

DAMAGE BOOK

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OU_212221

UNIVERSAL
LIBRARY

OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

Call No. 823.7

^{P.G.}
Accession No. 16307

Author

T36H

Thackeray William. M.

Title

History of Henry Esmond. 891

This book should be returned on or before the date
last marked below.



" I draw this sword and break it and deny you."

P. 330

The History of Henry Esmond Esq.

By

William Makepeace Thackeray

Abridged and Edited by

A. C. Mackenzie

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON

1929

COPYRIGHT

PRINTED IN GREAT BRITAIN

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION.	ix
THE AUTHOR.	xv
FAMILY TREE OF THE ESMONDS.	xvi
HISTORICAL EVENTS REFERRED TO.	xvi
BOOK I, CHAPTER. I	3
" II. -	10
" III -	14
" IV. -	25
" V . -	30
" VI. -	41
" VII-	52
" VIII.	66
" IX. -	79
" X . -	83
" XI.	88
" XII-	93
" XIII-	101
" XIV	121
BOOK II, CHAPTER I	130
" II. -	134
" III -	140
" IV. -	146
" V	150
" VI. -	156
" VII-	164
" VIII.	

	PAGE
BOOK II, CHAPTER IX-	168
X -	178
" . XI -	184
" . XII -	188
" . XIII .	202
BOOK III, CHAPTER I -	217
" . II ..	221
" . III -	230
" . IV -	248
" . V -	253
" . VI -	263
" . VII -	271
" . VIII .	278
" . IX -	291
" . X -	303
" . XI -	314
" . XII -	320
NOTES	331
QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS	342
HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY	343

ILLUSTRATIONS

By Hugh Thomson

- " I draw this sword and break it and deny you " (p. 330)
Frontispiece,
 " The little girl bade him to come too " - - - - p. 7

*** Except for omissions, and such alterations of connecting particles and the like as the omissions make necessary, this text is faithful to the original. When the titles of chapters are not Thackeray's own they are given in brackets.

INTRODUCTION

THOUGH this novel is called *The Life of Henry Esmond*, it is not an account of his whole life. The book begins where Lady Esmond Castlewood, leading the child Beatrix, meets Henry Esmond, and ends with that entrance of Beatrix upon the Esmonds and Prince James, with the broken swords before them, in a chamber of the same house. To round the book off, there is narrative, introductory and final, describing Esmond's childhood and his happy old age in Virginia, but these two incidents begin and end the living story, a story of a part only of Esmond's life, and chiefly a story of his attempts to win Beatrix Esmond.

Much of the delight that Henry Esmond gives us comes from his struggle, against stained birth and adverse fortune, by gallantry and wit to win his mistress's hand. That effort, wherein he is now almost on the height of success, and anon hurled down like Lucifer, long protracted, fiercely endured, excites keen sympathy. Drawn at first to Esmond by pity, we are drawn to him still more when we share his secret, that in his knowledge of his legitimate birth he had a most potent weapon, and might, by parting with ever so little of the delicacy of honour, have ended the game in triumph, and brought the lovely Beatrix back to Castlewood his Marchioness and wife. Thackeray despised those pedestals and heightenings we call Rank and Station, which may elevate a puny creature in the world's eyes high above souls of a nobler stature. His hero rejects the aid of chance, stands on his own feet, and trusts to his own stout heart for help.

Beatrix, the prize for which he played so grimly, is nobly portrayed. Her high-spirited nature has some sparks of that Beatrice of Shakespeare whom she resembled in her wit and

beauty. To those who would condemn woman to be for ever the thrall and minister to man she stands up like a queen. "Adam's sons are my brethren," is a speech as fit for the mouth of Beatrix Esmond as for Beatrice, daughter of Antonio of Messina. Her presence lights up pages like a flame. There is the taste of life in her beauty, her cruelty, her selfishness, ambition, freaks of tenderness. She is a woman compounded of as many elements as earth itself. Perhaps the most striking episode of all is the dreadful moment when Esmond, aghast with the tidings of Hamilton's murder, comes upon Beatrix admiring the precious metals commanded for her wedding. Many sermons upon the vanity of worldly things will wither in our memories while that scene is as bright and fresh as the colours of to-day. Esmond has called her Herodias, and bidden her come into a chamber apart, and she comes in her triumph, but with the first shade of disaster upon her.

"She sprang away from the friend who would have protected her. 'Hath he left me?' says she. 'We had words this morning—he was very gloomy, and I angered him; but he dared not, he dared not!' As she spoke a burning blush flushed over her whole face and bosom. Esmond saw it reflected in the glass by which she stood, with clenched hands pressing her swelling heart.

"'He has left you,' says Esmond, wondering that rage rather than sorrow was in her looks.

"'And he is alive,' cries Beatrix, 'and you bring me this commission! He has left me, and you haven't dared to avenge me! You, that pretend to be the champion of our house, have let me suffer this insult! Where is Castlewood? I will go to my brother.'

"'The Duke is not alive, Beatrix,' said Esmond.

"She looked at her cousin wildly, and fell back to the wall as if shot in the breast. 'And you come here, and—and—you killed him?' "

This dreadful surmise opens Beatrix's heart to us. Fierce desires and inordinate ambitions congregate there, behind the flower-like skin and eyes like jewels. She is as living as Beatrice of Messina in her caprices and her relentless passions, and only the worse creature because she rages for herself, and not as the proud lady of Italy, for her cousin's defamation. Beatrix Esmond's beauty, petulance, and wanton spirits are charmingly set forth in a hundred passages of this marvellous book. They are as pleasant to remember as a day in April with primroses in the grass and the first green leaves on the birch trees, or the voice of a sweet singer, or a noble picture, or anything else that cheers the heart and leaves another jewel in the memory's casket. What a thing was this woman! we must say, full of these memories : and how pitiful was her ending ! The triumph of Henry Esmond goes step by step with the tragedy of Beatrix.

The old morality plays gave their characters names according to their nature : Greed fought against Pity, Thief against Trueman , and many famous books of later days are morality plays less plainly expressed. If John Bunyan had taken the History of Henry Esmond in hand we might have heard the story of Mistress Worldly and Captain Valiant-for-Truth, natural son of my Lord Heartless, in place of Beatrix and Colonel Esmond; and though we might be something more teased with sermons than even in Thackeray's pages—leave has been taken to shorten or omit the sermons in this edition—the main trend of the story would go the same way. For the tale is a moral tale, and treats of worldly success and moral failure, and how people come to fall as Beatrix fell—until in the end she became a Baroness and owned great wealth, which is told in Thackeray's later novel, *The Virginians*.

The instances of Beatrix's graces and powers are accompanied with fatal tokens of her faults. Selfish to the core, **she** uses these graces only to advance herself, and, as insatiable as **she** is selfish, attains her end only to despise what **she** has

got. She is tied to her desires as to an ever-turning wheel, and knows no resting-place for the heart. This is plain from the beginning. The pretty babe who sulked when her brother was petted, the child who fled to her father when her mother was vexed, and to her mother when her father stormed, whose malicious tongue almost threw Lord Castlewood sword in hand on his guest, whose wanton eyes measured every man near, who captivated Ashburnham and rejected him, who mourned only for herself when Hamilton died, is marked from her earliest years with pride and ambition. Her faults are implanted in her nature, and grow with her as the ivy grows with the oak it kills, until in the end, without honour or love, she prepares to exchange her reputation for the tarnished honours of a prince's mistress. There is no change of nature, except that, as the glow and charm of youth depart, her character grows uglier to our eyes.

In this duel between Beatrix and Esmond, Rachel Esmond stands almost a spectator. But her calm and quiet influence never wanes, though it may be overshadowed, as the stars that are bright before dawn disappear when the sun blazes in heaven, and take up their reign again more glorious than before when he has descended into the sea. Between her and Beatrix there is almost every opposition of character, the one bold, self-seeking and imperious, the other so pious and resigned that she turns her love of Esmond into efforts to help him in his wooing of her daughter. Beatrix uses all her gifts to aid herself, and rides through life trampling others out of her way ; her mother is like a gentle nun, for ever turning aside to succour the weary and reach a hand to the fallen. Gentle, but not weak, nor in any way insipid: she is witty, lovely, and of unfailing dignity, and in her self-denial stronger than her imperial daughter's waywardness. When her spirit breaks forth in the opposition of wills, it is Beatrix who goes to the ground; for there are in Rachel Esmond greater fires and greater depths than the flamboyant beauty could command.

Of the man who stood between those two, looking this way and that, worshipping at both shrines, Thackeray draws a grim picture. Henry Esmond had a hard life of it in his friendless youth and weary campaigns and despised wooings: a man of patient merit, unused to complain. He grew into the master Thackeray describes in Virginia, showing the most perfect courtesy to all, and so well-loved by his slaves that the weakest of them would have died for him. This is one justification of Thackeray's story: since there is nothing better in this world than noble minds, it is well worth knowing how such minds have achieved nobility. We do not look for doctrines in novels, but there is a doctrine shadowed forth in the account of the lives of Rachel, Lady Castlewood, and Henry Esmond, the doctrine that we are made pure through suffering and enlarge our souls through pain. Unreflecting creatures like the two Viscounts Castlewood remain much what they were, losing the graces of youth, progressing from calves into oxen, until stung by some sorrow or remorse that brings on them emotions unknown to the unthinking brutes.

Not that the book exalts suffering as mediaeval manuals do. Few books show more rapture with the pleasures of life as they are tasted by a high and generous mind. The country pleasures of Castlewood, the fine devotion of friendship, adventurous thrills of conspiracy, feasting and singing in camps and cities, the beauty of stately men and women, have their share in the delights of Esmond. Even the grim god of war, whom Thackeray abhors, has justice done to his show and glitter.

Though inclined to moralise too tediously, Thackeray is one of the best students of humanity. He looked into the heart and recounted faithfully what he saw there. This accurate knowledge of human nature is not a virtue common among English romance writers. The French have more of it. Thackeray's life among them in early manhood may have given him that witty clearness and delicacy of feeling in which he equals the greatest of the French novelists.

A truthful man is often disconcerting. So with books, Thackeray says that Charlotte Bronte declared this one "admirable and odious." "Grand and melancholy," he calls it himself, and "written in a fit of cut-throat melancholy." But these are singular judgments, since *Esmond* is enjoyed by those who love neither grandeur nor melancholy. A good book, like a good garden, should cater for all tastes, and here is God's plenty. There is no romantic glorification, to be sure. He turns the seamy side of the coat to us, as well as the lace and silver buttons. Much of war is a foul business of stabbing peasants and burning cottages, much of love mere madness. But the coat, on the whole, is a good coat, and man, in spite of his savagery and unreason, a noble creature: that is no melancholy conclusion.

THE AUTHOR

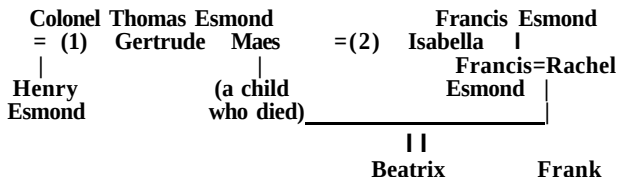
WILLIAM MAKEPEACE THACKERAY was born near Calcutta, 18th July, 1811. His father was a collector of revenues for the East India Company. Coming from India in childhood, Thackeray was sent to Charterhouse School, the " Grey Friars " of *The Newcomes*. In 1829 he went up to Trinity College, Cambridge, but only remained there for a year.

In 1832 he came of age and inherited his fortune, which all passed through his hands in a year or two—part of it lost at cards, part in an Indian bank, part in two unsuccessful newspapers. He thought of becoming an artist, but never learnt to draw accurately. Soon he took to writing books and illustrating them himself. In 1837-38 *The Yellowplush Correspondence* appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*. In 1840 he brought out the *Paris Sketch Book*. When *Punch* was founded in 1841, he became a frequent contributor. His first great novel was *Vanity Fair*, 1846-48; *Pendennis* was published in 1848-50 ; *Esmond* in 1852; *The Newcomes* appeared in 1834-55; *The Virginians*, a sequel to *Esmond*, in 1857-59. He also wrote two brilliant sets of lectures, one on *English Humourists* (1851), and the other on *The Four Georges* (1856), delivering them with great success both in America and England.

In 1836 he had married Isabella Shawe, daughter of an Irish colonel; by her he had three daughters, the eldest of whom became herself a novelist of distinction. In 1859 he was invited to edit a new magazine, the *Cornhill*, which was a success from the first and has had a distinguished history. He was still writing novels when his career was abruptly terminated. He died suddenly on 24th December, 1863, in a house which he had lately built for himself at Kensington.

FAMILY TREE OF THE ESMONDS

Lord Castlewood



At the beginning of the story (1691) Henry Esmond was 12, and Rachel 20 ; in 1714, on the death of Queen Anne, he was 35, and she 43.

HISTORICAL EVENTS REFERRED TO IN THE NOVEL

- 1688 (Nov.). Landing of William of Orange.
- (Dec). Flight of James II.
- 1689. William III declared King.
- 1690 (July). Battle of the Boyne.
- 1702. Vigo Bay Expedition. Death of William III.
- 1704. Blenheim.
- 1706. Ramillies.
- 1708. Oudenarde. Capture of Lille.
- 1709. Malplaquet.
- 1713. Peace of Utrecht.
- 1714 (Aug.). Death of Queen Anne.
- (Sept.). Arrival of the Elector of Hanover, afterwards George I.

THE HISTORY OF
HENRY ESMOND
WRITTEN BY HIMSELF

BOOK I

THE EARLY YOUTH OF HENRY ESMOND
UP TO THE TIME OF HIS LEAVING
TRINITY COLLEGE, IN CAMBRIDGE

CHAPTER I

*[HARRY ESMOND BECOMES ACQUAINTED WITH
FRANCIS ESMOND, FOURTH VISCOUNT, AND
HIS FAMILY AT CASTLE WOOD]*

WHEN Francis, fourth Viscount Castlewood, came to his title, and presently after to take possession of his house of Castlewood, county Hants, in the year 1691, almost the only tenant of the place besides the domestics was a lad of twelve years of age, of whom no one seemed to take any note until my Lady Viscountess lighted upon him, going over the house with the housekeeper on the day of her arrival. The boy was in the room known as the Book-room, or Yellow Gallery, where the portraits of the family used to hang.

The new and fair lady of Castlewood found the sad, lonely little occupant of this gallery busy over his great book, which he laid down when he was aware that a stranger was at hand; and, knowing who that person must be, the lad stood up and bowed before her, performing a shy obeisance to the mistress of his house.

She stretched out her hand—indeed, when was it that that hand would not stretch out to do an act of kindness, or to protect grief and ill-fortune? "And this is our kinsman," she said; "and what is your name, kinsman?"

"My name is Henry Esmond," said the lad, looking up

at her in a sort of delight and wonder, for she had come upon him as a *Dea certè*, and appeared the most charming object he had ever looked on. Her golden hair was shining in the gold of the sun, her complexion was of dazzling bloom, her lips smiling, and her eyes beaming with a kindness which made Henry Esmond's heart to beat with surprise.

" His name is Henry Esmond, sure enough, my lady, says Mrs. Worksop, the housekeeper (an old tyrant whom Henry Esmond plagued more than he hated), and the old gentlewoman looked significantly towards the late lord's picture, as it is now in the family, noble and severe-looking, with his hand on his sword, and his order on his cloak, which he had from the Emperor during the war on the Danube against the Turk.

Seeing the great and undeniable likeness between this portrait and the lad, the new Viscountess, who had still hold of the boy's hand as she looked at the picture, blushed and dropped the hand quickly, and walked down the gallery, followed by Mrs. Worksop.

When the lady came back, Harry Esmond stood exactly in the same spot, and with his hand as it had fallen when he dropped it on his black coat.

Her heart melted, I suppose—indeed, she hath since owned as much—at the notion that she should do anything unkind to any mortal, great or small; for, when she returned, she had sent away the housekeeper upon an errand by the door at the farther end of the gallery, and, coming back to the lad, with a look of infinite pity and tenderness in her eyes, she took his hand again, placing her other fair hand on his head, and saying some words to him, which were so kind, and said in a voice so sweet, that

the boy, who had never looked upon so much beauty before, felt as if the touch of a superior being or angel smote him down to the ground, and kissed the fair protecting hand as he knelt on one knee. To the very last hour of his life, Esmond remembered the lady as she then spoke and looked—the rings on her fair hands, the very scent of her robe, the beam of her eyes lighting up with surprise and kindness, her lips blooming in a smile, the sun making a golden halo round her hair.

As the boy was yet in this attitude of humility, enters behind him a portly gentleman, with a little girl of four years old in his hand. The gentleman burst into a great laugh at the lady and her adorer, with his little queer figure, his sallow face, and long black hair. The lady blushed, and seemed to deprecate his ridicule by a look of appeal to her husband—for it was my Lord Viscount who now arrived, and whom the lad knew, having once before seen him in the late lord's lifetime.

" So this is the little priest! " says my lord, looking down at the lad ; " welcome, kinsman ! "

" He is saying his prayers to mamma," says the little girl, who came up to her papa's knee ; and my lord burst out into another great laugh at this, and kinsman Henry looked very silly.

" *Le pauvre enfant, il n'a que nous,*" says the lady, looking to her lord ; and the boy, who understood her, though doubtless she thought otherwise, thanked her with all his heart for her kind speech.

" And he shan't want for friends here," says my lord, in a kind voice ; " shall he, little Trix ? "

The little girl, whose name was Beatrix, and whom her papa called by this diminutive, looked at Henry Esmond

solemnly, with a pair of large eyes, and then a smile shone over her face, which was as beautiful as that of a cherub, and she came up and put out a little hand to him.

When my lord and lady were going away, the little girl, still holding her kinsman by the hand, bade him to come too. "Thou wilt always forsake an old friend for a new one, Trix," says her father to her good-naturedly, and went into the gallery, giving an arm to his lady. They passed thence through the music-gallery, long since dismantled, and Queen Elizabeth's Rooms, in the clock-tower, and out into the terrace, where was a fine prospect of sunset and the great darkling woods with a cloud of rooks returning, and the plain and river, with Castlewood village beyond, and purple hills beautiful to look at; and the little heir of Castlewood, a child of two years old, was already here on the terrace in his nurse's arms, from whom he ran across the grass instantly he perceived his mother, and came to her.

"If thou canst not be happy here," says my lord, looking round at the scene, "thou art hard to please, Rachel."

"I am happy where you are," she said, "but we were happiest of all at Walcote Forest." Then my lord began to describe what was before them to his wife, and what indeed little Harry knew better than he—namely, the history of the house: how by yonder gate the page ran away with the heiress of Castlewood, by which the estate came into the present family; how the Roundheads attacked the clock-tower, which my lord's father was slain in defending. "I was but two years old then," says he, "but take forty-six from ninety, and how old shall I be, kinsman Harry?"

"Thirty," says his wife, with a laugh.

HENRY ESMOND



The little girl bade him to come too.

" A great deal too old for you, Rachel," answers my lord, looking fondly down at her. Indeed she seemed to be a girl, and was at that time scarce twenty years old.

" You know, Frank, I will do anything to please you," says she, " and I promise you I will grow older every day."

" You mustn't call papa Frank; you must call papa my lord now," says Miss Beatrix, with a toss of her little head ; at which the mother smiled, and the good-natured father laughed, and the little trotting boy laughed— not knowing why, but because he was happy, no doubt, as every one seemed to be there.

As the sun was setting, the little heir was sent in the arms of his nurse to bed, whither he went howling ; but little Trix was promised to sit to supper that night—" And you will come too, kinsman, won't you ? " she said.

Harry Esmond blushed. " I — I have supper with Mrs. Worksop," says he.

" D—n it," says my lord, " thou shalt sup with us, Harry, to-night! Shan't refuse a lady, shall he, Trix ? " And they all wondered at Harry's performance as a trencher-man, in which character the poor boy acquitted himself very remarkably ; for the truth is he had had no dinner, nobody thinking of him in the bustle which the house was in during the preparations antecedent to the new lord's arrival.

" No dinner ! poor, dear child ! " says my lady, heaping up his plate with meat; and my lord, filling a bumper for him, bade him call a health, on which Master Harry, crying " The King," tossed off the wine. My lord was ready to drink that, and most other toasts ; indeed only too ready.

As for young Esmond, when he got to his little chamber, it was with a heart full of surprise and gratitude towards the new friends whom this happy day had brought him. He was up and watching long before the house was astir, longing to see that fair lady and her children—that kind protector and patron ; and only fearful lest their welcome of the past night should in any way be withdrawn or altered. But presently little Beatrix came out into the garden, and her mother followed, who greeted Harry as kindly as before. He told her at greater length the histories of the house (which he had been taught in the old lord's time), and to which she listened with great interest; and then he told her, with respect to the night before, that he understood French, and thanked her for her protection.

"Do you ? " says she, with a blush ; " then, sir, you shall teach me and Beatrix." And she asked him many more questions regarding himself, which had best be told more fully and explicitly than in those brief replies which the lad made to his mistress's questions.

CHAPTER II

[THE STORY GOES BACK TO TELL OF THE ESMOND FAMILY AND ESPECIALLY OF THOMAS, THIRD VISCOUNT, AND HIS WIFE ISABEL]

GEORGE LORD CASTLEWOOD (the second Viscount), of King Charles the First's time, had no male issue save his one son, Eustace Esmond, who was killed, with half of the Castlewood men beside him, at Worcester fight. The lands about Castlewood were sold and apportioned to the Commonwealth men ; Castlewood being concerned in almost all of the plots against the Protector, after the death of the King, and up to King Charles the Second's restoration. My lord followed that King's court about in its exile, having ruined himself in its service. He had but one daughter, who was of no great comfort to her father ; for misfortune had not taught those exiles sobriety of life, and it is said that the Duke of York and his brother the King both quarrelled about Isabel Esmond. She was maid of honour to the Queen Henrietta Maria. She early joined the Roman Church ; her father, a weak man, following her not long after at Breda.

On the death of Eustace Esmond at Worcester, Thomas Esmond, nephew to my Lord Castlewood, and then a strippling, became heir to the title. Thomas had served with the Emperor, and with the Dutch, when King Charles was compelled to lend troops to the States; and against them, when his Majesty made an alliance with the French

King. In these campaigns Thomas Esmond was more remarked for duelling, brawling, vice, and play, than for any conspicuous gallantry in the field, and came back to England, like many another English gentleman who has travelled, with a character by no means improved by his foreign experience.

[Thomas rather late in life, became the third Viscount and married his still older cousin, Isabel, the second Viscount's daughter, a somewhat eccentric character, for the sake of her wealth.]

Holding the purse-strings in her own control, to which, indeed, she liked to bring most persons who came near her, Lady Castlewood could command her husband's obedience, and so broke up her establishment at London, and brought her maids, lap-dogs, and gentlewomen, her priest, and his lordship her husband, to Castlewood Hall, that she had never seen since she had quitted it as a child with her father during the troubles of King Charles the First's reign. The walls were still open in the old house as they had been left by the shot of the Commonwealth men. A part of the mansion was restored and furbished up with the plate, hangings, and furniture brought from the house in London. My lady meant to have a triumphal entry into Castlewood village, and expected the people to cheer as she drove over the green in her great coach, my lord beside her, her gentlewomen, lap-dogs, and cockatoos on the opposite seat, six horses to her carriage, and servants armed and mounted following it and preceding it. But 'twas in the height of the No-Popery cry ; the folks in the village and the neighbouring town were scared by the sight of her ladyship's painted face and eyelids, as she bobbed her head out of the coach

window, meaning, no doubt, to be very gracious; and one old woman said, " Lady Isabel! lord-a-mercy, it's Lady Jezebel! " a name by which the enemies of the right honourable Viscountess were afterwards in the habit of designating her. The country was then in a great No-Popery fervour. Her ladyship's known conversion, and her husband's, the priest in her train, and the service performed at the chapel of Castlewood (though the chapel had been built for that worship before any other was heard of in the country, and though the service was performed in the most quiet manner), got her no favour at first in the county or village. By far the greater part of the estate of Castlewood had been confiscated, and been parcelled out to Commonwealth men. One or two of these old Cromwellian soldiers were still alive in the village, and looked grimly at first upon my Lady Viscountess, when she came to dwell there.

