my infancy ; and my toes being properly turned out, dancing came as by intuition. I was already a tolerable trifler ; could recite a piquant anecdote without losing the point, *broder* upon a slender hint of scandal, and twist a *bon mot* so artfully, that my fair auditresses had a right to suppose it hazarded by themselves.

To the Marchioness, I chattered ; with Lady Harriet, I listened ; and consequently, was successful with both. It has been told of a late nobleman, equally distinguished by his abilities and absence of mind, that, having talked to himself in his travelling-carriage the whole way from Brighton to London, he ended, at Hyde Park Corner, by inviting himself to dinner, as the pleasantest companion he had ever travelled with. Lady Harriet evidently thought as much of *me* ; because what passed for dialogue between us, was as much a monopolylogue as those of Mathews.

Never had I seen her so gracious!—Not a sarcasm, not a reproof! Kind, encouraging, it needed all the beauty of the expressive face on which, for an hour past, I had been gazing, to convince me that the charming little widow from whose mouth dropped pearls and diamonds, and in whose large eyes sparkled shrewdness and wit, was three-and-thirty years of age, a hardened fraction of that adamantine temple of worldliness, called the *beau monde*!

After wincing under the *hauteur* of Emily, such brilliancy *ought* to have dazzled,—such affability ought to have overwhelmed me!—Far from it!—The chaste moonlight imparts no charm to the glaring sunshine; though glaring sunshine disposes us for the refreshing softness of the tranquil moon. For the first time, I discerned effort in Lady Harriet's wit, and restlessness in her vanity. But, as my admiration declined, my embarrassment vanished. My tongue was loosed. I became natural in her presence; that is, natural as the clipped hedges

and formal *parterres* of a Dutch garden. My fair friends were content, however, with the gaudy blossoms tendered by my gallantry. Both of them smiled upon me “delightfully with all their might;” and accordingly, at the most earnest moment of the conversation, I started up, as if recollecting an engagement, made a profound bow, and,—

————— nec ultra  
Errorem foveo,

vanished!—

Nothing in the world provokes a woman of the world more than that the man who has found refuge in her comfortable Opera-box, and amused himself with her lively chat, should take his precipitate departure five minutes before the conclusion of the ballet;—a deliberate avowal that he despairs the honour (that is, that he chooses to shirk the bore) of escorting her to her carriage. But to leave her alone in her glory,—to leave her, when the kindnesses lavished upon you have been the means of keeping more assiduous beaux

from the field,—is an “ungrateful injury,” past all forgiveness !

Morley, I knew, was off to White’s. Morley was the strongest whist-man of his day ; one of those whom one knows as well where to find, at a certain hour of the night throughout the season, as the police inspector at his station-house, or the premier during the session of parliament. Squeamy and Drewe were lounging, as usual, in the pit, directly under Lady Harriet’s box. I made it my business to pin them there firmly by the button,—too happy in being button-held by *me*, usually so supercilious in my acceptance of their acquaintance,—so that she could have no hopes of *us* ! No mistaking our united intentions to convoy nothing but ourselves and our canes out of the Opera House that night. Indeed, I had already engaged my companions to sup with me at Watier’s, a new club, the headquarters of the *roués*, of which our three Insignificances were component parts.

My plan was to remain there, *en évidence*, till

the last moment ; then, just as the curtain was falling, rush up to the skiey regions of the fifth tier, in order to ascertain by what fortunate cavalier Emily and her chaperon were escorted. I did not foresee that the stairs would be crowded with people hurrying down ; and that, as usual, where a single person attempts to combat the mass, the mass would have the best of it. The upper part of the house was half empty before I reached the spot.

Everybody in the unlucky habit of frequenting the London theatres, either in those days or these, must have found their choler excited, on some occasion or other, by the coarseness of the Rule-Britannia class of the community frequenting the galleries ; and just as often, by the indecorum of a class of men, who, if better born and bred, are scarcely better mannered,—dandies of a secondary order, whose gallantry consists in staring women out of countenance, and whose heroism in knocking a man down !

On reaching the door of the box which so strongly excited my interest, I found it besieged

by a group of Lovelaces of this description ; and, unless I am much mistaken, my eye caught a glimpse of Jack Harris himself, hurrying off on my approach, as if ashamed of being seen in such company. But the lights were all but extinguished, and I was unable positively to determine. Even the box-keepers were gone ; and but that the doors of all the adjoining boxes stood open, while that of Miss Hanmer's remained closed, I should have concluded that I was too late, and that Emily had already taken her departure.

Something in the triumphant air of the scamps stationed in the vicinity, convinced me they were lying in ambush for her exit, to molest her with insult. But how to obtain admittance, in the boxkeeper's absence, with a tender of my services ?—I knocked at the door of the box ; — no answer !—At length, it occurred to me to enter the one adjoining, and lean over for a parley. Anxiety on her account imparted courage for so bold an intrusion. I was boiling with rage. I felt convinced that she was held prisoner by

these blackguards. It was in perfect good faith, it was with the truest and best intentions, that I pushed my way into the next box, drew aside the intervening curtain, and addressed her.

For a moment, I suspect, Emily mistook me for an auxiliary of her persecutors; for her first movement, on hearing herself spoken to, was to retreat into a corner behind her companion. I raised my voice, however, to re-assure her.

“I fear you have no one to see you to your carriage!—” said I. “Will you do me the favour to accept my arm?—”

A few hurried words addressed to her companion, in which I could detect, though altered by a foreign accent, the names of Lord Ormington and Mr. Hanmer, seemed intended to explain the connection between us. But the agitated tone in which they were uttered, served to convince me that I had not mistaken their situation; that they were alone,—unprotected,—terrified.—Emily advanced to the front of the box, to explain that they accepted my offer

with gratitude ; and the sight of her blanched cheeks and tremulous lips excited so much emotion in my breast, that I forgot to congratulate myself on having vanquished her scruples or humbled her pride.

“ I fear,—I greatly fear,—” cried I, “ that you have experienced some annoyance?—If you would only point out to me, as we go down, the individual by whom—”

She stopped me. “ If I profit by your kindness,” said she, “ it is only on condition that you take no notice of anything that has occurred, or may occur, concerning us. Nothing would annoy me half so much as to become the object of a dispute in public.”

“ Do me the favour then to admit me into your box till you are sufficiently composed for a sortie,” said I, “ in order that it may be seen you have an authorized protector.”

No need of the precaution. On making my way round, the coast was already clear. I had consequently no difficulty in persuading Miss

Hanmer to hasten from the spot, where only a glimmering light remained to render our situation more embarrassing.

“The gentleman who accompanied us hither, the husband of Madame d’Acunha,” said Emily, in a low voice, (as we hurried down stairs together, closely followed by the old lady, whom she seemed to introduce by the latter name,) “must have met with some accident, which prevented his rejoining us. He usually leaves us during the ballet, to obtain a better place in the pit; but has never before failed to be in time for escorting us out.”

“And you have consequently been exposed to annoyance!—I am convinced of it!—It is useless to deny it!” cried I, with swelling bosom, when, on reaching the lobbies adjoining the crush-room, now nearly empty, I perceived the four vulgar brutes already noticed, leaning against the wall, as if to wait our passing. They were indulging in noisy mirth. It was the epoch of “coaching;” and with the abuse of propriety

distinguishing the genuine Bond-street lounger, these individuals were dressed in the bang-up style, which the Barouche Club had brought into fashion,—their dialect being the newly-discovered European tongue, called slang.—I saw at a glance that I, Cecil Danby, should irremediably soil my fingers by contact with such gentry; and with the most valiant intentions, was grateful to Emily's moderation, when she persisted in assuring me I was mistaken. Instead of casting a triumphant glance upon the baffled enemy, she quietly, but firmly, impelled me in a contrary direction toward the chair door.

I inquired if it was *there* her carriage was waiting?—

“I have no carriage,” she replied, without the slightest embarrassment. “Perhaps you will have the goodness to call a hackney-coach for us, as Monsier d'Acunha would have done, had he been here.”

I was horrified!—not at the idea of calling a hackney-coach; not even at the degradation

awaiting the beautiful and queenly creature leaning on my arm; but at the prospect of leaving her alone, while I proceeded along those horrible avenues of Shepherd's-market, which the awkward issues of the Opera-house at that period rendered inevitable. Candour was my only alternative. “I *dare* not leave you,” said I. “Accompany me out, and a link-boy will procure us a coach.”

At the chair door, stood Jack Harris, in company with two other Christchurch-men,—cigars in their mouths,—hands in their pockets,—insolence in their eyes!—

“Please to want a coach, sir?—” cried half a dozen link-boys, surrounding us, as we emerged into the dirty passage.

“Please to want a coach, sir?—” mimicked the voices of half a dozen other frequenters of the detestable spot, on perceiving that we were not attended by a servant, and that my companions were not in what is termed full-dress.

Heaven knows I cared nothing about “pleas-

ing to want a coach." I flatter myself my worldly position justifies my being seen in such a vehicle, whenever or wherever it suits my convenience ; and saving for their cursed noise, the chorus of link-boys would have little moved my spleen. But that Emily should be exposed, under such circumstances, to the sneers of Jack Harris and his companions, wounded me to the quick ! The whole gang was now united, and followed us leisurely to the spot, where, after the departure of the sedan chairs, a few miserable king's coaches, looking as if they wanted only a touch to tumble to pieces, were permitted to jolt their way up to the pavement.

One of these, summoned by the link-man's twang, was already drawn up and awaiting us ; the iron steps rattling, and the dirty straw invitingly displayed by the light of half a dozen links, the proprietors of which stood requesting the ladies to take their time, in a tone that sounded wonderfully like a threat. A beastly fellow of a coachman, whose rusty clothes seemed to have as

much difficulty in adhering to him as the component parts of his coach and horses to each other, was pushing them back, with a hand that held a wisp of hay, while the other kept open the creaking door.

What an equipage for Emily!—As it stared me in the face, I seemed to *feel* that Jack Harris and his rampant crew were staring at it from behind me!—I could hear their repressed laughter. I could imagine all that was passing in their minds!—

Do me not the injustice, kind reader, to suppose that it was for the Honourable Cecil Danby the flush mounted to my cheek. I know not how it might be with me now, after the demoralization of an ill-spent life. But I was then only twenty and seven months. I had still a heart,—ay, and as full of magnanimity as the leading article of a newspaper is full of the first person plural.

“ You *must* allow me to accompany you home. I do not consider you safe! ” said I, whispering through the chestnut curls into the neatly hemmed

little ear of Emily. “Do me justice. I have no presumptuous views in pressing my services upon you. But you are watched by those who would scruple at nothing in pursuing their aggressions. If you choose it, I will even take my place with the coachman ; but you shall not proceed so far as Southampton Buildings unattended.”

Emily answered not a word. I could make nothing of her silence, save that it gave consent. Fool that I was, not to suspect the truth,—that it proceeded from her tears !—

The moment I had placed her and the old lady in the coach, I jumped in after them ; and, having flung the link-boys their reward, whispered the address to the surly old brute who was slamming the door. At that moment, the glare of half-a-dozen links, assembled to grace our departure, fell upon the faces of the facetious group, of which Jack Harris formed a part ; displaying, under varied forms of expression, amazement, envy, and derision !

I did not dwell upon their insolence, further than by grinding between my teeth certain imprecations, purporting to take a more developed shape hereafter; for, though perplexed by the darkness, and distracted by the jarring and jangling of the vehicle, the sobs of Emily were audible from the shoulder of her companion, into whose arms she had thrown herself.

I had just self-command to forbear offering consolations which would have aggravated her uneasiness. My business there was to be a silent and unobtrusive guardian. The old lady,—or, since such was her name, Madame d'Acunha,—was well satisfied to engross the conversation, by a torrent of words, of which the purport was sufficiently revealed by the successive tones of rage, fear, resentment, varying her ejaculations. Unless the truant, the delinquent, the absent-without-leave Monsieur d'Acunha, were far gone in apoplexy or some other lethargic seizure, I would not have been in his skin at their next meeting! She probably threatened quite as loudly the ag-

gressors who had presumed on their unprotected situation ; but of this, as no proper name served as index to her invectives, I was unable to judge.

All my thoughts, moreover, were engrossed by the grief of Emily. I fancied, (what is not one able to fancy at twenty-and-a-half!) that I could detect in her weeping, as clearly as in Madame d'Acunha's abuse, inflexions of wounded pride, of suffering delicacy. I was even in hopes that my turn might come, and tears of penitent gratitude signalize her recognition of my modest merit. But her sobs subsided to sighs, and her sighs to silence, without a sound having escaped her lips indicative of consciousness of my presence !

I could not stand this long. “ You are better now, I trust ? — ” said I, still preserving appropriate calmness of manner and attitude. Had I and old Madame d'Acunha been *tête-à-tête* in the coach, I could not have maintained a more decorous perpendicularity.

“ As much better as I can be with the con-

sciousness of having been troublesome to everybody, and a burthen to myself," she replied, with much emotion. " Mr. Hanmer warned me that I was imprudent in yielding to my passionate love of music so far as to venture to the Opera, attended only by those whose ignorance of the English language might expose us to difficulties. But habit renders bold. I have now so repeatedly occupied the same box without attracting notice or annoyance, that I ceased even to apprehend it."

" But since your father was aware of the danger," I observed, " why not himself attend you to the theatre? —"

" You have twice given me reason to suppose that you regard me as the daughter of Mr. Hanmer," was her mild reply. " Your kindness entitles you to explanations which, as a stranger, I feared could not be very interesting. I am his ward. I have been but a few months in England. I am an inmate of his house. My name is Emily Barnet."

There was something in the explicit frankness of her explanation, which reminded me of Franklin and his boot-jack.

"I trust," said I, "you will not the less permit me to consider myself (connected, as I am, by peculiar ties with Mr. Hanmer,) privileged to officiate as your protector whenever or where-soever my aid may be wanting."

"You have been most kind, and I am deeply sensible of the obligation," replied Emily, with some sensibility; "but you must forgive me for assuring you that any further acquaintance between us would be wholly unacceptable to my guardian."

This was throwing down the glove of defiance some what cavalierly! but I had no leisure to remonstrate. Emily's tears had prolonged themselves so unreasonably, that we were approaching Southampton Buildings. I perceived, moreover, that we were not only near the term of our journey, but dodged by a hackney-coach, evidently intent upon keeping up with us.

Though careful not to breathe a hint of my suspicions, I congratulated myself silently on my foresight in not having allowed them to return home alone. At Mr. Hanmer's door, I was preparing to jump out, when Emily delayed me with an urgent request that, after depositing *her*, I would proceed with Madame d'Acunha, to her residence in Burton Crescent.

"Were she to alight here, to spare you this trouble," said Emily, "Mr. Hanmer would become aware that something unusual had occurred, and experience uneasiness for the future. Do me the favour, therefore, to take care of my friend home. She speaks no English, or would add her acknowledgments to my own."

So saying, she sprang out of the coach, the steps of which had been let down during her address. I had not even found time to offer her my hand; and Pepper-and-Salt, with a tallow-candle in his hand, was now on guard over us! All that remained was to get rid of the old lady

with as much celerity as I had been got rid of by the young one.

But, while giving my attention to Emily's parting request, the artful dodger of a hackney-coach had escaped me!—No vestige of it in any direction!—Having tracked Miss Barnet into the house, its mission was accomplished; for I don't suppose it signified much to Jack Harris at what number in Burton Crescent might reside the worshipful helpmate of the missing Monsieur d'Acunha.

“A pretty finale to my evening's amusements, upon my soul!”—cried I, on finding myself jogging along the then gloomy and half-finished streets adjoining Burton Crescent. “I—Cis Danby—to be benighted in the wilds of Bloomsbury!—And for what?—To play the squire to an old cat in a rusty bombazine gown, with a complexion only half a degree less dingy!”

The mansion in which Madame d'Acunha had requested to be deposited, appeared suffi-

ciently respectable to warrant better habiliments and a more creditable equipage ; and now that I was alone in the coach, I could perceive, powerful even beyond its fustiness, the searching and delicious fragrance of *vanille*, which appears to form the natural atmosphere of the women of Portugal.

It was not, however, till fairly ensconced in the easy chair of my own room in Hanover Square, (which, by the way, did not by any means correspond with Jack Harris's predictions,) that I became fully sensible of the strangeness of my fortune in the events of the evening.

Petted by Lady Harriet,—smiled upon by the Marchioness,—thanked — gratefully and affectionately thanked, by Emily !—It was surely enough to turn a stronger head than the one which had never sat straight upon its shoulders, since the demoralizing epoch of its first cockade !—

## CHAPTER IV.

In fact, there's not much interesting in 't,  
Unless it be in hot-press and good print.

PROCTOR.

Il semblait voler à des conquêtes, et n'avoir qu'à se mettre en frais de bonne volonté, pour inspirer autour de lui de l'amour.

BRUCKER.

IT is time, methinks, that I afford some slight idea of the temple consecrated by my mother's devotion and my own, to the worship of that memorable individual, the Honourable Cecil Danby; for though it was only the same double room on the third floor of the house in Hanover Square, occupied by my nursery in my cockadehood, and by John and myself, conjointly, in our school-days, it had now assumed a character of higher interest for posterity.

Lady Ormington, like the majority of silly women, had a passion for furnishing. Before the high-pressure education movement came into play, writing ill-spelt letters, and running up upholsterers' bills, were among the least mischievous avocations of those whose game was loo, and whose virtue, the charity that covereth a multitude of sins.

My rooms, gentle reader ! (or, on this occasion more especially, reader fair !) my rooms, as I found them on arriving for my first Oxford vacation, were hung with a highly glazed white paper, matched with highly glazed white furniture ; the whole being vivified by a gay pattern of blue convolvulus. Even the carpet exhibited, on its pale grey ground, the same design, and the Worcester china was what George Robins would call *en suite*. Nothing could be more summer-like and cheering. The furniture was of the darkest rose-wood ; the shower-bath white japan. But the triumph of the whole was the dressing-table, on whose spot-

less marble slab stood the crystal and gold belongings of the dressing-box, manufactured for me by Gray, under the immediate directions of Lady Ormington.

The most refined coxcombry breathed in the arrangements of my sanctuary. Something, however, of the old bachelor was perceptible in the exactness of its distribution. The boot-jack knew its appointed place ; and the nail-nippers would not have been at their ease unless laid side by side with the razor-strop. Unluckily, the small groom, (for as yet tigers were not—“ We had not got the name, but had the thing,”) who, as the characteristic curse of my younger sonhood, supplied the place of valet, did not always understand this as well as the boot-jack and nail-nippers ; and for the first three weeks Tim flourished in my service, seldom less than fifty threats of annihilation per diem were extorted by his negligence. I might possibly have put one of them into execution, had I contemplated any likelihood of replacing the

little sinner within many inches of his meritorious exiguity.

Small grooms were just “ come in,”—as they say of green peas, strawberries, and fashions. *Women* have in all ages been addicted to trifles of this description, such as pages, dwarfs, and marmosets. But it remained for our own times to attach to the six feet two of full developed manhood, three feet, or less, by way of henchman to its valour. I have heard of brats born in a mews and in a stable bred, deliberately stunted, like puppies, and by the same spirituous potions, in order to accomplish them for a tiger-hood.

Tim,—“ my boy,” as Falstaff used to call his page, and as we then all called our tigers,—had won my affections by the pluck with which I saw him bear a severe fall from one of Lady Ormington’s horses, to the back of which, poor atom ! he had been lifted by his father, her ladyship’s Irish coachman. I promoted him on the spot to tops and buckskins ; and a few days

afterwards, not an eye in the ring but was bent with envy and admiration upon the natty little puppet who made so knowing a figure upon my bay mare. I was offered any money for Tim by Sir Moulton Drewe. But as Lady Harriet Vandeleur had inquired “where I could possibly have picked up that love of a groom!—” I would not part with him “for any money.”—

Tim soon proved himself invaluable,—an enormous addition to my personal consequence: I stood higher in the world by three feet. I was one of the few who, by taking thought, have added a cubit to their stature.

“Yon’s a varmint little chap o’ yourn, sir,” said Fetlock the dealer, to me, one day, as I was lounging in his yard with Sir Moulton Drewe. “Come o’ the roight sort, I reckon;—a truss o’ the ould load,—a foal o’ the true dam.—I s’pose he’ll get to Newmarket in time.—As good a whip, sir,—(Connaught Bill, the lad’s father, I mean!)—as ever turned a family coach out of a yard; ay! and as showy with the ribbons

in hand and his levée wig on, as ever sat a 'am-  
mercloth, is Connaught Bill!—Many's the judge  
'ould give his heyes for sich a presence as his'n.  
But I must say, sir, for her ladyship Lady  
Ormington, your mamma, sir, that her lady-  
ship knows a good thing when she's got it!  
I sold my lady them greys of hern, sir;—and  
her ladyship wrote me out a cheque for the  
money on Drummond, sir, like a gemman!—A  
long price in them times, sir, three hundred  
guineas. But I never heard no complaints; and  
when her la'ship was wanting summut neat for  
you, sir, last season, she sends to me, and, 'Mr.  
Fetlock, sir—,' says her la'ship, 'you'll please  
to look out a good-looking 'ack for my son,'  
says she.—'Don't stand to a guinea or two  
for price,' says her la'ship,—'cause the paying  
is *my* affair; and I don't look to a trifle, so as  
he gets summut as is not showy, but well-bred  
and the roight thing,' says she.—And, dang  
it! *that* showed the roight thing, I take it,  
Mr. Danby, sir! All your vulgar chaps, of

nobody knows who, as comes 'ere to my yard,  
with the tin ringing in their pockets, the first  
thing they sings out for — ‘Fetlock,’ says  
they, ‘haven’t ’ee got summut *showy* — sum-  
mut as ’ll cut a splash in the Park?’—Lor’  
bless ’ee, sir, her la’ship, Lady Ormington, be  
too much of a lady to wish a son of her’n to  
be cutting splashes in the Park!—and I’m main  
glad, I assure *you*, sir, to see that chap o’ Con-  
naught Bill’s in such good training, I be.”

I have, I trust, brought my *lares* and *penates*  
sufficiently before my readers, to enable them to  
conjecture my *agrémens personnels*, when rous-  
ing myself at the matin summons of Tim, and  
stretching my manly limbs in my airy French  
bed. On the morning after the Opera affair, I  
slept as soundly as if the bunches of bright blue  
convolvulus over my head were so many poppies.  
I was even moved to say something almost as  
uncivil as Solomon said in his haste, concerning  
Downing Street and its regulations, when Tim  
drew aside my curtains in the dead of morning.

" Plase yer honour, tain't Downing Strate at all at all ! "—cried the little fellow, laying a triangular billet on my pillow. " Only Lady Hawyet's jontleman be a waiting for an answer, sir."

" Lady Harriet ? "—Yes—the three-cornered messenger of bliss was come at last ! — Piqued, by heavens ! — I seemed to see an embroidered waistcoat in the perspective, as I tore open the little treasure with all the eagerness of a child demolishing a flower.

Reader !—(*entre nous*), dost thou know the little, conscious, fluttering, demi-semi tone of kindness in which a woman addresses the man who is neither acquaintance, friend, nor lover, — but something more than the one, — less than the other, — and whom she fears perhaps as much as she wishes to convert into the third ?—Art thou acquainted with the letter that neither " dears " nor " my dears " thee ? — that calls thee neither Sir,—nor Mr. So and So ; — neither Henry, Harry, nor Hal ; — but bursting at once into a strain of familiarity, as into a challenge, *in medias*

res, gives thee to understand that the sweet creature writes as she would speak ; and would fain have thee read with the same candid and eager spirit thou hadst listened ?—

A very great man committed himself by putting it into print that he knew no greater happiness than to sit by the fire and read good novels ! I could have surprised him with a brighter notion : — to lie in an airy French bed, showered over with blue convolvulus, and read such billets as I describe ; such billets, in short, as the following from Lady Harriet Vandaleur. Am I (Heaven and Watier's forgive my breach of trust !) — *am* I justified in making it public ?—

“ Be pleased to come and dine with us to-day at Richmond. If you are at my door at four, Lady Devereux will give you a place in her barouche. We go early, that we may do a little rural before dinner ; though I scarcely know whether the lilacs and laburnums are sufficiently in bloom to satisfy the demands of nightingales or

fine ladies. By the way, what do you mean by defying my prohibitions, and being seen with that dreadful Mr. Harris—Harrison—you know whom I mean—the Oxford man, who wears flashy waistcoats, and takes off his gloves to exhibit his rings?—I have another quarrel with you of the same kind. But we will fight out both at Richmond.”

The other quarrel, my exulting heart assured me, regarded Emily! Lady Harriet had heard of my escorting a nameless beauty, a lady of equivocal appearance, publicly at the Opera;—nay, had seen me in her box.—Exquisite triumph!—I was to be called to order by a reprimand!—

“*Plase your honour, Lady Hawyet’s jontleman ’ould be glad to know what answer for my lady?*” demanded Tim, advancing towards the bedside, as he saw me about to commence a third reperusal of the billet. “Lady Hawyet’s jontleman be werry partic’lar about waiting.”

"I will send an answer presently," said I, already resolved that the "presently" should extend far into the morning; and the answer, when received, reduce the little beauty to despair. Ten Lady Harriets and twenty pretty marchionesses would not have tempted me to Richmond,—

Just as her ladyship's invitation determined me to absent myself, did Emily's prohibition excite me to return to Southampton Buildings.

A visit of ceremony—of inquiry—was indispensable.—No need to alarm old Hanmer with allusions to what had passed. For a man of any skill, nothing so easy as to make old Six-and-eightpence the instrument of conveying my message to his ward, without consciousness of his mission. Between the claims of office-hours, therefore, and the remoteness of my Mecca in Bloomsbury, Lady Devereux's barouche (even had I been inclined for it) was out of the question.

I repeated this to myself fifty times while I

was dressing. Always mistrust your own motives when you repeat a thing to yourself fifty times. Nothing more suspicious than to find yourself laying down the law to yourself with such damnable iteration;—more particularly those, who, like myself, have no time to lose in argument;—for time and tide, public offices and the green curtain, wait for no man.

I was forced to be in Downing Street every day, by ten of the clock. Such was the compact between Votefilch and Lord Ormington, such the compact between Lord Ormington and myself; the balance of the scales resting on the fulcrum of my strict obedience, being beggary or four hundred and seventy-five pounds a-year ! I was past the age for idylls and empty pockets. I had learned to talk with Voltaire of “*le superflu, chose si nécessaire !*”—and consequently thanked my mother sincerely for the gift of an excellent Breguêt repeater; owing to which, and my prudence, I was seldom many minutes behind my time.

Lord Ormington's voice, however insignificant in the House to which he devoted it, was in his own as the fiat of the gods ! Even routine acquires an air of forcibility, if powerfully persevered in. The regularity of his hours and habits, and the obstinacy of his reserve, endowed him as he advanced in life with the mysterious importance conceded to the ebb and flow of the tides. There is something portentous and awful in the periodical appearance of heavenly bodies, or disappearance of mundane ones. I swear that the nightly driving off of Lord Ormington's carriage, was beginning to inspire me with respect.

More than once, Lady Harriet had warned me against irreverence towards his lordship ; and very much more than once, had my mother checked me by an anxious look, when I was hazarding against him the sort of gay *persiflage*, which an old man is slow to perceive, but which, if he once perceives, he rarely fails to visit with vengeance. She seemed horribly afraid of my

offending him ; and in process of time I began to participate in her deference.

My respect extended even to his colleagues. Branded with the ignominious shame of cadetship, and consequently doomed by the obsolete barbarisms of feudal law to feed on husks in order that my elder brother might luxuriate on the fatted calf, I was well pleased, since my apprenticeship in public life was inevitable, to serve it under such a master of his craft as Lord Votefilch. He was a clever arbitrary man, a Napoleon on a Lilliputian scale ;—great in centralization,— having an undeviating system of official subordination, and keeping his youngsters admirably drilled.

There was a good deal stirring then in the administration of our foreign policy. “ There were giants on the earth in those days.” Napoleon and Wellington were making war,— Metternich and Nesselrode making peace ; and *I* was making myself useful, by transcribing in cyphers which I did not understand, despatches which

no one understood. Yet, somehow or other, my *amour propre* was interested in my vocation. I was the fly on the wheel. Whenever second editions were trumpeted through the streets by the newsmen's horns, I kept saying to myself, like that deluded insect, What a devil of a dust we are kicking up!—After having simply mended the pens for the Secretary who mended the style of Lord Votefilch's protocols, I looked down upon Sir Moulton Drewe and my cousin Squeamy as poor useless creatures, unworthy the noble soil of the land that pretends to rule the waves, while every year it yields up a circumferential foot or two to their presumptuous incursions.

Joking apart, Votefilch was a great man for the arduous times he lived in. Planted between a double battery, perpetually exposed in parliament to the broadsides of a powerful opposition, and in office to the puzzlement arising from the shifting policy of such of the powers of Europe as were not already engulfed in the greatest

despotism of modern times, the cannonarchy of Napoleon, his lordship stood firm as a Colossus, or as a donkey

By his own weight made stedfast and immoveable.

His patience had the skin of a buffalo ; his temper was the sort of granite, on which you may hammer for hours without eliciting a spark. It is difficult to rate too highly this species of impassibility in a public man. In official life, he, whose shrinking susceptibility betrays his vulnerable point, attracts such incessant showers of arrows, that he has neither leisure nor self-possession for the accomplishment of his wiser purposes.

Now the Right Honourable Secretary of State for Foreign affairs had the highest esteem for the Right Honourable Lord Ormington. Lord Ormington was one of the heavy pieces of ordnance, invaluable to government in certain emergencies. When vexatious questions were pressed by the opposition, he was always ready to rise and generalize with plausibilities, while the

stunned party recovered its senses, and gathered itself up for reply ;—a sort of moral *point d'orgue*, giving breathing space to the solos.—Nothing, in fact, but the importance of his services, would have pleaded with Votefilch, to admit into his office a young gentleman with hands so white, and pretensions so towering, as those of the Honourable Cecil Danby. For he was essentially a practical man ;—an astronomer not an astrologer ;—one who regarded poetry as a mild species of insanity ;—quarrelled with the Woods and Forests, because they would not mend the roads with the ruins of Fotheringay Castle ;—and could perceive no irony in Hamlet's assignment of purpose to the ashes of “ Imperial Cæsar.” It seemed a relief to his mind, that emperors, when turned to clay, could be turned to account.

Gods ! how I ramble !—Old fellows always do, from the moment they are pinned down into their gouty chair.—Reminiscence is as trackless as any other land of dreams ; and the mind

goes floating on, like the wind, whithersoever it listeth.

At five o'clock, on the day from which I started into these digressions, gentle reader, little Tim held my horse in Southampton Buildings while I left my card for old Hanmer.

"Since your master is not at home, say I will call again another day," said I, addressing Pepper-and-Salt, in a key that might have been audible in the King's Theatre, from Lady Harriet Vandaleur's box, to that of Madame d'Acunha. "All the family are well, I trust?—"

And the jerking, stultified looks and gestures of the poor wretch, as he replied with grateful civility, that "he was worry much obliged to me. Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch were both of 'em remarkable stout," almost put me out of conceit of my stratagem.

I wondered whether Emily overheard us? It was indispensable she should see that, though obedient to her commands, I was not unmindful of her welfare. But whether I had her approval

or not, I had my own. It was a real triumph to feel that I had sacrificed a pleasant party to Richmond, in order to effect my visit of inquiry to Southampton Buildings.

Four and twenty hours afterwards, I began to wonder what Lady Harriet Vandeleur thought of my desertion. I knew what other people thought of it. Though I had positively resolved to cut Jack Harris,—to cut him irretrievably,—with a bill-hook,—with a poleaxe,—with whatever instrument effected the surest dismemberment,—the fellow walked straight up to me in St. James's Street with such an air of candour, that one might as easily have thought of cutting one's own image in the glass,—

“ My dear Cis,” said he, “ how truly unkind of you not to warn me at once, last night, that I was on tender ground.—You well know my regard for you, and that I would ride a lame horse five miles in a pouring rain, to avoid giving you the slightest annoyance.—Yet you permitted me to make a jest of a person every way entitled to my

respect, even if not commanding it through her influence over your feelings. Accept my sincere apologies, as well as my congratulations on your happiness, in the acquaintance of the prettiest woman in town."

"Are you talking of Lady Harriet Vandeleur?"—cried I, pretending to misunderstand him.

"You are perfectly aware, my dear fellow, of whom I am talking. As to Lady Harriet, no one will ever talk of *her* beauty, so long as her countenance remains distorted by the envy and jealousy it exhibited last night, during your flirtation with the lovely Emily."

How the deuce did he know that her name was Emily?—I would not condescend to inquire!—If I encouraged his familiarity, he would, ten to one, ask me to present him to Lady Harriet, or the Marchioness of Devereux, or some other woman to whom his audacity must have been insupportable.

The next time I entered the Opera House, I prepared myself to view with a throbbing heart,

the scene of my interesting adventure ; more particularly as I knew that Lady Harriet was gone to a breakfast at Payne's Hill, and would be absent from her post of observation. That Emily would be absent too, was equally certain, and a source of very different feelings. It would, however, be something to place myself in the seat she had occupied, and devote my thoughts and recollections to her image.

To my utter surprise however, not only had Madame d'Acunha resumed her place by her husband, (a burly, square-looking, chocolate-coloured Portuguese, who might have put to flight a regiment of Jack Harrises,) but Miss Barnet was again their companion ; not seated in front of the box, indeed,—but the eyes of a lover readily espied her.

“ I have taken the liberty of intruding upon you to express a hope, that you sustained no injury from your fatigues the other night,” said I, with all the awkwardness of a school-boy. Finding myself graciously received, I alluded

slightly, to having already relieved my anxieties on her account, by collateral inquiry.

“ You are surprised, perhaps, to find me here again ?” said Emily, with a blush inferring more than words, that she felt in need of apology. “ But as we have exacted of Monsieur d’Acunha not to leave us again, and shall quit the theatre early in the ballet, I had not courage to deprive myself of the Flauto Magico.”

I muttered something stupid, about being the last person to find fault with any measure enabling me to see her again. But she did not seem to listen. D’Acunha, to whom she presented me on my entrance, interrupted us, with an offer of his place, that I might have a better view of Tramezzani’s remarkably bad acting ; to which I replied by taking a seat at the back of the box, beside Emily. Her companions were soon so thoroughly absorbed in the music, as to afford me almost the enjoyment of a *tête-à-tête*.

She was looking just as usual. Not a plait altered in her black gown,—not a curl in

the arrangement of her beautiful hair. It must have been her graciousness, therefore, which imparted a thousand new attractions to her beauty. I saw her smile for the first time. For the first time, her eyes assumed an expression of interest when I addressed her.

“ You English people,” said she, when the close of the act enabled us to converse with freedom, “ can very little enter into the love of music engendered by the climate and early associations of southern countries. With you, music is a luxury,—with us, a necessary of life. I need not inform you that the establishment of my guardian boasts little to flatter the imagination. I have been three months a prisoner in England,—cold, barren, cheerless, solemn England; and the severest convent of my native country, with the harmonies of its religious service and fragrance of its genial atmosphere, would have been, comparatively, a garden of Eden.”

“ Do not found your ideas of England exclu-

sively upon the experience of Southampton Buildings!" cried I. "Our summers have their orange blossoms as well as your own, and our—"

"No, no!—don't pretend to tell me that you have as much taste for music as animates the poorest water-carrier in Lisbon!" interrupted Emily. "I have rarely missed a representation at this theatre. Impossible to see a colder or less attentive audience!—Perhaps you have too many other pleasures to affix much importance to music. You come here with such a display of luxury, that it is easy to see you stand in no need of it as a consolation. It constitutes only one of the refinements of fashion. With us, it is more. It is part of our religion;—it is part of our foretaste of heaven;—a balm for sorrow,—a substitute for the prosperities of life."—

"Doomed to the society of old Hanmer, and the attendance of Pepper-and-Salt!"—was my silent and involuntary reflection, as I fixed my

eyes upon the countenance beaming with sensibility, that gave force to her expressions. “ Poor girl ! — no wonder she has recourse to the Flauto Magico to sweeten her imagination—”

“ Are you likely to remain long in this country ? — ” said I, with the benevolent project of effecting, through my mother, some improvement in her position.

“ Alas ! who can say ! — We are refugees. My father is a Lisbon merchant, resident at Cintra. The aspect of public affairs in Portugal determined him to profit by the departure of his friends, the d’Acunhas, to afford me a home in England ; and apprehensive, perhaps, that their ignorance of the customs of this country might endanger my comfort, he obtained a provisional shelter for me in the house of his old acquaintance and correspondent, Mr. Hanmer. Twenty years have elapsed since my father quitted England. He was, therefore, unable to appreciate — he did not exactly understand — he — in short — for why should I not speak openly ?

—I have written to entreat that he will either recall me, or find me a more suitable abode."

I was inexpressibly gratified by her frankness ; the more so, that her previous reserve sufficed to prove she did not lightly accord her confidence.

As we grew more intimate, I even ventured to tax her with her *hauteur* at our two first interviews.

"Would you have had me otherwise ?—" cried she. "Consider how bitterly my pride was hurt on finding myself treated by a stranger as a subordinate of Mr. Hanmer's establishment."

"I addressed you, surely, as his daughter ?—"

"During my residence with him, I had heard enough of Lord Ormington and his affairs, to understand that his lordship's son was scarcely ignorant of Mr. Hanmer's being unmarried."

"Conceive how little interest I can have attached to the private affairs of my father's so-

licitor ! — Believe me, my offence was unintentional.”—

“ At least let us now proclaim an amnesty ! ” cried Emily. “ My pride has been sufficiently rebuked by finding myself in need of the kindness of one to whom it had been unjustly exhibited. Be your own indiscretion visited, in its turn, by a little compunction for having driven me to the resource of *hauteur* as a guarantee against intrusion. My situation at Mr. Hanmer’s is a peculiar one. Without intending to wound my feelings, he gave me to understand, on learning our first interview — but we will say no more about it ! — War is over ! — In place of disagreeable reminiscences, let us set about the improvement of peace.”

I had always lived in the company which has the assurance to call itself the best. In that best, Lady Ormington was cited for the elegance of her manners. The world, that superficial observer, is apt to mistake appearance for deportment ; and the merit for which a woman

is indebted to the amount of her milliner's bill and the slenderness of her waist, is often set down to grace of manner. I do not mean to say that my mother's were faulty. She could be charming enough, when worth her while. But she never played to empty benches. Like the country manager who could not afford to give the snow-storm in his Christmas pantomime with white paper, when the audience was thin, she often "snowed brown," and was peevish and ungracious till further notice.