She appeared at the Hexton Assembly, bringing her lord after her, scaring the country folks with the splendour of her diamonds, which she always wore in public. They said she wore them in private, too, and slept with them round her neck ; though the writer can pledge his word that this was a calumny. " If she were to take them off," my Lady Sark said, " Tom Esmond, her husband, would run away with them and pawn them." 'Twas another calumny. My Lady Sark was also an exile from Court, and there had been war between the two ladies before.

The village people began to be reconciled presently to their lady, who was generous and kind, though fantastic and haughty, in her ways, and whose praises Doctor Tusher, the Vicar, sounded loudly amongst his flock. As

for my lord, he gave no great trouble, being considered scarce more than an appendage to my lady, who, as daughter of the old lords of Castlewood, and possessor of vast wealth, as the country folks said (though indeed nine-tenths of it existed but in rumour), was looked upon as the real queen of the Castle, and mistress of all it contained.

CHAPTER III

[HOW HARRY ESMOND GAME TO CASTLEWOOD AS PAGE TO COUNTESS ISABEL]

COMING up to London again some short time after this retreat, the *[third]* Lord Castlewood dispatched a retainer of his to a little cottage in the village of Ealing, near to London, where for some time had dwelt an old French refugee, by name Mr. Pastoureau, one of those whom the persecution of the Huguenots by the French King had brought over to this country. With this old man lived a little lad, who went by the name of Henry Thomas. He remembered to have lived in another place a short time before, near to London too, amongst looms and spinning-wheels, and a great deal of psalm-singing and church-going, and a whole colony of Frenchmen.

There he had a dear, dear friend, who died, and whom he called Aunt. She used to visit him in his dreams sometimes ; and her face, though it was homely, was a thousand times dearer to him than that of Mrs. Pastoureau, Bon Papa Pastoureau's new wife, who came to live with him after aunt went away. And there, at Spittlefields, as it used to be called, lived Uncle George, who was a weaver too, but used to tell Harry that he was a little gentleman, and that his father was a captain and his mother an angel.

When he said so, Bon Papa used to look up from the

loom, where he was embroidering beautiful silk flowers, and say, " Angel! she belongs to the Babylonish scarlet woman." Bon Papa was always talking of the scarlet woman. He had a little room where he always used to preach and sing hymns out of his great old nose. Little Harry did not like the preaching ; he liked better the fine stories which aunt used to tell him. Bon Papa's wife never told him pretty stories ; she quarrelled with Uncle George, and he went away.

After this, Harry's Bon Papa and his wife and two children of her own that she brought with her, came to live at Ealing. The new wife gave her children the best of everything, and Harry many a whipping, he knew not why.

Harry was very glad when a gentleman dressed in black, on horseback, with a mounted servant behind him, came to fetch him away from Ealing, and sprang quite delighted upon the horse upon which the lacquey helped him.

He was a Frenchman; his name was Blaise. The child could talk to him in his own language perfectly well; he knew it better than English indeed, having lived hitherto chiefly among French people, and being called the little Frenchman by other boys on Ealing Green. He soon learned to speak English perfectly, and to forget some of his French: children forget easily.

The lacquey before whom he rode was very lively and voluble, and informed the boy that the gentleman riding before him was my lord's chaplain, Father Holt—that he was now to be called Master Harry Esmond—that my Lord Viscount Castlewood was his *parrain*—that he was to live at the great house of Castlewood, in the province

of——shire, where he would see Madame the Viscountess, who was a grand lady. And so, seated on a cloth before Blaise's saddle, Harry Esmond was brought to London, and to a fine square called Co vent Garden, near to which his patron lodged.

Mr. Holt, the priest, took the child by the hand, and brought him to this nobleman, a grand, languid nobleman in a great cap and flowered morning-gown, sucking oranges. He patted Harry on the head, and gave him an orange.

" C'est bien 9a," he said to the priest after eyeing the child, and the gentleman in black shrugged his shoulders.

" Let Blaise take him out for a holiday," and out for a holiday the boy and the valet went. Harry went jumping along ; he was glad enough to go.

He will remember to his life's end the delights of those days. He was taken to see a play by Monsieur Blaise in a house a thousand times greater and finer than the booth at Ealing Fair; and on the next happy day they took water on the river, and Harry saw London Bridge, with the houses and booksellers' shops thereon, looking like a street, and the Tower of London, with the armour, and the great lions and bears in the moat—all under company of Monsieur Blaise.

Presently, of an early morning, all the party set forth for the country—namely, my Lord Viscount and the other gentleman ; Monsieur Blaise, and Harry on a pillion behind him ; and two or three men with pistols, leading the baggage-horses. And all along the road the Frenchman told little Harry stories of brigands, which made the child's hair stand on end, and terrified him; so that at the great gloomy inn on the road where they lay, he besought

to be allowed to sleep in a room with one of the servants, and was compassionated by Mr. Holt, the gentleman who-travelled with my lord, and who gave the child a little bed in his chamber.

His artless talk and answers very likely inclined this gentleman in the boy's favour, for next day Mr. Holt said Harry should ride behind him, and not with the French lacquey ; and all along the journey put a thousand questions to the child—as to his foster-brother and relations at Ealing; what his old grandfather had taught him; what languages he knew; whether he could read and write, and sing ; and so forth.

At length, on the third day, at evening, they came to a village standing on a green with elms round it, very pretty to look at; and the people there all took off their hats, and made curtsies to my Lord Viscount, who bowed to them all languidly ; and there was one portly person that wore a cassock and" a broad-leafed hat, who bowed lower than any one, and with this one both my lord and Mr. Holt had a few words. " This, Harry, is Castlewood church," says Mr. Holt, " and this is the pillar thereof, learned Doctor Tusher. Take off your hat, sirrah, and salute Doctor Tusher! "

" Come up to supper, Doctor," says my lord, at which the Doctor made another low bow, and the party moved on towards a grand house that was before them, with many grey towers and vanes on them, and windows flaming in the sunshine ; and a great army of rooks, wheeling over their heads, made for the woods behind the house, as Harry saw, and Mr. Holt told him that they lived at Castlewood too.

They came to the house, and passed under an arch into

a courtyard, with a fountain in the centre, where many men came and held my lord's stirrup as he descended, and paid great respect to Mr. Holt likewise. And the child thought that the servants looked at him curiously, and smiled to one another ; and he recalled what Blaise had said to him when they were in London, and Harry had spoken about his god-papa, when the Frenchman said, "*Parbleu !* one sees well that my lord is your godfather "—words whereof the poor lad did not know the meaning then, though he apprehended the truth in a very short time afterwards, and thought of it with no small feeling of shame.

Taking Harry by the hand as soon as they were both descended from their horses, Mr. Holt led him across the court, and under a low door to rooms on a level with the ground; one of which Father Holt said was to be the boy's chamber, the other on the other side of the passage being the Father's own; and as soon as the little man's face was washed, and the Father's own dress arranged, Harry's guide took him once more to the door by which my lord had entered the hall, and up a stair, and through an ante-room to my lady's drawing-room—an apartment than which Harry thought he had never seen anything more grand, no, not in the Tower of London which he had just visited. Indeed, the chamber was richly ornamented in the manner of Queen Elizabeth's time, with great stained windows at either end, and hangings of tapestry, which the sun shining through the coloured glass painted of a thousand hues ; and here in state, by the fire, sate a lady, to whom the priest took up Harry, who was indeed amazed by her appearance.

My Lady Viscountess's face was daubed with white and

red up to the eyes, to which the paint gave an unearthly glare ; she had a tower of lace on her head, under which was a bush of black curls—borrowed curls—so that no wonder little Harry Esmond was scared when he was first presented to her—the kind priest acting as master of the ceremonies at that solemn introduction—and he stared at her with eyes almost as great as her own, as he had stared at the player-woman who acted the wicked tragedy-queen, when the players came down to Ealing Fair. She sate in a great chair by the fire corner. In her lap was a spaniel-dog that barked furiously; on a little table by her was her ladyship's snuff-box and her sugar-plum box. She wore a dress of black velvet and a petticoat of flame-coloured brocade. She had as many rings on her fingers as the old woman of Banbury Cross ; and pretty small feet, which she was fond of showing, with great gold clocks to her stockings, and white pantofles with red heels ; and an odour of musk was shook out of her garments whenever she moved or quitted the room, leaning on her tortoiseshell stick, little Fury barking at her heels.

" I present to your ladyship your kinsman and little page of honour, Master Henry Esmond," Mr. Holt said, bowing lowly, with a sort of comical humility. " Make a pretty bow to my lady, Monsieur ; and then another little bow, not so low, to Madame Tusher, the fair priestess of Castlewood."

" Where I have lived and hoped to die, sir," says Madame Tusher, giving a hard glance at the brat and then at my lady.

Upon her the boy's whole attention was for a time directed. He could not keep his great eyes off from her. Since the Empress of Ealing, he had seen nothing so awful.

" Does my appearance please you, little page ? " asked the lady.

" He would be very hard to please if it didn't," cried Madame Tusher.

" Have done, you silly Maria," said Lady Castlewood.

" Where I'm attached, I'm attached, Madame ; and I'd die rather than not say so."

" Come and kiss my hand, child ; " and Harry Esmond took and dutifully kissed the lean old hand, upon the gnarled knuckles of which there glittered a hundred rings.

" To kiss that hand would make many a pretty fellow happy! " cried Mrs. Tusher ; on which my lady crying out, " Go, you foolish Tusher! " and tapping her with her great fan, Tusher ran forward to seize her hand and kiss it. Fury arose and barked furiously at Tusher ; and Father Holt looked on at this queer scene with arch, grave glances.

The awe exhibited by the little boy perhaps pleased the lady to whom this artless flattery was bestowed ; for having gone down on his knee (as Father Holt had directed him, and the mode then was) and performed his "obeisance, she said, " Page Esmond, my groom of the chamber will inform you what your duties are, when you wait upon my lord and me ; and good Father Holt will instruct you as becomes a gentleman of our name. You will pay him obedience in everything; and I pray you may grow to be as learned and as good as your tutor."

The lady seemed to have the greatest reverence for Mr. Holt, and to be more afraid of him than of anything else in the world. If she was ever so angry, a word or look from Father Holt made her calm; indeed he had a vast power of subjecting those who came near him, and,

among the rest, his new pupil gave himself up with an entire confidence and attachment to the good Father, and became his willing slave almost from the first moment he saw him.

He put his small hand into the Father's as he walked away from his first presentation to his mistress, and asked many questions in his artless, childish way. " Who is that other woman ? " he asked. " She is fat and round; she is more pretty than my Lady Castlewood."

" She is Madame Tusher, the parson's wife of Castlewood. She has a son of your age, but bigger than you."

" Why does she like so to kiss my lady's hand ? It is not good to kiss."

" Tastes are different, little man. Madame Tusher is attached to my lady, having been her waiting-woman before she was married, in the old lord's time. She married Doctor Tusher, the chaplain. The English household divines often marry the waiting-women."

" You will not marry the French woman, will you ? I saw her laughing with Blaise in the buttery."

" I belong to a church that is older and better than the English church," Mr. Holt said (making a sign, whereof Esmond did not then understand the meaning, across his breast and forehead); "in our church the clergy do not marry. You will understand these things better soon."

" Was not Saint Peter the head of your church ?—Dr. Rabbits of Ealing told us so."

The Father said, " Yes, he was."

" But Saint Peter was married, for we heard only last Sunday that his wife's mother lay sick of a fever." On which the Father again laughed, and said he would understand this too better soon, and talked of other things, and

took away Harry Esmond, and showed him the great old house which he had come to inhabit.

It stood on a rising green hill, with woods behind it, in which were rooks' nests, where the birds at morning and returning home at evening made a great cawing. At the foot of the hill was a river, with a steep ancient bridge crossing it; and beyond that a large pleasant green flat, where the village of Castlewood stood, and stands, with the church in the midst, the parsonage hard by it, the inn with the blacksmith's forge beside it, and the sign of the " Three Castles " on the elm. The London road stretched away towards the rising sun; and to the west were swelling hills and peaks.

Young Harry Esmond learned the domestic part of his duty, which was easy enough, from the groom of her ladyship's chamber—serving the Countess, as the custom commonly was in his boyhood, as page, waiting at her chair, bringing her scented water and the silver basin after dinner, sitting on her carriage-step on state occasions, or on public days introducing her company to her. This was chiefly of the Catholic gentry, of whom there were a pretty many in the country and neighbouring city, and who rode not seldom to Castlewood to partake of the hospitalities there. In the second year of their residence, the company seemed especially to increase. My lord and my lady were seldom without visitors, in whose society it was curious to contrast the difference of behaviour between Father Holt, the director of the family, and Doctor Tusher, the rector of the parish—Mr. Holt moving amongst the very highest as quite their equal, and as commanding them all; while poor Doctor Tusher, whose position was indeed a difficult

HENRY ESMOND

one, having been chaplain once to the Rax-
to the Protestant servants there, seemed more III
usher than an equal, and always rose to go away after
the first course.

Father Holt began speedily to be so much occupied with these visitors as rather to neglect the education of the little lad who so gladly put himself under the kind priest's orders. At first they read much and regularly, both in Latin and French ; the Father not neglecting in anything to impress his faith upon his pupil, but not forcing him violently, and treating him with a delicacy and kindness which surprised and attached the child, always more easily won by these methods than by any severe exercise of authority. And his delight in their walks was to tell Harry of the glories of his order, of its martyrs and heroes, of its brethren converting the heathen by myriads, traversing the desert, facing the stake, ruling the courts and councils or braving the tortures of kings ; so that Harry Esmond thought that to belong to the Jesuits was the greatest prize of life and bravest end of ambition, and began to long for the day, not only when he should enter into the one church and receive his first communion, but when he might join that wonderful brotherhood, which was present throughout all the world, and which numbered the wisest, the bravest, the highest born, the most eloquent of men among its members. Father Holt bade him keep his views secret, and to hide them as a great treasure which would escape him if it was revealed ; and, proud of this confidence and secret vested in him, the lad became fondly attached to the master who initiated him into a mystery so wonderful and awful. And when little Tom Tusher, his neighbour, came

RY ESMOND

for his holiday, and said how he, too, was to - up for an English priest, and would get what he called an exhibition from his school, and then a college scholarship and fellowship, and then a good living, it basked young Harry Esmond's powers of reticence not to say to his young companion, " Church ! priesthood ! fat living ! My dear Tommy, do you call yours a church and a priesthood ? What is a fat living compared to converting a hundred thousand heathens by a single sermon ? What is a scholarship at Trinity by the side of a crown of martyrdom, with angels awaiting you as your head is taken off ? Could your master at school sail over the Thames on his gown ? Have you statues in your church :hat can bleed, speak, walk, and cry ? My good Tommy, in dear Father Holt's church these things take place every lay." And Harry Esmond, because of his promise to Father Holt, hiding away these treasures of faith from T. Tusher, delivered himself of them nevertheless simply to Father Holt, who stroked his head, smiled at him with his inscrutable look, and told him that he did well to meditate on these great things, and not to talk of them except under direction.

CHAPTER IV

[HARRY'S LIFE AT CASTLE WOOD. FATHER HOLT]

HAD time enough been given, and his childish inclinations been properly nurtured, Harry Esmond had been a Jesuit priest ere he was a dozen years older, and might have finished his days a martyr in China or a victim on Tower Hill: for, in the few months they spent together at Castlewood, Mr. Holt obtained an entire mastery over the boy's intellect and affections, and had brought him to think, as indeed Father Holt thought with all his heart too, that no life was so noble, no death so desirable, as that which many brethren of his famous order were ready to undergo.

After being at home for a few months in tranquillity (if theirs might be called tranquillity, which was, in truth, a constant bickering), my lord and lady left the country for London, taking their director with them ; and his little pupil scarce ever shed more bitter tears in his life than he did for nights after the first parting with his dear friend, as he lay in the lonely chamber next to that which the Father used to occupy. He and a few domestics were left as the only tenants of the great house; and, though Harry sedulously did all the tasks which the Father set him, he had many hours unoccupied, and read in the library, and bewildered his little brains with the great books he found there.

After a while, the little lad grew accustomed to the loneliness of the place, and in after-days remembered this part of his life as a period not unhappy. When the family was at London the whole of the establishment travelled thither with the exception of the porter—who was, moreover brewer, gardener, and woodman—and his wife and children. These had their lodging in the gate-house hard by, with a door into the court; and a window looking out on the green was the chaplain's room; and next to this a small chamber where Father Holt had his books, and Harry Esmond his sleeping closet. Little Harry Esmond acted as his familiar, and faithful little servitor—beating his clothes, folding his vestments, fetching his water from the well long before daylight, ready to run anywhere for the service of his beloved priest. When the Father was away he locked his private chamber; but the room where the books were was left to little Harry, who, but for the society of this gentleman, was little less solitary when Lord Castlewood was at home.

Great public events were happening all this while, of which the simple young page took little count. But one day, riding into the neighbouring town on the step of my lady's coach, his lordship and she and Father Holt being inside, a great mob of people came hooting and jeering round the coach, bawling out, " The Bishops for ever! " " Down with the Pope ! " " No Popery ! no Popery ! Jezebel, Jezebel! " so that my lord began to laugh ; my lady's eyes to roll with anger, for she was as bold as a lioness, and feared nobody ; whilst Mr. Holt, as Esmond saw from his place on the step, sank back with rather an alarmed face, crying out to her ladyship, " For God's sake, madam, do not speak or look out of window; sit

still." But she did not obey this prudent injunction of the Father ; she thrust her head out of the coach window, and screamed out to the coachman, " Flog your way through them, the brutes, James, and use your whip! "

The mob answered with a roaring jeer of laughter, and fresh cries of " Jezebel! Jezebel! " Mylord only laughed the more: he was a languid gentleman ; nothing seemed to excite him commonly, though I have seen him cheer and halloo the hounds very briskly, and his face (which was generally very yellow and calm) grow quite red and cheerful during a burst over the Downs after a hare, and laugh, and swear, and huzzah at a cockfight, of which sport he was very fond. And now, when the mob began to hoot his lady, he laughed with something of a mischievous look, as though he expected sport, and thought that she and they were a match.

James the coachman was more afraid of his mistiess than the mob, probably, for he whipped on his horses as he was bidden, and the post-boy that rode with the first pair (my lady always went with her coach-and-six) gave a cut of his thong over the shoulders of one fellow who put his hand out towards the leading horse's rein.

It was a market-day, and the country people were all assembled with their baskets of poultry, eggs, and such things. The postilion had no sooner lashed the man who would have taken hold of his horse, but a great cabbage came whirling like a bombshell into the carriage, at which my lord laughed more, for it knocked my lady's fan out of her hand, and plumped into Father Holt's stomach. Then came a shower of carrots and potatoes.

" For Heaven's sake be still! " says Mr. Holt; " we

are not ten paces from the ' Bell ' archway, where they can shut the gates on us, and keep out this *canaille*."

The little page was outside the coach on the step, and a fellow in the crowd aimed a potato at him, and hit him in the eye, at which the poor little wretch set up a shout; the man laughed, a great big saddler's apprentice of the town. " Ah ! you d-----little yelling Popish bastard," he said, and stooped to pick up another. The crowd had gathered quite between the horses and the inn door by this time, and the coach was brought to a dead stand-still. My lord jumped as briskly as a boy out of the door on his side of the coach, squeezing little Harry behind it; had hold of the potato-thrower's collar in an instant; and the next moment the brute's heels were in the air, and he fell on the stones with a thump.

" You hulking coward ! " says he, " you pack of screaming blackguards ! how dare you attack children, and insult women ? Fling another shot at that carriage, you sneaking pigskin cobbler, and by the Lord I'll send my rapier through you ! "

Some of the mob cried, " Huzzah, my lord ! " for they knew him, and the saddler's man was a known bruiser, near twice as big as my Lord Viscount.

" Make way there," says he (he spoke in a high shrill voice, but with a great air of authority). " Make way, and let her ladyship's carriage pass." The men that were between the coach and the gate of the " Bell " actually did make way, and the horses went in, my lord walking after them with his hat on his head.

As he was going in at the gate, through which the coach had just rolled, another cry begins of " No Popery—no Papists ! " My lord turns round and faces them once more.

" God save the King! " says he at the highest pitch of his voice. " Who dares abuse the King's religion? You, you d——d psalm-singing cobbler, as sure as I'm a magistrate of this county I'll commit you! " The fellow shrank back, and my lord retreated with all the honours of the day. But when the little flurry caused by the scene was over, and the flush passed off his face, he relapsed into his usual languor, trifled with his little dog, and yawned when my lady spoke to him.

Very soon afterwards, my lord and lady went to London with Mr. Holt, leaving, however, the page behind them. The little man had the great house of Castlewood to himself; or between him and the housekeeper, Mrs. Worksop, an old lady who was a kinswoman of the family in some distant way, and a Protestant, but a staunch Tory and King's-man, as all the Esmonds were. He used go to school to Doctor Tusher when he was at home, though the Doctor was much occupied too.

A kingdom was changing hands whilst my lord and lady were away. King James was flying, the Dutchmen were coming; awful stories about them and the Prince of Orange used old Mrs. Worksop to tell to the idle little page.

He liked the solitude of the great house very well. He had all the play-books to read, and no Father Holt to whip him, and a hundred childish pursuits and pastimes, without doors and within, which made this time very pleasant.

CHAPTER V

MY SUPERIORS ARE ENGAGED IN PLOTS FOR THE RESTORATION OF KING JAMES THE SECOND

NOT having been able to sleep, for thinking of some lines for eels which he had placed the night before, the lad was lying in his little bed, waiting for the hour when the gate would be open, and he and his comrade, John Lockwood, the porter's son, might go to the pond and see what fortune had brought them. At daybreak John was to awaken him, but his own eagerness for the sport had served him as a *reveille* long since—so long, that it seemed to him as if the day never would come.

It might have been four o'clock when he heard the door of the opposite chamber, the Chaplain's room, open, and the voice of a man coughing in the passage. Harry jumped up, thinking for certain it was a robber, or hoping perhaps for a ghost, and, flinging open his own door, saw before him the Chaplain's door open, and a light inside, and a figure standing in the doorway, in the midst of a great smoke which issued from the room.

"Who's there?" cried out the boy, who was of a good spirit.

"*Silentium!*" whispered the other; "'tis I, my boy!" and, holding his hand out, Harry had no difficulty in recognising his master and friend, Father Holt. A curtain was over the window of the Chaplain's room that looked

to the court, and Harry saw that the smoke came from a great flame of papers which were burning in a brazier when he entered the Chaplain's room. After giving a hasty greeting and blessing to the lad, who was charmed to see his tutor, the Father continued the burning of his papers, drawing them from a cupboard over the mantelpiece wall, which Harry had never seen before.

Father Holt laughed seeing the lad's attention fixed at once on this hole. "That is right, Harry," he said, "faithful little famuli see all and say nothing. You are faithful, I know."

"I know I would go to the stake for you," said Harry.

"I don't want your head," said the Father, patting it kindly; "all you have to do is to hold your tongue. Let us burn these papers, and say nothing to anybody. Should you like to read them?"

Harry Esmond blushed, and held down his head. He *had* looked, as the fact was, and without thinking, at the paper before him; and though he had seen it, could not understand a word of it, the letters being quite clear enough, but quite without meaning. They burned the papers, beating down the ashes in a brazier, so that scarce any traces of them remained.

Harry had been accustomed to see Father Holt in more dresses than one—it not being safe, or worth the danger, for Popish ecclesiastics to wear their proper dress—and he was, in consequence, in no wise astonished that the priest should now appear before him in a riding-dress, with large buff leather boots, and a feather to his hat, plain, but such as gentlemen wore.