Lady Harriet, too, was a person remarked for what the great world call high-breeding. *My* notion of high-breeding is the manner that raises others to your level, without at any moment allowing you to descend to theirs,—the essential characteristic of high birth. But Lady Harriet, instead of placing other people at their ease, only contrived to show how much she was at ease herself, often at the cost of comfort to her associates. She was restless, too — nay, worse, she was artificial. Her *naïveté* was cal-

culated, her impromptus were *faits à loisir*. She could be courtly and refined enough, it is true. But to be courtly does not imply to be well-bred.

In Emily's manner, on the contrary, I despaired indications of that intuitive elegance, as inseparable from certain natures as fragrance from certain flowers. When offended, she was a queen ;—when pleased, a child.—Of the conventions of society, she knew nothing. All her ideas of decorum emanated from instinctive modesty. My coxcombry was as much thrown away upon her, as the beauty of some exquisite piece of mechanism on a savage. But when she approved — when by chance I gave utterance to a sentiment that found sympathy with her own,—the moisture of her eye was instantaneous ; or if some chance expression — some passing sarcasm — happened to divert her, her pearly teeth became visible in a moment, brightening the cordial smiles respondent to my efforts for her entertainment.

For I *did* try to entertain her. Every opera-night, I was as faithful to *my* post, as Spagnolletti to his. The d'Acunhas, aware of the annoyance to which Emily had been subjected by the homage paid to her beauty, favoured her wish to remain constantly in the back-ground ; and between their passionate love of music, and approval of Emily's modest retreat from the public gaze, I had the field to myself.

I was now perfectly at home among them. Though ordinary-looking people enough, there was something in their unsociable isolation in the midst of a great metropolis, that redeemed them from vulgarity. Emily gave me to understand that their affairs, as well as those of her father, were deeply involved in the precarious destinies of their native country ; and that their whole time was absorbed in business connected with the finances of Portugal, save the half dozen hours a week which they snatched for the consolation of music.

They were at enmity, it seemed, with old

Hanmer ; misunderstandings having arisen out of their mutual position relative to the guardianship of Miss Barnet ; and this was, I conclude, the motive of their silence respecting my growing intimacy with his ward. Though nothing passed between us on the subject, I saw distinctly that my name was never mentioned to him, either by Emily or her friends.

Luckily for me that the Opera was only twice a-week !—The career of fashion and fortune I had traced for myself would unquestionably have been nipped in the bud. To pass more of my time in the society of a rational being, rational without homeliness, rational without a single drawback, (save that she was only Emily Barnet, and I, the Honourable Cecil Danby,) must have endangered my coxcombry as well as my heart.

Yet I don't know ! The limitation of my pleasures only served, perhaps, to increase the risk. I could see her at no other time or place. Other sources of diversion were ever open to me. Emily alone, imprisoned in the dirty old den of my

father's man of business, was as-uncome-atable as a queen surrounded by her household brigade. Had it been any other person's man of business, I would have defied him ; but old Hanmer would have assuredly communicated my visits to Lord Ormington ; and Lord Ormington's displeasure, as I have said before, was not to be trifled with.

Meanwhile, the happiness of the hour sufficed me. At twenty-and-a-half, one stands between yesterday and to-morrow, independent of either. To-day contains an empire ; and Heaven knows I had all things to put me in conceit with my reign ! The liberalities of my mother rendered my allowance almost superfluous. It was her duty, she said, to take care that my first season in town reflected no disgrace upon herself.

"Next year," said her ladyship, "if you do vulgar or foolish things, it is *you* who will be put to shame ; for by that time you will have obtained a name. At present, people would only say, in alluding to your blunders, 'It is that silly son of Lady Ormington's !' I must really

beg, therefore, Cis, that you will be more cautious in your conduct. You made me get you invitations to the Duchess's *loo-parties*, to —— House, to the Marchioness of Devereux's, to twenty other places, which do not open their doors indiscriminately ; and, after all my trouble, you have not shown your face at one of them !”

“ My face is highly flattered that its absence should be remarked,” said I, coolly. “ It is more than would have happened to its honourable elder brother's.”

“ Perhaps so. But John is at least consistent. John does not care for the world, and never plagues me for invitations. By the way, your brother is come to town.”

“ Yes, I saw him yesterday in Albemarle Street. I believe he quizzicalizes at the Alfred.”

“ I 'll tell you what he does *not* do, Cecil. He is not seen skulking down the back-stairs at the Opera, with women in bonnets, whom he shuffles into a hackney-coach !”

"I am heartily glad to hear it," replied I, gravely; "for he is not the man who can afford to follow his own conceits in such matters. If Danby were seen giving his arm to a woman who looked like a housemaid, he would naturally be mistaken for a footman!"

"While *you*, I suppose, flatter yourself that you are only taken for a *roué*! However, there is *roué* and *roué*; and I can promise you, Cis, that obscure follies of that description—"

"Follies of *what* description?" cried I, interrupting her. "Explain these mysterious allusions to bonnets. By whom have I ever been seen loitering on any back stairs, save those of St. James's?"—

"By Lady Harriet Vandeleur, I conclude; who informed me you were degenerating horribly; that you did nothing you ought—"

"Nothing I ought?"—cried I, again interrupting her. "Lord Votefilch considers me a model for the official youth of Britain!—He has even given me sundry hints, that if I did not

write so cursed bad a hand, and spelt a little better, he would make me his private secretary ! ”

“ I am sure you don’t write much worse than other young men ! ” exclaimed my mother, peevishly. “ However, I suppose you only say it to make me nervous ; for I know, through Hanmer, who heard it from Lord Ormington, that they are perfectly satisfied with you at the office.”

This was rather a discursive mode for the intelligence to reach my mother ! However, I was getting pretty well accustomed to our family oddities.

Lady Ormington’s sarcasms about ladies in bonnets, did not suffice to frighten me from my usual resorts. The charm I found in Emily’s society was far beyond my dread of vulgar censure ; nor did I enjoy it the less, for my conviction that mine was not disagreeable to herself. She made no effort to attract me. There was no eagerness in her manner of recommending herself ; nor any pretensions, on my part, to the character of a lover. As we became more inti-

mate, I refrained from even the demonstrations of admiration inevitable on our first acquaintance. I had my own dignity to maintain, as she hers ; and though content that she should be aware of my deep devotion, chose to remain *le plus debout possible pour être à genoux.*

This did not injure my cause. Emily had every pretext for accepting my civilities as those of a mere acquaintance ; and no sooner had she ceased to fear that a show of kindness, on her part, might draw down upon her the crisis of a declaration, than she became perfectly at her ease.

A child could not have let fall its words more artlessly than Emily, when describing the habits of her early life ; her father's house at Cintra ; her orange-gardens, her mountains, her thickets of myrtle, her choir of nightingales ; her despair when apprized of the necessity of quitting all these, to dwell among strangers in a foreign country—a *northern* country—a Protestant country !

“ And yet,” she added, with a smile, “ how

far I was from surmising all the horrors of England, or imagining the mean narrowness of a house of business in Southampton Buildings! — I have heard my father speak of Mr. Hanmer as enormously wealthy. Yet what enjoyment does he allow himself? — In what intellectual effort does he indulge? — Books, music, flowers, are as much unknown in his house, as if such things had no existence. *My* father, too, is a man of business. *My* father is a mere merchant; but our house is bright with pictures,—our gardens gay with flowers! — A day spent without music or reading, would seem a lost day to *us*! — How is this? — Are all your professional people as dull, cold, and inelegant, as those I see? — Is conversation considered, in all your societies, an idle waste of words?" —

"The conversation in which *you* deign to take a part, would everywhere be appreciated!" I replied. But I could not but look with compassion on this plant of a Southern clime, crushed by the practical habits of our middle classes;

checked for the joyousness of spirit which, in every country but money-making England, is cherished and encouraged ; and censured for carelessness of forms, the growth of an inferior order of society.

All my care was to soothe the vexations of Emily, and remedy her sense of isolation. I tried to connect her, through *my* sympathy, with the sympathies of others. I described London society to her, in all its subdivisions ; country society, in all its ponderous complications. I told her what we were, what we had been, what we ought to be. The merest trifles illustrative of our social existence, seemed to amuse her. The details of my mother's establishment were laid before her, as minutely as an interior by Mieris ; nay, even my own apartments, with all their common-place associations, were painted for her amusement, as I have painted them for that of the reader.

It was curious enough that my object was to reconcile *her* with England, and reduce her

into one of the million, while the influence she exercised over myself sufficed to detach me from the mass. Till I knew her, I had acted upon the impulses of others ; had existed but as a leaf upon the tree. I had now an individual identity, derived from an existence as dear as it was dangerous !—

A disagreeable surprise was about to startle me to new perceptions. I have described the era of which I am writing, as the age of slang. But those only who retain personal recollections of the coaching “ peers of many capes,” with their bang-up pastimes, the ring and the road, their vociferousness at public places, their brutality at the Fives-Court, their activity at O. P. rows and Opera riots, can form an idea of the eccentric peculiarity of my brother’s mild reserve and studious seclusion, in the midst of the general uproar. Danby was certainly not one of those who are fated to make a noise in the world !

“ I have seen your brother !—” said Emily

one night, as I assumed my usual place by her side.

“ I trust he had the honour of pleasing you ? ” said I, almost coxcombically. But my gaiety subsided at the thought that she had perhaps, in her turn, attracted his attention.

“ May I ask,” I resumed, “ *where* Danby was so fortunate as to meet you ? ”—

“ You are very formal,—very ceremonious to-night ! ”—cried she, in some surprise. “ Having heard that ‘ Mr. Danby ’ was in the drawing-room with my guardian, and being unaware that you had a brother,—”

“ You wished to ascertain whether I cut as awkward a figure as ever on the hearth-rug in Southampton Buildings ! ”—

“ What would Mr. Hanmer have said, pray, on finding us such intimate acquaintance ? —No ! no ! I indulged my curiosity by a still more disgraceful proceeding. I was foolish enough to watch from my window the horse waiting in the street, till I saw its master jump into his saddle.”

“ Then you certainly did not see my brother!—” said I, interrupting her. “ Danby was never known to jump in his life—not even at a conclusion !”—

“ Why play upon my imperfect knowledge of your language?—It *was* your brother; though certainly nothing in his appearance indicated the relationship. But Mr. Hanmer mentioned at dinner that Lord Ormington’s son had been with him, preparatory to taking his seat in parliament.”

“ Parliament?—Danby in parliament?—Am I fated to receive all my news of home through the medium of Southampton Buildings?” cried I pettishly, deeply vexed at the prospect of worldly distinctions wasted on this elder brother.

Why is it, by the way, that, according to the attestation of ancient history and modern gossip, from the days of Cain and Abel, and Jacob and Esau, down to those of the two Chéniers and the two Danbys, there has existed so much fraternal discordance between almost every pair of brothers?

Is it that between two sons parental affection hath its ups and downs, like a swing or a balance? —Or does it arise from the inherent perversity of human nature?— I must confess I had, in my early youth, an antipathy to ugly John!— Not because he was my elder brother. No!—I swear my feelings towards him were as those of Faulconbridge. I would not have exchanged fortunes with him, to have exchanged faces. Ormington Hall and Hanover Square would have been poor compensation for the wretchedness of bearing about that frightful physiognomy,—that ignoble person,—those stooping, narrow shoulders,—those long graceless arms,—eyes that, conscious of defect, quailed under those of others,—and hair approaching to the reprobated Judas hue!— Life was not worth living for, with these defeatures! I would not have been a duke on such a penalty!—

Emily's information, meanwhile, was as authentic as it was strange. The very next day, Lord Votefilch, in taking some papers from my

hands, congratulated me, that “his Majesty’s government was about to receive an accession of strength by my brother’s entrance into parliament.”

I said nothing,—I only smiled.—But my smile, I conclude, was significant.

“ We have very high accounts of the abilities of Mr. Danby,” added he, gravely, as if replying to my smile.

“ From Lord Ormington, my lord?—”

“ No, sir.—His lordship recommended his second son to our attention; but he tendered us, at the same time, the services of his elder. He brings in Mr. Danby for his own borough. There was no occasion for overlauding him. The obligation is conferred on *us*. ”

I bit my lips.

“ It is from Cambridge we have heard so much in his honour,” persisted his lordship. “ Mr. Danby distinguished himself nobly at the University; but he has distinguished himself still more, by subsequently devoting his time in de-

fiance of all the temptations of society, to a course of severe study. Your brother, sir, has been brought up in the old school. Your brother brings more into the market than mere talent.

*‘Ως ουδεν ἡ μαθησις, ην μη νους παρη.’—*

Old Votefilch, I saw, was vain of his own academic distinctions. The old fellow was slyly slipping on his crown of laurels, under shelter of my brother's wing.

“ I sincerely trust, my lord,” said I, “ that Danby may add another name to the catalogue of those who, to the honours of the University, have added the more glorious distinctions of public life. May your lordship not be disappointed in your expectations !”

On the following Saturday, his Majesty's lieges were acquainted by his Majesty's Gazette, that

“ For the borough of Rigmarole, John Alexander Danby, commonly called the Honourable John Alexander Danby, was returned to serve

in this present parliament, *vice* John Julius Fudge, Esq., who had accepted the Chiltern Hundreds."

I suppose I ought to have felt proud at this announcement:—I felt angry. Fate was heaping a great deal too much upon the Honourable John Alexander. He was beginning to monopolize the good things of this world. After being exiled to the nursery in his nankin frock, and to lodgings in his superfine blue one, to be thus suddenly snatched into public notice! —Lady Ormington cared as little for him, as she had done three-and-twenty years before. But Granta, it seemed, “bragged of him, as of a virtuous and well-governed youth;” and his Majesty’s cabinet ministers had been pleased to lend their long ears to her vauntings. Even Emily Barnet spoke of him, as if interested in his success. For my part, I should have cared as much for that of our *ché�티f* cousin, little Squeamy.

“ You will go and hear your brother make

his first speech?" cried Emily, whose heart was warm with the sympathies of every generous affection.

"I wish I had nothing worse to do with my time, than dance attendance in the House of Commons, for the chance of hearing the Honourable Member for Rigmarole give utterance to a few words inaudible in the gallery!"—cried I. "However, Danby is just as little likely to come and listen to an harangue of mine, unless from the dock of the Old Bailey, or a cart at Tyburn. He despises me as the young Hopeless of the family; and we might pass for a fashionable couple, so complete is our alienation. Do not look so shocked!"—cried I, startled by her grave countenance.

"Is it the abhorrence of cant and exaggeration, which so often betrays you English people into abuse of your relations and calumny of yourselves?"—said she, in reply. "Bossuet tells us to beware of those who exceed in goodness; as there is nothing more suspicious than

a pretension to exorbitant virtues. But I see no reason for falling into the opposite extreme."

This well-earned reproof vexed me, as seeming to take part with my brother. I was born without a genius for family affection. I am much inclined to doubt whether such instincts exist; or rather, whether the love of kindred be not the mere result of education. In mine, sympathy with any living thing, save Dash and Bibiche, had never been even hinted at by my mother. I might have been reared in a tribe of Iroquois, with more exhortation to humanity. As to John and Julia, once or twice, when our respective nurses interfered with our fisticuffs, and inflicted upon Master and Miss Danby, on whom alone they were permitted to exercise their jurisdiction, the study of that pleasing lyric of the mellifluous Watts,

Birds in their little nests agree,  
my mother was sure to mar the business by

carrying me off to Gunter's or Wetten's, and rewarding my domestic sufferings with pralines and maccaroons.

As to proceeding to the House of Commons, to behold poor Danby vibrate like a pendulum between his two long arms, "two eel skins stuffed," while giving utterance to his maiden stammer, though neither the eloquence of Windham or Grattan, Curran or Canning, ever attracted me into that den of—honest men, I might have made the sacrifice to my sense of what was due to the family name, had he deigned to express a proper desire for my countenance. But in this, as in all else, he maintained towards me the haughtiest reserve. As a matter of taste, politics delighted me not, nor politicians either. At a dinner-party, they are crammed down one's throat by one's neighbours, as fish sauces are forced upon one by the butler. But I was not much of a dining-out man; and when political dinners occurred in Hanover Square, usually hurried *incog.* to

Sablonière's, and skulked *en polisson* to the theatre.

It was consequently an unlooked-for blow, when, one morning as I took my accustomed place at the office, *i. e.* before the fire-place, with my hands under the skirts of my coat, I was beset with congratulations by the “seven other devils worse than myself,” who shared with me in Downing Street the laborious task of cursing the climate, and inquiring how went the enemy, (I don’t mean the enemy in Spain, but the enemy at the Horse Guards ; I don’t mean H. R. H. the Commander-in-chief, but the time-keeper of London and Westminster.) For a moment, I fancied I was going to be married ; and longed to satisfy myself whether Emily or Lady Harriet was the favoured fair ;—more especially, as each of them brandished a morning paper, to give force to his felicitations, as the tragedians of England smite their bosom or touch their sword, in allusion to their conscience or their valour. The newspapers evidently contained the germ of

my good fortune. The newspapers had probably hitched me into some announcement of “Fashionable Hymeneals.”

I was wrong. The newspapers announced the apotheosis of the Honourable John Danby, not the demise of his brother!—The newspapers set forth that his Majesty’s government had to congratulate itself on an accession of the most powerful nature, in the person of the Member for Rigmarole. A new Chatham was born unto them,—a “heaven-born minister,”—risen like a Phœnix from the ashes of him of whom port-wine and Austerlitz had deprived the British Empire.

Could such things be  
And overcome me like a summer cloud,  
Without my special wonder?

Could I, Cecil the coxcomb, be wide awake, and Danby, the Honourable John,—the awkward, squinting boy,—have become a man, and a man of genius?—My whole frame tingled with irritation at the supposition! —

" You are a made man, Cis, my boy ! " cried young Lord Chippenham, one of my clerkly colleagues.

" I sincerely wish you joy, Mr. Danby ; " added Halbert Herries, another of my brother slaveys. Congratulations (damn them !) were showered upon me, like bouquets on an opera dancer.

As I sauntered up St. James's Street, at the close of the day,—and now that Lady Harriet's influence was in abeyance I no longer made short cuts across the Birdcage walk,—matters went still worse. The Cocoa-tree stared at me with all its leaden eyes, as I lounged along. The Albion, albeit unused to demonstration, rushed to its new bay-window to gaze. Boodle's shrugged its round shoulders as I passed ; even the chairmen of White's and Brookes's, seemed to whisper to each other (for Connaught Bill and his cub had rendered my name familiar in their mouths as household words,) " Arrah now, isn't yeonder broth iv a boy, own brother to

the new great parli'ment man, what 's to bate  
Charlie and Billy to everlasting smitherens ? ”

To be immortalized by a leaf from the laurels of John Danby,—to be brightened by a ray from his luminous countenance,—“ Oh ! what a falling off was there ! ”—Was such the reward of all my labour ? —Was it for this I had excruciated myself in boots, agonizing as the shirt of Nessus ? Was it for this I had closeted myself for consultation with Stultz, with a degree of mystery, worthy of Guido Fawkes and Garnet ? —Was it for this I had abjured hunting, for the sake of my figure, and shooting, for love of my complexion ? —Was it for this I had anointed myself with the oil of Macassar above my fellows ? —Was it for this I had delivered to Hendrie, under the patent of my seal, the original recipe for the Danby washball ? —To be overcrowded by an elder brother,— a squinting elder brother,— a man unknown to White's, ignored by Watier's ;—whom, had he pleaded the loss of his ticket to the door-keepers of the Argyle Rooms, not a humanized

being, from Colonel Greville to the linkboys, could have identified as a man of (dis-)respectability!—

I was afraid to dine at my Club that day. All the world seemed in league to fling my brother in my teeth. I was afraid even Sablonière's might fail to respect my incognito. Even at the Bedford, or some other slang house of my unaccustomed haunts, I should be recognized and pointed out as the Castor of Pollux the politician.—In the plenitude of my weakness, I determined to dine at home.