"You know the secret of the cupboard," said he, laughing, "and must be prepared for other mysteries;" and

he opened—but not a secret cupboard this time—only a wardrobe, which he usually kept locked, and from which he now took out two or three dresses and perruques of different colours, a couple of swords of a pretty make (Father Holt was an expert practitioner with the small-sword, and every day, whilst he was at home, he and his pupil practised this exercise, in which the lad became a very great proficient), a military coat and cloak, and a farmer's smock, and placed them in the hole over the mantelpiece from which the papers had been taken.

"If they miss the cupboard," he said, "they will not find these ; if they find them, they'll tell no tales, except that Father Holt wore more suits of clothes than one. All Jesuits do. You know what deceivers we are, Harry."

Harry was alarmed at the notion that his friend was about to leave him ; but "No," the priest said, "I may very likely come back with my lord in a few days. We are to be tolerated ; we are not to be persecuted. But they may take a fancy to pay a visit at Castlewood ere our return ; and, as gentlemen of my cloth are suspected, they might choose to examine my papers, which concern nobody—at least not them." And to this day, whether the papers in cipher related to politics, or to the affairs of that mysterious society whereof Father Holt was a member, his pupil, Harry Esmond, remains in entire ignorance.

The rest of his goods, his small wardrobe, etc., Holt left untouched on his shelves and in his cupboard, taking down—with a laugh, however—and flinging into the brazier, where he only half burned them, some theological treatises which he had been writing against the English divines. "And now," said he, "Henry, my son,

you may testify, with a safe conscience, that you saw me burning Latin sermons the last time I was here before I went away to London; and it will be daybreak directly, and I must be away before Lockwood is stirring."

" Will not Lockwood let you out, sir ? " Esmond asked. Holt laughed ; he was never more gay or good-humoured than when in the midst of action or danger.

" Lockwood knows nothing of my being here, mind you," he said ; " nor would you, you little wretch ! had you slept better. You must forget that I have been here ; and now farewell. Close the door, and go to your own room, and don't come out till—stay, why should you not know one secret more ? I know you will never betray me."

In the Chaplain's room were two windows—the one looking into the court facing westwards to the fountain ; the other, a small casement strongly barred, and looking on to the green in front of the Hall. This window was too high to reach from the ground ; but, mounting on a buffet which stood beneath it, Father Holt showed me how, by pressing on the base of the window, the whole framework of lead, glass, and iron stanchions descended into a cavity worked below, from which it could be drawn and restored to its usual place from without; a broken pane being purposely open to admit the hand which was to work upon the spring of the machine.

" When I am gone," Father Holt said, " you may push away the buffet, so that no one may fancy that an exit has been made that way ; lock the door ; place the key—where shall we put the key ?—under ' Chrysostom ' on the bookshelf ; and if any ask for it, say I keep it there, and told you where to find it, if you had need to go to my

room. The descent is easy down the wall into the ditch; and so, once more farewell, until I see thee again, my dear son." And with this the intrepid Father mounted the buffet with great agility and briskness, stepped across the window, lifting up the bars and framework again from the other side, and only leaving room for Harry Esmond to stand on tiptoe and kiss his hand before the casement closed, the bars fixing as firm as ever, seemingly, in the stone arch overhead. When Father Holt next arrived at Castlewood, it was by the public gate on horseback ; and he never so much as alluded to the existence of the private issue to Harry, except when he had need of a private messenger from within, for which end, no doubt, he had instructed his young pupil in this means of quitting the Hall.

The Prince of Orange was then at Salisbury, as young Esmond learned from seeing Doctor Tusher in his best cassock (though the roads were muddy, and he never was known to wear his silk, only his stuff one, a-horseback), with a great orange cockade in his broad-leafed hat, and Nahum, his clerk, ornamented with a like decoration. The Doctor was walking up and down in front of his parsonage, when little Esmond saw him, and heard him say he was going to pay his duty to his Highness the Prince, as he mounted his pad and rode away with Nahum behind.

It was while Doctor Tusher was away at Salisbury that there came a troop of dragoons with orange scarfs, and quartered in Castlewood ; and some of them came up to the Hall, where they took possession, robbing nothing, however, beyond the hen-house and the beer-cellar, and only insisting upon going through the house and looking

for papers. The first room they asked to look at was Father Holt's room, of which Harry Esmond brought the key; and they opened the drawers and the cupboards, and tossed over the papers and clothes, but found nothing except his books and clothes, and the vestments in a box by themselves, with which the dragoons made merry, to Harry Esmond's horror. And to the questions which the gentleman put to Harry, he replied that Father Holt was a very kind man to him, and a very learned man, and Harry supposed would tell him none of his secrets if he had any. He was about eleven years old at this time, and looked as innocent as boys of his age.

The family were away more than six months, and when they returned they were in the deepest state of dejection, for King James had been banished, the Prince of Orange was on the throne, and the direst persecutions of those of the Catholic faith were apprehended by my lady, who said she did not believe that there was a word of truth in the promises of toleration that Dutch monster made, or in a single word the perjured wretch said. My lord and lady were in a manner prisoners in their own house; so her ladyship gave the little page to know, who was by this time growing of an age to understand what was passing about him, and something of the characters of the people he lived with.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as chaplain. He was always fetching and carrying; strangers, military and ecclesiastic (Harry knew the latter, though they came in all sorts of disguises), were continually arriving and departing. My lord made long absences and sudden reappearances, using sometimes the means of exit which Father Holt had employed,

though how often the little window in the Chaplain's room let in or let out my lord and his friends Harry could r tell. My lord and Father Holt must have made constant journeys at night. Once or twice little Harry acted as their messenger and discreet little aide-de-camp. He remembers he was bidden to go into the village with his fishing-rod, enter certain houses, ask for a drink of water, and tell the good man, " There would be a horse-market at Newbury next Thursday," and so carry the same message on to the next house on his list.

He did not know what the message meant at the time, nor what was happening ; which may as well, however, for clearness' sake, be explained here. The Prince of Orange being gone to Ireland, where the King was ready to meet him with a great army, it was determined that a great rising of his Majesty's party should take place in this country, and my lord was to head the force in our county. Of late he had taken a greater lead in affairs than before, having the indefatigable Mr. Holt at his elbow, and my Lady Viscountess strongly urging him on.

One day (it must have been about the month of June 1690) my lord, in a great horseman's coat, under which Harry could see the shining of a steel breastplate he had on, called little Harry to him, put the hair off the child's forehead, and kissed him, and bade God bless him in such an affectionate way as he never had used before. Father Holt blessed him too. And then they took leave of my Lady Viscountess, who came from her apartment with a pocket-handkerchief to her eyes, and her gentlewoman and Mrs. Tusher supporting her. " You are going to—to ride," says she. " Oh, that I might come too ! but I am forbidden horse-exercise."

" We kiss my Lady Marchioness's hand," says Mr. Holt.

" My lord, God speed you ! " she said, stepping up and embracing my lord in a grand manner. " Mr. Holt, I ask your blessing; " and she knelt down for that, whilst Mrs. Tusher tossed her head up.

Mr. Holt gave the same benediction to the little page, who went down and held my lord's stirrups for him to mount. There were two servants waiting there too ; and they rode out of Castlewood gate.

As they crossed the bridge, Harry could see an officer in scarlet ride up touching his hat, and address my lord.

The party stopped, and came to some parley or discussion, which presently ended, my lord putting his horse into a canter after taking off his hat and making a bow to the officer, who rode alongside him step for step—the trooper accompanying him falling back, and riding with my lord's two men. They cantered over the green, and behind the elms (my lord waving his hand, Harry thought) ; and so they disappeared. That evening we had a great panic, the cowboy coming at milking-time riding one of our horses, which he had found grazing at the outer park-wall.

All night my Lady Viscountess was in a very quiet and subdued mood. She scarce found fault with anybody; she played at cards for six hours. Little page Esmond went to sleep. He prayed for my lord and the good cause before closing his eyes.

It was quite in the grey of the morning when the porter's bell rang, and old Lockwood, waking up, let in one of my lord's servants who had gone **with** him in the morning, and who returned with a melancholy story.

The officer who rode up to my lord had, it appeared, said to him that it was his duty to inform his lordship that he was not under arrest, but under surveillance, and to request him not to ride abroad that day.

My lord replied that riding was good for his health; that if the captain chose to accompany him, he was welcome ; and it was then that he made a bow, and they cantered away together.

When he came on to Wansey Down, my lord all of a sudden pulled up, and the party came to a halt at the cross way.

" Sir," says he to the officer, " we are four to two. Will you be so kind as to take that road, and leave me to go mine ? "

" Your road is mine, my lord," says the officer.

" Then——" says my lord. But he had no time to say more ; for the officer, drawing a pistol, snapped it at his lordship, as at the same moment Father Holt, drawing a pistol, shot the officer through the head. It was done, and the man dead, in an instant of time. The orderly, gazing at the officer, looked scared for a moment, and galloped away for his life.

" Fire ! fire ! " cries out Father Holt, sending another shot after the trooper ; but the two servants were too much surprised to use their pieces, and my lord calling to them to hold their hands, the fellow got away.

" Mr. Holt," says Blaise, " gets off his horse, examines the pockets of the dead officer for papers, gives his money to us two, and says, ' The wine is drawn, M. le Marquis. We must drink it. '

" The poor gentleman's horse was a better one than that I rode," Blaise continues. " Mr. Holt bids me get

on him; and so I gave a cut to Whitefoot, and she trotted home. We rode on towards Newbury. We heard firing towards midday. At two o'clock a horseman comes up to us as we were giving our cattle water at an inn, and says, ' All is done! The Ecossais declared an hour too soon - - General Ginckel was down upon them.' The whole thing was at an end.

" ' And we've shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape,' says my lord.

" ' Blaise,' says Mr. Holt, writing two lines on his table-book— one for my lady, and one for you, Master Harry— ' you must go back to Castle wood and deliver these ': and behold me."

And he gave Harry the two papers. He read that to himself, which only said, " Burn the papers in the cupboard ; burn this. You know nothing about anything." Harry read this, ran upstairs to his mistress's apartment, where her gentlewoman slept near to the door, made her bring a light and wake my lady, into whose hands he gave the paper. She was a wonderful object to look at in her night attire, nor had Harry ever seen the like.

As soon as she had the paper in her hand, Harry stepped back to the Chaplain's room, opened the secret cupboard over the fireplace, burned all the papers in it, and, as he had seen the priest do before, took down one of his reverence's manuscript sermons and half-burned that in the brazier. By the time the papers were quite destroyed it was daylight. Harry ran back to his mistress again. Her gentlewoman ushered him again into her ladyship's chamber. She told him (from behind her nuptial curtains) to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon.

But the mysteries of her ladyship's toilet were as awfully long on this day as on any other, and, long after the coach was ready, my lady was still attiring herself. And just as the Viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young Job Lockwood comes running up from the village with news that a lawyer, three officers, and twenty or four-and-twenty soldiers, were marching thence upon the house. Job had but two minutes the start of them, and, ere he had well told his story, the troop rode into our courtyard.

CHAPTER VI

THE ISSUE OF THE PLOTS.—THE DEATH OF THOMAS, THIRD VISCOUNT OF CASTLEWOOD; AND THE IMPRISONMENT OF HIS VISCOUN- TESS

AT first my lady was for dying like Mary, Queen of Scots (to whom she fancied she bore a resemblance in beauty), and, stroking her scraggy neck, said, " They will find Isabel of Castlewood is equal to her fate." Her gentlewoman, Victoire, persuaded her that her prudent course was, as she could not fly, to receive the troops as though she suspected nothing, and that her chamber was the best place wherein to await them. So her black japan-casket, which Harry was to carry to the coach, was taken back to her ladyship's chamber, whither the maid and mistress retired. Victoire came out presently, bidding the page to say her ladyship was ill, confined to her bed with the rheumatism.

By this time the soldiers had reached Castlewood ; Harry Esmond saw them from the window of the tapestry parlour. A couple of sentinels were posted at the gate ; a half-dozen more walked towards the stable; **and** some others, preceded by their commander, and **a** man in black, a lawyer probably, were conducted by **one** of the servants to the stair leading up to the part **of the house** which my **lord and** lady inhabited.

So the Captain, a handsome, kind man, and the lawyer, came through the anteroom to the tapestry parlour, and where now was nobody but young Harry Esmond, the page.

" Tell your mistress, little man," says the Captain kindly, " that we must speak to her."

" My mistress is ill a-bed," said the page.

" What complaint has she ? " asked the Captain.

The boy said, " The rheumatism."

" Rheumatism ! that's a sad complaint," continues the good-natured Captain ; " and the coach is in the yard to fetch the doctor, I suppose ? "

" I don't know," says the boy.

" And how long has her ladyship been ill ? "

" I don't know," says the boy.

" When did my lord go away ? "

" Yesterday night."

" With Father Holt ? "

" With Mr. Holt."

" And which way did they travel ? " asks the lawyer.

" They travelled without me," says the page.

" We must see Lady Castle wood."

" I have orders that nobody goes in to her ladyship-she is sick," says the page ; but at this moment Victoire came out. " Hush ! " says she ; and, as if not knowing that any one was near, " What's this noise ? " says she. " Is this gentleman the doctor ? "

" Stuff! we must see Lady Castle wood," says the lawyer, pushing by.

The curtains of her ladyship's room were down, and the chamber dark, and she was in bed with a nightcap on her head, and propped up by her pillows, looking none the

less ghastly because of the red which was still on her cheeks, and which she could not afford to forgo.

" Is that the doctor ? " she said.

" There is no use with this deception, madam," Captain Westbury said (for so he was named). " My duty is to arrest the person of Thomas, Viscount Castle wood, a non-juring peer ; of .Robert Tusher, Vicar of Castle wood ; and Henry Holt, known under various other names and designations, a Jesuit priest, who officiated as chaplain here in the late king's time, and is now at the head of the conspiracy which was about to break out in this country against the authority of their Majesties King William and Queen Mary ; and my orders are to search the house for such papers or traces of the conspiracy as may be found here. Your ladyship will please to give me your keys, and it will be as well for yourself that you should help us, in every way, in our search."

" You see, sir, that I have the rheumatism, and cannot move," said the lady, looking uncommonly ghastly as she sat up in her bed, where, however, she had had her cheeks painted, and a new cap put on, so that she might at least look her best when the officers came.

" I shall take leave to place a sentinel in the chamber, so that your ladyship, in case you should wish to rise, may have an arm to lean on," Captain Westbury said.

" Your woman will show me where I am to look ; " and Madame Victoire, chattering in her half French and half English jargon, opened while the Captain examined one drawer after another; but, as Harry Esmond thought, rather carelessly, with a smile on his face, as if he was only conducting the examination for form's sake.

Before one of the cupboards Victoire flung herself down, stretching out her arms, and, with a piercing shriek, cried, " Non, jamais, monsieur l'officier! Jamais! I will rather die than let you see this wardrobe."

But Captain Westbury would open it, still with a smile on his face, which, when the box was opened, turned into a fair burst of laughter. It contained—not papers regarding the conspiracy—but my lady's wigs, washes, and rouge-pots ; and Victoire said men were monsters, as the Captain went on with his perquisition. He tapped the back to see whether or no it was hollow ; and as he thrust his hands into the cupboard, my lady from her bed called out, with a voice that did not sound like that of a very sick woman, " Is it your commission to insult ladies as well as to arrest gentlemen, Captain ? "

" These articles are only dangerous when worn by your ladyship," the Captain said, with a low bow and a mock grin of politeness. " I have found nothing which concerns the Government as yet—only the weapons with which beauty is authorized to kill," says he, pointing to a wig with his sword-tip. " We must now proceed to search the rest of the house."

" You are not going to leave that wretch in the room with me?" cried my lady, pointing to the soldier.

" What can I do, madam ? Somebody you must have to smooth your pillow and bring your medicine—permit me——

" Sir ! " screamed out my lady.

" Madam, if you are too ill to leave the bed," the Captain then said, rather sternly, " I must have in four of my men to lift you off in the sheet. I must examine

this bed, in a word. Papers may be hidden in a bed as elsewhere; we know that very well, and——"

Here it was her ladyship's turn to shriek, for the Captain, with his fist shaking the pillows and bolsters, at last came to "burn" as they say in the play of forfeits, and wrenching away one of the pillows, said, "Look ! did not I tell you so ? Here is a pillow stuffed with paper."

"Some villain has betrayed us !" cried out my lady, sitting up in the bed, showing herself full dressed under her night-rail.

"And now your ladyship can move, I am sure; permit me to give you my hand to rise. You will have to travel for some distance—as far as Hexton Castle to-night. Will you have your coach ? Your woman shall attend you if you like—and the japan-box ? "

"Sir ! you don't strike a *man* when he is down," said my lady, with some dignity ; "can you not spare a woman ? "

"Your ladyship must please to rise, and let me search the bed," said the Captain ; "there is no more time to lose in bandying talk."

And, without more ado, the gaunt old woman got up. Harry Esmond recollected to the end of his life that figure, with the brocade dress and the white night-rail, and the gold-clocked red stockings, and white red-heeled shoes, sitting up in the bed, and stepping down from it. The trunks were ready packed for departure in her anteroom, and the horses ready harnessed in the stable; about all which the Captain seemed to know, by information got from some quarter or other, and whence Esmond could make a pretty shrewd guess in after-times, when Doctor Tusher complained that King William's Govern-

ment had basely treated him for services done in that cause.

The horses were by this time harnessed to the coach, and the Countess and Victoire came down and were put into the vehicle. This woman, who quarrelled with Harry Esmond all day, was melted at parting with him, and called him " dear angel," and " poor infant," and a hundred other names.

The Viscountess giving him her lean hand to kiss, bade him always be faithful to the House of Esmond. " If evil should happen to my lord," says she, " his *successor*, I trust, will be found, and give you protection. Situated as I am, they will not dare wreak their vengeance on me *now*." And she kissed a medal she wore with great fervour, and Henry Esmond knew not in the least what her meaning was ; but hath since learned that, old as she was, she was for ever expecting, by the good offices of saints and relics, to have an heir to the title of Esmond.

Harry Esmond was too young to have been introduced into the secrets of politics in which his patrons were implicated ; for they put but few questions to the boy (who was little of stature, and looked much younger than his age), and such questions as they put he answered cautiously enough, and professing even more ignorance than he had, for which his examiners willingly enough gave him credit. He did not say a word about the window or the cupboard over the fireplace ; and these secrets quite escaped the eyes of the searchers.

So then my lady was consigned to her coach, and sent off to Hexton, with her woman and the man of law to

bear her company, a couple of troopers riding on either side of the coach. And Harry was left behind at the Hall, belonging as it were to nobody, and quite alone in the world. The captain and a guard of men remained in possession there ; and the soldiers, who were very good-natured and kind, ate my lord's mutton and drank his wine, and made themselves comfortable, as they well might do in such pleasant quarters.

The captains had their dinner served in my lord's tapestry parlour, and poor little Harry thought his duty was to wait upon Captain Westbury's chair, as his custom had been to serve his lord when he sat there.

And now there befell an event by which the Viscountess recovered her liberty, and the house of Castlewood got a new owner, and fatherless little Harry Esmond a new and most kind protector and friend. Whatever that secret was which Harry was to hear from my lord, the boy never heard it ; for that night when Father Holt arrived, and carried my lord away with him, was the last on which Harry ever saw his patron. What happened to my lord may be briefly told here. Having found the horses at the place where they were lying, my lord and Father Holt rode together to Chatteris, where they had temporary refuge with one of the Father's penitents in that city ; but the pursuit being hot for them, and the reward for the apprehension of one or the other considerable, it was deemed advisable that they should separate, and the priest betook himself to other places of retreat known to him, whilst my lord passed over from Bristol into Ireland, in which kingdom King James had a court and an army. My lord was but a small addition to this—bringing, indeed, only his sword and the few pieces in

his pocket—but the King received him with some kindness and distinction in spite of his poor plight, confirmed him in his new title of Marquis, gave him a regiment, and promised him further promotion. But titles or promotion were not to benefit him now. My lord was wounded at the fatal battle of the Boyne, flying from which field (long after his master had set him an example) he lay for a while concealed in the marshy country near to the town of Trim, and more from catarrh and fever caught in the bogs than from the steel of the enemy in the battle, sank and died. May the earth lie light upon Thomas of Castlewood ! He who writes this must speak in charity, though this lord did him and his two grievous wrongs : for one of these he would have made amends, perhaps, had life been spared him ; but the other lay beyond his power to repair, though 'tis to be hoped that a greater Power than a priest has absolved him of it. He got the comfort of this absolution, too, such as it was—a priest of Trim writing a letter to my lady to inform her of this calamity.

But in those days letters were slow of travelling, and our priest's took two months or more on its journey from Ireland to England ; where, when it did arrive, it did not find my lady at her own house—she was at the King's house of Hexton Castle when the letter came to Castlewood—but it was opened for all that by the officer in command there.

Harry Esmond well remembered the receipt of this letter, which Lockwood brought in as Captain Westbury and Lieutenant Trant were on the green playing at bowls, young Esmond looking on at the sport, or reading his book in the arbour.

" Here's news for Frank Esmond," says Captain Westbury. " Harry, did you ever see Colonel Esmond ? " And Captain Westbury looked very hard at the boy as he spoke.

Harry said he had seen him but once when he was at Hex ton, at the ball there.

" And did he say anything ? "

" He said what I don't care to repeat," Harry answered. For he was now twelve years of age : he knew what his birth was, and the disgrace of it ; and he felt no love towards the man who had most likely stained his mother's honour and his own.

" Did you love my Lord Castlewood ? "

" I wait until I know my mother, sir, to say," the boy answered, his eyes filling with tears.

" Something has happened to Lord Castlewood," Captain Westbury said in a very grave tone— " something which must happen to us all. He is dead of a wound received at the Boyne, fighting for King James."

" I am glad my lord fought for the right cause," the boy said.

" It was better to meet death on the field like a man than face it on Tower-hill, as some of them may," continued Mr. Westbury. " I hope he has made some testament, or provided for thee somehow. This letter says he recommends *unicum filium suum dilectissimum* to his lady. I hope he has left you more than that."

Harry did not know, he said. He was in the hands of Heaven and Fate ; but more lonely now, as it seemed to him, than he had been all the rest of his life, and that night, as he lay in his little room which he still occupied, the boy thought with many a pang of shame and grief of

his strange and solitary condition : how he had a father and no father ; a nameless mother that had been brought to ruin, perhaps, by that very father whom Harry could only acknowledge in secret and with a blush, and whom he could neither love nor revere. And he sickened to think how Father Holt, a stranger, and two or three soldiers, his acquaintances of the last six weeks, were the only friends he had in the great wide world, where he was now quite alone. The soul of the boy was full of love, and he longed as he lay in the darkness there for some one upon whom he could bestow it. He remembers, and must to his dying day, the thoughts and tears of that long night, the hours tolling through it. Who was he, and what ? Why here rather than elsewhere ? I have a mind, he thought, to go to that priest at Trim, and find out what my father said to him on his death-bed confession. Is there any child in the whole world so unprotected as I am ? Shall I get up and quit this place, and run to Ireland ? With these thoughts and tears the lad passed that night away until he wept himself to sleep.

The next day, the gentlemen of the guard, who had heard what had befallen him, were more than usually kind to the child, especially his friend Scholar Dick, who told him about his own father's death, which had happened when Dick was a child at Dublin, not quite five years of age. " That was the first sensation of grief," Dick said, " I ever knew. I remember I went into the room where his body lay, and my mother sat weeping beside it. I had my battledore in my hand, and fell a-beating the coffin, and calling Papa; on which my mother caught me in her arms, and told me in a flood

of tears Papa could not hear me, and would play with me no more, for they were going to put him under ground whence he could never come to us again. And this," said Dick kindly, "has made me pity all children ever since, and caused me to love thee, my poor fatherless, motherless lad. And if ever thou wantest a friend, thou shalt have one in Richard Steele."