Never shall I forget Lord Ormington's face that day!—Monk Lewis had just then brought into fashion, *Tales of Wonder* treating of dead bodies taken possession of by the evil one, and playing a posthumous part in the world. Here was a tale of wonder *mise en action*!—His lordship, usually as dull and dumb as if defunct, appeared suddenly animated,—suddenly spiritualized,—till at the last he spake with his tongue. The devil was in him that day. He was almost jocose. He actually asked me to take wine.

Strange to say, my mother waxed silent in proportion to the fluency of her lord. Her ladyship and I seemed dumb-founded, because Danby had taken to speaking, and Lord Ormington to talking. With *me* she was as pettish as if I had on one of Jack Harris's flashy waist-coats ; actually resenting the triumphs of my father's favourite, as a delinquency on the part of her own.

The most superficial observer might have discovered that some very unusual occurrence had taken place in the family ; for his lordship's carriage was announced half an hour earlier than usual. For once, he was bound to the Commons, instead of the Lords. A world of paternity sparkled in his triumphant looks !—The pigtail of my lord's own man seemed to vibrate with delight when, as he brought in his lordship's coffee, he whispered that the chariot was in waiting.

“ I do not inquire whether you have read your brother's speech,” said Lord Ormington, as he

wás about to quit the room, with far more of the nobleman in his air than I had ever yet seen him assume.—“I know that you have *not* ;—I did not even expect it of you !”—and his manner plainly implied, “being totally incompetent to apprehend its merits and intention.” “But lest you should commit yourself in the world by ignorance of its purport,”—he continued, fixing his eyes firmly upon mine,—“know that it was on the Catholic question,—that it carried away the House ;—and that I possess in the future representative of my family, a son for whom the esteem of the kingdom will shortly afford confirmation of my own.”

Such was the first item of family intelligence which Lord Ormington condescended to communicate to me, otherwise than through the professional mouths of Messrs. Hanmer and Snatch, of Southampton Buildings ! —

## CHAPTER V.

A very set

Smooth speech, his first and maidenly transgression  
 Upon debate : the papers echoed yet  
 With his *début*, which made a strong impression,  
 And rank'd with what is every day display'd —  
 The best, first speech that ever yet was made.

BYRON.

Ce sont de ces nuances qui échappent souvent à l' analyse, et qui laissent pourtant une impression ineffaçable.

EUGÈNE SUE.

EMANCIPATION was the Irish giant of my youth, as Daniel O'Connell of my age ; and aptly indeed might Catholic Hibernia exclaim to evangelic England, as the taunter in Tom Thumb—

You *made* the giant first and then you kill'd it ! —

It was a good giant enough, however, in its time, to have its head smitten off by the riders

in the quintain ; a capital cockshy for parliamentary schoolboys,—an excellent coral to assist the dentition of teething statesmen.—

Everybody familiar with the routine of public schools, is conversant with the list of magnanimities set apart by the masters, as themes for the twaddling of the inexperienced in *belles lettres* ; such as “Marathon,”—“Regulus,”—“The Revival of the Arts,”—“The Clemency of Titus,”—and so forth ; concerning each of which well-worn topics, the Dr. Dronebys of successive generations are as conversant with every epithet and every argument to be put in requisition, as if already printed in small pica among the pages of Blair’s Lessons, or Stretchs Beauties of History.

Even so must the Speakers of the House have regarded for a quarter of a century the annual orations on Catholic emancipation. I can scarcely persuade myself that the intolerance of England was spouted out of countenance by the braying of these donkeys, as the walls of Jericho were overthrown by the braying of trumpets ; but the canvas did very well as a sampler

to be flourished upon by the “promising young men.” My brother’s periods were about as much to the purpose as Rode’s variations ; and had I not forsaken politics in the narrative of my adventures, I would bring forward a little theory of my own on this point, almost worthy the solemnities of a *Quarterly Review*.

Stung to the quick by the triumph of Lord Ormington’s son in the House, I was not sorry to find that Lady Ormington’s had distinguished himself in the coteries by a *mot* aptly concentrating the pith of the Irish question.

“ So your brother has immortalized himself by a speech upon Ireland ?” said Lady Harriet Vandeleur, addressing me across the Duchess of Moneymusk’s dinner-table, evidently for the purpose of provocation.

“ *Poor Ireland ! —*” was my reply, (accompanied by a significant elevation of the shoulders—implying—“ will *no* one let her alone ?” “ The question of her legislation seems to me to resolve itself into the proposition suggested by

Camille Desmoulins, concerning France and the Convention : — ‘ *La Convention a trouvé la France sans culotte; sa gloire et son chef-d’œuvre seront de la rendre culottée!* ’ Whoever shall rid green Erin of her rags, will work greater wonders in her behalf than by allowing her to tell her own beads, or palaver in her own parliament.”

The diners-out applauded ; for they were displeased by the triumph of a man like Danby, unknown to fame through their premonitory flourish of trumpets. But they dared not protest against him. There was no plausible “ because ” to preface their “ dissentients.” His speech was allowed to be a good speech. The Universities were pleased, because it showed a spice of scholarship ; the country, because it was indited in manly English ; the town, because its wisdom was not altogether devoid of wit. As if wit were more or less than the *animus* of wisdom : — legitimate offspring of an union between good sense and good spirits !

Still, amid all these plaudits, Thersites found

something to rail at. The bitter bile of sarcasm engendered by the repletion of society, brought a sneer to its jaundiced cheek. Single-speech Hamilton was quoted ; and the speech of the Honourable Member for Rigmarelle, when printed, was decided to be a prize essay. The knowing ones pretended to discover a cotton weft through the rich pile of the velvet.

When the subject was broached in my presence, I took refuge, like other false prophets, in mysticism. My French quotation having served my cause so well, I replied to all questions concerning the abilities of my brother — “*Entre l'apparent et le réel, il y a tout un abîme!*” — much as my boy Tim would have hinted that “the proof of the puddin’ was in the ating.”

One day, shortly after the sudden sprouting of the Danby laurels, I received a note from my Fee-faw-fum, Lord Votefilch, begging me to look out certain confidential documents, the whereabouts of which in Downing-street was exclusively known to myself, and bring them to him at

the House. The Opposition had thrown a hand grenade into the ministerial camp ; and it was necessary to clear away the wreck caused by its explosion.

Half an hour afterwards, backed by my Treasury countersign, I was in waiting, to make my way like other groundlings as occasion offered, to the Treasury bench. There was a great hub-bub. That tumultuous assemblage which calls itself a deliberative body, was considerably out of order ; the light troops of the Opposition having been skirmishing like Pandours ! When lo ! as I stood writing in pencil on the back of my hat a few lines addressed to his lordship the Hon. Sec., requesting instruction, a sudden lull succeeded to the raging of the billows :—“ after the tempest, a still small voice ! ”—

In a moment, you might have heard a pin fall. There is always something awful in the self-stilling of a public assembly ;—a tribute from the passions of the many to the power of the one ;—

The power of thought,— the magic of the mind,—

that power which no man could hold, “unless it were given him from above ! ”

Even I, though thwarted by having my habits and privacy invaded by the dirty work of the nation, and who had arrived at the House in a bitter bad temper, even I could not refuse to hear the voice of the charmer when I found him charming so wisely that even the cunning old serpents of debate-shirkers, crept out of their holes in the lobby ; while the murmurs of the Opposition died away, like a night-storm at the dawn of morning.

It is an interesting sight, for people sufficiently Catholic in their spirit to cast away party feeling and interest themselves in the lights and shadows of public life, to watch the gradual development of opinion consequent on a fine piece of oratory, in an enlightened assemblage. Such a public assembly as the parliament of 1810, was an instrument that responded visibly, or rather audibly, to the touch of a skilful player. He whose hand I found upon the chords, was a player less adroit

than powerful ; the ear recognised at once the inspiration of genius. I was so placed that my eye commanded the Opposition benches ; but not a glimpse of the speaker. I saw him only as a divinity is manifested,—in the deep devotion of his worshippers, and the despair of the devils he hath cast out. The brows of the leading Opposition members were contracted,—their lips compressed !—But not a vestige of scorn, not a gesture of levity.—They bore the sledge-hammer blows dealt upon them, with the surly self-respecting desperation of an Indian at the stake ; and one may generally estimate the strength of an antagonist, by the attitude in which his attack is parried.

Could I have allowed it to enter into the possibility of things that I, Cecil Danby, was ignorant of any matter which it imported me to know, I should certainly have addressed myself to my nearest neighbour, to inquire the name of this powerful debater, this intellectual Milo, who had silenced the bellowing of John Bull and was

carrying him off upon his shoulders. But for worlds, I would not have committed a sin of ignorance on such a point, in such a place ! The voice of the speaker was new to me. Husky in the onset, perhaps from infirmity, perhaps from excitement, it gradually cleared, and—

Rose like a steam of rich distilled perfumés,

as the soul of the orator expanded, and the moral overpowered the material in his sensitive nature. My heart thrilled as I listened. Half an hour before, I was not sure that I possessed one ! —

There are as many modes of oratory as there are ways to dress eggs,—and there are even various modes, each of which, others besides my friend Connaught Bill and his whelp Tim might be pardoned for calling the best. The mode of the N. N. to whom I was yielding breathless attention, was the very type of style for a highly-born, highly-bred, highly-educated, and consequently high-minded young man; “young Har-

ry with his beaver up," ripe for an Agincourt of the mind ; — " young Harry," fighting for his country without violating the still holier bond of fellow-creatureship ; — " young Harry," feeling himself a prince, without forgetting himself to be a man ! — Good Lord ! I am speechifying too ! The parliamentary epidemic seems to exercise a posthumous contagion, — like the infection of the plague, communicated by the dust of the dead after a century's interment ! —

Joking apart, I was carried away, like the rest. Of the whole house, no cheers more enthusiastic than my own !

On the subsiding of the uproar consequent upon this eloquent speech, (which embodied a reply as forcible as elegant, to a ferocious attack upon the foreign policy of government,) I found myself eagerly surrounded — warmly congratulated.—

" I have thanks to offer to yourself, my dear Danby, as well as to your brother," said Lord Votefilch, when informing me that my documents

were no longer wanted ; “ for I am convinced that it must be *your* information which has placed our invaluable champion in a situation to come forward thus readily. The finest reply that has been heard within these walls these ten years ! — Not a living orator, sir, has a chance against your brother ! — The Napoleon of debate ! — If an usurper, he knows how to make his usurpation respected.” —

I could have killed old Votefilch for the complacent crush of the hand, enforcing these effusions of his gratitude ! —

There was a dreadful struggle in my feelings. Had I been left to myself, had there been no one but Cis Danby and the victorious gladiator under the roof of St. Stephen’s, I verily believe I should have thrown myself on his neck, as Benjamin on that of Joseph, and claimed fraternal fellowship with his nobleness. But amid the vulgar crowd surrounding us, this demonstration might not be ! The warmth of others chilled me. The exaggerated enthusiasm chaunting forth the praises

of Danby, only that its own voice might be audible, reduced mine to silence. My heart was as hard as Pharaoh's by the time I reached the pavement of Palace Yard ! —

To escape the conflicting batteries of St. James's Street, I made straight for Buckingham Gate ; though with no intention, on *this* occasion, of surprising Colonel Morley knocking at the bower-chamber-door of his lady fair. I was on foot. It was a fine June afternoon. The shade and verdure of the Park ought to have refreshed me. But, by Heavens ! through all the stillness of the Birdcage Walk, where scarce a gnat or a nursery-maid was stirring, I seemed to hear over again, like the roar of the ocean in a dream, the tumultuous plaudits of the House ! I was brother-ridden. The soul of Cain was within me ; or rather, the soul of that Cain of civilization, the terrible Franz von Moor.

The first thing that roused me from my meditations, was a cheerly voice that saluted me as I was approaching Tattersall's ; round whose

gates a detachment of tilburies, stanhopes, and led-horses were clustered.

“ Anything *my* way, Mr. Danby, sir ?” inquired Fetlock, touching his hat, and joining me on my way towards Hyde Park Corner. “ As pretty a little bit of blood in my stable, just now, Mister Danby, sir, as you ’d wish to see !—Let you have it a bargain, as the season’s getting on : —carry a lady, like an arm-chair, sir !—The very thing for a gemman as knows what he ’s about, Mister Danby, sir ; and ’t would give me pleasure now, (if ’twas only for knowing what pride her la’ship, Lady Ormington, would take to see you so prettily mounted,) to let you have the mare on terms as might be agreeable.—A young gemman, like *you*, Mr. Danby, sir, which leads the fashion among the tip-tops—”

“ Good morning, Fetlock !”—said I, seizing the opportunity of having reached the crossing by St. George’s Hospital, to send him to Coventry or to Pimlico, while I proceeded into Hyde Park : for I could not stand being flattered by a

horse-dealer at such a moment. It was like Correggio, sinking broken-hearted under the load of copper-coin,—the ignominious guerdon of his abilities.

On reaching home, I found Lady Ormington so desperately “nervous,” (*Ang.* out of humour,) that I concluded she had already heard of this new triumph of her first-born. I was mistaken. She knew nothing about the matter, and cut me short at mere mention of the House of Commons.

“ You know I don’t care a pin for politics ! ” said she. “ Why plague me about such nonsense ? particularly when you see me so nervous ! Just conceive your aunt Agatha taking it into her head that she is well enough to come to town ! ”

“ You know I don’t care a pin for my aunt Agatha. Why plague me about such nonsense ? ”—retorted her graceless son : “ but why, pray, may she not come to town when she likes ? ”

“ The season is more than half over. What can be the use of dragging Julia all the way up

from Devonshire, now that the birth-day is past?—I am convinced they only do it to torment me!”—

“ It is a long journey for so small a purpose,—considering how easily your ladyship is tormented,” said I, gravely. “ I cannot, however, see why they should remain at Sidmouth during the dog-days. The summer has now set in severer than usual; and I understood it was only during the winter months, Baillie ordered the old lady to a milder climate.”

“ It is no question of the barometer!” cried Lady Ormington. “ I see through it all!—It is Julia’s doing!—It is all this stupid speech of Danby’s!”

“ You are in the minority in calling it stupid, my dear mother,” cried I; “ and I have the pleasure of informing you, that half an hour hence, the newsmen’s horns will render it impossible for you to remain ignorant that you are again a grandmother!”

“ *Grandmother?*” — reiterated Lady Orming-

ton, aghast,—the last person in the world to enter into a joke.

“Grandmother to a *chef-d’œuvre* engendered by John’s flirtations with the tuneful Nine,” said I, laughing.

“Speaking again so soon?—What nonsense! I have often heard poor Sir Lionel say, there was nothing the House detested so much as a callow member, chirruping before it knew how to tune up its pipes. I am sure the reason these people have come up to town so unexpectedly, is to enjoy his triumph! As to Julia, from the hour she was born, she has thought of nobody but her elder brother.”

“Because nobody else seems to have been at the trouble of thinking of *her*!”

“Lord Ormington wanted to have them all here to dinner to-day. But I told him plainly, I was a great deal too nervous for a family party. Besides, I have promised to be with the Duchess early. She has got to go to the ball at Carlton House, after her loo.”

“Got to go!”—Lady Ormington’s syntax was scarcely so refined as that of her son’s.

“But why not take Julia with you to-night?” said I, with the amiable intention of provoking her.

“Are you quite out of your mind, Cis?” cried she, rising from the sofa, and placing Bibiche carefully in her basket. “Lord Ormington and his sisters would just as soon let Julia set foot in a pest-house, as go to the Duchess of Monymusk’s loo-party. I do not interfere with the scruples of their decorumships those two old maids. As they have been kind enough, (in consideration of my wretched state of health,) to undertake the task of introducing Miss Danby into the world, it would ill become me (would it, my pretty Bibiche?) to counteract their system of education. By the way, Cis, remember that Lord Ormington will take it amiss if you do not call on these people to-morrow!”—

I looked vaguely acquiescent. But I had cares, at that moment, far more critical than

maiden aunts or a red-haired sister. I was about to make my *début* at Carlton House ! Thanks to personal influence, (certainly not that of Lord Ormington, who had no more interest in the *beau monde* than I with the bench of bishops,) I had received an invitation from the Prince ; and, till the startling event of my brother's *succès*, experienced inexpressible delight at a circumstance which I knew would be wormwood to Jack Harris and Lady Harriet's *roué* colonel.

Oh ! inimitable Mrs. Davenport !—Mrs. Davenport, whom Charles Lamb defined as “ Garick in petticoats,”—Mrs. Davenport, with whom expired the ripe familiarity of that empress of romantic gossips, Juliet's nurse,—Mrs. Davenport, who, in the prime of thy mellow years, wert then playing to perfection the part invented by Morton for thy transcendent merits ; how often has thy exclamation of “ what will Mrs. Grundy say ? ” since recurred to my conscience, in the course of my profitless career !

For those few simple words contain the germ of a thousand catastrophes,—the heart of a thousand mysteries,—the secret of a thousand downfalls ! The ruin of almost every imprudent family may be traced to the influence of a Mrs. Grundy ! The presumption of forward boys, the rashness of public men, the speculations of private, are caused, nine times in ten, by the ambition of eclipsing some intimate friend or intimate foe, the Mrs. Grundy of our several destinies !—

Apart, however, from the desire of astonishing my rivals in love and coxcombry, I was overjoyed at the prospect of entering that renowned circle,—the school of my art,—the cradle of infant dandyism,—the incipient Order that was to supersede the bucks, ruffians, and bang-up gentlemen of the road, so long in possession of the *pavé*.

“ Away with such triflers ! ” cries the sage, flinging aside our pages into the depths of his gloomy library, as if the grubbers among the dry bones

of history did more to expedite the progress of the times, than those fluttering butterflies who oppose, at least, no dead weight to the general impetus. The truth is that, like a straw thrown up to determine the course of the wind, the triflers of any epoch are an invaluable evidence of the bent of the public mind. *They* are always floating on the surface,—always ostensible!—*They* are a mark for general observation. Statesmen and beaux are the only *really* public men. Posterity will see, in Brummel and Castlereagh, the leading characters of the Regency,—of the gilded, not the golden age!

The creation of DANDYISM—(pshaw not, ye critics! nor exclaim “hold, enough!”—for the thing is obsolete, “*et il n'y a rien de nouveau que ce qui est oublié!*”); the creation, I say of DANDYISM afforded the first indication to the public, that, in spite of Stultz and Truefitt, the portraits of Sir Thomas and the certificates of Sir Henry,—the Prince was growing old!—Had we written the word then, it must have been thus,

—, or, at worst, o—d ; for no one presumed to approach more definitely that fatal hint. If, when Louis the Fourteenth attained his seventieth year, his courtiers defined *soixante et dix ans* as *l'âge de tout le monde*, no one at Carlton House now presumed to be less than five-and-forty.