Harry Esmond thanked him, and was grateful. But what could Corporal Steele do for him? take him to ride a spare horse, and be servant to the troop? Though there might be a bar in Harry Esmond's shield, it was a noble one. The counsel of the two friends was, that little Harry should stay where he was, and abide his fortune; so Esmond stayed on at Castle wood, awaiting with no small anxiety the fate, whatever it was, which was over him.

CHAPTER VII

*I AM LEFT AT CASTLEWOOD AN ORPHAN.
AND FIND MOST KIND PROTECTORS THERE*

DURING the stay of the soldiers in Castlewood, honest Dick the Scholar was the constant companion of the lonely little orphan lad Harry Esmond; and they read together, and they played bowls together, and when the other troopers or their officers, who were free-spoken over their cups (as was the way of that day, when neither men nor women were over-nice), talked unbecomingly of their amours and gallantries before the child, Dick, who very likely was setting the whole company laughing, would stop their jokes, and once offered to lug out against another trooper called Hulking Tom, who wanted to ask Harry Esmond a ribald question.

Harry was sorry when the kind soldiers vacated Castlewood, looking forward with no small anxiety (for care and solitude had made him thoughtful beyond his years) to his fate when the new lord and lady of the house came to live there. He had lived to be past twelve years old now, and had never had a friend, save this wild trooper perhaps, and Father Holt; and had a fond and affectionate heart, tender to weakness, that would fain attach itself to somebody.

The instinct which led Harry Esmond to admire and love the gracious person, the fair apparition of whose beauty and kindness had so moved him when he first

beheld her, became soon a devoted affection and passion of gratitude, which entirely filled his young heart, that as yet, except in the case of dear Father Holt, had had very little kindness for which to be thankful. There seemed, as the boy thought, in every look or gesture of this fair creature, an angelical softness and bright pity—in motion or repose she seemed gracious alike ; the tone of her voice, though she uttered words ever so trivial, gave him a pleasure that amounted almost to anguish. It cannot be called love, that a lad of twelve years of age, little more than a menial, felt for an exalted lady, his mistress ; but it was worship. To catch her glance, to divine her errand and run on it before she had spoken it—to watch, follow, adore her—became the business of his life. Meanwhile, as is the way often, his idol had idols of her own, and never thought of or suspected the admiration of her little pigmy adorer.

My lady had on her side her three idols : first and foremost, Jove and supreme ruler, was her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he frowned, she trembled. If he joked, she smiled and was charmed. If he went a-hunting, she was always at the window to see him ride away, her little son crowing on her arm, or on the watch till his return. She made dishes for his dinner; spiced his wine for him ; made the toast for his tankard at breakfast; hushed the house when he slept in his chair, and watched for a look when he woke. If my lord was not a little proud of his beauty, my lady adored it. She clung to his arm as he paced the terrace, her two fair little hands clasped round his great one ; her eyes were never tired of looking in his face and wondering

at its perfection. Her little son was his son, and had his father's look and curly brown hair. Her daughter Beatrix was his daughter, and had his eyes—were there ever such beautiful eyes in the world? All the house was arranged so as to bring him ease and give him pleasure. She liked the small gentry round about to come and pay him court, never caring for admiration for herself: those who wanted to be well with the lady must admire him. Not regarding her dress, she would wear a gown to rags, because he had once liked it; and, if, he brought her a brooch or a ribbon, would prefer it to all the most costly articles of her wardrobe.

My lord went to London every year for six weeks, and the family being too poor to appear at Court with any figure, he went alone. It was not until he was out of sight that her face showed any sorrow; and what a joy when he came back! What preparation before his return! The fond creature had his arm-chair at the chimney-side—delighting to put the children in it, and look at them there. Nobody took his place at the table; but his silver tankard stood there as when my lord was present.

As Esmond has taken truth for his motto, it must be owned, even with regard to that angel, his mistress, that she had a fault of character which flawed her perfections. With the other sex perfectly tolerant and kindly, of her own she was invariably jealous; and a proof that she had this vice is that, though she would acknowledge a thousand faults which she had not, to this which she had she could never be got to own. But if there came a woman with even a semblance of beauty to Castlewood, she was so sure to find out some wrong in her that my lord, laughing in his jolly way, would often joke with her

concerning her foible. Comely servant-maids might come for hire, but none were taken at Castle wood. The housekeeper was old; my lady's own waiting-woman squinted, and was marked with the smallpox.

The second fight which Harry Esmond had was at fourteen years of age, with Bryan Hawkshaw, Sir John Hawkshaw's son, of Bramblebrook, who, advancing this opinion that my lady was jealous and henpecked my lord, put Harry into such a fury that Harry fell on him, and with such rage that the other boy, who was two years older and by far bigger than he, had by far the worst of the assault, until it was interrupted by Doctor Tusher walking out of the dinner-room.

Bryan Hawkshaw got up bleeding at the nose, having indeed been surprised, as many a stronger man might have been, by the fury of the assault upon him.

" You little bastard beggar! " he said, " I'll murder you for this ! "

And indeed he was big enough.

" Bastard or not," said the other, grinding his teeth, " I have a couple of swords, and if you like to meet me, as a man, on the terrace to-night——"

And here, the Doctor coming up, the colloquy of the young champions ended. Very likely, big as he was, Hawkshaw did not care to continue a fight with such a ferocious opponent as this had been.

CHAPTER VIII

AFTER GOOD FORTUNE COMES EVIL

SINCE my Lady Mary Wortley Montagu brought home the custom of inoculation from Turkey, I think the severity of the smallpox—that dreadful scourge of the world—has somewhat been abated in our part of it. In my early days this pestilence would enter a village and destroy half its inhabitants. At its approach, it may well be imagined, not only the beautiful but the strongest were alarmed, and those fled who could. One day, in the year 1694 (I have good reason to remember it), Doctor Tusher ran into Castlewood house with a face of consternation, saying that the malady had made its appearance at the blacksmith's house in the village, and that one of the maids there was down in the smallpox.

The blacksmith, besides his forge and irons for horses, had an alehouse for men, which his wife kept, and his company sat on benches before the inn door, looking at the smithy while they drank their beer. Now there was a pretty girl at this inn the landlord's men called Nancy Sievewright, a bouncing, fresh-looking lass, whose face was as red as the hollyhocks over the pales of the garden behind the inn. At this time Harry Esmond was a lad of sixteen, and somehow, in his walks and rambles, it often happened that he fell in with Nancy Sievewright's bonny face.

When Doctor Tusher brought the news that the small-pox was at the " Three Castles," whither a tramper, it was said, had brought the malady, Henry Esmond's first thought was of alarm for poor Nancy, and then of shame and disquiet for the Castlewood family, lest he might have brought this infection ; for the truth is that Mr. Harry had been sitting in a back room for an hour that day, where Nancy Sieviewright was with a little brother, who complained of headache, and was lying stupefied and crying, either in a chair by the corner of the fire, or in Nancy's lap, or in mine.

Little Lady Beatrix screamed out at Doctor Tusher's news ; and my lord cried out, " God bless me ! " He was a brave man, and not afraid of death in any shape but this. He was very proud of his pink complexion and fair hair ; but the idea of death by smallpox scared him beyond all other ends. " We will take the children, and ride away to-morrow to Walcote "—this was my lord's small house, inherited from his mother, near to Winchester.

To love children, and be gentle with them, was an instinct rather than a merit in Henry Esmond, so much so that he, thought almost with a sort of shame of his liking for them, and of the softness into which it betrayed him ; and on this day the poor fellow had not only had his young friend, the milkmaid's brother, on his knee, but had been drawing pictures and telling stories to the little Frank Castlewood, who had occupied the same place for an hour after dinner, and was never tired of Henry's tales, and his pictures of soldiers and horses. As luck would have it, Beatrix had not on that evening taken her usual place, which generally she was glad enough to have, u

her tutor's lap. For Beatrix, from the earliest time, was jealous of every caress which was given to her little brother Frank.

Upon this day, when poor Harry Esmond had had the blacksmith's son and the peer's son alike upon his knee, little Beatrix, who would come to her tutor willingly enough with her book and her writing, had refused him, seeing the place occupied by her brother, and, luckily for her, had sat at the further end of the room, away from him, playing with a spaniel dog which she had (and for which, by fits and starts, she would take a great affection), and talking at Harry Esmond over her shoulder, as she pretended to caress the dog, saying that Fido would love her, and she would love Fido, and nothing but Fido, all her life.

When the news was brought that the little boy at the " Three Castles " was ill with the smallpox, poor Harry Esmond felt a shock of alarm, not so much for himself as for his mistress's son, whom he might have brought into peril. Beatrix, who had pouted sufficiently (and who, whenever a stranger appeared, began, from infancy almost, to play off little graces to catch his attention), her brother being now gone to bed, was for taking her place upon Esmond's knee ; for, though the Doctor was very obsequious to her, she did not like him, because he had thick boots and dirty hands (the pert young miss said), and because she hated learning the catechism.

But as she advanced towards Esmond from the corner where she had been sulking, he started back and placed 'he great chair on which he was sitting between him and
r, saying in the French language to Lady Castlewood, whom the young lad had read much, and whom he

had perfected in this tongue, "Madam, the child must not approach me ; I must tell you that I was at the blacksmith's to-day, and had his little boy upon my lap."

"Where you took my son afterwards," Lady Castlewood said, very angry, and turning red. "I thank you, sir, for giving him such company. Beatrix," she said in English, "I forbid you to touch Mr. Esmond. Come away, child—come to your room ; come to your room. I wish your Reverence good-night; and you, sir, had you not better go back to your friends at the alehouse ? " Her eyes, ordinarily so kind, darted flashes of anger as she spoke, and she tossed up her head (which hung down commonly) with the mien of a princess.

"Hey-day ! " says my lord, who was standing by the fireplace—indeed he was in the position to which he generally came by that hour of the evening—"hey-day ! Rachel, what are you in a passion about ? Ladies ought never to be in a passion—ought they, Doctor Tusher ? "

"It is, my lord, because Mr. Henry Esmond, having nothing to do with his time here, and not having a taste for our company, has been to the alehouse, where he has *some friends*."

My lord burst out, with a laugh and an oath, "You young slyboots, you've been at Nancy Sieviewright. D—the young hypocrite, who'd have thought it in him ? I say, Tusher, he's been after—— "

"Enough, my lord," said my lady; "don't insult me with this talk."

"Upon my word," said poor Harry, ready to cry v shame and mortification, "the honour of that v **person is perfectly unstained for me.'**"

" Oh, of course, of course," says my lord, more and more laughing and tipsy. " Upon his *honour*, Doctor—Nancy Sieve——"

" Take Mistress Beatrix to bed," my lady cried at this moment to Mrs. Tucker her woman, who came in with her ladyship's tea. " Put her into my room—no, into yours," she added quickly. " Go, my child—go, I say—not a word ! " And Beatrix, quite surprised at so sudden a tone of authority from one who was seldom accustomed to raise her voice, went out of the room with a scared countenance, and waited even to burst out a-crying until she got to the door with Mrs. Tucker.

For once her mother took little heed of her sobbing, and continued to speak eagerly. " My lord," she said, " this young man—your dependant—told me just now in French—he was ashamed to speak in his own language—that he had been at the alehouse all day, where he has had that little wretch who is now ill of the smallpox on his knee. And he comes home reeking from that place—and takes my boy into his lap without shame, and sits down by me. He may have killed Frank for what I know—killed our child. Why was he brought in to disgrace our house ? Why is he here ? Let him go—let him go, I say, to-night, and pollute the place no more."

She had never once uttered a syllable of unkindness to Harry Esmond, and her cruel words smote the poor boy, so that he stood for some moments bewildered with grief and rage at the injustice of such a stab from such a hand.

" I cannot help my birth, madam," he said, " nor my *er* misfortune. And as for your boy, if—if my coming to him pollutes him now, it was not so always.
my lord. Heaven bless you and yours for

your goodness to me ! I have tired her ladyship's kindness out, and I will go; " and, sinking down on his knee, Harry Esmond took the rough hand of his benefactor and kissed it.

" He wants to go to the alehouse—let him go ! " cried my lady.

" I'm d——d if he shall," said my lord. " I didn't think you could be so d——d ungrateful, Rachel."

Her reply was to burst into a flood of tears, and to quit the room with a rapid glance at Harry Esmond, as my lord, not heeding them, and still in great good-humour, raised up his young client from his kneeling posture (for a thousand kindnesses had caused the lad to revere my lord as a father), and put his broad hand on Harry Esmond's shoulder.

" She was always so," my lord said ; " the very notion of a woman drives her mad. I took to liquor on that very account, by Jove—for no other reason than that ; for she can't be jealous of a beer-barrel or a bottle of rum, can she, Doctor ? D——it, look at the maids, just look at the maids in the house. You wouldn't take a wife out of Castle wood now, would you, Doctor ? " and my lord burst out laughing.

The Doctor, who had been looking at my Lord Castlewood from under his eyelids, said, " But joking apart, and, my lord, as a divine, I cannot treat the subject in a jocular light, nor, as a pastor of this congregation, look with anything but sorrow at the idea of so very young a sheep going astray."

" Sir," said young Esmond, bursting out indignantly, " she told me that you yourself were a horrid old man, and had offered to kiss her in the dairy."

" For shame, Henry," cried Doctor Tusher, turning as red as a turkey-cock, while my lord continued to roar with laughter. " If you listen to the falsehoods of an abandoned girl——"

" She is as honest as any woman in England, and as pure for me," cried out Henry, " and as kind, and as good. For shame on you to malign her ! "

" Far be it from me to do so," cried the Doctor. " Heaven grant I may be mistaken in the girl, and in you, sir, who have a truly *precocious* genius ; but that is not the point at issue at present. It appears that the smallpox broke out in the little boy at the ' Three Castles ; ' that it was on him when you visited the alehouse, for your *own* reasons ; and that you sat with the child for some time, and immediately afterwards with my young lord." The Doctor raised his voice as he spoke, and looked towards my lady, who had now come back, looking very pale, with a handkerchief in her hand.

" This is all very true, sir," said Lady Esmond, looking at the young man.

" 'Tis to be feared that he may have brought the infection with him."

" From the alehouse—yes," said my lady.

" D——it, I forgot when I collared you, boy," cried my lord, stepping back. " Keep off, Harry, my boy : there's no good in running into the wolf's jaws, you know."

My lady looked at him with some surprise, and instantly advancing to Henry Esmond, took his hand. " I beg your pardon, Henry," she said ; " I spoke very unkindly. I have no right to interfere with you—with your——"

My lord broke out into an oath. " Can't you leave the boy alone, my lady ? " She looked a little red, and faintly pressed the lad's hand as she dropped it.

" There is no use, my lord," she said ; " Frank was on his knee as he was making pictures, and was running constantly from Henry to me. The evil is done, if any."

" Not with me, damme," cried my lord. " I've been smoking"—and he lighted his pipe again with a coal—" and it keeps off infection ; and as the disease is in the village—plague take it!—I would have you leave it. We'll go to-morrow to Walcote, my lady."

" I have no fear," said my lady ; " I may have had it as an infant. It broke out in our house then ; and when four of my sisters had it at home, I escaped it, and two of my dear sisters died."

" I won't run the risk," said my lord ; " I'm as bold as any man, but I'll not bear that."

" Take Beatrix with you and go," said my lady. " For us the mischief is done ; and Tucker can wait upon us, who has had the disease."

" You take care to choose 'em ugly enough," said my lord, at which her ladyship hung down her head and looked foolish ; and my lord, calling away Tusher, bade him come to the oak parlour and have a pipe. The Doctor made a low bow to her ladyship (of which salaams he was profuse), and walked off on his creaking square-toes after his patron.

When the lady and the young man were alone, there was a silence of some moments, during which he stood at the fire, looking rather vacantly at the dying embers, whilst her ladyship busied herself with her tambour frame and needles.

" I am sorry," she said, after a pause, in a hard, dry voice,— " I *repeat* I am sorry that I showed myself so ungrateful for the safety of my son. It was not at all my wish that you should leave us, I am sure, unless you found pleasure elsewhere. But you must perceive, Mr. Esmond, that at your age, and with your tastes, it is impossible that you can continue to stay upon the intimate footing in which you have been in this family. You have wished to go to the University, and I think 'tis quite as well that you should be sent thither. I did not press this matter, thinking you a child, as you are, indeed, in years—quite a child; and I should never have thought of treating you otherwise until—until these *circumstances* came to light. And I shall beg my lord to dispatch you as quick as possible; and will go on with Frank's learning as well as I can—and—and I wish you a good-night, Mr. Esmond."

And with this she dropped a stately curtsy, and, taking her candle, went away through the tapestry door which led to her apartments. Esmond stood by the fireplace, blankly staring after her. Indeed, he scarce seemed to see until she was gone ; and then her image was impressed upon him, and remained for ever fixed upon his memory. He saw her retreating, the taper lighting up her marble face, her scarlet lip quivering, and her shining golden hair. He went to his own room, and to bed, where he tried to read, as his custom was ; but he never knew what he was reading until afterwards he remembered the appearance of the letters of the book (it was in Montaigne's Essays), and the events of the day passed before him—that is, of the last hour of the day, for as for the morning, and the poor milkmaid yonder, he never so much as once thought.

And he could not get to sleep until daylight, and woke with a violent headache, and quite unrefreshed.

He had brought the contagion with him from the " Three Castles " sure enough, and was presently laid up with the smallpox, which spared the Hall no more than it did the cottage.

CHAPTER IX

I HAVE THE SMALLPOX, AND PREPARE TO LEAVE CASTLEWOOD

WHEN Harry Esmond passed through the crisis of that malady, and returned to health again, he found that little Frank Esmond had also suffered and rallied after the disease, and the lady his mother was down with it, with a couple more of the household. " It was a Providence, for which we all ought to be thankful," Dr. Tusher said, " that my lady and her son were spared, while Death carried off the poor domestics of the house ; " and rebuked Harry for asking, in his simple way, For which we ought to be thankful—that the servants were killed, or the gentlefolks were saved ? Nor could young Esmond agree in the Doctor's vehement protestations to my lady, when, he visited her during her convalescence, that the malady had not in the least impaired her charms, and had not been churl enough to injure the fair features of the Viscountess of Castlewood ; whereas, in spite of these fine speeches, Harry thought that her ladyship's beauty was very much injured by the smallpox. When the marks of the disease cleared away, they did not, it is true, leave furrows or scars on her face (except one, perhaps, on her forehead over her left eyebrow); but the delicacy of her rosy colour and complexion was gone, her eyes had lost their brilliancy, her hair fell, and her face looked older. It was as if a coarse hand had rubbed off the delicate tints

of that sweet picture, and brought it, as one has seen unskilful painting-cleaners do, to the dead colour. Also, it must be owned that, for a year or two after the malady, her ladyship's nose was swollen and redder.

There would be no need to mention these trivialities, but that they actually influenced many lives, as trifles will in the world, where a gnat often plays a greater part than an elephant. When Tusher in his courtly way (at which Harry Esmond always chafed and spoke scornfully) vowed and protested that my lady's face was none the worse, the lad broke out and said, " It is worse ; and my mistress is not near so handsome as she was ; " on which poor Lady Castlewood gave a rueful smile, and a look into a little Venice glass she had, which showed her, I suppose, that what the stupid boy said was only too true, for she turned away from the glass, and her eyes filled with tears.

The sight of these in Esmond's heart always created a sort of rage of pity, and seeing them on the face of the lady whom he loved best, the young blunderer sank down on his knees, and besought her to pardon him, saying that he was a fool and an idiot, that he was a brute to make such a speech, he who had caused her malady ; and Doctor Tusher told him that a bear he was indeed, and a bear he would remain, at which speech poor young Esmond was so dumb-stricken that he did not even growl.

" He is *my* bear, and I will not have him baited, Doctor," my lady said, patting her hand kindly on the boy's head, as he was still kneeling at her feet. " How your hair has come off ! And mine, too," she added with another sigh.

" It is not for myself that I cared," my lady said to Harry, when the parson had taken his leave ; " but *am* I very much changed ? Alas ! I fear 'tis too true."

" Madam, you have the dearest, and kindest, and sweetest face in the world, I think," the lad said; and indeed he thought and thinks so.

" Will my lord think so when he comes back ? " the lady asked with a sigh, and another look at her Venice glass. " Suppose he should think as you do, sir, that I am hideous—yes, you said hideous—he will cease to care for me. 'Tis all men care for in women, our little beauty. Why did he select me from among my sisters ? 'Twas only for that. We reign but for a day or two ; and be sure that Vashti knew Esther was coming."

One day, as he himself was recovering from his fever and illness, a pang of something like shame shot across young Esmond's breast, as he remembered that he had never once during his illness given a thought to the poor girl at the smithy, whose red cheeks but a month ago he had been so eager to see. Poor Nancy! her cheeks had shared the fate of roses, and were withered now. She had taken the illness on the same day with Esmond: she and her brother were both dead of the smallpox, and buried under the Castlewood yew-trees.

When my lady heard of the fate which had befallen poor Nancy, she said nothing so long as Tusher was by ; but when he was gone, she took Harry Esmond's hand and said,—

" Harry, I beg your pardon for those cruel words I used on the night you were taken ill. I am shocked at the fate of the poor creature, and am sure that nothing had happened of that with which, in my anger, I charged

you. And the very first day we go out, you must take me to the blacksmith, and we must see if there is anything I can do to console the poor old man. Poor man ! to lose both his children ! What should I do without mine ?"

At length, when the danger was quite over, it was announced that my lord and his daughter would return. Esmond well remembered the day. The lady his mistress was in a flurry of fear. Before my lord came, she went into her room, and returned from it with reddened cheeks. Her fate was about to be decided. Her beauty was gone—was her reign, too, over ? A minute would say. My lord came riding over the bridge—he could be seen from the great window, clad in scarlet, and mounted on his grey hackney—his little daughter ambled by him in a bright riding-dress of blue, on a shining chestnut horse. My lady leaned against the great mantelpiece, looking on, with one hand on her heart—she seemed only the more pale for those red marks on either cheek. She put her handkerchief to her eyes, and withdrew it, laughing hysterically—the cloth was quite red with the rouge when she took it away. She ran to her room again, and came back with pale cheeks and red eyes—her son in her hand—just as my lord entered, accompanied by young Esmond, who had gone out to meet his protector, and to hold his stirrup as he descended from horseback.

"What, Harry, boy!" my lord said good-naturedly, "you look as gaunt as a greyhound. The smallpox hasn't improved your beauty, and your side of the house hadn't never too much of it—ho, ho !"

And he laughed, and sprang to the **ground** with no small agility, looking handsome and **red**, with a jolly **face**

and brown hair, like a Beef-eater; Esmond kneeling again, as soon as his patron had descended, performed his homage, and then went to greet the little Beatrix, and help her from her horse.

" Fie ! how yellow you look ! " she said ; " and there are one, two red holes in your face ; " which, indeed, was very true—Harry Esmond's harsh countenance bearing, as long as it continued to be a human face, the marks of the disease.

My lord laughed again, in high good-humour.

" D——it ! " he said, with one of his usual oaths, " the little slut sees everything. She saw the Dowager's paint t'other day, and asked her why she wore that red stuff—didn't you, Trix ? and the Tower ; and St. James's; and the play; and the Prince George, and the Princess Anne—didn't you, Trix ? "

" They are both very fat, and smelt of brandy," the child said.

Papa roared with laughing.

" Brandy ! " he said. " And how do you know, Miss Pert ? "

" Because your lordship smells of it after supper, when I embrace you before I go to bed," said the young lady, who, indeed, was as pert as her father said, and looked as beautiful a little gipsy as eyes ever gazed on.

" And now for my lady," said my lord, going up the stairs, and passing under the tapestry curtain that hung Before the drawing-room door. Esmond remembered that noble figure, handsomely arrayed in scarlet. Within the last few months he himself had grown from a boy to be a man, and with his figure his thoughts had shot up, and grown manly.

My lady's countenance, of which Harry Esmond was accustomed to watch the changes, and with a solicitous affection to note and interpret the signs of gladness or care, wore a sad and depressed look for many weeks after her lord's return, during which it seemed as if, by caresses and entreaties, she strove to win him back from some ill-humour he had, and which he did not choose to throw off. In her eagerness to please him she practised a hundred of those arts which had formerly charmed him, but which seemed now to have lost their potency. Her songs did not amuse him, and she hushed them and the children when in his presence. Her silence annoyed him as much as her speech, and he would peevishly, and with an oath, ask her why she held her tongue and looked so glum; or he would roughly check her when speaking, and bid her not talk nonsense. It seemed as if, since his return, nothing she could do or say could please him.

"Mr. Tutor," as my lady called Esmond, had now business enough on his hands in Castle wood House. He had three pupils, his lady and her two children, at whose lessons she would always be present; besides writing my lord's letters, and arranging his accompts for him—when these could be got from Esmond's indolent patron.

Of the pupils the two young people were but lazy scholars; and as my lady would admit no discipline such as was then in use, my lord's son only learned what he liked, which was but little, and never to his life's end could be got to construe more than six lines of Virgil. Mistress Beatrix chattered French prettily from a very early age, and sang sweetly; but this was from her mother's teaching, not Harry Esmond's, who could scarce distinguish

between " Green Sleeves " and " Lillibullero," although he had no greater delight in life than to hear the ladies sing. He sees them now (will he ever forget them ?) as they used to sit together of the summer evenings—the two golden heads over the page—the child's little hand and the mother's beating the time, with their voices rising and falling in unison.

But if the children were careless, 'twas a wonder how eagerly the mother learnt from her young tutor—and taught him too. The happiest instinctive faculty was this lady's—a faculty for discerning latent beauties and hidden graces of books, especially books of poetry, as in a walk she would spy out field-flowers and make posies of them, such as no other hand could.

These happy days were to end soon, however, and it was by the Lady Castlewood's own decree that they were brought to a conclusion. It happened about Christmas-time, Harry Esmond being now past sixteen years of age, that his old comrade, adversary, and friend, Tom Tusher, returned from his school in London, a fair, well-grown, and sturdy lad, who was about to enter college, with an exhibition from his school, and a prospect of after promotion in the church.

When Thomas Tusher was gone, a feeling of no small depression and disquiet fell upon young Esmond, of which, though he did not complain, his kind mistress must have divined the cause ; for soon after she showed not only that she understood the reason of Harry's melancholy, but could provide a remedy for it. Her habit was thus to watch, unobservedly, those to whom duty or affection bound her, and to prevent their designs, or to fulfil them, when she had the power.

All the notice, then, which Lady Castle wood seemed to take of Harry Esmond's melancholy, upon Tom Tusher's departure, was, by a gaiety unusual to her, to attempt to dispel his gloom. She made his three scholars (herself being the chief one) more cheerful than ever they had been before, and more docile too, all of them learning and reading much more than they had been accustomed to do. "For who knows," said the lady, " what may happen, and whether we may be able to keep such a learned tutor long ? "

Frank Esmond said he for his part did not want to learn any more, and cousin Harry might shut up his book whenever he liked, if he would come out a-fishing ; and little Beatrix declared she would send for Tom Tusher, and *he* would be glad enough to come to Castlewood, if Harry chose to go away.

At last comes a messenger from Winchester one day, bearer of a letter, with a great black seal, from the Dean there, to say that his sister was dead, and had left her fortune of £2,000 among her six nieces, the Dean's daughters; and many a time since has Harry Esmond recalled the flushed face and eager look wherewith, after this intelligence, his kind lady regarded him. She did not pretend to any grief about the deceased relative, from whom she and her family had been many years parted.

When my lord heard of the news, he also did not make any very long face. " The money will come very handy to furnish the music-room and the cellar, which is getting low, and buy your ladyship a coach and a couple of horses that will do indifereⁿt to ride or for the coach. And, Beatrix, you shall have a spinnet; and, Frank, you shall

have a little horse from Hexton Fair ; and, Harry, you shall have five pounds to buy some books," said my lord, who was generous with his own, and indeed with other folks' money. " I wish your aunt would die once a year, Rachel ; we could spend your money, and all your sisters', too."

" I have but one aunt—and—and I have another use for the money, my lord," says my lady, turning very red.

" Another use, my dear ! And what do you know about money ? " cries my lord. " And what the devil is there that I don't give you which you want ? "

" I intend to give this money—can't you fancy how, my lord ? "

My lord swore one of his large oaths that he did not know in the least what she meant.

" I intend it for Harry Esmond to go to college. Cousin Harry," says my lady, " you mustn't stay longer in this dull place, but make a name to yourself, and for us too, Harry."

" D—n it, Harry's well enough here," says my lord, for a moment looking rather sulky.

" Is Harry going away ? You don't mean to say you will go away ? " cry out Frank and Beatrix at one breath.

" But he will come back ; and this will always be his home," cries my lady, with blue eyes looking a celestial kindness ; " and his scholars will always love him, won't they ? "

" By G—d, Rachel, you're a good woman ! " says my lord, seizing my lady's hand, at which she blushed very much, and shrank back, putting her children before her. " I wish you joy, my kinsman," he continued, giving Harry Esmond a hearty slap on the shoulder. " I won't

balk your luck. Go to Cambridge, boy ; and when Tusher dies you shall have the living here, if you are not better provided by that time. We'll furnish the dining-room and buy the horses another year. I'll give thee a nag out of the stable—take any one except my hack and the bay gelding and the coach-horses—and God speed thee, my boy ! "

" Have the sorrel, Harry ; 'tis a good one. Father says 'tis the best in the stable," says little Frank, clapping his hands, and jumping up. " Let's come and see him in the stable." And the other, in his delight and eagerness, was for leaving the room that instant to arrange about his journey.

The Lady Castlewood looked after him with sad penetrating glances. " He wishes to be gone already, my lord," said she to her husband.

The young man hung back abashed. " Indeed, I would stay for ever, if your ladyship bade me," he said.

" And thou wouldst be a fool for thy pains, kinsman," said my lord. " Tut, tut, man. Go and see the world. Sow thy wild oats, and take the best luck that fate sends thee. I wish I were a boy again, that I might go to college, and taste the Trumpington ale."

" Ours, indeed, is but a dull home," cries my lady, with a little of sadness, and maybe of satire, in her voice—" an old glum house, half ruined, and the rest only half furnished ; a woman and two children are but poor company for men that are accustomed to better. We are only fit to be your worships' handmaids, and your pleasures must of necessity lie elsewhere than at home."

" Curse me, Rachel, if I know now whether thou art in earnest or not," said my lord.

" In earnest, my lord ! " says she, still clinging by one of her children. " Is there much subject here for joke ? " And she made him a grand curtsy, and, giving a stately look to Harry Esmond, which seemed to say, " Remember ; you understand me, though he does not," she left the room with her children.

" Since she found out that confounded Hexton business," my lord said—" and be hanged to them that told her !—she has not been the same woman. She, who used to be as humble as a milkmaid, is as proud as a princess," says my lord. " Take my counsel, Harry Esmond, and keep clear of women. Since I have had anything to do with the jades, they have given me nothing but disgust. When I saw my lady on a pillion riding behind the Dean her father, she looked and was such a baby that a six-penny doll might have pleased her. And now you see what she is—hands off, highty-tighty, high and mighty, an empress couldn't be grander. Pass us the tankard, Harry, my boy. A mug of beer and a toast at morn, says my host. A toast and a mug of beer at noon, says my dear. D—n it, Polly loves a mug of ale, too, and laced with brandy, by Jove ! " Indeed, I suppose they drank it together; for my lord was often thick in his speech at mid-day dinner, and at night, at supper, speechless altogether.

Harry Esmond's departure resolved upon, it seemed as if the Lady Castlewood, too, rejoiced to lose him; for more than once, when the lad, ashamed perhaps at his own secret eagerness to go away, tried to express to his mistress his sense of gratitude to her, and his sorrow at quitting those who had so sheltered and tended a nameless and houseless orphan, Lady Castlewood cut

short his protests of love and his lamentations, and would hear of no grief, but only look forward to Harry's fame and prospects in life. " Our little legacy will keep you for four years like a gentleman. Heaven's providence, your own genius, industry, honour, must do the rest for you. Castlewood will always be a home for you; and these children, whom you have taught and loved, will not forget to love you. Promise me that you will be true to them—as—as I think I have been to you—and a mother's fond prayer and blessing go with you."

' So help me God, madam, I will, " said Harry Esmond, falling on his knees, and kissing the hand of his dearest mistress. " If you will have me stay now, I will."

" Indeed, you are best away," said my lady, laughing, as she put her hand on the boy's head for a moment. " You shall stay in no such dull place. You shall go to college and distinguish yourself as becomes your name. That is how you shall please me best; and—and if my children want you, or I want you, you shall come to us, and I know we may count on you."

" May Heaven forsake me if you may not! " Harry said, getting up from his knee.

" And my knight longs for a dragon this instant that he may fight," said my lady, laughing—which speech made Harry Esmond start and turn red; for indeed the very thought was in his mind, that he would like that some chance should immediately happen whereby he might show his devotion. And it pleased him to think that his lady had called him " her knight "; and often and often he recalled this to his mind, and prayed that he might be her true knight too.

My lady's bed-chamber window looked out over the country, and you could see from it the purple hills beyond Castle wood village, the green common betwixt that and the Hall, and the old bridge which crossed over the river. When Harry Esmond went away for Cambridge, little Frank ran alongside his horse as far as the bridge ; and there Harry stopped for a moment, and looked back at the house where the best part of his life had been passed. It lay before him with its grey familiar towers, a pinnacle or two shining in the sun, the buttresses and terrace walls casting great blue shades on the grass. And Harry remembered, all his life after, how he saw his mistress at the window looking out on him in a white robe, the little Beatrix's chestnut curls resting at her mother's side. Both waved a farewell to him, and little Frank sobbed to leave him. Yes, he *would* be his lady's true knight, he vowed in his heart; he waved her an adieu with his hat.

CHAPTER X

I GO TO CAMBRIDGE, AND DO BUT LITTLE GOOD THERE

MY lord, who said he should like to revisit the old haunts of his youth, kindly accompanied Harry Esmond in his first journey to Cambridge.

Mr. Esmond was entered a pensioner of Trinity College in Cambridge, to which famous college my lord had also in his youth belonged. Doctor Montague was master at this time, and received my Lord Viscount with great politeness ; so did Mr. Bridge, who was appointed to be Harry V tutor. Tom Tusher, who was of Emmanuel College, and was by this time a junior soph, came to wait upon my lord, and to take Harry under his protection ; and comfortable rooms being provided for him in the great court close by the gate, and near to the famous Mr. Newton's lodgings, Harry's patron took leave of him with many kind words and blessings, and an admonition to him to behave better at the University than my lord himself had ever done.

'Tis needless in these memoirs to go at any length into the particulars of Harry Esmond's college career. It was like that of a hundred young gentlemen of that day. But he had the ill-fortune to be older by a couple of years than most of his fellow-students ; and by his previous solitary mode of bringing up, the circumstances of his

life, and the peculiar thoughtfulness and melancholy that had naturally engendered, he was, in a great measure, cut off from the society of comrades who were much younger and higher-spirited than he. His tutor, who had bowed down to the ground as he walked my lord over the college grass-plats, changed his behaviour as soon as the nobleman's back was turned, and was—at least Harry thought so—harsh and overbearing. When the lads used to assemble in their *grege*s in hall, Harry found himself alone in the midst of that little flock of boys. They raised a great laugh at him when he was set on to read Latin, which he did with the foreign pronunciation taught to him by his old master, the Jesuit, than which he knew no other. Mr. Bridge, the tutor, made him the object of clumsy jokes, in which he was fond of indulging. The young man's spirit was chafed, and his vanity mortified ; and he found himself, for some time, as lonely in this place as ever he had been at Castle wood, whither he longed to return. His birth was a source of shame to him, and he fancied a hundred slights and sneers from young and old, who, no doubt, had treated him better had he met them himself more frankly. And as he looks back, in calmer days, upon this period of his life, which he thought so unhappy, he can see that his own pride and vanity caused no small part of the mortifications which he attributed to others' ill-will. The world deals good-naturedly with good-natured people ; and I never knew a sulky misanthropist who quarrelled with it, but it was he, and not it, that was in the wrong. Tom Tusher gave Harry plenty of good advice on this subject, for Tom had both good sense and good-humour ; but Mr. Harry chose to treat his senior with a great deal of

superfluous disdain and absurd scorn, and would by no means part from his darling injuries, in which, very likely, no man believed but himself.

A poem or two in Latin and English, which were pronounced to have some merit, and a Latin oration (for Mr. Esmond could write that language better than pronounce it), got him a little reputation both with the authorities of the University and amongst the young men, with whom he began to pass for more than he was worth. A few victories over their common enemy, Mr. Bridge, made them incline towards him, and look upon him as the champion of their order against the seniors. Such of the lads as he took into his confidence found him not so gloomy and haughty as his appearance led them to believe; and Don Dismallo, as he was called, became presently a person of some little importance in his college, and was, as he believes, set down by the seniors there as rather a dangerous character.

Don Dismallo was a staunch young Jacobite, like the rest of his family; gave himself many absurd airs of loyalty; used to invite young friends to Burgundy, and give the King's health on King James's birthday; wore black on the* day of his abdication; fasted on the anniversary of King William's coronation; and performed a thousand absurd antics, of which he smiles now to think.

One of his companions was a queer gentleman that resided in the University, though he was no member of it, and was the professor of a science scarce recognised in the common course of college education. This was a French refugee officer, who had been driven out of his native country at the time of the Protestant persecutions there, and who came to Cambridge, where he taught the

science of the small-sword, and set up a saloon-of-arms. Though he declared himself a Protestant, 'twas said Mr. Moreau was a Jesuit in disguise ; indeed he brought very strong recommendatcns to the Tory party, which was pretty strong in that University, and very likely was one of the many agents whom King James had in this country. Esmond found this gentleman's conversation very much more agreeable and to his taste than the talk of the college divines in the common-room. He never wearied of Moreau's stories of the wars of Turenne and Condé, in which he had borne a part; and being familiar with the French tongue from his youth, and in a place where but few spoke it, his company became very agreeable to the brave old professor of arms, whose favourite pupil he was, and who made Mr. Esmond a very tolerable proficient in the noble science of *escrimc*.

At the next term, Esmond was to take his degree of Bachelor of Arts, and afterwards, in proper season, to assume the cassock and bands which his fond mistress would have him wear. Tom Tusher himself was a parson and a fellow of his college by this time ; and Harry felt that he would very gladly cede his right to the living of Castlewood to Tom, and that his own calling was in no way the pulpit. But as he was bound, before all things in the world, to his dear mistress at home, and knew that a refusal on his part would grieve her, he determined to give her no hint of his unwillingness to the clerical office ; and it was in this unsatisfactory mood of mind that he went to spend the last vacation he should have at Castlewood, before he took orders.

CHAPTER XI

I COME HOME FOR A HOLIDAY TO CASTLEWOOD, AND FIND A SKELETON IN THE HOUSE

AT his third long vacation, Esmond came as usual to Castlewood, always feeling an eager thrill of pleasure when he found himself once more in the house where he had passed so many years, and beheld the kind, familiar eyes of his mistress looking upon him. She and her children (out of whose company she scarce ever saw him) came to greet him. Miss Beatrix was grown so tall that Harry did not quite know whether he might kiss her or no ; and she blushed and held back when he offered that salutation, though she took it, and even courted it, when they were alone.

" I believe you will have to occupy your old chamber," says my lady. " I hope the housekeeper has got it ready."

" Why, mamma, you have been there **ten** times these three days yourself ! " exclaims Frank.

" And she cut some flowers which you planted in my garden—do you remember, ever so many years ago ?—when I was quite a little girl," cries out Miss Beatrix, on tiptoe. " And mamma put them in your window."

" I remember when you grew well after you were ill that you used to like roses," said the lady, blushing like one of them. They all conducted Harry Esmond to his chamber, the children running before, **Harry** walking by his mistress hand-in-hand.

The old room had been ornamented and beautified not a little to receive him. The flowers were in the window in a china vase; and there was a fine new counterpane on the bed, which chatterbox Beatrix said mamma had made too. A fire was crackling on the hearth, although it was June—my lady thought the room wanted warming. Everything was done to make him happy and welcome. "And you are not to be a page any longer, but a gentleman and kinsman, and to walk with papa and mamma," said the children. And as soon as his dear mistress and children had left him to himself, it was with a heart overflowing with love and gratefulness that he flung himself down on his knees by the side of the little bed, and asked a blessing upon those who were so kind to him.

One of the causes why my Lord Viscount had taken young Esmond into his special favour was a trivial one, that hath not before been mentioned, though it was a very lucky accident in Henry Esmond's life. A very few months after my lord's coming to Castlewood, in the winter time—the little boy, being a child in a petticoat, trotting about—it happened that little Frank was with his father after dinner, who fell asleep over his wine, heedless of the child, who crawled to the fire; and, as good fortune would have it, Esmond was sent by his mistress for the boy, just as the poor little screaming urchin's coat was set on fire by a log, when Esmond, rushing forward, tore the dress off the infant, so that his own hands were burned more than the child's, who was frightened rather than hurt by this accident. But certainly 'twas providential that a resolute person should have come in at that instant, or the child had been burned to death probably, my lord sleeping very heavily after drinking,

and not waking so cool as a man should who had a danger to face.

Ever after this the father, loud in his expressions of remorse and humility for being a tipsy good-for-nothing, and of admiration for Harry Esmond, whom his lordship would style a hero for doing a very trifling service, had the tenderest regard for his son's preserver, and Harry became quite as one of the family. His burns were tended with the greatest care by his kind mistress, who said that Heaven had sent him to be the guardian of her children, and that she would love him all her life.

And it was after this, and from the very great love and tenderness which had grown up in this little household, rather than from the exhortations of Dean Armstrong (though these had no small weight with him), that Harry came to be quite of the religion of his house and his dear mistress, of which he has ever since been a professing member. As for Doctor Tusher's boasts that he was the cause of this conversion—even in these young days Mr. Esmond had such a contempt for the Doctor, that had Tusher bade him believe anything (which he did not; never meddling at all), Harry would that instant have questioned the truth on't.

My lady seldom drank wine, but on certain days of the year, such as birthdays (poor Harry had never a one) and anniversaries, she took a little ; and this day, the 29th December, was one. At the end, then, of this year '96, it might have been a fortnight after Mr. Holt's last visit, Lord Castlewood being still very gloomy in mind, and sitting at table—my lady bidding a servant bring her a glass of wine, and looking at her husband with one of her sweet smiles, said,—

" My lord, will you not fill a bumper too, and let me call a toast ? "

" What is it, Rachel ? " says he, holding out his empty glass to be filled.

" 'Tis the 29th of December," says my lady, with her fond look of gratitude, " and my toast is, ' Harry—and God bless him, who saved my boy's life ! ' "

My lord looked at Harry hard, and drank the glass; but clapped it down on the table in a moment, and, with a sort of groan, rose up and went out of the room. What was the matter ? We all knew that some great grief was over him.

Not very far off from Castlewood is Sark Castle, where the Marchioness of Sark lived, who was known to have been a mistress of the late King Charles ; and to this house, whither, indeed, a great part of the county gentry went, my lord insisted upon going, not only himself, but on taking his little daughter and son, to play with the children there. The children were nothing loth, for the house was splendid, and the welcome kind enough. But my lady—justly, no doubt—thought that the children of such a mother as that noted Lady Sark had been could be no good company for her two, and spoke her mind to her lord. His own language when he was thwarted was not indeed of the gentlest. To be brief, there was a family dispute on this, as there had been on many other points, and the lady was not only forced to give in—for the other's will was law ; nor could she, on account of their tender age, tell her children what was the nature of her objection to their visit of pleasure, or indeed mention to

them any objection at all—but she had the additional secret mortification to find them returning delighted with their new friends, loaded with presents from them, and eager to be allowed to go back to a place of such delights as Sark Castle. Every year she thought the company there would be more dangerous to her daughter, as from a child Beatrix grew to a woman, and her daily increasing beauty, and many faults of character too, expanded.

It was Harry Esmond's lot to see one of the visits which the old Lady of Sark paid to the Lady of Castlewood Hall, whither she came in state, with six chestnut horses and blue ribbons, a page on each carriage step, a gentleman of the horse, and armed servants riding before and behind her. And, but that it was unpleasant to see Lady Castlewood's face, it was amusing to watch the behaviour of the two enemies—the frigid patience of the younger lady, and the unconquerable good-humour of the elder, who would see no offence whatever her rival intended, and who never ceased to smile and to laugh, and to coax the children, and to pay compliments to every man, woman, child, nay dog, or chair and table, in Castlewood, so bent was she upon admiring everything there.

CHAPTER XII

MY LORD MOHUN COMES AMONG US FOR NO GOOD

THERE had ridden along with this old Princess's cavalcade two gentlemen—her son, my Lord Firebrace, and his friend, my Lord Mohun—who both were greeted with a great deal of cordiality by the hospitable Lord of Castlewood. My Lord Firebrace was but a feeble-minded and weak-limbed young nobleman, small in stature and limited in understanding, to judge from the talk young Esmond had with him ; but the other was a person of a handsome presence, with the *bel air*, and a bright, daring, warlike aspect, which, according to the chronicle of those days, had already achieved for him the conquest of several beauties and toasts. He had fought and conquered in France, as well as in Flanders. And he spoke of his military exploits pleasantly, and with the manly freedom of a soldier, so as to delight all his hearers at Castlewood, who were little accustomed to meet a companion so agreeable.

On the first day this noble company came, my lord would not hear of their departure before dinner, and carried away the gentlemen to amuse them, whilst his wife was left to do the honours of her house to the old Marchioness and her daughter within. They looked at the stables, where my Lord Mohun praised the horses, though there was but a poor show there ; they walked over the

old house and gardens, and fought the siege of Oliver's time over again ; they played a game of rackets in the old court, where my Lord Castlewood beat my Lord Mohun, who said he loved ball of all things, and would quickly come back to Castlewood for his revenge. After dinner they played bowls, and drank punch in the green alley ; and when they parted they were sworn friends, my Lord Castlewood kissing the other lord before he mounted on horseback, and pronouncing him the best companion he had met for many a long day. All night long, over his tobacco-pipe, Castlewood did not cease to talk to Harry Esmond in praise of his new friend.

At breakfast next day it was the same talk renewed ; and when my lady said there was something free in the Lord Mohun's looks and manner of speech which caused her to mistrust him, her lord burst out with one of his laughs and oaths, said that he never liked man, woman, or beast but what she was sure to be jealous of it, that Mohun was the prettiest fellow in England, that he hoped to see more of him whilst in the country, and that he would let Mohun know what my Lady Prude said of him.

" Indeed," Lady Castlewood said, " I liked his conversation well enough. 'Tis more amusing than that of most people I know. I thought it, I own, too free ; not from what he said, as rather from what he implied."

" Psha ! your ladyship does not know the world," said her husband, " and you have always been as squeamish as when you were a miss at fifteen."

You found no fault when I was a miss at fifteen."

" Begad, madam, you are grown too old for a pinafore now ; and I hold that 'tis for me to judge what company my wife shall see," said my lord, slapping the table.

" Indeed, Francis, I never thought otherwise," answered my lady, rising and dropping him a curtsy, in which stately action, if there was obedience, there was defiance too, and in which a bystander, deeply interested in the happiness of that pair as Harry Esmond was, might see how hopelessly separated they were—what a great gulf of difference and discord had run between them.