Nature, however, was no courtier. Nature began to hint that liqueurs were a less safe beverage than sherry,—that jollity was a plebeian effervescence,—wit a more princely thing than humour,—superciliousness than noise.—And, lo ! dandyism “rose like an exhalation,”—stole in on tiptoe ;—and the vulgar began to record the prowesses of George Brummell, as they now enlarge upon the feats of Mehemet Ali.

It is all stupid and silly enough in the retrospection ; and Brummell is, at present, only known to history as an adventurer who, having given the law to princes, eventually received it from a *Juge de paix*, and died a lunatic in a public hospital ; just as, fifteen years ago, Na-

poleon was an adventurer who, having given the law to emperors, eventually received it from Sir Hudson Lowe, and died of the worries at St. Helena !

But the re-action has commenced. Napoleon is beginning to receive ample justice at the hands of a new generation ; and our grand-nephews will behold in George Brummell a great reformer,—a man who dared to be cleanly in the dirtiest of times,—a man who compelled gentlemen to quit the coach-box and assume a place in their own carriage,—a man who induced the ingenuous youth of Britain to prove their valour otherwise than by threshing superannuated watchmen,—a man, in short, who will survive for posterity as Charlemagne of the great empire of Clubs.

It would never surprise me to find the ashes of the great ex-dandy fetched home from Caen, as those of Napoleon have been from St. Helena, to be interred at the foot of the Duke of York's column ; on the identical spot where he

initiated the Prince into the mysteries of Roman punch ; the Sully of that modern Henri whose good-nature probably wished that all his subjects might have “*un turbot au pot.*” No doubt that, like the great man of antiquity, George Brummell often threatened his ungrateful country that it “should not even possess his bones !” But flesh and blood are more susceptible in their generation, than the disembodied and enlightened ghost.

So Seneca — “Corruptibile corpus aggravat animam ; et deprimit terrena inhabitatio sensum multa cogitantem !”

I digress, that is to say, I do not digress, but I grow garrulous ; and nobody, now-a-days, is allowed to be garrulous in print, save “The Doctor,” and the Poor Law Commissioners. If Rabelais had written with the fear of the weekly and monthly reviews before his eyes, he would have grown as stiff and concise as a drill sergeant.

One word more, however, about the Brummell

school ! If effeminate, conceited, frivolous, in their pursuit of pleasure, they pursued it, at least, with less peril to his Majesty's lieges than the rufflers of more recent times. Melton, which owed its origin to their sportmanship, still attests that they were good riders and good fellows, though they smashed neither turnpike-gates nor policemen. They drank their claret, without forcing buckets of gin down the throats of the swell-mob ; and like certain insect tribes which prey upon each other, their victims were sought and found in their own order of society. It is not always that the scum floating on the surface of every great capital, is of so innoxious a nature. Theirs was the foam of champagne, not the frothing of coccus indicus.

So much in honour of the circle into which I was that night inducted at Carlton House ! I conclude I passed muster respectably in the throng ; for, after a whisper with which his Royal Highness accompanied his cordial reception of my mother, I saw Lady Ormington's eye assume

the self-same supernatural brightness that had emanated from her lord's, on the day of Danby's *début* in public life.

I flatter myself my tie *was* irreproachable ! It is not every man who can wear a white waist-coat and cravat, without looking either as insipid as a boiled chicken, or as dingy as a Spanish olive. But for those qualified by nature by clear complexions and well planted whiskers to surmount the difficulty, nothing like it to mark the inborn distinction between a gentleman and a butler ! — The steward's room, and the Lord High Steward's room, were just then assimilated in the fashion of their garments. Tights and Tituses were the order of the day ; and the costume which the present reign has restored to the English court, was the distinctive mark of a fine gentleman in the eyes of the finest gentleman in Europe. It brings tears into my eyes to reflect how that last remnant of the Chesterfield school has since been vilified. And why ?—because, of the mingled

mud and spangles composing the ground-work of a court, the succeeding generation preferred the mud.

CARLTON HOUSE (at the period of which I treat) had not yet put on its judge's condemning cap. It was the Carlton House of the Prince, not of the Regent ;—it was the Carlton House of the Whigs, not of the Tories ;—the bivouac of the Opposition, not the tabernacle of Church and State.—To me, there was nothing very striking in its aspect ; for the same tastes, the same degenerate passion for trinketry and Lilliputian *virtù*, encumbered its *consoles* with china and its chimney-pieces with fanciful *pendules*, that rendered my mother's drawing-room a Dædalian mystery. Elegance, however, was there, though overgauded with superficial refinements. Even gold may be degraded by over-gilding, or attenuated to too fine a thread.

At my age, it was impossible not to be excited by the spectacle of a *fête* so brilliant in its arrangement, so remarkable for the beauty of its

female guests ; and gay music and glaring illumination produced the usual exhilarating sensations, when the *coup d'œil* burst upon my view.

But such is the ordering of every human destiny, that, after the Egyptian custom, the death's head, the refrigerating *memento mori*, was not wanting at the banquet. Everybody was talking of my brother !—A new speaker of importance is more estimated by the adverse party than by his own. The Whigs were anxiously exclaiming, “ Who *is* this young Danby ?—whose son,—whose scholar ? Eton or Harrow ?—Oxford or Cambridge ?—Did he distinguish himself at the University ? — What private tutor ? — What honours ? — What Club ?—”

Nay, when some dowager or damsel, smitten with the whiteness of my linen or blackness of my curls, was at the trouble of inquiring the name of the tall young man leaning against the door, I had the torture of hearing it answered,—“ Don't you know ?—A younger bro-

ther of the Danby by whom all the world is engrossed !”—

Ye gods!—to be accepted in society as supplementary to John Danby;—*faire la queue de la comète* to my squinting elder brother!—I was on the verge of learning to despise conventional distinctions. The noble nature of Emily had so far regenerated my own, that the True,—the Real,—was acquiring some value in my eyes. But now, all was over with my dawning virtues. The moment I found my position subordinate, came the ambition of rising. It was indispensable to my happiness not to be pointed out, much longer, as the brother of the Honourable Member for Rigmarole.

But how to distinguish myself,—*how?*—The first of gladiators cannot conquer without a fight; and where, alas! was I to find an arena?—Neither Bacon nor Milton, Burleigh nor Bolingbroke, could have made themselves remarkable by “a livery more guarded than their fellows” as clerks in the Foreign Office. Nay, as men of

genius, they had been less serviceable in active life than such men as Hanmer and Snatch,—as was exemplified by Walpole, when he pointed out that a blunt paper-knife was a better instrument to divide the pages of a book, than a sharper blade. In my official capacity, therefore, my prospects of distinction were as remote as if lying on the Oriental side of the Red Sea.

Even as regarded the Lists of fashion, a Jack Harris might distinguish himself, because, to a low-born man, notoriety is fame. Whereas, for one of my position to make himself remarked by dress or equipage, were defamatory as the branding iron!—The highest distinction for a nobleman's younger son in such a clique as that at Carlton House, is to become altogether undistinguishable.—Woeful annihilation!—a drop in the ocean!—a grain of sand in the wilderness!—

A sudden thought relieved my depressed spirits. What if I were to marry Lady Harriet Vandeleur, set the Thames on fire by our select dinners, and, like a hand at commerce, win the

game by my skill at discarding?—A Cecil and Lady Harriet Danby unanimous in their views and projects, able to command the best society, might per force of tact become fuglemen of the brigade of fashion. Eight thousand a year, though nothing in the hands of a gambler like Morley, less than nothing in those of a Squeamy, or a Sir Moulton Drewe, would become Pactolus, when flowing through the fertilizing regions of a brain like mine.

“After all,” I reasoned within myself, on my return from the gorgeous *fête*, which had proved such a scene of humiliation,—“after all, but for that expedition to Southampton Buildings, I should have remained seriously attached to the piquant little personage, whom Emily has taught me to regard as a doll. It would be a very small sacrifice on my part to become her husband. The dozen years difference of age between us, must be estimated at six hundred a year each, and the jointure makes all equal. In affording me the means of shining in the

*beau monde*, she commands my gratitude, and will, eventually, win my affection. Decidedly, I must set about recommending myself to the little widow,—a new Jason, devoted to the conquest of a second golden fleece.”

Next night, came the Opera. I had already determined to drop my visits to Emily; though not so suddenly as to cause an alarming vacuum in her existence. I would wean her, poor girl, from my society. My visit to the box should be a short one. On many accounts, indeed, this was desirable; for the d’Acunhas were beginning to understand just so much English as rendered them confounded bores. They *would* be asking questions and misconceiving the answers; then further inquiries, with new misapprehensions.

From Emily, however, I had nothing to fear in the way of questioning. *She* was happy enough to have me with her, without indulging in frivolous curiosity; nay, she *had* no curiosity. With *her* I was secure from the vulgar

gossip that beset me in company with Lady Harriet ; tittle-tattle about births and marriages, promotions and preferments. So far from knowing who and who were together, Emily Barnet knew not even who was whom. Had she been my wife, this would have been a defect ; in a friend, a charming, intelligent, conversational friend, it was little short of a virtue. Her mind was thoroughly unsophisticated. She never read a newspaper,—never heard a scandal.—

“ I was at a magnificent ball last night, at Carlton House,” said I, by way of reply to Emily’s remarks on my air of languor.

“ What *is* Carlton House,—a theatre ? ”—inquired she, with a *naïveté* that must have passed for assumed with any one to whom the peculiarities of her situation were unknown.

“ No,—the residence of the heir apparent,—the Prince of Wales.”

“ The Prince of Wales ? —I have heard Mr. Hanmer speak of him as a paragon ! ” said she. “ He is young and handsome, is he not ? ”—

"On the contrary, a fat middle-aged man, with a remarkably wiggly wig," replied I, laughing at her gravity.

"*Quelle désillusion!*"—cried Emily. "But how came you to stay so late at the ball of this fat middle-aged prince?"—

"Because the ball, at least, was young and slim,—a charming *fête!*" cried I, with affected enthusiasm. A heavy sigh must have escaped poor Emily; for d'Acunha immediately turned his sallow saturnine visage round upon us, as if to examine what was going on.

One of the most bewitching charms of Emily Barnet, consisted in a throat long and slender as that of Anna Boleyn, which imparted a peculiar grace to her slightest movements. It was impossible to see her under greater disadvantage than I did;—always in the same place,—always in the same dress,—always in the same attitude;—no scope for the display of elegance of manners, or accomplishments of mind.

Yet strange to tell, there was something in all this that seemed to enhance the charm of our intercourse. That dull silent box, with its solemn atmosphere of reserve,—the mourning habits of its inmates,—the peculiarities of their looks and language,—imparted an almost monastic gravity to the spot, contrasted with the brilliancy of my usual haunts, and the garrulosity of my ordinary companions. I felt as if under the influence of a spell from the moment I crossed the threshold. It was like stepping into some picture by Velasquez. It was like creeping into the heart of some old Spanish romance.

But I was going to remark that I had noticed in Emily, among the few expressive gestures compatible with her invariable position, a peculiar mode of turning away her head, on pretence of looking towards the stage, between the wall and the intervening figure of Madame d'Acunha, whenever the discrepancy of our situations in life

became demonstrated by some incidental topic. There was a deprecation,—a tacit confession,—in her desire to avoid my scrutiny at such moments, which, even had not the movement itself been exquisitely graceful, would have touched my feelings. Never did she seem so lovely in my eyes as then — with nothing of her features visible but the fine oval of her soft cheek and dimpled chin,— fair as monumental alabaster, — and rendered still fairer by the contrast of the glossy curls hanging loosely from her temples. In that attitude does she recur oftenest to my memory. I seem to see her still,— averting her moistened eyes, and by slow degrees returning to her usual position; the long up-turned eyelashes first becoming visible,—then, the arched lips,— the finely chiselled nose,— all that pure and noble physiognomy.— Poor,— *poor Emily!*—

She detested England,— how should she do otherwise?—and all her pleasurable anticipations

regarded her return to Portugal. Her lamentations incessantly recalled, like Mignon's song,

Das Land wo die citronen blühn !

Her visions were of silvery fountains and azure skies ; of evergreen shrubberies and craggy mountains ; of music and song, not as pleasing imagery, or mere accessories, but essentially interwoven with the business of life. So strong is the influence of early associations !—

“ She *cannot* have formed projects in which we are mutually interested,” said I to myself, in an apologetic tone, as I slowly descended into the nether world from d’Acunha’s box on the night in question. “ She *cannot* suppose, poor girl, that there is anything in common between the son of an English peer and the daughter of a Lisbon merchant,—between a Downing-street diplomat, and the ward of a snuffy old solicitor in Southampton Buildings ! She *cannot* imagine when raving about the groves and skies of

Cintra, that I am ever likely to wander by her side among its froggy tanks and twisted-stemmed pomegranate trees!—Emily must be aware that I lounge away a pleasant hour with her, glad to refresh my eyes with her bright intelligent countenance, and as little serious in my attentions as she in her encouragement. She likes me, because I am a little younger and more amusing than old Hanmer or old d'Acunha ; but would infinitely prefer some young Oporto winegrower of her own condition of life, to a mere idler about town like Cecil Danby.”—

I said this to myself, dear readers, (ambitious plural !) with, of course, a secret conviction that Emily would be proud and happy to perform a pilgrimage barefoot to the shrine of Saint James of Compostella, for my sake. But it was as well to keep up the farce with myself of deserting her with the most honourable intentions. After having pressed her hand every time I placed her in her hackney-coach, and brought her a sprig of some favourite flower every time we

met, I made up my mind to back out of the business with a ceremonious decorum worthy the king's champion at a coronation banquet !

I had quitted the box the moment I saw old D'Acunha wipe his opera-glass, preparatory to placing it in its morocco case ; which was always the signal for their preparing to quit the house. Heretofore, I had seized that moment to nail myself to my chair ; the happiness of my evening consisting in my transit from the clouds to the earth below, with Emily leaning on my arm ; her fragrant hair occasionally wafted across my cheek by the night air of the passages,—her breath almost mingling with my own.

But with my present views, it was high time this should have an end. So I walked quietly out of the box, as if intending to return ; and instead of returning, went straight down to Lady Harriet, and, (thanks to the ample themes supplied by the *fête* of the preceding night,) found occasion to be extraordinarily amusing.

A mere woman of the world must be very

generous indeed, who does not allow herself to be diverted at the expense of her friends ; who, she is well aware, would feel little scruple at returning the compliment. The Marchioness of Devereux, wearied by her ball, was not at the Opera. Nothing easier, therefore, than to describe to Lady Harriet the strip of plush on which her fair friend had mounted her diamond bandeau the preceding night, like the new order of a new Countess of Salisbury.

A peal of laughter from her ladyship and Lord Squeamy, who sat gibbering in the corner of the box, rewarded my sally. I next attacked the Duchess of Moneymusk, who, I declared, had wanted only a philabeg at the Prince's ball, to look the image of a Highland recruiting sergeant. Again, Lady Harriet's laughter exploded : but I noticed that certain persons or personages who had been chattering away in the next box, became suddenly silent, and had little doubt that her grace and her grace's Scotch bonnet were seated there in judgment upon my perfidy !

As it was my cue to take out Lady Harriet, and make an exhibition of our intimacy in the crush-room, I remained till the end of the ballet. The people of the adjoining box were just before us in the lobby,—quizzes, decided quizzes! —an old woman, escorted by an ungainly looking chap with his hat on, and a simple-looking country miss. I was struck, however, even in the midst of my whispers to Lady Harriet, by the singularly melodious voice of the girl. She possessed exactly the same varied and refined intonation which had imparted double eloquence to the speech of the Honourable Member for Rigmarole! And no wonder;—for, on her turning round, evidently shocked by one of Lady Harriet's explosive laughs, exclamations were exchanged between us of “Cecil!”—“Julia!”—and I found that I had been following in the wake of my maiden sister and maiden aunt!

“I hope you received my card?—I did myself the honour of calling yesterday.—By the way, I *had* no card, and simply left my name,” said

I, addressing Miss Danby, sen. But with a sort of negative grunt, plainly implying she did not believe a word I was saying, the dear soul and her Bayard in the brown beaver-hat, passed on.

Julia, however, lingered a little behind, in conversation with Lady Harriet, whom she had known as a child, in Hanover Square; and I was startled by the singular sweetness of her countenance. It was a face such as Raphael or Titian would have delighted to paint; the earnest expression of the eye and angelic character of the mouth, being exactly such as the old artists used to lend to the celestial beings, whose hair bordered on auburn as the natural accompaniment of a transparent complexion.

More wonders! — The frightful sister was grown a beauty, just as the stupid brother had progressed into a genius! — The cockade was decidedly eclipsed. — What was I, after all? — A mere B. A. of the art of dandyism, — a clerk in a public office, — and desperately in love with a

young lady of problematical extraction, domiciled in the vicinity of Bloomsbury Square!—

The hare and the tortoise over again,—always the hare and the tortoise!—However, the race was not yet won. I might still successfully atone for the rash levity of genius.—

## CHAPTER VII.

Si melius quid habes, accerse ; vel imperium fer.

HORACE.

Quelque méchant qu'on soit, on ne réussit guère à faire le mal avec plaisir. Si ce n'est le remords, c'est la honte qui paralyse souvent les ressources de la perversité !

GEORGE SAND.

I WONDER why people are so fond of calling Youth “*ingenuous?*”—No greater mistake!—Youth has not *courage* to tell the truth, even to itself. As I said before, it is only after thirty that men presume to have a will or a way of their own.

Youth is an imitative animal;—Youth is a monkey!—The world is in conspiracy against it. The beasts of prey have the best of it. The

monkey is condemned to a chain and a bag of nuts. Were the marmozet to wax grave, we should cry, “Stupid little beast, look at its airs of gravity! Give it a poke with your stick, and make it climb.”—The poor monkey is accordingly forced to be frisky, whether it will or no.—It dares not be natural: it dares not trust to its instincts.—No!—youth has very little title to be called ingenuous.—

But Youth has another and still bitterer enemy than its masters,—ITSELF! Of all the mockeries it has to dread, those most fatal in the creation of mistrust are its own. The generous glow, the fervid impulse, are, in truth, vouchsafed by nature. But the curious in casuistry are requested to decide whether, of the spirits of good and evil assigned to each of us as our companions through life, the good have not the ascendancy over our material, and the evil over our moral nature!—The flush of joy, the thrill of horror, so instinctive in our early years, at the relation of wicked or virtuous ac-

tions,—the gushing tears, or uncontrollable smiles, evincing our sympathies of affection, are far more independent of our will than we care to own;—whereas, most of our evil deeds are the result of deliberation. But, hold! we are on the brink of the bottomless pit of metaphysics; and there are coxcombs enough enlisted in that transcendental department of the fudgerations of literature, without mustering among their number the Honourable Cecil Danby. My Pegasus is entered for higher stakes.

I only mean to say,—for the longest preamble must arrive at the fact at last,—that though I suspected myself of being desperately in love with Emily Barnet, I deceived myself and the truth was not in me, whenever I tried to bring myself to confession.

At my shaving-glass, (tonsorial operations being peculiarly favourable to reflection, nay, I am not sure that beards were not assigned by Providence to secure to every man five minutes' uninterrupted communing with himself in the course

of the day) — at my shaving-glass, I often interrogated my feelings; and whenever, by a rising blush or gentle sigh, they suggested that Emily had claims on my affections, I pished and pshawed them into a more reasonable frame, as though I were old Munden enacting a peevish guardian in a Spanish comedy.