" By G—d ! Mohun is the best fellow in England, and I'll invite him here just to plague that woman. Did you ever see such a frigid insolence as it is, Harry ? That's the way she treats me," he broke out, storming, and his face growing red as he clenched his fists and went on: " I'm nobody in my own house, I'm to be the humble servant of that parson's daughter. She puts me to shame before the children with her d—d airs, and, I'll swear, tells Frank and Beaty that papa's a reprobate, and that they ought to despise me."

" Indeed and indeed, sir, I never heard her say a word but of respect regarding you," Harry Esmond interposed.

" No, curse it ! I wish she would speak. But she never does. She scorns me, and holds her tongue. She keeps off from me, as if I was a pestilence. By George! she was fond enough of her pestilence once. And when I came a-courting, you would see miss blush—blush red, by George, for joy. And now, sir, look at her! I believe she would be glad if I was dead; and dead I've been to her these five years—ever since you all of you had the smallpox, and she never forgave me for going away."

" Indeed, my lord, though 'twas hard to forgive, I think my mistress forgave it," Harry Esmond said. " And

remember how eagerly she watched your lordship's return, and how sadly she turned away when she saw your cold looks."

" Damme ! " cries out my lord, " would you have had me wait and catch the smallpox ? Where the deuce had been the good of that ? I'll bear danger with any man, but not useless danger—no, no. Thank you for nothing. And—you nod your head, and I know very well, Parson Harry, what you mean. There was the—the other affair to make her angry. But is a woman never to forgive a husband who goes a-tripping ? Do you take me for a saint ? "

" Indeed, sir, I do not," says Harry, with a smile.

" Since that time my wife's as cold as the statue at Charing Cross. I tell thee she has no forgiveness in her, Henry. Her coldness blights my whole life, and sends me to the punch-bowl, or driving about the country. My children are not mine, but hers, when we are together. 'Tis only when she is out of sight with her abominable cold glances, that run through me, that they'll come to me, and that I dare to give them so much as a kiss ; and that's why I take 'em and love 'em in other people's houses, Harry. I'm killed by the very virtue of that proud woman. Virtue! Give me the virtue that can forgive ; give me the virtue that thinks not of preserving itself, but of making other folks happy."

And my lord again slapped the table, and took a great draught from the tankard. Harry Esmond admired as he listened to him, and thought how the poor preacher of this self-sacrifice had fled from the smallpox, which the lady had borne so cheerfully, and which had been the cause of so much disunion in the lives of all in this house.

The intimacy between the Lords Mohun and Castlewood appeared to increase as long as the former remained in the country, and my Lord of Castlewood especially seemed never to be happy out of his new comrade's sight. They sported together, they drank, they played bowls and tennis. My Lord Castlewood would go for three days to Sark, and bring back my Lord Mohun to Castlewood.

CHAPTER XIII

MY LORD LEAVES US AND HIS EVIL BEHIND HIM

MY Lord Mohun (of whose exploits and fame some of the gentlemen of the University had brought down but ugly reports) was once more a guest at Castlewood, and seemingly more intimately allied with my lord even than before. Once in the spring those two noblemen had ridden to Cambridge from Newmarket, whither they had gone for the horse-racing, and had honoured Harry Esmond with a visit at his rooms; after which Dr. Montague, the master of the College, who had treated Harry somewhat haughtily, seeing his familiarity with these great folks, and that my Lord Castlewood laughed and walked with his hand on Harry's shoulder, relented to Mr. Esmond, and condescended to be very civil to him. And some days after his arrival, Harry, laughing, told this story to Lady Esmond, remarking how strange it was that men, famous for learning and renowned over Europe, should, nevertheless, so bow down to a title and cringe to a nobleman ever so poor. At this Mistress Beatrix flung up her head, and said it became those of low origin to respect their betters ; that the parsons made themselves a great deal too proud, she thought; and that she liked the way at Lady Sark's best, where the chaplain, though he loved pudding, as all parsons do, always went away before the custard.

" And when I am a parson," says Mr. Esmond, " will you give me no custard, Beatrix ? "

" You—you are different," Beatrix answered, " You are of our blood."

" My father was a parson, as you call him," said my lady.

" But mine is a peer of Ireland," says Mistress Beatrix, tossing her head. " Let people know their places. I suppose you will have me go down on my knees and ask a blessing of Mr. Thomas Tusher, that has just been made a curate, and whose mother was a waiting-maid."

And she tossed out of the room, being in one of her flighty humours then.

When she was gone, my lady looked so sad and grave that Harry asked the cause of her disquietude. She said it was not merely what he said of Newmarket, but what she had remarked, with great anxiety and terror, that my lord, ever since his acquaintance with the Lord Mohun especially, had recurred to his fondness for play, which he had renounced since his marriage.

" But men promise more than they are able to perform in marriage," said my lady, with a sigh. " I fear he has lost large sums, and our property, always small, is dwindling away under this reckless dissipation. I heard of him in London with very wild company. Since his return letters and lawyers are constantly coming and going ; he seems to me to have a constant anxiety, though he hides it under boisterousness and laughter. I looked through—through the door last night, and—and before," said my lady, " and saw them at cards after midnight. No estate will bear that extravagance, much less ours, which will be so diminished that my son will have, nothing at all, and my poor Beatrix no portion ! "

" I wish I could help you, madam," said Harry Esmond sighing, and wishing that unavailingly, and for the thousandth time in his life.

" Who can ? Only God," said Lady Esmond—" only God, in whose hand's we are."

As my lord and his friend Lord Mohun were such close companions, Mistress Beatrix chose to be jealous of the latter ; and the two gentlemen often entertained each other by laughing, in their rude, boisterous way, at the child's freaks of anger and show of dislike. " When thou art old enough, thou shalt marry Lord Mohun," Beatrix's father would say ; on which the girl would pout and say, " I would rather marry Tom Tusher." And because the Lord Mohun always showed an extreme gallantry to my Lady Oastlewood, whom he professed to admire devotedly, one day, in answer to this old joke of her father's, Beatrix said, "I think my lord would rather marry mamma than marry me, and is waiting till you die to ask her."

The words were said lightly and pertly by the girl one night before supper, as the family party were assembled near the great fire. The two lords, who were at cards, both gave a start. My lady turned as red as scarlet, and bade Mistress Beatrix go to her own chamber ; whereupon the girl, putting on, as her wont was, the most innocent air, said, " I am sure I meant no wrong. I am sure mamma talks a great deal more to Harry Esmond than she does to papa ; and she cried when Harry went away, and she never does when papa goes away ! And last night she talked to Lord Mohun for ever so long, and sent us out of the room, and cried when we came back, and——"

" D—n ! " cried out my Lord Castlewood, out of all patience. " Go out of the room, you little viper ! " and he started up and flung down his cards.

" Ask Lord Mohun what I said to him, Francis," her ladyship said, rising up with a scared face, but yet with a great and touching dignity and candour in her look and voice. " Come away with me, Beatrix." Beatrix sprang up too ; she was in tears now.

" Dearest mamma, what have I done ? " she asked. " Sure I meant no harm." And she clung to her mother, and the pair went out sobbing together.

" I will tell you what your wife said to me, Frank," my Lord Mohun cried. " Parson Harry may hear it ; and, as I hope for heaven, every word I say is true. Last night, with tears in her eyes, your wife implored me to play no more with you at dice or at cards ; and you know best whether what she asked was not for your good."

" Of course it was, Mohun," says my lord in a dry, hard voice. " Of course you are a model of a man, and the world knows what a saint you are."

My Lord Mohun was separated from his wife, and had had many affairs of honour, of which women as usual had been the cause.

" I am no saint, though your wife is ; and I can answer for my actions as other people must for their words," said my Lord Mohun.

" By G—d, my lord, you shall ! " cried the other, starting up.

" We have another little account to settle first, my lord," says Lord Mohun. Whereupon Harry Esmond, filled with alarm for the consequences to which this disastrous dispute might lead, broke out into the

most vehement expostulations with his patron and his adversary. " Gracious heavens! " he said, " my lord, are you going to draw a sword upon your friend in your own house ? Can you doubt the honour of a lady who is as pure as heaven, and would die a thousand times rather than do you a wrong ? Are the idle words of a jealous child to set friends at variance ? " Has not my mistress, as much as she dared do, besought your lordship, as the truth must be told, to break your intimacy with my Lord Mohun, and to give up the habit which may bring ruin on your family ? But for my Lord Mohun's illness, had he not left you ? "

" ' Faith, Frank, a man with a gouty toe can't run after other men's wives," broke out my Lord Mohun, who indeed was in that way, and with a laugh and a look at his swathed limb so frank and comical that the other, dashing his fist across his forehead, was caught by that infectious good-humour, and said with his oath, "——it, Harry, I believe thee," and so this quarrel was over, and the two gentlemen, at swords drawn but just now, dropped their points, and shook hands.

Beatipacifici. " Go, bring my lady back," said Harry's patron. Esmond went away only too glad to be the bearer of such good news. He found her at the door—she had been listening there, but went back as he came. She took both his hands ; hers were marble cold. She seemed as if she would fall on his shoulder. " Thank you, and God bless you, my dear brother Harry! " she said. She kissed his hand. Esmond felt her tears upon it; and leading her into the room, and up to my lord, the Lord Castlewood, with an outbreak of feeling and affection such as he had not exhibited for many a long day, took

his wife to his heart, and bent over and kissed her and asked her pardon.

[Lord Castlewood is deeply in debt to Lord Mohun, having continually lost money to him at cards. Mohun tries to gain Lady Castlewood's affection by letting her husband win back his losses ; he deceives her into supposing that he has come under the influence of religion and is a reformed character. Harry Esmond, anxious to bring Mohun's visit to an end before greater harm comes, offers to go for a drive with Mohun and warns him that he is playing a dangerous game.]

" Danger, psha ! " says my lord, giving a cut to the horses, which at this minute—for we were got on to the Downs—fairly ran off into a gallop that no pulling could stop. The rein broke in Lord Mohun's hands, and the furious beasts scampered madly forwards, the carriage swaying to and fro, and the persons within it holding on to the sides as best they might, until, seeing a great ravine before them, where an upset was inevitable, the two gentlemen leapt for their lives, each out of his side of the chaise. Harry Esmond was quit for a fall on the grass, which was so severe that it stunned him for a minute ; but he got up presently very sick, and bleeding at the nose, but with no other hurt. The Lord Mohun was not so fortunate ; he fell on his head against a stone, and lay on the ground, dead to all appearance.

This misadventure happened as the gentlemen were on their return homewards ; and my Lord Castlewood, with his son and daughter, who were going out for a ride, met the ponies as they were galloping with the car behind, the broken traces entangling their heels, and my lord's people turned and stopped them. It was young Frank

HENRY ESMOND

who spied out Lord Mohun's scarlet coat as he lay . ground, and the party made up to that unfort gentleman and Esmond, who was now standing over His large periwig and feathered hat had fallen off, an was bleeding profusely from a wound on the forehe and looking, and being, indeed, a corpse.

" Great God ! he's dead ! " says my lord. " Ride, some one ! fetch a doctor—stay ! I'll go home and bring back Tusher ; he knows surgery," and my lord, with his son after him, galloped away.

They were scarce gone when Harry Esmond, who was indeed but just come to himself, bethought him of a similar accident which he had seen on a ride from Newmarket to Cambridge ; and taking off a sleeve of my lord's coat, Harry, with a penknife, opened a vein in his arm, and was greatly relieved, after a moment, to see the blood flow. He was near half an hour before he came to himself, by which time Doctor Tusher and little Frank arrived, and found my lord not a corpse indeed, but as pale as one.

After a time, when he was able to bear motion, they put my lord upon a groom's horse, and gave the other to Esmond, the men walking on each side of my lord, to support him, if need were, and worthy Doctor Tueher with them. Little Frank and Harry rode together at a foot pace.

When we rode together home, the boy said, " We met mamma, who was walking on the terrace with the Doctor, and papa frightened her, and told her you were dead——"

" That I was dead ? " asks Harry.

" Yes. Papa says, ' Here's poor Harry killed, my dear;' on which mamma gives a great scream, and oh,

HENRY ESMOND

! she drops down and I thought she was dead too. 'ou never saw such a way as papa was in. He swore of his great oaths, and he turned quite pale ; and . he began to laugh somehow, and he told the Doctor take his horse, and me to follow him; and we left him. hd I looked back, and saw him dashing water out of the fountain on to mamma. Oh, she was so frightened ! "

Musing upon this curious history—for my Lord Mohun's name was Henry too, and they called each other Frank and Harry often—and not a little disturbed and anxious, Esmond rode home. His dear lady was on the terrace still, one of her women with her, and my lord no longer there. There are steps and a little door thence down into the road. My lord passed, looking very ghastly, with a handkerchief over his head, and without his hat and periwig, which a groom carried ; but his politeness did not desert him, and he made a bow to the lady above.

" Thank Heaven you are safe ! " she said.

" And so is Harry, too, mamma," says little Frank—" huzzay! "

Harry Esmond got off the horse to run to his mistress, as did little Frank, and one of the grooms took charge of the two beasts, while the other, hat and periwig in hand, walked by my lord's bridle to the front gate, which lay half a mile away.

" Oh, my boy ! what a fright you have given me ! " Lady Castlewood said, when Harry Esmond came up, greeting him with one of her shining looks, and a voice of tender welcome; and she was so kind as to kiss the young man ('twas the second time she had so honoured him), and she walked into the house between him and her son, holding a hand of each.

CHAPTER XIV

WE BIDE AFTER HIM TO LONDON

AFTER a repose of a couple of days, the Lord Mohun was so far recovered of his hurt as to be able to announce his departure for the next morning, when, accordingly, he took leave of Castlewood, proposing to ride to London by easy stages, and lie two nights upon the road. His host treated him with a studied and ceremonious courtesy, certainly different from my lord's usual frank and careless demeanour ; but there was no reason to suppose that the two lords parted otherwise than good friends, though Harry Esmond remarked that my Lord Viscount only saw his guest in company of other persons, and seemed to avoid being alone with him.

Harry Esmond was witness of the departure. It was very different to my lord's coming, for which great preparation had been made; and there was a sadness and constraint about all persons that day, which filled Mr. Esmond with gloomy forebodings and sad indefinite apprehensions. Lord Castlewood stood at the door watching his guest and his people as they went out under the arch of the outer gate. When he was there, Lord Mohun turned once more; my Lord Viscount slowly raised his beaver and bowed. His face wore a peculiar livid look, Harry thought. He cursed and kicked away his dogs, which came jumping about him;

then he walked up to the fountain in the centre of the court, and leaned against a pillar and looked into the basin. As Esmond crossed over to his own room, late the Chaplain's, on the other side of the court, and turned to enter in at the low door, he saw Lady Castlewood looking through the curtains of the great window of the drawing-room overhead at my lord as he stood regarding the fountain. There was in the court a peculiar silence somehow ; and the scene remained long in Esmond's memory ; the sky bright overhead ; the buttresses of the building, and the sun-dial casting shadow over the gilt *memento mon* inscribed underneath ; the two dogs, a black greyhound and a spaniel nearly white, the one with his face up to the sun, and the other snuffing amongst the grass and stones, and my lord leaning over the fountain, which was plashing audibly. 'Tis strange how that scene, and the sound of that fountain, remain fixed on the memory of a man who has beheld a hundred sights of splendour, and danger too, of which he has kept no account.

The Lady Castlewood's mind was greatly relieved, in the last few days of this well-remembered holiday time, by my lord's announcing one morning, after the post had brought him letters from London, in a careless tone, that the Lord Mohun was gone to Paris, and was about to make a great journey in Europe ; and though Lord Castlewood's own gloom did not wear off, or his behaviour alter, yet this cause of anxiety being removed from his lady's mind, she began to be more hopeful and easy in her spirits, striving too, with all her heart, and by all the means of soothing in her power, to call back my lord's cheerfulness and dissipate his moody humour.

He accounted for it himself by saying that he was out

of health ; that he wanted to see his physician ; that he would go to London and consult Doctor Cheyne. It was agreed that his lordship and Harry Esmond should make the journey as far as London together ; and of a Monday morning, the 10th of October, in the year 1700, they set forwards towards London on horseback. The day before being Sunday, and the rain pouring down, the family did not visit church ; and at night my lord read the service to his family very finely, and with a peculiar sweetness and gravity—speaking the parting benediction, Harry thought, as solemn as ever he heard it. And he kissed and embraced his wife and children before they went to their own chambers with more fondness than he was ordinarily wont to show, and with a solemnity and feeling of which they thought in after-days with no small comfort.

They took horse the next morning, lay that night on the road, and entered London at nightfall; my lord going to the " Trumpet," in the Cockpit, Whitehall, a house used by the military in his time as a young man, and accustomed by his lordship ever since.

An hour after my lord's arrival, my lord's man of business arrived from Gray's Inn ; and thinking that his patron might wish to be private with the lawyer, Esmond was for leaving them. But my lord said his business was short; introduced Mr. Esmond particularly to the lawyer, who had been engaged for the family in the old lord's time, who said that he had paid the money, as desired, that day to my Lord Mohun himself, at his lodgings in Bow Street; that his lordship had expressed some surprise, as it was not customary to employ lawyers, he said, in such transactions between men of honour; but

nevertheless he had returned my Lord Viscount's note of hand, which he held at his client's disposition.

" I thought the Lord Mohun had been in Paris ? " cried Mr. Esmond, in great alarm and astonishment.

" He is come back at my invitation," said my Lord Viscount. " We have accounts to settle together."

" I pray Heaven they are over, sir," says Esmond.

" Oh, quite," replied the other, looking hard at the young man. " He was rather troublesome about that money which I told you I had lost to him at play. And now 'tis paid, and we are quits on that score, and we shall meet good friends again."

" My lord," cried out Esmond, " I am sure you are deceiving me, and that there is a quarrel between the Lord Mohun and you."

" Quarrel—pish! We shall sup together this very night, and drink a bottle. Every man is ill-humoured who loses such a sum as I have lost. But now 'tis paid, and my anger is gone with it."

" Where shall we sup, sir ? " says Harry.

" We ! Let some gentlemen wait till they are asked," says my Lord Viscount, with a laugh. " You go to Duke Street and see Mr. Betterton. You love the play, I know. Leave me to follow my own devices ; and in the morning we'll breakfast together, with what appetite we may, as the play says."

" By G—! my lord, I will not leave you this night," says Harry Esmond. " I think I know the cause of your dispute. I swear to you 'tis nothing. On the very day the accident befell Lord Mohun I was speaking to him about it. I know that nothing has passed but idle gallantry on his part."

" You know that nothing has passed but idle gallantry between Lord Mohun and my wife," says my lord, in a thundering voice—" you knew of this and didn't tell me ? "

" I knew more of it than my dear mistress did herself, sir—a thousand times more. How was she, who was as innocent as a child, to know what was the meaning of the covert addresses of a villain ? "

" A villain he is, you allow, and would have taken my wife away from me."

" Sir, she is as pure as an angel," cried young Esmond.

" Have I said a word against her?" shrieks out my lord. " Did I ever doubt that she was pure ? It would have been the last day of her life when I did. Do you fancy I think that *she* would go astray ? No, she hasn't passion enough for that. She neither sins nor forgives. I know her temper. And now I've lost her, by Heaven I love her ten thousand times more than ever I did—yes, when she was young and as beautiful as an angel—when she smiled at me in her old father's house, and used to lie in wait for me there as I came from hunting—when I used to fling my head down on her little knees and cry like a child on her lap, and swear I would reform, and drink no more, and play no more, and follow women no more—when all the men of the Court used to be following her—when she used to look with her child more beautiful, by George, than the Madonna in the Queen's Chapel. I am not good like her—I know it. Who is—by Heaven, who is ? I tried and wearied her—I know that very well. I could not talk to her. You men of wit and books could do that, and I couldn't—I felt I couldn't. Why, when

you were but a boy of fifteen I could hear you two together talking your poetry and your books till I was in such a rage that I was fit to strangle you. But you were always a good lad, Harry, and I loved you—you know I did. And I felt she didn't belong to me ; and the children don't. And I besotted myself, and gambled, and drank, and took to all sorts of devilries out of despair and fury. And now comes this Mohun, and she likes him—I know she likes him."

" Indeed, and on my soul, you are wrong, sir," Esmond cried.

"She takes letters from him," cries my lord—" look here, Harry," and he pulled out a paper with a brown stain of blood upon it. " It fell from him that day he wasn't killed. One of the grooms picked it up from the ground and gave it me. ' Divine Gloriana—Why look so coldly on your slave who adores you ? Have you no compassion on the tortures you have seen me suffering ? Do you vouchsafe no reply to billets that are written with the blood of my heart ? ' She had more letters from him."

" But she answered none," cries Esmond.

" That's not Mohun's fault," says my lord ; " and I will be revenged on him—as God's in Heaven, I will."

" For a light word or two, will you risk your lady's honour and your family's happiness, my lord ? " Esmond interposed beseechingly.

" Psha! there shall be no question of my wife's honour," said my lord; " we can quarrel on plenty of grounds besides. If I live, that villain will be punished ; if **I fall**, my family will be only the better: there will only be a spendthrift the less to keep in the world. My

mind is made up, Harry Esmond, and whatever the event is I am easy about it. I leave my wife and you as guardians to the children."

Seeing that my lord was bent upon pursuing this quarrel, and that no entreaties would draw him from it, Harry Esmond (then of a hotter and more impetuous nature than now, when care, and reflection, and grey hairs have calmed him) thought it was his duty to stand by his kind, generous patron, and said, " My lord, if you are determined upon war, you must not go into it alone. 'Tis the duty of our house to stand by its chief ; and I should neither forgive myself nor you if you did not call me, or I should be absent from you at a moment of danger."

" Why, Harry, my poor boy, you are bred for a parson, " says my lord, taking Esmond by the hand very kindly, " and it were a great pity that you should meddle in the matter."

" Your lordship thought of being a churchman once," Harry answered ; " and your father's orders did not prevent him fighting at Castlewood against the Roundheads. Your enemies are mine, sir. I can use the foils, as you have seen, indifferently well ; and don't think I shall be afraid when the buttons are taken off 'em." And then Harry explained, with some blushes and hesitation, how he had himself expostulated with the Lord Mohun, and proposed to measure swords with him if need were, and he could not be got to withdraw peaceably in this dispute. " And I should have beat him, sir," says Harry, laughing. " He never could parry that *botte* I brought from Cambridge. Let us have half an hour of it, and rehearse ; I can teach it your lordship. 'Tis the most delicate point in the

world ; and if you miss it, your adversary's sword is through you."

" By George, Harry, you ought to be the head of the house," says my lord gloomily. " You had been better Lord Castle wood than a lazy sot like me," he added, drawing his hand across his eyes, and surveying his kinsman with very kind, affectionate glances.

" Let us take our coats off and have half an hour's practice before nightfall," says Harry, after thankfully grasping his patron's manly hand.

" You are but a little bit of a lad," says my lord, good-humouredly ; " but, in faith, I believe you could do for that fellow. No, my boy," he continued, " I'll have none of your feints and tricks of stabbing ; I can use my sword pretty well too, and will fight my own quarrel my own way."

" But I shall be by to see fair play ? " cries Harry.

" Yes, God bless you, you shall be by."

" When is it, sir ? " says Harry, for he saw that the matter had been arranged privately and beforehand by my lord.

" 'Tis arranged thus : I sent off a courier to Jack Westbury to say that I wanted him specially. He knows for what, and will be here presently, and drink part of that bottle of sack. Then we shall go to the theatre in Duke Street, where we shall meet Mohun; and then we shall all go sup at the ' Rose' or the ' Greyhound.' Then we shall call for cards, and there will be probably a difference over the cards; and then—God help us !—either a wicked villain and traitor shall go out of the world, or a poor worthless devil that doesn't care to remain in it. I am better away, Hal; my wife will be all the happier when I

am gone," says my lord, with a groan that tore the heart of Harry Esmond, so that he fairly broke into a sob over his patron's kind hand.