I said to myself, “Emily is a handsome girl enough,” (my conscience whispering all the time that she was an angel!) “but every girl who smiles upon one, at *my* age, appears a divinity.” I said to myself, “It is true that, niched into that wretched opera-box, Emily’s manners appear tolerable,” (my conscience whispering all the time that they would have done honour to a court!) “but, launched in good society, her deportment would probably be as awkward and unmeaning as that of other misses.” I said to myself, “Certainly, her mind appears cultivated. She has read a parcel of foreign books, that I know nothing about,” (my conscience whispering all the time, that the originality of

her ideas was only exceeded by the depth of her acquirements !) “ but it would be a bore to produce in good company a wife who seems to have been educated for a governess.”

But this was not all. Bitter as were these treasons against Emily, I poured into the porches of my own ears a still more leprous distilment affecting the gifted being I was intent upon depreciating !

“ After all,” said Cecil Danby to me, (flourishing one of Packwood’s razors gracefully in his hand,—and he deserved to cut his throat for his pains,—) “ after all, *who* will guarantee me that this girl is not an adventuress?—How do I know that the whole affair has not been a trap to ensnare me?—What assures me that old Hanmer, warned of my coming, did not station his pretty ward (perhaps some illegitimate offspring of the prim old solicitor!) in his drawing-room, as a torch to singe the wings of the fashionable butterfly?—Lord Ormington’s younger son may be a bad match for one of the daughters

of the Duchess of Monymusk, or even for Lady Harriet Vandeleur ; but I flatter myself that, with *my* person and prospects, I am a catch for a Miss Emily Barnet. As if those mum-chance, olive-faced d'Acunhas would have allowed me to sit there by her side, looking unutterable things and saying unlookable things, without apprizing her guardian !—If they did *not*, they are unconscientious, disreputable people ; adventurers, also.—I am, however, the last man to be made a dupe of ; and now that I have begun to espy the plot, will be cautious of throwing myself in the way of temptation.”

Such was the “ingenuousness” of my “youth :” and I will answer for it that few of those who “explore Cam’s smooth margin,” or the banks of the Cherwell or Isis, after being flogged through Eton, Harrow, Westminster, or Winchester,—Horace, Homer, and the Greek Testament,—are worth a maravedi more than myself in point of singleness of mind.

Cecil Danby kept his word with me like a

gentleman, on the present occasion. Next Opera night, not a sign of him in the d'Acunhas' box! — I even eschewed the pit, lest the old Guimaraen plumb should adhere to me, and invite me to accompany me up stairs. This manœuvre had the effect of bringing Emily, during the ballet, to the front of the box, where she had never made her appearance since the first disastrous night of our meeting. I could plainly see her eyes wandering over the pit in search of me. Nay, as if I were not sufficiently distinguished from the mass to be perceptible to the naked eye, she had even recourse to old d'Acunha's glasses, which, Heaven knows, I had never seen her use before! —

All this was in my favour.—For I was of course installed “close at the ear of Eve,”—close beside Lady Harriet Vandeleur;—and my cause with *her* was not injured by the attention universally excited by Emily's beauty. People raved about her;—for she was both a beauty and a mystery. Had one of the Duchess of Mony-

musk's daughters been thrice as handsome, the world would have said less about her ; as a planet, whose rising and setting might be computed, whose aphelion and perihelion were matters for the almanack.

But Emily was a brilliant meteor, known only by its radiance. All the world — that is, all the fashionable world,—knew her by the name of “ Cis Danby’s girl.” I was the only man admitted into her box ; the only person ever seen to address her ; and a vague report was prevalent (spread, doubtless, by the vulgar horde who had dodged us home in the hackney-coach,) that she lived in an obscure street in the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury Square. Was it *my* fault that the world should form indiscreet surmises from such grounds ?—

The consequence was, that no one presumed to name her disrespectfully before me, any more than they would have done my sister. Though canvassed far and near as the handsomest creature in town, before *me* she was never men-

tioned. While talking that night to Lady Harriet, I saw her ladyship's eyes frequently directed towards the altitude where Emily's graceful head detached itself from the red curtain of her box, as by a halo. I could see that she was proud to have me with her,—proud to render me faithless to so lovely a creature ;—no, not proud ! pride is a loftier feeling — she was vain ;—vain that the battalion of fops surveying her box from the pit, should whisper to each other, “ Aha ! — Cis has changed hands to-night ! — Cis has forsaken the company of the gods ! — Cis has come down to the things of this world.”—

Cis *had* forsaken the company of the Gods ; but if Jove in his amorous de-deification disguised himself as a swan, the modern thunderer was proving himself a goose.

“ I am quite anxious about Lady Ormington !—” observed Lady Harriet, suddenly addressing me, when she saw that my eyes were following the direction of her own. “ She is growing ill and nervous again. I tried to get

her to the Opera to-night ; but she would not hear of it. I have not seen her so poorly these two years."

I hazarded certain filial allusions to the heat of the weather : not, however, because blind to the fact that Lady Ormington's illness was pre-ordained so long as Julia remained in town.

" I wanted her to go with me to our water-party on Monday," added Lady Harriet coolly.

" To a *water-party* ?—" said I, satisfied that this was only a lure thrown out to make me petition for an invitation, and choosing to be cruel. " You might as well propose such a recreation to a Frenchwoman, the most hydrophobic of God's creatures ; or to Lot's wife, after her transformation."

" You are extremely witty to-night !" retorted Lady Harriet, drily — *very* drily.—

" My mother is one of the many English women who so band-box away their days as to lose, like Baron Trenck, or Latude, or any other state-prisoner, all capacity for air and exer-

cise. In *her* youth, things so pretty were never made to stand!" I continued,—forgetting that the page of the register recording my mother's baptism, might almost include that of Lady Harriet.

"There will be no walking, and very little standing in our expedition," she replied. "However, perhaps she was right to declare off, for your brother and sister are of the party."

"Lady Ormington must feel proud of the miracles wrought by her son's success!" said I, bitterly. "Danby's parliamentary triumphs seem able, like faith, to remove mountains: for I remember once your telling me you had given up an engagement in Hanover Square, on finding he was to dine at home,—having no courage to confront a squinting man!"

"Mr. Danby has proved that he is worth listening to; and where *that* is the case, *looks* go for nothing. I then thought he was to make his way with us, like yourself, by superficial accomplishments. But who cares for the figure-

head of a ship which, charged with a precious freight, is cutting its way bravely through the waters?"—

"If we had but Gurney here to take you down!"—cried I, with the most supercilious impertinence. "Do you know, dearest Lady Harriet, you would make a dangerous rival for Hafiz, or Rosa Matilda of the Morning Post!"

"While Cecil Danby is to be rivalled only by the ineffable Cecil Danby!"—said she, with perfect coolness; "*Crispin, rival de lui-même!*"

I was cruelly nettled: not by her sayings, but by her doings. What in the world had induced her to form this offensive and defensive alliance with my brother?—Could John—frightful John,—be superseding Colonel Morley, absent without leave?—Her invitation to Julia was a natural consequence; for it was well known in the Ormington clique, that Danby was nowhere so vulnerable as through his affection for his sister; that those twain were as one flesh.

But why desire to conquer him? *His* prospects were too good to admit of his marrying for money; and in the way of mere flirtation, what woman ever threw away her smiles upon a cub, because he had made a tolerable speech or two in the House? — Yet now I recollect — but, no! — there is no call upon me to reveal those secrets of my times, in which I did not exercise a personal influence.—

What right had I, meanwhile, to resent being excluded from Lady Harriet's water-party, when from her last *al fresco* entertainment I had been self-banished? I saw clearly that she had not forgotten Richmond, because *I* was beginning to forget Southampton Buildings; but chose that I should crawl my way, with other creeping things, into her ark. Her ladyship was egregiously mistaken.

“ It is a pity you do not persuade Lord Ormington to join your party! — ” said I. “ It would then include, to the last fraction, the most high and puissant house of Danby.”

"Not exactly *to the last*,"—observed her ladyship, evidently preparing me a *coup de patte*.

"And what particle, pray, would be wanting?"—

"The greatest, in his own estimation," she replied, bitterly. But I managed to look so hopelessly puzzled, that she was compelled explicitly to add,—"*yourself!*"

"*I am a mere nonentity!*" cried I, laughing, as if relieved from my perplexity. "Besides, all the world has heard of our Greenwich dinner on Monday, which is to include all the birds of the heir (apparent) and all the fishes of the Thames!"

Lady Harriet saw that her *coup* had missed fire. As she did not frequent the clique of Carlton House, she concluded that some party was *in petto* of which she knew nothing; and was piqued like a pouting child, who discovers that there is a doll in the world larger than its own.

"*We* dine at Colonel Morley's villa, at Fulham," said she. "I own I have not courage for the compound of villainous smells, punch, tobacco and small beer, which infect one after a dinner at the Ship."

"*The Ship?*—" said I, opening my innocent eyes with wonder.

"Did you not say you were going to dine at the Ship?"—

"I mentioned Greenwich. Your ladyship, I perceive, centralizes that nautical town into a fashionable tavern, just as people consider the Pavilion, Brighton,—and Paris, France! If the tribe of Danby collected round you at Fulham on Monday, are charitable enough to send us their good wishes floating with the return of the tide, I trust they will find me less publicly installed."

"I am aware that you are fond of secluded retreats!—" observed Lady Harriet, *piquée au vif*, and raising her opera-glass towards the d'Acunhas' box.

But I would not be brow-beaten. If once a keeper allows himself to be glared down by the animal he is bent upon taming, there is an end of him.

“Admit,” cried I, gently caressing my curls, “that there is some pleasure in straying from the beaten track,—the vulgar, dusty, turnpike-road of fashionable life,—to luxuriate among ‘hedge-row elms and hillocks green,’—youth, beauty, innocence and delight!—One is apt to grow Paradaical at the rural season; when the worn-out things of this world seem fit only for the curiosity shop. Buds and blossoms, hay-making and love-making, go charmingly together, with the thermometer at 78, and the reason at zero.”

“I quite agree with you,”—replied Lady Harriet, too much a woman of the world to be thrown off her guard, even by this coarse attack, “when the haymakers are genuine Philly Nettletops, and the love newly mown like the grass. But the *bergères galantes* of Boucher, with their powdered wigs and hoops

of pea-green taffeta, or worse still, the glazed calico shepherds and shepherdesses of a London ballet, are to *me* as tawdry as all other counterfeits. By the way, can you tell me the name of the illustrious unknown yonder, who seems to be watching us with so much interest?" —

I did not expect that Lady Harriet would come so decidedly to the point.

"That beautiful creature in mourning?" — said I, with quickened respiration. "A Portuguese I fancy. The gentleman at least, is a certain Don Vicente d'Acunha.—Perhaps you are acquainted with him?—It is amazing the number of refugees from Spain and Portugal, now in London. The other night at Carlton House, we had the Duchess d'Hijar, the finest figure in Europe."

"And has the Duchess also taken up her abode on the fifth tier at the Opera, and the neighbourhood of Bloomsbury Square?" — demanded Lady Harriet, losing all self-command.

"You had better inquire of Danby, at your

water party!" cried I, scarcely able to control my irritation; "who is more intimate than myself in the house where I had first the honour of meeting the beautiful girl who appears to have so powerfully excited your ladyship's interest.—Drewe, my dear fellow!—why have you never sent the recipe you promised me, for cleaning meerschaums?—Though I sentenced my boy to a week's apprenticeship in the barracks of the German Legion, Hudson assures me the fellow has no more idea of handling a pipe, than I of hingeing a Laurencekirk!"

As I had anticipated, Sir Moulton Drewe, who had never heard a word of the recipe, and did not even smoke, was so voluble in giving and requiring explanations, that Emily was safe! Before he had half recovered his astonishment, I was in the centre of the pit, squabbling with one of the Stanhopes about the comparative merits of Vestris and Deshayes.

I begin to think there is a destiny in the said Opera, (King's Theatre—Queen's Theatre,

— what is it, just now?—) for embroiling the affairs of bankers, managers, and lovers!—One of the cleverest fellows connected with its harassing concerns, has often protested to me that the London public would never enjoy a good and sufficient opera, till the present crazy barrack was burnt to the ground; and I am of his opinion. Fire is a universal purification. Perhaps, by the time the new houses of Parliament have risen, like blanched sea-kail from their cinders, the Fire-King of whom James and Horace Smith made themselves the laureats, may take to his embraces the great barn in the Haymarket, which, on the night in question, I devoted to him and all other Infernal Gods!—

Yet, after all, there is something sacred and classical in the old den!—The Opera House is pretty nearly the only place of public amusement of the Prince's time, left standing. Carlton House, Buckingham House, Ranelagh, Lords, Commons, Whitfield's Chapel, Vauxhall, Fozard's Riding School, the Argyll Rooms, and the

King's Mews,—all evaporated,—all flown off *in fumo!* This is the age of demolition,—the era of rubbish. The very nature of London buildings interdicts even a pretension to the venerable. The moss of antiquity imparts no dignity to brick and mortar. “Nothing more deplorable than the decay of a plaster wall!” says a clever French writer. “Like a gauze dress, it is a thing not intended for durability, which, when it lasts, becomes a badge of shabbiness and disgrace.”

At all events, when the edifice which has drained the resources of bankers, taxed the wisdom of lord chancellors, and enriched the Gazette with nearly as many respectable names as the battle of Waterloo, shall down with its dust, like the wretched capitalists whom it has involved in ruin, may some appropriate historian arise to immortalize its archives! When those charming boxes shall have ceased to exist, whose six-feet-square are enjoyed for sixty evenings of the year, at the cost of very little more than the salary of

an Irish Bishop ; when those stalls shall be broken up, which, like that of Caligula's horse, are plated with gold,—may some Antoine Hamilton or Callot of the twentieth century, dip his light pen in aqua-fortis, to depict the lights and shadows of a spot consecrated by such holy memories of beauty and genius,—art and nature ;—*human* nature, of course,—the only nature worth writing of. Newgate and the Tower have been recently dug up and unrolled, like mummies, for the contemplation of the curious in villany. Between ourselves and Mr. Ainsworth, there is good ground still to be broken at the Opera !—

There was a time,—ere poets, like the gods of poetry, had departed,—when the Pastoral had still its votaries, and kings wandered amid happy valleys and wedded with shepherdesses. The world knows better now-a-days. The Pastoral has no longer a devotee, save in one of Haydn's symphonies ; and kings abide in castles on the Thames, or palaces on the Seine, guarded by a legion of honour and legion of cooks,—*chefs*

*d'escadrons* and *chefs de cuisine*;—the only shepherdesses in whom they *now* take delight, being of *biscuit* or Dresden china, standing prim and crisp upon their chimney-pieces.

Now the amiable weakness of modern times that approaches nearest to the hallucinations under whose influence “King Cophetua lov'd the beggar-maid,” is the passion of a lord for an opera-dancer! An opera-dancer is the Perdita of the nineteenth century, and the Crockfordites are her Florizels. Some denizen of St. James's Street even proposed to extend the constitution of the country into King, Lords, Commons, and Opera,—and why not?—

I am not certain whether the choregraphic art be not the nearest approach to a universal language,—that *desideratum* of sages and centuries! —How else can we account for the mightiness of renown which hath bruited the name of Taglioni from Indus to the Pole, enabling her to subdue the Imperial or Hyrcanian bear of St. Petersburg, and flourish in the court-circular of the

Celestial Empire?—What statesman, what philosopher, what elder among the conscript fathers of art, science, or jurisprudence, hath attained an European, American, Asiatic, and African reputation, like Fanny Elssler?—Which would England, which would Europe, most deplore,—the final exit of the Lord Chancellor or of Cerito?—By Terpsichore and all her caperings! the ceremony approaching nearest the apotheosis of the ancients, is the crowning of a popular opera-dancer!—

Vainly do envious or jealous detractors attempt to throw a slur upon these sham divinities, as *les monstres les plus charmants que l'on puisse imaginer*, or, as somebody called them, “angels lined with devil.”—Their nature must be hyper-diabolical indeed, to circumvent fascinations, powerful as if one of Titian’s Venuses were animated by a Promethean spark,—endowed with the creative genius of Shakspeare,—the fantasticality of Goethe,—the piquancy of Voltaire,—the grace of Boucher,—the *mignardise* of

Mignard,—and the irresistibility of ——, confound me if I gratify her vanity by putting the name in print!—

To me, I confess, the old Opera House constitutes a species of Elysian fields, where I behold flit by me shadows of the great departed! Often am I tempted to exclaim from my secluded stall,

Visions of glory! spare my aching sight!—

Mara, Banti, Grassini, Catalani, Pasta, Sonntag, Malibran, Grisi,—Mozart, Rossini, Cimarosa, Paesiello, Bellini, Meyerbeer, Donizetti,—the very names have music in them!—Were the old theatre demolished, the stones would sing of their whereabouts,—like the granite statue of Memnon, emitting harmonious anthems.

The stage too,—the stage over whose boards have bounded the fantastic toes of Angiolini, Hillisberg, Mélanie, Noblet, Mercandotti, Fanny Bias, Pauline Leroux, Didelot, Deshayes, Ronzi Vestris, Heberle, Brugnoli, Taglioni, Duverney, Elssler, Cerito,—binds us in boards for ever

more. The mast of the Victory has been carved into snuff-boxes,—the Red Barn, in which Maria Martin was murdered, cut up into tooth-picks ! What might not be expected, as a speculation, from the conversion of the boards of the Queen's Theatre into articles of domestic furniture ?—

Oh ! Henry S—— ! quaintest and kindliest of mankind !—survivor of that cordial race, in whom good-breeding never refrigerated the warmer impulses of the soul,—when this work of destruction shall be accomplished, to thee be dedicated the prompter's box, sad relique of departed years ;—and in place of monumental inscription, the feudal legend of the Thane of Fife,—“ *VIRTUTE ET OPERA !* ”—

I know not how I find courage for pleasantries upon the subject,—unless as More and Anne Boleyn jested upon the scaffold. For of all the adventures of my youth, that which commenced on the stair-case of the old Opera House, has left the most indelible impressions on my mind. The evil issue thereof had its

origin in the indiscretion of speech wrung from me, on the night in question, by the tauntings of Lady Harriet Vandeleur!—

The following day I was to dine with Lord Votefilch, who had a villa on the Thames to refresh himself one day in the week by contact with the mud of nature, after immersion the remaining six amid its clay. It was an ex-official dinner, or I should not have been invited. Lord Votefilch the minister, lived in St. James's Square, and gave dinners on Saturdays; Lord Votefilch the man, at Putney, and gave dinners on Sundays. I had rather have belonged to the Saturday *pow wow*; for Votefilch the minister, was a great man in the political circle; whereas Votefilch the man, was a mere mediocrity among the Watierians and their kind.

Besides, (as Chippenham and I agreed when he invited us in an unceremonious way at the office,) it is adding insult to injury for a *chef* to invite his youngsters to a family dinner, which he knows they dare not refuse. I wonder

he did not beg us to bring our fishing-rods, like other clerks out for a holiday ! Even then, we could not have allowed ourselves to feel affronted.

To dine at Putney at half past six, then the general hour, necessitated a toilet at five ; and I consequently looked in for a moment, *en passant*, to Lady Ormington's drawing-room, at an hour at which I was little in the habit of testifying my filial respect. My mother used to receive tribes of visitors on a Sunday. Fine ladies often do, as the consequence of their retreat from the mobs let loose upon the earth on that day of general debondagement. Kensington Gardens was, if I recollect, just then the resort in fashion. Kensington Gardens, (a spot which oppresses my spirits as if the atmosphere confined within its masses of trees and brick walls, were mephitic as the jungles of Sierra Leone,) has always undergone fierce alternations of popular favour and scorn. It is sure to be either so much in fashion and so crowded,

that every blade of grass is worn from its sooty turf; or so deserted, that the palace looks ashamed to be standing there by itself, *faisant pied de grue*, like a pelican in the wilderness. At the period I write of, Bow Street runners used to be stationed at the gate, to prevent his Majesty's lieges from being mummied in their attempt to pass the wicket.—No! that was the preceding year!—At present there was nobody in Kensington Gardens but the gate-keepers in their suits of green and yellow melancholy,—green coats and jaundice.—It was to the ring that the idlers devoted their gravel-grinding.

Lady Ormington and Co. consequently remained in their several habitations, sealed up like patent medicines.

I had forgotten however that, in her dread of family dinners, it was her ladyship's cue to be nervous; and that she was consequently “not at home;” and it startled me when, on entering her china warehouse, instead of the

murmur of voices usual at that hour under its fresco ceilings of blue sky, (a hateful fashion of that day, conveying the bitterest irony upon the dingy heavens without,) I heard nothing but the peevish voice of Lady Ormington talking to herself or Bibiche,—in notes that might have been mistaken for those of a sick parrot, quarrelling with itself over an almond.

Poor Bibiche!—I should have been sorry for the little beast, had not the adage of “*tel maître tel chien*,” been strictly exemplified in her case. A legitimate descendant of the original Dash staring its unmeaning eyes out in Cosway’s portrait of the Right Honourable Lady Ormington, Bibiche was whimsical, fretful, and unattached. I was never sorry when my mother worried the dog; for the dog had an immunity for worrying all my mother’s fellow-creatures.

On the present occasion, however, it was not the spaniel to whom her ladyship was murmuring her woes. It was an animal of more

consequence. It was the heir of the noble House of Danby.

Saul among the prophets!—What on earth could the rising young man be about in the sanctuary of Bibiche and her lady?—I should as soon have expected to find old Droneby himself inaugurated among the bonzes and mandarins at Carlton House!

Lady Ormington was evidently agitated. Her face, when flurried, had a peculiarly ridiculous appearance, like the marble basin of a flower-garden, when ruffled by a stormy wind,—which I take to be the wire-wove edition of a puddle in a storm.

The Hon. Member for Rigmarole, who was standing up before the fireless fire-place, as Englishmen are apt to do, (as one sees a sentinel still on guard over poor dismantled Kew Palace,) looked as cool as if he had been iced. A lucky presentiment forewarned me not to nod to him, as usual; for a moment afterwards, I was honoured by him with a Grandisonian bow,—one

of those bows for which one hears the foot slide formally on the carpet!—The honourable member saluted me as he would have done old Votefilch; and the salutation which, addressed to the minister, had denoted humility, when addressed to the clerk of the F. O. was, of course, an impertinent signal of superiority.

The colour rose to my cheek.—Not the flush of anger. No!—I was positively overawed by the *sang-froid* of the Hon. John Alexander Danby! Before I recovered my parts of speech, he had left the room!—

“A pretty business you have made of it!” whimpered my mother, as soon as he was out of hearing.

“Business?—*I* guilty of business?”—cried I, trying to recover my usual flippancy; “and on the Sabbath?—Fie!”—

“Don’t be absurd, Cis. I am quite nervous enough, without your silly jokes. I tell you, you have irretrievably offended your brother!”

“I rejoice to hear it. I was afraid he was

only slightly affronted, which would have given me the very unnecessary trouble of trying to bring him into better humour.—The word, irretrievable, decides it.—I love an extreme case.”—

“*Pray* don’t talk such nonsense! — If you knew how completely you depend upon Lord Ormington and Danby, you would not indulge in these boyish caprices. I tell you once for all, Cis, (and you well know that my word may be depended upon, in what concerns your interests,) your only chance of a settlement in life is by conciliating the good-will of your brother! —”

“A *settlement*, my dear mother? — The very word is as hard of digestion as an unripe pine! A *settlement*? — Just what Stultz had the audacity to mention to me yesterday! — A settlement? — Why, if I were on the verge of committing matrimony —”

“For *once* be serious! —” cried Lady Ormington, angrily. “Your position is a most precarious one! — Take warning! — Take heed! — If

Danby were to make representations to your father of the injury he has sustained at your hands—”

“ Why what, in Heaven’s name, have I done to him?—I cheered his speech till it cost me my month’s allowance at Gunter’s for Florence-drops, to cure my hoarseness!—I may have said, perhaps, that he dressed like a gentleman from the Inns of Court,—and so he does.—Nay, if Herries, or any other of my brother clerks, were to require a bow from me in Pall Mall, buried to the ears in such a coat as Danby’s—”

“ Cecil !” interrupted Lady Ormington, with more energy than I had ever seen her exhibit. “ Had your brother addressed to his father, instead of myself, his grievances against you—”

“ He has been complaining, then? —” cried I. “ The pretty boy *has* been here, with his finger in his eye, declaring that unless I beg his pardon for having torn his kite—”

“ Do not **FORCE** me to bring you to reason ! ” cried my mother, with so sudden an assumption

of authority, that I sat down quietly in a chair, prepared to listen patiently to her expostulations. “With all your pretensions to good manners and good sense, Danby has shown, on this occasion, far more than yourself. He came here simply to appeal to me, as your best friend,—as your only friend,—to engage you to observe towards *him* the same forbearance and reserve he maintains towards *you*. It is his wish,—his engagement, indeed, with me,—that you shall meet in public as friends; and maintain towards each other, in private, the mutual deference of elder and younger brothers.”

“And pray, in what point of this extraordinary compact have I failed?”—cried I, a sudden and terrible light breaking in upon me,—a light which I own I wanted courage to humiliate her and myself, by bringing to distinct admission.

“You have injured his reputation,—you have wounded his feelings!”—persisted my mother. “Do you suppose that everybody is as indifferent to good repute as yourself?—Do you imagine

that because *your* heart is unsusceptible of attachment—”

“ Come, come, mother! — If you are going to set up John Danby in the pattern young man line, I must really beg you to let me off!” cried I; “ I dine at Putney—”

“ With Lord Voteflch? — How unfortunate! — You will meet your brother! ”—

“ Unfortunate, indeed! — I have a great mind to break my leg, and send an excuse. Meanwhile,” said I, “ try to make me understand, in as few words as possible, *where* I injured the poor fellow’s reputation, and *how* I have wounded his feelings? ”—

“ By representing him, last night, in Lady Harriet Vandeleur’s box at the Opera, as sharing your dissipations. You accused him of being engaged, as well as yourself, in some disgraceful *liaison*? ”—

“ Nonsense, nonsense! — I merely silenced Lady Harriet’s inquiries concerning a young lady, (unknown, I admit, in the fashionable world, but

of the highest respectability,) by informing her that Danby was as well able as myself to satisfy her curiosity—”

“ Which you know very well that he was *not!* — ”

“ He *might* have been,—since she is the ward of old Hanmer of Southampton Buildings, with whom my brother keeps up quite as much intercourse as I do.”

“ Old Hanmer’s ward? — This completely alters the state of the case! ”—cried Lady Ormington. “ Why she passes in the world for being—”

“ No matter! — The world is an ass! — The world believes anything that anybody in the world chooses to assert,— yet the world never utters a word of truth! — And so, after all, Danby feels irreparably injured by being accused of an acquaintance with a charming girl, of good family, of—”

“ You are aware, Cis, of Lady Harriet’s style of repeating things! Between jest and earn-

est, she attacked your brother about 'it in the crush-room, with Lady Susan Theydon on his arm, to whom, you are aware, he is paying attention."

" *Danby?* — to Lady Susan Theydon? — the coxcomb! — one of the prettiest girls in town!" —

" You will probably find her Lady Susan Danby before the season is over; that is, if he manages to get over, with her mother, who is the most particular woman alive, the unfavourable impression made by Lady Harriet's allusions."

" I am damned sorry the thing has happened!" — cried I, in all sincerity; " for I can understand that, under such circumstances, he may have felt vexed by what was on my part a mere *étourderie*. But why couldn't John Danby come straight up to me, like a man, and ask for an explanation, without all these petticoat negotiations?" —

" Because he is under a promise to me never to enter into disputes with you of any kind!"

I shrugged my shoulders.

" Between my father who negotiates with me through his lawyers, and my brother who treats with me through your ladyship, I am beginning to fancy myself a prince in disguise ! "— said I.

" Rather, a beggar in expectancy ! "— faltered Lady Ormington. " But not a word more, Cecil ! I have said enough to induce you, if you have a grain of good feeling in your composition, to make the necessary reparations to your brother ! "

I was about to utter a bitter rejoinder ; when the butler hastily announced that Lord Chippenham, who was to drive me down to Putney, was waiting at the door.

Merciful powers !—A toilet of five minutes at Midsummer !—What had society done to me that I should insult its understanding by appearing before it under circumstances so disadvantageous ?—I dared not reflect upon the interpretation his Majesty's ministers might give to my dishevelled locks !—I thought of Copenhagen,—of the gallant Nelson,—of the incautious wafer, and trembled !—

## CHAPTER VIII.

The proprietors are bitten by the rage of what they fancy to be improvement, and are levelling ground, smoothing banks, and building rockwork, with pagodas and Chinese railing. The laburnums, willows, and flowering shrubs are beginning to be tortured into what the gardener calls genteel shapes. Even the course of the river has been thwarted, and part of its waters diverted into a broad ditch to form an island,— flat, swampy, and dotted over with exotic shrubs.

BECKFORD.

“On y trouve bons compagnons, chère transcedante, vins très vieux, femmes très jeunes, des bougies à faire pâlir le soleil, tous les élémens avec lesquels se fabrique ordinairement la joie humaine.”

ENGLAND is thought to excel in villas. A villa is an architectural fantasia, wherein every individual is allowed to display his taste or want of taste; and the Dublin cit, accordingly, places his portico on the second floor, over

the verandah: the Parisian *badaud* ornaments the sphinxes over his gates with coquettish straw hats, tied knowingly under the chin; and in Holland, rows of tin aloes in stone vases are ranged along the wall. But in the environs of London, ye gods! in the environs of London, from Brentford to Stratford le Bow, from Paddington to Putney, what vagaries in brick and mortar,—what barbarisms in Portland stone!—

In all directions, for ten miles round the capital,—villas—villas—villas! A villa is one of the first indications of prosperity on the part of a professional man. Thriving merchants—popular actors—popular dentists—popular lawyers—popular all sorts of things, are sure to have their Tusculum, their *rus in urbe*, their Eden, their 'appiness 'ouse!—A villa is the *agrément* of a laborious life, the restoration of an unwholesome one; and the days of many a cabinet minister have been lengthened in the land by the *bel respiro* of

his Gloucester Lodge or Footscray, his Ealing or Hayes.

But, above all, a villa is an essentially aristocratic appurtenance. Lords and ladies cannot dispense with a green and sunny nook, in which to go and hide their heads, when they are glad or sorry, in the sweets of a honey-moon, or the sours of widowerhood.

Among these, there are doubtless a few such as

Youthful poets fancy, when they love.

There is Chiswick, matchless Chiswick!—There is Strawberry Hill, somewhat the worse for wear, but classic ground, every inch of it;—Gunnersbury, where the flowers and fruit are formed, like those of Aladdin's magic garden, of rubies and emeralds;—Sion, Wimbledon, Roehampton, Mount Felix, Ken Wood, Osterley; where conclude, if once I venture to begin, the enumeration of our suburban residences of high degree?—

In point of truth, the excellence we claim for the villas of London resides less in their elevation, than in the intensity of verdure engendered by our ever-weeping climate. Their real attraction consists in the soft, green turf, overshaded here and there by a clump of beeches, a shapely tulip-tree or drooping cedar ; skirted at intervals by parterres of geraniums, or creepers trained in fanciful devices, throwing themselves like fountains of blossoms into the air ;— while clumps of the choicer shrubs, all-spice trees, magnolias, or the 'gum-cistus, exhale their musky perfumes, like Moorish slaves flinging their censers of incense to and fro. (If that is not a bran-new simile, O Public ! I am pretty particularly mistaken !)

I speak all this feelingly, for one of the favourite subjects of my mother's grumbleations was the want of a villa. Ormington Hall was in Lancashire, a two days', nay, for a nervous lady, a three days' journey from town. What was to become of her at Easter and Whit-

suntide?—What was she to do, during family mournings or other plaintive exigencies?—Her sole resource was Brighton,—everybody's resource, from the Prince to the haberdasher. It was enough to put her out of conceit with being out of spirits, to have to exhibit her black crape or blue devils on the Steyne!

There was a time when I used to agree with Lady Ormington. It seemed a deuced hard thing to have no intermediary spot, betwixt the Hall and Hanover Square; some genteel purgatory, between paradise and its antipodes. Every now and then, in the cowslip season, her ladyship used to be taken rural, and “babble of green fields.” She would sigh over the advertisements of the auctioneers, grandiloquizing the glories of Richmond Hill or the beauties of Shenley, till “the greenth and gloomth” of Horace Walpole were outdone. I really thought Lord Ormington would have to end with bartering his borough for the rangership of the parks; or one of his Yorkshire woods

for a gove of Canada poplars in the purlieus of Primrose Hill.

But now that my official helotism was beginning to familiarize me with the ministerial snuggeries ranged along the river from Vauxhall Bridge to that of Richmond, in white and sparkling rows, like the mineral teeth of Desirabode, I was beginning to thank his obduracy. How be-frogged I used to feel, after one of those dinners of Votefilch's!—Nothing but Undine could have swum it!—I am convinced that will-o'-the-wisps must have danced often-times, after night-fall, over his lordship's lawn; while his ponds and tanks bore forcible resemblance to tureens of green-pea soup or basins of turtle. I could have fancied I felt fins expanding, after a day in his charming fen.

The drawing-room windows commanded a view of an osier-bed on the opposite bank; not rising out of the water, however,—for that might have impaired a Canaletti-like charm, or entitled one to dream of “Sabrina fair,” uplift-

ing her “ pearly arms ” from the “ pure translucent wave ;” but between the pewter-tinted Thames, and the dingy sallops, there stagnated even at high tide a strip of alluvial soil, barely concealed by patches of coarse rushes, while, at low tide, were perceptible some twenty yards of that filthiest deposit of the cloacæ of London and its suburbs, called Thames mud ; compelling one, at times, to hold one’s nose, and inclining one, at others, to close one’s eyes.

On one side of Maybush Lodge there was a great soap manufactory, which indicted itself as a nuisance once a quarter, in order to be beforehand with its neighbours and pocket the informer’s fine ; while, on the other, reeked a brewery !—A distant view of a patent oil-mill completed the charm.

But then the river !

“ The exulting and abounding river !”—the charming, bright, cool, refreshing river ;— the river, so propitious to the natatorial essays of the preparatory schools in the neighbourhood,

no less than to the termination of the woes of certain deluded sempstresses, induced to listen to the Tempter in the Eden of Cumberland Tea-gardens and other rustic resorts in the parishes of Chelsea and Milbank ;—the river of coal-barges and lighters, funny-clubs and wherries ; where, three times a week or so, one has the satisfaction of beholding the victims of much punch dashed against the piers of the bridges, and dived for by the jolly young watermen, as though they were the pearls of Ormus or the wreck of the Royal George ; — while catches and glees, oaths and imprecations, shrieks and groans, “oars and sculls,” constitute the intermingling music of its waters ! —

Oh ! happy river !

River, that rollest by the ancient walls  
Where dwells the lady of my love ;

river, whose flounders, like Mithridates, fatten on poisons ; whose white-bait delight in gas, and whose eels luxuriate in pyroligneous acid :

— sooner locate beside the fœtid banks of a Batavian canal, sooner become a toll-keeper of Lethe's wharf, than breathe my summer breath within scent of thine unsavoury odours, within reach of thy pandemoniacal sounds! —

Lord Votefilch's villa was one of the best of those compact white dwelling-houses, “seated,” as George Robins calls it, “on a verdant lawn,” like a solitary billiard-ball lying on its green table. The house was commodious within ; without, of Doric architecture. Nothing fanciful about it, nothing rustic : but it was as damp as a catacomb, unless during the dog-days, when its frontage lay exposed to a glaring south-western sun.

Maybush Lodge was the growth of royal favouritism. It had been created in George the Second's time by the old Duke of Newcastle ; and during the long reign of his royal grandson had as regularly alternated with the Whigs and Tories, as if a part of the administration. What tales could its wainscots have

unfolded, if wainscots were included in the category of wooden orators! — What conspiracies (against the country) had been hatched in its premier-coop! — What wars and rumours of wars had gone forth from its portals! — How often had France been sent to the devil under its coved ceilings; how often the balance of power weighed in its scales, and found wanting. Poor Maybush Lodge! — green eyrie, to which the crook-beaked birds of prey retreated to feed their young ones with young ones torn from the nests of other birds,—what heaps of whitened bones my mind's eye seemed to descry around the retreat of the plunderers! —

To do mine host justice, no one could more gallantly lay aside the cares of state, or hang up more resolutely in his hall the toga of public life. There was a Lady Votefilch;—a woman of a certain age and uncertain temper, whose former beauty one took for granted, though little trace of it remained, as the only means of accounting for the infatuation which had

rendered so shrewd a man the proprietor of such a nonentity. There was a niece, too, either of hers or his, who resided with them,—a certain Lady Theresa,—the idol of my colleagues in Downing Street. It was a matter of special duty among such of them as were admitted to share the venison and household leisure of their *chef*, to fall in love with Lady Theresa.

I scarcely know why. She was not old,—not ugly,—not disagreeable;—negative qualities at best; but it was like finding a flower in the wilderness, to discover anything approaching to young, pretty, or agreeable among those bald heads and sunken faces. The first time I saw her sitting there among them, mute and undemonstrative, I wondered what the deuce Chippenham, Herries, and the rest of them had found in her, to turn their heads. But after a dinner or two at Maybush Lodge, I began to examine her more curiously,—to experience an interest in her merits,—to watch

her inexpressive blue eyes with the hope of detecting some talent, sentiment, or emotion. She was the only very human thing present. A bird which alights upon the mast during a sea voyage is an object of intense interest to the mariner, however dingy its plumage or poor its note.

To make the agreeable to Lady Votefilch and her niece, at the Sunday dinners, was part of the week's duty. The major part of the task was easy enough. Lady V. was a vain foolish woman, not too fastidious in the quality of adulation. To compliment her on her beauty, had been scandal in disguise ; but she was content to accept the far more easily levied tribute of compliments upon her toilet. She cared for nothing but dress. A reigning divinity of Fashion, she was also one of its votaries ; dressed not so much in the fashion of the day, as *à la mode de demain*. While the Right Hon. Sec. was inventing political combinations and speculating upon European alliances, she was cabal-

ling with Madame Le Brun, the Talleyrand of modern *modistes*, concerning revolutions in caps, and conspiracies against turbans that be.

To such a woman, Cecil the son of Lady Ormington—*the* Lady Ormington—could not but be an object of interest ; and when she found I had tact enough to refrain from dedicating my sighs with the general monsoon of the Foreign Office to Lady Theresa, she concluded that I recognized my insufficiencies as a younger son, and begged Lord Votefilch to honour my forbearance by a general invitation. He knew better,—for he really wished to see me familiarly at his table ; and consequently restricted his civility to giving me a formal invitation more frequently than to the rest of his quill machinery.