" The business was talked over with Mohun before he left home—Castlewood, I mean," my lord went on. " I took the letter in to him, which I had read, and I charged him with his villainy ; and he could make no denial of it, only he said that my wife was innocent."

" And so she is ; before Heaven, my lord, she is ! " cries Harry.

" No doubt, no doubt. They always are," says my lord. " No doubt, when she heard he was killed she fainted from accident."

" But, my lord, my name is Harry," cried out Esmond, burning red. " You told my lady, ' Harry was killed ! ' "

" Damnation ! shall I fight you too ? " shouts my lord in a fury. " Are you, you little serpent, warmed by my fire, going to sting—you ? No, my boy, you're an honest boy; you are a good boy." (And here he broke from rage into tears even more cruel to see.) " You are an honest boy, and I love you; and, by heavens, I am so wretched that I don't care what sword it is that ends me. Stop, here's Jack Westbury. Well, Jack! Welcome, old boy ! This is my kinsman, Harry Esmond."

" Who brought your bowls for you at Castlewood, sir," says Harry, bowing ; and the three gentlemen sat down and drank of that bottle of sack which was prepared for them.

" Harry is number three," says my lord. " You needn't be afraid of him, Jack." And the Colonel gave a look, as much as to say, " Indeed, he don't look as if I need." And then my lord explained what he had only told by

hints before. When he quarrelled with Lord Mohun he was indebted to his lordship in a sum of sixteen hundred pounds, for which Lord Mohun said he proposed to wait until my Lord Viscount should pay him. My lord had raised the sixteen hundred pounds and sent them to Lord Mohun that morning, and before quitting home had put his affairs into order, and was now quite ready to abide the issue of the quarrel.

When we had drunk a couple of bottles of sack, a coach was called, and the three gentlemen went to the Duke's Playhouse, as agreed. The play was one of Mr. Wyherley's—"Love in a Wood."

Between the acts of the play the gentlemen crossed over and conversed freely. There were two of Lord Mohun's party, Captain Macartney, in a military habit, and a gentleman in a suit of blue velvet and silver in a fair periwig, with a rich fall of point of Venice lace—my Lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland. My lord had a paper of oranges, which he ate, and offered to the actresses, joking with them. And Mrs. Bracegirdle, when ray Lord Mohun said something rude, turned on him, and asked him what he did there, and whether he and his friends had come to stab anybody else, as they did poor Will Mountford? My lord's dark face grew darker at this taunt, and wore a mischievous, fatal look. They that saw it remembered it, and said so afterwards.

. When the play was ended the two parties joined company, and my Lord Castlewood then proposed that they should go to a tavern and sup. Lockit's, the "Greyhound," in Charing Cross, was the house selected. All six marched together that way; the three lords going ahead, Lord Mohun's captain, and Colonel Westbury, and Harry

Esmond walking behind them. As they walked, Westbury told Harry Esmond about his old friend Dick the Scholar, who had got promotion, and was Cornet of the Guards, and had wrote a book called the "Christian Hero," and had all the Guards to laugh at him for his pains, for the Christian Hero was breaking the commandments constantly, Westbury said, and had fought one or two duels already. And, in a lower tone, Westbury besought young Mr. Esmond to take no part in the quarrel. "There was no need for more seconds than one," said the Colonel, "and the Captain or Lord Warwick might easily withdraw." But Harry said no; he was bent on going through with the business. Indeed, he had a plan in his head which, he thought, might prevent my Lord Viscount from engaging.

They went in at the bar of the tavern, and desired a private room and wine and cards; and when the drawer had brought these, they began to drink and called healths, and as long as the servants were in the room appeared very friendly.

Harry Esmond's plan was no other than to engage in talk with Lord Mohun, to insult him, and so get the first of the quarrel. So when cards were proposed he offered to play. "Psha!" says my Lord Mohun (whether wishing to save Harry, or not choosing to try the *botte de Jésuite*, it is not to be known)—"young gentlemen from college should not play these stakes. You are too young."

"Who dares say I am too young?" broke out Harry. "Is your lordship afraid?"

"Afraid!" cries out Mohun.

But my good Lord Viscount saw the move. "I'll play you for ten moidores, Mohun," says he.—"You silly boy,

we don't play for groats here as you do at Cambridge." And Harry, who had no such sum in his pocket (for his half-year's salary was always pretty well spent before it was due), fell back with rage and vexation in his heart that he had not money enough to stake.

"I'll stake the young gentleman a crown," says the Lord Mohun's Captain.

"I thought crowns were rather scarce with the gentlemen of the army," says Harry.

"Do they birch at college?" says the Captain.

"They birch fools," says Harry, "and they cane bullies, and they fling puppies into the water."

"Faith, then, there's some escapes drowning," says the Captain, who was an Irishman; and all the gentlemen began to laugh, and made poor Harry only more angry.

My Lord Mohun presently snuffed a candle—it was when the drawers brought in fresh bottles and glasses, and were in the room—on which my Lord Viscount said, "The deuce take you, Mohun, how damned awkward you are! Light the candle, you drawer."

"Damned awkward is a damned awkward expression, my lord," says the other. "Town gentlemen don't use such words—or ask pardon if they do."

"I'm a country gentleman," says my Lord Viscount.

"I see it by your manner," says my Lord Mohun. "No man shall say damned awkward to me."

"I fling the words in your face, my lord," says the other; "shall I send the cards too?"

"Gentlemen, gentlemen! before the servants?" cry out Colonel Westbury and the Lord Warwick in a breath. The drawers go out of the room hastily. They tell the people below of the quarrel upstairs.

" Enough has been said," says Colonel Westbury. " Will your lordships meet to-morrow morning ? "

" Will my Lord Castlewood withdraw his fjords ? " asks the Earl of Warwick. i

" My Lord Castlewood will be——first," savsjfolonel Westbury.

" Then we have nothing for it. Take notice, gengamen, there have been outrageous words—reparation askad and refused."

" And refused," says my Lord Castlewood, putting on his hat. " Where shall the meeting be ? and when?"

" Since my lord refuses me satisfaction, which I deep regret, there is no time so good as now," says my Mori Mohun. " Let us have chairs and go to Leicester Field.'

" Are your lordship and I to have the honour of exchanging a pass or two ? " says Colonel Westbury, with a low bow to my Lord of Warwick and Holland.

" It is an honour for me," says my lord, with a profound congee, " to be matched with a gentleman who has been at Mons and Namur."

" Will your Reverence permit me to give you a lesson ? " says the Captain.

" Nay, nay, gentlemen, two on a side are plenty," says Harry's patron. " Spare the boy, Captain Macartney," and he shook Harry's hand—for the last time, save one, in his life.

At the bar of the tavern all the gentlemen stopped, and my Lord Viscount said, laughing, to the barwoman, that those cards set people sadly a-quarrelling, but that th dispute was over now, and the parties were all going away to my Lord Mohun's house, in Bow Street, to drink / bottle more before going to bed.

A half-dozen of chairs were now called, and the six gentlemen stepping into them, the word was privately given to the chairmen to go to Leicester Field, where the gentlemen were set down opposite the " Standard " tavern. It was midnight, and the town was a-bed by this time, and only a few lights in the windows of the houses ; but the night was bright enough for the unhappy purpose which the disputants came about, and so all six entered into that fatal square, the chairmen standing without the railing and keeping the gate, lest any persons should disturb the meeting.

All that happened there hath been matter of public notoriety, and is recorded, for warning to lawless men, in the annals of our country. After being engaged for not more than a couple of minutes, as Harry Esmond thought (though being occupied at the time with his own adversary's point, which was active, he may not have taken a good note of time), a cry from the chairmen without, who were smoking their pipes, and leaning over the railings of the field as they watched the dim combat within, announced that some catastrophe had happened, which caused Esmond to drop his sword and look round, at which moment his enemy wounded him in the right hand. But the young man did not heed this hurt much, and ran up to the place where he saw his dear master was down.

My Lord Mohun was standing over him.

" Are you much hurt, Frank ? " he asked in a hollow voice.

" I believe I'm a dead man," my lord said from the Tround.

" No, no, not so," says the other ; " and I call God to

witness, Frank Esmond, that I would have asked your pardon had you but given me a chance. In—in the first cause of our falling out, I swear that no one was to blame but me, and—and that my lady——"

"Hush!" says my poor Lord Viscount, lifting himself on his elbow and speaking faintly. "'Twas a dispute about the cards—the cursed cards. Harry, my boy, are you wounded too? God help thee! I loved thee, Harry, and thou must watch over my little Frank—and—and carry this little heart to my wife."

And here my dear lord felt in his breast for a locket he wore there, and, in the act, fell back fainting.

We were all at this terrified, thinking him dead; but Esmond and Colonel West bury bade the chairmen to come into the field; and so my lord was carried to one Mr. Aimes, a surgeon, in Long Acre, and there the house was wakened up, and the victim of this quarrel carried in.

My Lord Viscount was put to bed, and his wound looked to by the surgeon, who seemed both kind and skilful. When he had looked to my lord, he bandaged up Harry Esmond's hand (who, from loss of blood, had fainted too, in the house, and may have been some time unconscious); and when the young man came to himself you may be sure he eagerly asked what news there were of his dear patron; on which the surgeon carried him to the room where the Lord Castlewood lay, who had already sent for a priest, and desired earnestly, they said, to speak with his kinsman. He was lying on a bed, very pale and ghastly, with that fixed, fatal look in his eyes which betokens death; and faintly beckoning all the other persons away from him with his hand, and crying out, "Only Harry Esmond," the hand fell powerless

down on the coverlet, as Harry came forward, and knelt down and kissed it.

"Thou art all but a priest, Harry," my Lord Viscount gasped out, with a faint smile, and pressure of his cold hand. "Are they all gone? Let me make thee a death-bed confession."

And with sacred Death waiting, as it were, at the bed-foot, as an awful witness of his words, the poor dying soul gasped out his last wishes in respect of his family, his humble profession of contrition for his faults, and his charity towards the world he was leaving. Some things he said concerned Harry Esmond as much as they astonished him. And my Lord Viscount, sinking visibly, was in the midst of these strange confessions, when the ecclesiastic for whom my lord had sent, Mr. Atterbury, arrived.

My lord, hearing of Mr. Atterbury's arrival, and squeezing Esmond's hand, asked to be alone with the priest; and Esmond left them there for this solemn interview. My lord had said to him that which confounded the young man—informed him of a secret which greatly concerned him. Indeed, after hearing it, he had had good cause for doubt and dismay, for mental anguish as well as resolution. While the colloquy between Mr. Atterbury and his dying penitent took place within, an immense contest of perplexity was agitating Lord Castlewood's young companion.

At the end of an hour—it may be more—Mr. Atterbury came out of the room, looking very hard at Esmond, and holding a paper.

"He is on the brink of God's awful judgment," the priest whispered. "He has made his breast clean to me.

He forgives and believes, and makes restitution. Shall it be in public ? Shall we call a witness to sign it ? "

" God knows," sobbed out the young man, " my dearest lord has only done me kindness all his life."

The priest put the paper into Esmond's hand. He looked at it. It swam before his eyes.

" 'Tis a confession," he said.

" 'Tis as you please," said Mr. Atterbury.

There was a fire in the room, where the cloths were drying for the baths, and there lay a heap in a corner, saturated with the blood from my dear lord's body. Esmond went to the fire, and threw the paper into it. 'Twas a great chimney with glazed Dutch tiles. How we remember such trifles in such awful moments !—the scrap of the book that we have read in a great grief—the taste of that last dish that we have eaten before a duel, or some such supreme meeting or parting. On the Dutch tiles at the bagnio was a rude picture representing Jacob in hairy gloves cheating Isaac of Esau's birthright. The burning paper lighted it up.

" 'Tis only a confession, Mr. Atterbury," said the young man. He leaned his head against the mantelpiece; a burst of tears came to his eyes. They were the first he had shed as he sat by his lord, scared by this calamity, and more yet by what the poor dying gentleman had told him, and shocked to think that he should be the agent of bringing this double misfortune on those he loved best.

" Let us go to him," said Mr. Esmond. And accordingly they went into the next chamber, where by this time the dawn had broke, which showed my poor lord's pale face and wild appealing eyes, that wore that awful fatal look of coming dissolution. The surgeon was with him.

He went into the chamber as Atterbury came out thence. My Lord Viscount turned round his sick eyes towards Esmond. It choked the other to hear that rattle in his throat.

" My Lord Viscount," says Mr. Atterbury. " Mr. Esmond wants no witnesses, and hath burned the paper."

" My dearest master ! " Esmond said, kneeling down, and taking his hand and kissing it.

My Lord Viscount sprang up in his bed, and flung his arms round Esmond. " God bl—bless——" was all he said. The blood rushed from his mouth, deluging the young man. My dearest lord was no more. He was gone, with a blessing on his lips, and love and repentance and kindness in his manly heart.

" *Benedicti benedicentes*" says Mr. Atterbury ; and the young man, kneeling at the bedside, groaned out an " Amen."

" Who shall take the news to her ? " was Mr. Esmond's next thought. And on this he besought Mr. Atterbury to bear the tidings to Castlewood. He could not face his mistress himself with those dreadful news. Mr. Atterbury complying kindly, Esmond writ a hasty note on his table-book to my lord's man, bidding him get the horses for Mr. Atterbury, and ride with him, and send Esmond's own valise to the Gatehouse prison, whither he resolved to go and give himself up.

BOOK II

CONTAINS MR. ESMOND'S MILITARY LIFE AND
OTHER MATTERS APPERTAINING TO. THE
ESMOND FAMILY

CHAPTER I

I AM IN PRISON, AND VISITED, BUT NOT CONSOLED THERE

A GREAT secret had been told to Esmond by his unhappy stricken kinsman, lying on his death-bed. Were he to disclose it, as in equity and honour he might do, the discovery would but bring greater grief upon those whom he loved best in the world, and who were sad enough already. Should he bring down shame and perplexity upon all those beings to whom he was attached by so many tender ties of affection and gratitude ? degrade his father's widow ? impeach and sully his father's and kinsman's honour ? And for what ? for a barren title, to be worn at the expense of an innocent boy, the son of his dearest benefactress. He had debated this matter in his conscience, whilst his poor lord was making his dying confession. On one side were ambition, temptation, justice even ; but love, gratitude, and fidelity pleaded on the other. And when the struggle was over in Harry's mind a glow of righteous happiness filled it, and it was with grateful tears in his eyes that he returned thanks to God for that decision which he had been enabled to make.

And with this consoling thought he went away to give himself up at the prison, after kissing the cold lips of his benefactor.

It was on the third day after he had come to the

Gatehouse prison (where he lay in no small pain from his wound, which inflamed and ached severely), that H. Esmond's keeper came and told him that a visitor was asking for him ; and though he could not see her face, which was enveloped in a black hood, her whole figure, too, being veiled and covered with the deepest mourning, Esmond knew at once that his visitor was his dear mistress.

He got up from his bed, where he was lying, being very weak, and advancing towards her as the retiring keeper shut the door upon him and his guest in that sad place, he put forward his left hand (for the right was wounded and bandaged), and he would have taken that kind one of his mistress, which had done so many offices of friendship for him for so many years.

But the Lady Castle wood went back from him, putting back her hood, and leaning against the great stanchioned door which the jailer had just closed upon them. Her face was ghastly white, as Esmond saw it, looking from the hood ; and her eyes, ordinarily so sweet and tender, were fixed on him with such a tragic glance of woe and anger, as caused the young man, unaccustomed to unkindness from that person, to avert his own glances from her face.

" And this, Mr. Esmond," she said, " is where I see you ; and 'tis to this you have brought me! "

" You have come to console me in my calamity, madam," said he (though, in truth, he scarce knew how to address her, his emotions at beholding her so overpowered him).

She advanced a little, but stood silent and trembling, looking out at him from her black draperies, with her

small, white hands clasped together, and quivering lips and hollow eyes.

" Not to reproach me," he continued, after a pause. " My grief is sufficient as it is."

" Take back your hand—do not touch me with it ! " she cried. " Look ! there's blood on it ! "

" I wish they had taken it all," said Esmond, " if you are unkind to me."

" Where is my husband ? " she broke out. " Give me back my husband, Henry ! Why did you stand by at midnight and see him murdered ? Why did the traitor escape who did it ? You, the champion of our house, who offered to die for us—you that he loved and trusted, and to whom I confided him—you that vowed devotion and gratitude, and I believed you—why are you here, and my noble Francis gone ? Why did you come among us ? You have only brought us grief and sorrow—and repentance, bitter, bitter repentance—as a return for our love and kindness. Did I ever do you a wrong, Henry ? You were but an orphan child when I first saw you—when *he* first saw you, who was so good, and noble, and trusting. He would have had you sent away, but, like a foolish woman, I besought him to let you stay. And you pretended to love us, and we believed you ; and you made our house wretched, and my husband's heart went from me, and I lost him through you. I worshipped him ; you know I worshipped him—and he was changed to me. He was no more my Francis of old—my dear, dear soldier. He loved me before he saw you ; and I loved him. Oh, God is my witness how I loved him ! Why did he not send you from among us ? 'Twas only his kindness, that could refuse me nothing then. And, young as you were—

yes, and weak and alone—there was evil, I knew there was evil in keeping you. I read it in your face and eyes. I saw that they boded harm to us—and it came ; I knew it would. Why did you not die when you had the small-pox—and I came myself and watched you, and you didn't know me in your delirium—and you called out for me, though I was there at your side ? All that has happened since was a just judgment on my wicked heart. Oh, I am punished—awfully punished ! My husband lies in his blood—murdered for defending me, my kind, kind, generous lord—and you were by, and you let him die, Henry ! ”

These words, uttered in the wildness of her grief, by one who was ordinarily quiet, and spoke seldom except with a gentle smile and a soothing tone, rung in Esmond's ear; and 'tis said that he repeated many of them in the fever into which he now fell from his wound.

“ I wish I were in my lord's place,” he groaned out. “ It was not my fault that I was not there, madam. But Fate is stronger than all of us, and willed what has come to pass. It had been better for me to have died when I had the illness.”

“ Yes, Henry,” said she, and as she spoke she looked at him with a glance that was at once so fond and so sad, that the young man, tossing up his arms, wildly fell back, hiding his head in the coverlet of the bed. As he turned, he struck against the wall with his wounded hand, displacing the ligature, and he felt the blood rushing again from the wound. He remembered feeling a secret pleasure at the accident, and thinking, “ Suppose I were to end now, who would grieve for me ? ”

This hemorrhage, or the grief and despair in which the

luckless young man was at the time of the accident, must have brought on a deliquium presently ; for he had scarce any recollection afterwards, save of some one, his mistress probably, seizing his hand—and then of the buzzing noise in his ears as he awoke, with two or three persons of the prison around his bed, whereon he lay in a pool of blood from his arm.

It was now bandaged up again by the prison surgeon, who happened to be in the place ; and the governor's wife and servant, kind people both, were with the patient. Esmond saw his mistress still in the room when he awoke from his trance ; but she went away without a word, though the governor's wife told him that she sat in her room for some time afterwards, and did not leave the prison until she heard that Esmond was likely to do well.

Days afterwards, when Esmond was brought out of a fever which he had, and which attacked him that night pretty sharply, the honest keeper's wife brought her patient a handkerchief fresh washed and ironed, and at the corner of which he recognized his mistress's well-known cipher and viscountess's crown. " The lady had bound it round his arm when he fainted, and before she called for help," the keeper's wife said. " Poor lady ! she took on sadly about her husband. He has been buried to-day, and a many of the coaches of the nobility went with him ; and my lady has been with her two children to the King at Kensington, and asked for justice against my Lord Mohun, who is in hiding, and my Lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who is ready to give himself up and take his trial."

Such were the news, coupled with assertions about her

own honesty and that of Molly her maid, who would never have stolen a certain trumpery gold sleeve-button of Mr. Esmond's that was missing after his fainting fit, that the keeper's wife brought to her lodger.

'Tis needless to relate here the particulars or issue of that trial which ensued upon my Lord Castle wood's melancholy homicide. Of the two lords engaged in that sad matter, the second, my Lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland, who had been engaged with Colonel Westbury, and wounded by him, was found not guilty by his peers, before whom he was tried ; and the principal, the Lord Mohun, being found guilty of the manslaughter (which, indeed, was forced upon him, and of which he repented most sincerely), pleaded his clergy, and so was discharged without any penalty. The widow of the slain nobleman, as it was told us in prison, showed an extraordinary spirit, and, though she had to wait for ten years before her son was old enough to compass it, declared she would have revenge of her husband's murderer—so much and suddenly had grief, anger, and misfortune appeared to change her. But fortune, good or ill, as I take it, does not change men and women. It but develops their characters. Who hath not found himself surprised into revenge, or action, or passion, for good or evil, whereof the seeds lay within him, latent and unsuspected, until the occasion called them forth ? With the death of her lord, a change seemed to come over the whole conduct and mind of Lady Castlewood; but of this we shall speak in the right season.

The lords being tried then before their peers at Westminster, according to their privilege, being brought from the Tower with state processions and barges, and accom-

panied by lieutenants and axemen, the commoners engaged in that melancholy fray took their trial at Newgate, as became them ; and, being all found guilty, pleaded likewise their benefit of clergy. The sentence, as we all know in these cases, is, that the culprit lies a year in prison, or during the King's pleasure, and is burned in the hand, or only stamped with a cold iron ; or this part of the punishment is altogether remitted at the grace of the Sovereign. So Harry Esmond found himself a criminal and a prisoner at two-and-twenty years old. As for the two colonels, his comrades, they took the matter very lightly. Duelling was a part of their business, and they could not in honour refuse any invitations of that sort.

But the case was different with Mr. Esmond. His life was changed by that stroke of the sword which destroyed his kind patron's. As he lay in prison, old Dr. Tusher fell ill and died, and Lady Castlewood appointed Thomas Tusher to the vacant living ; about the filling of which she had a thousand times fondly talked to Harry Esmond. Thomas Tusher wrote to Esmond, as he lay in prison, announcing that his patroness had conferred upon him the living his reverend father had held for many years ; that she never, after the tragical events which had occurred (whereof Tom spoke with a very edifying horror), could see in the revered Tusher's pulpit, or at her son's table, the man who was answerable for the father's life ; that her ladyship bade him to say that she prayed for her kinsman's repentance and his worldly happiness ; that he was free to command her aid for any scheme of life which he might propose to himself ; but that on this side of the grave she would see him no more.

And this was the return for a life of devotion—this the end of years of affectionate intercourse and passionate fidelity ! Harry would have died for his patron, and was held as little better than his murderer ; he had sacrificed, she did not know how much, for his mistress, and she threw him aside; he had endowed her family with all they had, and she talked about giving him alms as to a menial!

He writ back a letter to Mr. Tusher from his prison, congratulating his reverence upon his appointment to the living of Castlewood, sarcastically bidding him to follow in the footsteps of his admirable father, whose gown had descended upon him ; thanking her ladyship for her offer of alms, which he said he should trust not to need ; and beseeching her to remember that, if ever her determination should change towards him, he would be ready to give her proofs of a fidelity which had never wavered, and which ought never to have been questioned by that house.

The duel, its fatal termination, the trial of the two peers and the three commoners concerned, caused the greatest excitement in the town. The prints and News Letters were full of them. The three gentlemen in Newgate were almost as much crowded as the bishops in the Tower, or a highwayman before execution. We were allowed to live in the Governor's house, as hath been said, both before trial and after condemnation, waiting the King's pleasure. Nor was the real cause of the fatal quarrel known, so closely had my lord and the two other persons who knew it kept the secret; but every one imagined that the origin of the meeting was a gambling dispute. Except fresh air, the prisoners had, upon payment, most

things they could desire. Interest was made that they should not mix with the vulgar convicts, whose ribald choruses and loud laughter and curses could be heard from their own part of the prison, where they and the miserable debtors were confined pell-mell.