Chippenham and I arrived late. When we made our appearance, dinner had been announced, and people were pairing slowly off with much form and ceremony, to traverse in couples twelve yards of Brussels carpeting, over which

they would have stepped singly without form or embarrassment. Old Votefilch was conducting a fine-looking woman, known to me by name and history ; then came her ladyship, escorted by a stupid-looking man, who I saw must be somebody, or he would not have presumed to look so stupid ; and lastly came Lady Theresa, arm-in-arm with the lion of the hour, — with Danby !—It was Chippenham's privilege and place ; but my dilatoriness had deprived him of his honours ; and we were compelled to scuffle in with Herries and two great unknowns, to promiscuous places at table.

Though far from in my best of humours, I was soon interested in the conversation, which, at such tables, flows as naturally as if helped round with the soup. The two nondescripts were official men of first-rate abilities, on their preferment ; the glassy-eyed individual supporting Lady Votefilch, was Lord Falkirk, a man who affected dulness as Pope Sixtus

caducity, in order to influence, unsuspected, the Conclave or Privy Council ; and the tall handsome woman in white satin, was one of those showy intrigantes, those prima donnas of society, who, whatever minister shall reign, are always to be found in musk-scented note-paper correspondence with Downing Street.

It was none of these, however, who imparted the colloquial charm to that chatty little party. It was the man who seemed determined to extinguish me by his superiority, in private as in public life. As the trunk of the elephant is constituted to pick up a straw after crushing the body of a man, Danby seemed bent on proving to his humiliated younger brother, that his small-talk was as great as his speaking was effective. He could drive a tandem as readily as the car of Juggernaut. To do him justice, I never met a more agreeable man. There was something fascinating beyond description in the melodious refinement of his

enunciation. His tone was easy,—his language fluent,—and he was as good a listener as ready in reply,—prompt in argument, modest in pursuing an advantage. Budge and Fudge, the official aspirants, were evidently vexed to find themselves thrown into the shade by so young a man. But they were soon reconciled. There is no disgrace in being eclipsed by Jupiter.

Next to the chattiness of my brother, the thing that struck me most, was the influence of time and place upon my collaborators, Chippenham and Herries. Herries was, by birth and education, official. He was the Asmodeus of an ink-bottle. His cradle had been a despatch box,—his swaddling-clothes were sheets of government foolscap. At the desk, he was great, for the atmosphere of Downing Street was as natal air to him ; and like Antæus, on touching treasury-ground he became invincible. I had always stood in awe of Herries' superior abilities, when I saw him issue from

the Blue Chamber, with confidential documents in his hand, such as were entrusted by Lord Votefilch to no sub. but himself.

But at Maybush Lodge, his distinctions vanished. At Maybush Lodge, the peacock became a dingy jay again. I suppose it was because he did not feel himself at ease; but he was tongue-tied. He joined in the conversation only to become an obstruction. A fastidious choice of expressions embarrassed his diction. He became heavy and verbose from trying to talk too well; missed the point of every story he attempted to relate; and filled up the pauses of his conversation with an unmeaning laugh.

Chippenham, on the contrary, who was anything but a genius, and who at the office passed for a ninny, became talkative and agreeable among people of his caste. The subjects discussed were familiar to him. His pockets were full of the small change current in such society. He had twice as much to say as

Halbert Herries ; or rather, with half as much to say, quadrupled it by his easy unaffected mode of expression. I perceived that with *him* Danby was quite ready to talk and listen ; whereas, when poor Herries addressed him, he fixed his eyes vacantly on the stammering man, who seemed baffled by the redundancy of his ideas or the insufficiency of his elocution. I was amused,—perhaps a little gratified. In the office, Herries had the best of it. Whenever Chippenham, or I, or Percy, or De l'Isle, stood convicted of the blunders inevitable to even the cleverest of novices, he used to over-crow us without ceremony. I was not sorry to see him silenced by my brother.

At that period, the Whigs and Tories of public life, whether dictating in the House “*avec ce calme sans entrailles qu'on appelle la dignité parlementaire*,” or disputing after dinner with the drouthiness of men whose real business in life is that of converting full de-

canters into empty ones, were now properly divided into a party maintaining that one Englishman could lick four Frenchmen, or that England “bangs Banagher, which bates the world ;”—and a party beholding in Napoleon a man in authorized command of the powers of darkness,—Demogorgon, minus his hoofs. The after-dinner politics of London consisted of “Are we to annihilate the French, or are the French to annihilate *us*?”—It is rather late in the history of the world to assign such overweening majesty to the edge of the sword. It was one of the evidences of the brutalizing power of war, that, from long contemplation of perpetual and bloody conflict, we were retrograding to the insensibilities of the dark ages. The law of the stronger was becoming our Alpha and Omega.

Precisely on this point, was the superiority of Danby’s mind apparent. His ideas were not exclusively extracted from the returns of the War Office, or the statistics of Extraordi-

nary Gazettes. Danby marched with the times, or, rather, marched with the pioneers who clear the way for the progress of the times. It was upon the force of public opinion and the strength of popular feeling throughout Europe, that he grounded his calculations. His judgment was not moulded by the dictation of peremptory articles in Quarterly Reviews. He was a scholar, and a ripe one. His studies at Ormington Hall were not comprised, as I had chosen to imagine, within limit of the Aldine authorities. Herodotus and Thucydides were but the plinth of the column of his universal knowledge. The modern, living, breathing, circulating literature of Europe, the pulses and arteries of the contemporaneous body of mankind, constituted the pillar's strength.

French, German, Italian, nay, even the Sclavonic languages, were familiar to him ; and, liberally supplied with the best publications of the day, he possessed a key to the gates of that mighty continent, from which, as by

a miracle, we were so long shut out. In the progress of public enlightenment, he traced the progress of public events. It was from the excitement of Germany, the indignation of Russia, the resentments of Holland, that he drew his horoscope of France, and foretold the downfall of a triton of the minnows, a Gulliver among the Lilliputians, a Cæsar among the principicules of Germany, whom the liberals of France detested as *un grand homme avorté en empereur*,—a conqueror whose foot was not only upon the neck of humbled nations but upon that of public opinion,—the executioner of the Duc d'Enghien and of the liberty of the press;—a man whose greatness was composed of the wrecks of a great revolution, as the early temples of Italy were framed of shattered fragments of the noble architecture of former ages.

Newsvenders' horns were not his only organs of information. Wellington might be a great general, but Danby humbly opined that a still more powerful instrument was the combination

of the many, against the tyranny of the one ; — a balance of power, having France and its cannon in one scale, and Europe, with the consciousness of right, in the other. He fore-saw clearly, and announced moderately, that the days of the empire were numbered.

Nothing more enrages a knot of middle-aged official men, who have been buffeting all their lives with the waves, till familiar with the strength of unseen currents and the peril of sunken rocks, (the practical difficulties of public life,) than to find a young fellow, of necessity a mere theorist, pretend to see further through the mists of politics than themselves. It is useless to insinuate that, while engaged in the difficult operation of keeping their heads above water, *he* may have been stationed in the lighthouse, beholding,

— as from a tower, the end of all ; —

a warden, anxiously watching the operations of contending parties.

To the arguments modestly put forth by the young Member for Rigmarole, accordingly, Budge and Fudge replied by interchanging glances of contempt. They knew nothing, not they, of the power and views of Russia. They cared nothing about Berlin. Germany was, to *them*, a country where a deluded population applauded Schiller's Robbers, or whimpered over the Sorrows of Werther. They quoted Pitt and Fox, Windham and Percival ; they talked about invariable principles and the wisdom of our ancestors ; but they wanted to hear nothing about the Continent. The quarrel lay in a nutshell ; the question was comprised in the Peninsula. It was there the ori-flamme was displayed ; it was there that the cabinet was writing its leading articles in characters of blood.

But for old Votefilch, Danby would have been talked down ; but the Right Hon. Secretary understood the art of extracting information, even under the semblance of disparage-

ment ; and took care that the young talker, who talked *not* for victory but out of the abundance of his heart, should have “ample space and verge enough” for the manifestations of his knowledge.

I saw Lady Votefilch shrug her shoulders in despair. She had hoped better things of an elder brother of mine, (for herself,) and better things of an elder son of Lord Ormington (for Lady Theresa). Even I, as regarded my own feelings, should have been better pleased to find him less earnestly occupied with *la chose publique* at that moment. I had made up my mind to a frank explanation with him. My heart was more open towards John than it had been since our days of nankin frocks ; and I trusted to see him more reserved in my presence. I had even hoped to find him angry ; for it is a work of labour and sorrow to stir up the cold embers of indifference.

Most young people fall into the blunder of attributing to all other human natures the

strength or weakness of their own ; or, as my friend Fetlock expressed it, “ they buy and sell by their own bushel.” I, for instance, chose to judge of Danby by myself—my Self, like most other young men, warm-hearted and generous while glorying in the affectation of superciliousness and folly. But there are spirits both brighter and blacker than this sweeping denomination ; and Danby was of the minority. I shall not explain whether of the elect virtuous, or elect vicious ; but he was better or worse than the common herd. When, taking him apart after dinner, I entered warmly into my self-exculpation, instead of expanding into the generous warmth I anticipated, admitting himself to have been overhasty, and, like the hero of a German comedy, throwing himself into my arms and swearing eternal friendship, he listened calmly,—judged dispassionately,—advised me to be more prudent in the selection of my confidants, — and turned on his heel !

I was furious!—I had accosted him, charged to the muzzle with magnanimity,—my coxcombry laid aside,—my envyings and jealousies subdued,—my fraternal sympathies on the *qui vive*.—His coolness chilled me to the heart's core!—I had only despised the ugly John of former days—I hated the Honourable Member for Rigmarole, at whose bidding the stormy debaters were still.

Biting my lip till the blood started, I lounged across the drawing-room, and affected as much *empressement* with that classical antique Lady Votefilch as the tall beauty, Mrs. Wrottesley, was bestowing upon the Foreign affairs; and, on sufficiently recovering my composure to glance round the room, saw that Lord Falkirk was talking apart with my brother; while Budge, Fudge, and Halbert Herries stood pretending to converse together, with their ears pricked up to catch a word here and there of the conversation. Even Chippenham, though smiled upon by the gentle Lady Theresa, was evi-

dently wanting to get away, and hear what Danby was saying. His influence had fixed its teeth upon them all. The power of the strong mind was manifest. Danby had snatched the tiara from their hands, and crowned himself a potentate.

We had scarcely even noted the transcendent excellence of a dinner from the *casseroles* of La Fenouille, the Francatelle of his day. We had not so much as even found fault with (the common criterion of approval) the finest claret then extant in port-bibbing England. We did not perceive that the lawns of Maybush were steeped in delicious moonlight, or that the fragrance of a thousand flower-beds was stealing in through the open windows. For through dinner, dessert, coffee, a master-spell had been upon our minds; and Lady Theresa and Mrs. Wrottesley smiled as vainly as the moon was shining.

There was but one way of breaking the charm,—Lady Votefilch asked for “a little music.”

Forth came the harp!—Up started Chippenham, who sang charmingly in every style. Not a more efficient method of delivering society from the ascendancy of a superior man, than to call for that general extinguisher of light—“a little music!”

The only bad result to myself was, that Chippenham, to whom on our return to town I was inclined to enlarge upon the bore of the whole thing, as the only stupid dinner ever heard of at Maybush Lodge, was of course so pleased at having heard himself sing, that he had forgotten having heard my brother hold forth. I could have killed him for the good faith with which he declared that he had been spending a very pleasant evening.

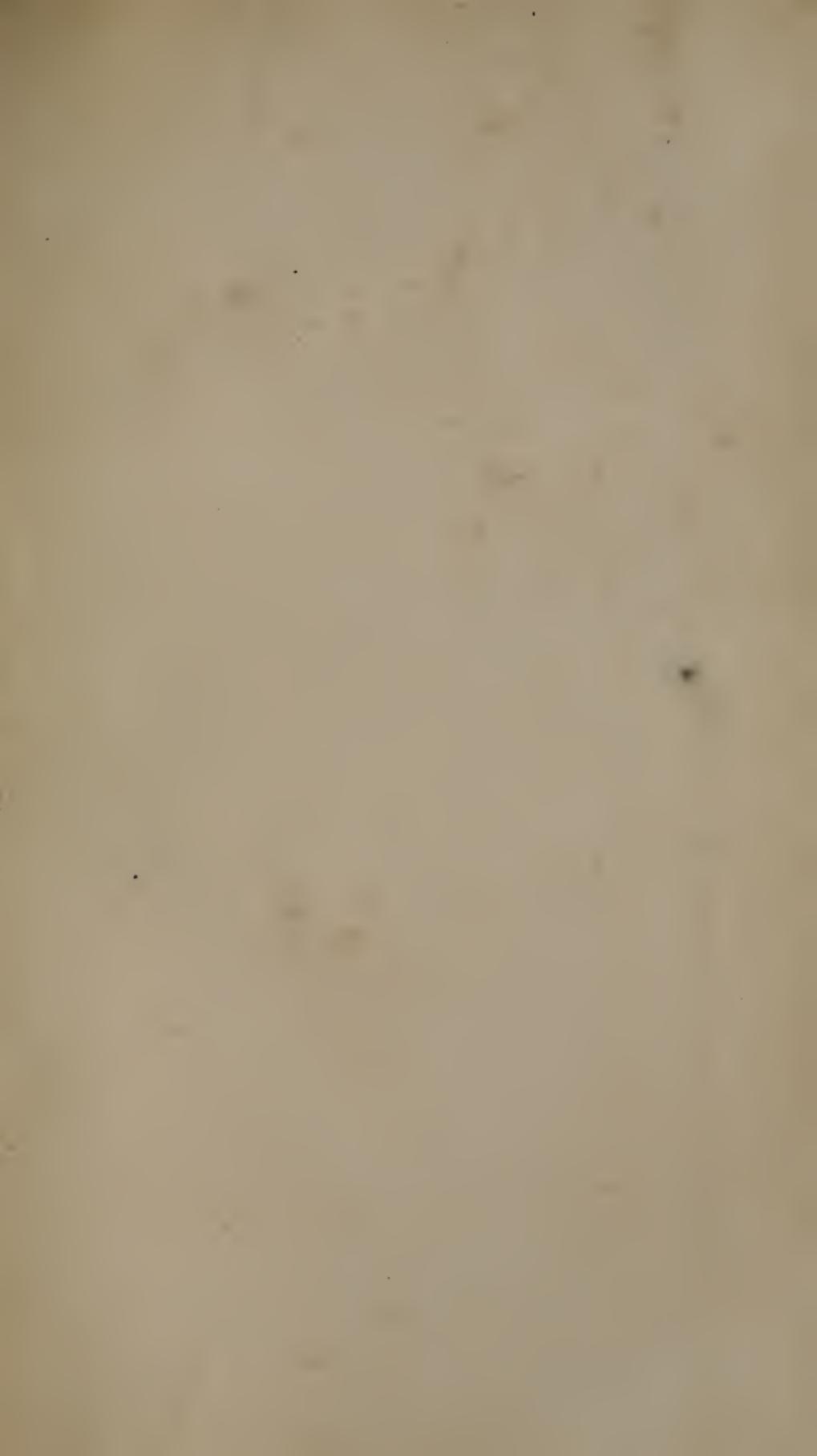
He put the finishing stroke to my ill-humour as we passed Hyde-Park Corner, (where a huge turnpike used in those days bid every man stand and deliver, ere he set foot in London,) by inquiring whether he should meet me at dinner, at Morley’s, the following day.

"*Not asked?*—how came that about?" —

*Is there a greater impertinence than to inquire the motive of one's being omitted from some agreeable party?—*

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

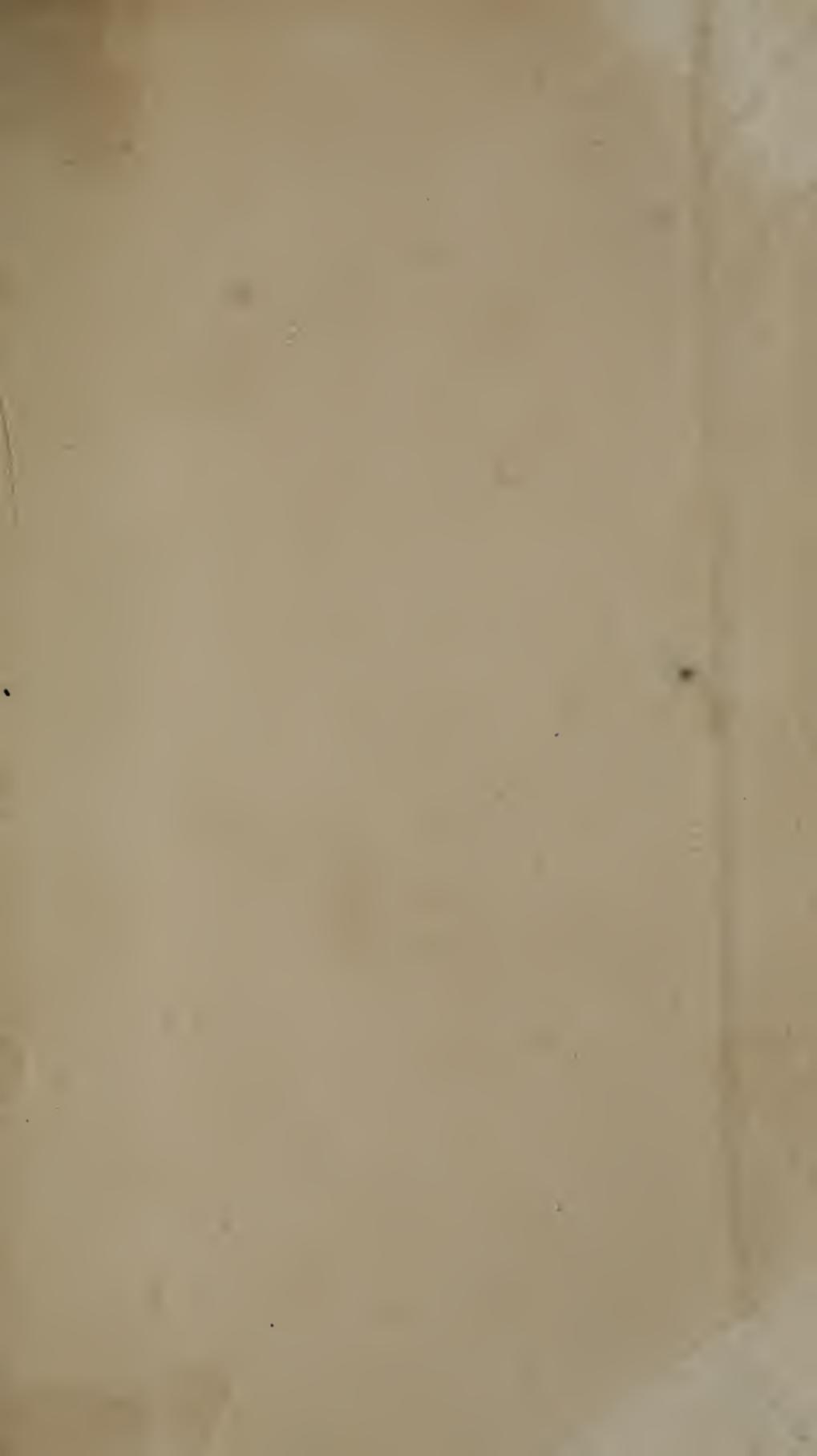
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