CHAPTER II

I COME TO THE END OF MY CAPTIVITY, BUT NOT OF MY TROUBLE

AMONG the company which came to visit the two officers was an old acquaintance of Harry Esmond's, that gentleman of the Guards, namely, who had been so kind to Harry when Captain Westbury's troop had been quartered at Castle wood more than seven years before. Dick the Scholar was no longer Dick the Trooper now, but Captain Steele of Lucas's Fusileers, and secretary to my Lord Cutts, that famous officer of King William's, the bravest and most beloved man of the English army. The two jolly prisoners had been drinking with a party of friends (for our cellar and that of the keepers of Newgate, too, were supplied with endless hampers of Burgundy and champagne that the friends of the colonels sent in) ; and Harry, having no wish for their drink or their conversation, being too feeble in health for the one and too sad in spirits for the other, was sitting apart in his little room, reading such books as he had, one evening, when honest Colonel Westbury, flushed with liquor, and always good-humoured in and out of his cups, came laughing into Harry's closet and said, " Ho, young Killjoy! here's a friend come to see thee ; he'll pray with thee, or he'll drink with thee; or he'll drink and pray turn about. Dick, my Christian Hero, here's the little scholar of Castlewood."

Dick came up and kissed Esmond on both cheeks, imparting a strong perfume of burnt sack along with his caress to the young man.

"What ! is this the little man that used to talk Latin and fetch our bowls ? How tall thou art grown ! I protest I should have known thee anywhere. And so you have turned ruffian and fighter, and wanted to measure swords with Mohun, did you ? I protest that Mohun said at the Guard dinner yesterday, where there was a pretty company of us, that the young fellow wanted to fight him, and was the better man of the two."

"I wish we could have tried and proved it, Mr. Steele," says Esmond, thinking of his dead benefactor, and his eyes filling with tears.

With the exception of that one cruel letter which he had from his mistress, Mr. Esmond heard nothing from her, and she seemed determined to execute her resolve of parting from him and disowning him. But he had news of her, such as it was, which Mr. Steele assiduously brought him from the Prince's and Princess's Court, where our honest Captain had been advanced to the post of gentleman-waiter. When off duty there, Captain Dick often came to console his friends in captivity ; a good nature and a friendly disposition towards all who were in ill-fortune no doubt prompting him to make his visits, and good fellowship and good wine to prolong them.

"Faith," says Westbury, "the little scholar was the first to begin the quarrel—I mind me of it now—at Lockit's. I always hated that fellow Mohun. What was the real cause of the quarrel betwixt him and poor Frank ? I would wager 'twas a woman."

"'Twas a quarrel about play—on my word, about

play," Harry said. " My poor lord lost great sums to his guest at Castlewood. Angry words passed between them ; and, though Lord Castlewood was the kindest and most pliable soul alive, his spirit was very high, and hence that meeting which has brought us all here," says Mr. Esmond, resolved never to acknowledge that there had ever been any other cause but cards for the duel.

" I do not like to use bad words of a nobleman," says Westbury, " but if my Lord Mohun were a commoner, I would say 'twas a pity he was not hanged. He was familiar with dice and women at a time other boys are at school being birched ; he was as wicked as the oldest rake years ere he had done growing ; and handled a sword and a foil, and a bloody one, too, before ever he used a razor. He held poor Will Mountford in talk that night when bloody Dick Hill ran him through. He will come to a bad end, will that young lord ; and no end is bad enough for him," says honest Mr. Westbury—whose prophecy was fulfilled twelve years after, upon that fatal day when Mohun fell, dragging down one of the bravest and greatest gentlemen in England in his fall.

Harry could never have paid his share of that prodigious heavy reckoning which my landlord brought to his guests once a week, for he had but three pieces in his pockets that fatal night before the duel, when the gentlemen were at cards, and offered to play five ; but whilst he was yet ill at the Gatehouse—after Lady Castlewood had visited him there, and before his trial—there came one in an orange-tawny coat and blue lace (the livery which the Esmonds always wore), and brought a sealed packet for Mr. Esmond, which contained twenty guineas, and a note saying that a counsel had been appointed for him,

and that more money would be forthcoming whenever he needed it.

'Twas a queer letter from the scholar as she was, or as she called herself, the Dowager Viscountess Castlewood, written in the strange, barbarous French which she and many other fine ladies of that time—witness her Grace of Portsmouth—employed. Indeed, spelling was not an article of general commodity in the world then ; and my Lord Marlborough's letters can show that he, for one, had but a little share of this part of grammar.

Marchioness of Esmond this lady sometimes called herself, in virtue of that patent which had been given by the late King James to Harry Esmond's father ; and in this state she had her train carried by a knight's wife, a cup and cover of assay to drink from, and fringed cloth.

CHAPTER III

I TAKE THE QUEEN'S PAY IN QUIN'S REGIMENT

THE fellow in the orange-tawny livery with blue lace and facings was in waiting when Esmond came out of prison, and, taking the young gentleman's slender baggage, led the way out of that odious Newgate, and by Fleet Conduit, down to the Thames, where a pair of oars was called, and they went up the river to Chelsea. Esmond thought the sun had never shone so bright, nor the air felt so fresh and exhilarating. Temple Garden, as they rowed by, looked like the Garden of Eden to him; and the aspect of the quays, wharves, and buildings by the river, Somerset House, and Westminster (where the splendid new bridge was just beginning), Lambeth tower and palace, and that busy, shining scene of the Thames swarming with boats and barges, filled his heart with pleasure and cheerfulness—as well such a beautiful scene might to one who had been a prisoner so long, and with so many dark thoughts deepening the gloom of his captivity. They rowed up at length to the pretty village of Chelsea, where the nobility have many handsome country-houses ; and so came to my Lady Viscountess's house—a cheerful new house in the row facing the river, with a handsome garden behind it, and a pleasant look-out both towards Surrey and Kensington, where stands

the noble ancient palace of the Lord Warwick, Harry's reconciled adversary.

After he had been shown to her room by the groom of the chamber (who filled many offices besides in her ladyship's modest household), and after a proper interval, this elderly goddess Diana vouchsafed to appear to the young man. A blackamoor in a Turkish habit, with red boots and a silver collar on which the Viscountess's arms were engraven, preceded her and bore her cushion ; then came her gentlewoman ; a little pack of spaniels barking and frisking about preceded the austere huntress ; then, behold, the Viscountess herself, " dropping odours." Esmond recollected from his childhood that rich aroma of musk which his mother-in-law (for she may be called so) exhaled. As the sky grows redder and redder towards sunset, so, in the decline of her years, the cheeks of my Lady Dowager blushed more deeply. Her face was illuminated with vermilion, which appeared the brighter from the white paint employed to set it off. She wore the ringlets which had been in fashion in King Charles's time ; whereas the ladies of King William's had head-dresses like the towers of Cybele. Her eyes gleamed out from the midst of this queer structure of paint, dyes, and pomatums. Such was my Lady Viscountess, Mr. Esmond's father's widow.

He made her such a profound bow as her dignity and relationship merited, and advanced with the greatest gravity, and once more kissed that hand, upon the trembling knuckles of which glittered a score of rings—remembering old times when that trembling hand made him tremble. " Marchioness," says he, bowing, and on one knee, " is it only the hand I may have the honour of

saluting ? " For, accompanying that inward laughter which the sight of such an astonishing old figure might well produce in the young man, there was goodwill too, and the kindness of consanguinity. She had been his father's wife, and was his grandfather's daughter. She had suffered him in old days, and was kind to him now after her fashion. And now that bar-sinister was removed from Esmond's thoughts, and that secret opprobrium no longer cast upon his mind, he was pleased to feel family ties and own them—perhaps secretly vain of the sacrifice he had made, and to think that he, Esmond, was really the chief of his house, and only prevented by his own magnanimity from advancing his claim.

Did she read in the young gentleman's eyes, which had now no fear of hers or their superannuated authority, that he knew or suspected the truth about his birth ? She gave a start of surprise at his altered manner ; indeed, it was quite a different bearing to that of the Cambridge student who had paid her a visit two years since, and whom she had dismissed with five pieces, sent by the groom of the chamber. She eyed him, then trembled a little more than was her wont perhaps, and said, " Welcome, cousin ! " in a frightened voice.

His resolution, as has been said before, had been quite different—namely, so to bear himself through life as if the secret of his birth was not known to him ; but he suddenly and rightly determined on a different course. He asked that her ladyship's attendants should be dismissed, and when they were private—" ' Welcome, nephew ! ' at least, madam, it should be," he said. " A great wrong has been done to me and to you, and to my poor mother, who is no more."

" I declare before Heaven that I was guiltless of it," she cried out, giving up her cause at once. " It was your wicked father who——"

" Who brought this dishonour on our family," says Mr. Esmond. " I know it full well. I want to disturb no one. Those who are in present possession have been my dearest benefactors, and are quite innocent of intentional wrong to me. The late lord, my dear patron, knew not the truth until a few months before his death, when Father Holt brought the news to him."

" The wretch ! he had it in confession ! he had it in confession ! " cried out the Dowager Lady.

" Not so. He learned it elsewhere, as well as in confession ," Mr. Esmond answered. " My father, when wounded at the Boyne, told the truth to a French priest, who was m hiding after the battle, as well as to the priest there at whose house he died. This gentleman did not think fit to divulge the story till he met with Mr. Holt at Saint Omer's. And the latter kept it back for his own purpose, and until he had learned whether my mother was alive or no. She is dead years since, my poor patron told me with his dying breath, and I doubt him not. I do not know even whether I could prove a marriage. I would not if I could. I do not care to bring shame on our name, or grief upon those whom I love, however hardly they may use me. My father's son, madam, won't aggravate the wrong my father did you. Continue to be his widow, and give me your kindness. 'Tis all I ask from you ; and I shall never speak of this matter again."

" Mais vous êtes un noble jeune homme! " breaks out my lady, speaking, as usual with her when she was agitated, in the French language.

" *Noblesse oblige*," says Mr. Esmond, making her a low bow. " There are those alive to whom, in return for their love to me, I often fondly said I would give my life away. Shall I be their enemy now and quarrel about a title ? What matters who has it ? 'Tis with the family still."

The old Dowager had taken him into favour for the moment, and chose not only to like him, as far as her nature permitted, but to be afraid of him ; and he found himself to be as familiar with her now as a young man, as, when a boy, he had been timorous and silent. She was as good as her word respecting him. She introduced him to her company, of which she entertained a good deal—of the adherents of King James, of course—and a great deal of loud intriguing took place over her card-tables. She presented Mr. Esmond as her kinsman to many persons of honour ; she supplied him not illiberally with money, which he had no scruple in accepting from her, considering the relationship which he bore to her, and the sacrifices which he himself was making in behalf of the family. But he had made up his mind to continue at no woman's apron-strings longer. A discontent with his former bookish life and quietude, a restless wish to see men and the world, led him to think of the military profession—at any rate, to desire to see a few campaigns—and accordingly he pressed his new patroness to get him a pair of colours ; and one day had the honour of finding himself appointed an ensign in Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusileers on the Irish establishment.

Mr. Esmond's commission was scarce three weeks old when that accident befell King William which ended the life of the greatest, the wisest, the bravest, and most

clement sovereign England ever knew. 'Twas the fashion of the hostile party to assail this great prince's reputation during his life ; but the joy which they and all his enemies in Europe showed at his death is a proof of the terror in which they held him.

The King dead, the Princess Anne (ugly Anne Hyde's daughter, our Dowager at Chelsea called her) was proclaimed by trumpeting heralds all over the town from Westminster to Ludgate Hill, amidst immense jubilations of the people.

Next week my Lord Marlborough was promoted to the Garter, and to be Captain-General of her Majesty's forces at home and abroad. Some good fortune at last occurred to a family which stood in great need of it, by the advancement of these famous personages, who benefited humbler people that had the luck of being in their favour. Before Mr. Esmond left England in the month of August, and being then at Portsmouth, where he had joined his regiment, and was busy at drill, learning the practice and mysteries of the musket and pike, he heard that a pension on the Stamp Office had been got for his late beloved mistress, and that the young Mistress Beatrix was also to be taken into Court.

CHAPTER IV

RECAPITULATIONS

FROM such fitful lights as could be cast upon his dark history by the broken narrative of his poor patron, torn by remorse and struggling in the last pangs of dissolution, Mr. Esmond had been made to understand, so far, that his mother was long since dead ; and so there could be no question as regarded her or her honour, tarnished by her husband's desertion and injury, to influence her son in any steps which he might take either for prosecuting or relinquishing his own just claims. It appeared from my poor lord's hurried confession that he had been made acquainted with the real facts of the case only two years since, when Mr. Holt visited him, and would have implicated him in one of those many conspiracies by which the secret leaders of King James's party in this country were ever endeavouring to destroy the Prince of Orange's life or power.

On one of these many coward's errands, then—for, as I view them now, I can call them no less—Mr. Holt had come to my lord at Castlewood, proposing some infallible plan for the Prince of Orange's destruction, in which my Lord Viscount, loyalist as he was, had indignantly refused to join. As far as Mr. Esmond could gather from his dying words, Holt came to my lord with a plan of insurrection, and offer of the renewal in his person of that

marquis's title which King James had conferred on the preceding viscount; and on refusal of this bribe, a threat was made, on Holt's part, to upset my Lord Viscount's claim to his estate and title of Castlewood altogether. To back this astounding piece of intelligence, of which Henry Esmond's patron now had the first light, Holt came armed with the late lord's dying declaration, after the affair of the Boyne, at Trim, in Ireland, made both to the Irish priest and a French ecclesiastic of Holt's order that was with King James's army. Holt showed, or pretended to show, the marriage certificate of the late Viscount Esmond with my mother in the city of Brussels, in the year 1677, when the Viscount, then Thomas Esmond, was serving with the English army in Flanders. He could show, he said, that this Gertrude, deserted by her husband long since, was alive, and a professed nun, in the year 1685, at Brussels, in which year Thomas Esmond married his uncle's daughter, Isabella, now called Viscountess Dowager of Castlewood; and leaving him for twelve hours, to consider this astounding news (SO the poor dying lord said), disappeared with his papers in the mysterious way in which he came. Esmond knew how well enough—by that window from which he had seen the Father issue; but there was no need to explain to my poor lord, only to gather from his parting lips the words which he would soon be able to utter no more.

Ere the twelve hours were over, Holt himself was a prisoner, implicated in Sir John Fenwick's conspiracy, and locked up at Hexton first, whence he was transferred to the Tower; leaving the poor Lord Viscount, who was not aware of the others being taken, in daily apprehension of his return, when—as my Lord Castlewood declared,

calling God to witness, and with tears in his dying eyes — it had been his intention at once to give his estate and his title to their proper owner, and retire to his own house at Walcote with his family. " And would to God I had done it," the poor lord said. " I would not be here now, wounded to death, a miserable, stricken man ! "

My lord waited day after day, and, as may be supposed, no messenger came ; but at a month's end Holt got means to convey to him a message out of the Tower, which was to this effect, that he should consider all unsaid that had been said, and that things were as they were.

" I had a sore temptation," said my poor lord. " Since I had come into this cursed title of Castlewood, which hath never prospered with me, I have spent far more than the income of that estate, and my paternal one too. I calculated all my means down to the last shilling, and found I never could pay you back, my poor Harry, whose fortune I had had for twelve years. My wife and children must have gone out of the house dishonoured and beggars. God knows, it hath been a miserable one for me and mine. Like a coward, I clung to that respite that Holt gave me. I kept the truth from Rachel and you. I tried to win money of Mohun, and only plunged deeper into debt; I scarce dared look thee in the face when I saw thee. This sword hath been hanging over my head these two years. I swear I felt happy when Mohun's blade entered my side."

After lying ten months in the Tower, Holt, against whom nothing could be found except that he was a Jesuit priest, known to be in King James's interest, was put on shipboard by the incorrigible forgiveness of King William, who promised him, however, a hanging if ever he

should again set foot on English shore. More than once, whilst he was in prison himself, Esmond had thought where those papers could be which the Jesuit had shown to his patron, and which had such an interest for himself. They were not found on Mr. Holt's person when that Father was apprehended ; for had such been the case, my Lords of the Council had seen them, and this family history had long since been made public. However, Esmond cared not to seek the papers. His resolution being taken—his poor mother dead—what matter to him that documents existed proving his right to a title which he was determined not to claim, and of which he vowed never to deprive that family which he loved best in the world ? As long as these titles were not forthcoming, Esmond's kinsman, dear young Francis, was the honourable and undisputed owner of the Castlewood estate and title. The mere word of a Jesuit could not overset Frank's right of occupancy ; and so Esmond's mind felt actually at ease to think the papers were missing, and in their absence his dear mistress and her son the lawful Lady and Lord of Castlewood.

Very soon after his liberation, Mr. Esmond made it his business to ride to that village of Ealing where he had passed his earliest years in this country, and to see if his old guardians were still alive and inhabitants of that place. But the only relic which he found of old M. Pastoureau was a stone in the churchyard, which told that Athanasius Pastoureau, a native of Flanders, lay there buried, aged eighty-seven years. The old man's cottage, which Esmond perfectly recollected, and the garden, were now in the occupation of quite a different family ; and it was with difficulty that he could learn in the village what had

come of Pastoureau's widow and children. The clerk of the parish recollected her—the old man was scarce altered in the fourteen years that had passed since last Esmond set eyes on him. It appeared she had pretty soon consoled herself after the death of her old husband, whom she ruled over, by taking a new one younger than herself, who spent her money, and ill-treated her and her children. The girl died ; one of the boys 'listed ; the other had gone apprentice. Old Mr. Rogers, the clerk, said he had heard that Mrs. Pastoureau was dead too. She and her husband had left Ealing this seven year; and so Mr. Esmond's hopes of gaining any information regarding his parentage from this family were brought to an end.

Who was his mother ? What had her name been ? When did she die ? Esmond longed to find some one who could answer these questions to him, and thought even of putting them to his aunt, the Viscountess, who had innocently taken the name which belonged of right to Henry's mother. But she knew nothing, or chose to know nothing, on this subject; nor, indeed, could Mr. Esmond press her much to speak on it. Father Holt was the only man who could enlighten him, and Esmond felt he must wait until some fresh chance or new intrigue might put him face to face with his old friend.

The appointment to his ensigncy, and the preparations necessary for the campaign, presently gave the young gentleman other matters to think of. His new patroness treated him very kindly and liberally ; she promised to make interest and pay money, too, to get him a company speedily ; she bade him procure a handsome outfit, both of clothes and of arms, and was pleased to admire him

when he made his first appearance in his laced scarlet coat, and to permit him to salute her on the occasion of this interesting investiture. " Red," says she, tossing up her old head, " hath always been the colour worn by the Esmonds." And so her ladyship wore it on her own cheeks very faithfully to the last. She would have him be dressed, she said, as became his father's son, and paid cheerfully for his five-pound beaver, his black buckled periwig, and his fine holland shirts, and his swords, and his pistols mounted with silver. Since the day he was born, poor Harry had never looked such a fine gentleman.

CHAPTER V

I GO ON THE VIGO BA Y EXPEDITION, TASTE SALT-WATER, AND SMELL POWDER

THE first expedition in which Mr. Esmond had the honour to be engaged rather resembled one of the invasions projected by the redoubted Captain Avory or Captain Kidd than a war between crowned heads, carried on by generals of rank and honour. On the first day of July, 1702, a great fleet of a hundred and fifty sail set sad from Spit-head, under the command of Admiral Shovell, having on board 12,000 troops, with his Grace the Duke of Ormond as the Captam-General of the expedition. One of these 12,000 heroes, having never been to sea before, or at least only once, in his infancy, when he made the voyage to England from that unknown country where he was born—one of those 12,000, the junior ensign of Colonel Quin's regiment of Fusileers, was in a quite unheroic state of corporal prostration a few hours after sailing ; and an enemy, had he boarded the ship, would have had easy work of him. From Portsmouth we put into Plymouth, and took in fresh reinforcements. We were off Finis-terre on the 31st of July—so Esmond's table-book informs him—and on the 8th of August made the rock of Lisbon. By this time the ensign was grown as bold as an admiral, and a week afterwards bad the fortune to be under fire for the first time—and under water, too, his

boat being swamped in the surf in Toros bay, where the troops landed. The ducking of his new coat was all the harm the young soldier got in this expedition, for indeed the Spaniards made no stand before our troops, and were not in strength to do so.

Esmond brought back a browned face, a heart resolute enough, and a little pleasant store of knowledge and observation, from that expedition, which was over -with the autumn, when the troops were back in England again ; and, giving up his post of secretary to General Lumley, whose command was over, and parting with that officer with many kind expressions of goodwill on the General's side, he had leave to go to Loudon, to see if he could push his fortunes any way further, and found himself once more in his dowager aunt's comfortable quarters at Chelsea, and in greater favour than ever with the old lady. He propitiated her with a present of a comb, a fan, and a black mantle, such as the ladies of Cadiz wear, and which my Lady Viscountess pronounced became her style of beauty mightily.

Between the first year of Queen Anne's reign and the second sad changes for the worse had taken place in the two younger ladies, at least in the elder's description of them. Rachel, Viscountess Castlewood, had no more face than a dumpling, and Mistress Beatrix was grown quite coarse, and was losing all her beauty. The widow was a scheming, artful, heartless hussy. She was spoiling her brat of a boy, and she would end by marrying her chaplain.

" What! Tusher ? " cried Mr. Esmond, feeling a strange pang of rage and astonishment.

" Yes—Tusher, my maid's son, and who has got all the

qualities of Lis father the lacquey in black, and his accomplished mamma the waiting-woman," cries my lady. " What do you suppose that a sentimental widow, who will live down in that dingy dungeon of a Castlewood, where she spoils her boy, kills the poor with her drugs, has prayers twice a day, and sees nobody but the chaplain—what do you suppose she can do, *mon cousin*, but let the horrid parson, with his great square toes and hideous little green eyes, make love to her ? When I was a girl at Castlewood all the chaplains fell in love with me ; they've nothing else to do."

My lady went on with more talk of this kind, though, in truth, Esmond had no idea of what she said further, so entirely did her first words occupy his thought. Were they true ? Not all, nor half, nor a tenth part of what the garrulous old woman said, was true. Could this be SO ? No ear had Esmond for anything else, though his patroness chattered on for an hour.

Instead of going to dinner at the " Rose " that night, Mr. Esmond bade his servant pack a portmanteau and get horses, and was at Farnham, half-way on the road to Walcote, thirty miles off, before his comrades had got to their supper after the play. He bade his man give no hint to my Lady Dowager's household of the expedition on which he was going ; and as Chelsea was distant from London, the roads bad, and infested by footpads, and Esmond often in the habit, when engaged in a party of pleasure, of lying at a friend's lodging in town, there was no need that his old aunt should be disturbed at his absence.

My lord's little house of Walcote—which he inhabited before he took his title and occupied the house of Castle-

wood—lies about a mile from Winchester; and his widow had returned to Walcote after my lord's death, as a place always dear to her, and where her earliest and happiest days had been spent, cheerfuller than Castlewood, which was too large for her straitened means, and giving her, too, the protection of the ex-dean, her father. The young Viscount had a year's schooling at the famous college there, with Mr. Tusher as his governor. So much news of them Mr. Esmond had had during the past year from the old Viscountess, his own father's widow ; from the young one there had never been a word.

Twice or thrice in his benefactor's lifetime Esmond had been to Walcote ; and now, taking but a couple of hours' rest only at the inn on the road, he was up again long before daybreak, and made such good speed that he was at Walcote by two o'clock of the day. He rid to the inn of the village, where he alighted, and sent a man thence to Mr. Tusher, with a message that a gentleman from London would speak with him on urgent business. The messenger came back to say the doctor was in town, most likely at prayers in the Cathedral. My Lady Viscountess was there, too ; she always went to Cathedral prayers every day.

The horses belonged to the post-house at Winchester. Esmond mounted again and rode on to the " George ; " whence he walked, leaving his grumbling domestic at last happy with a dinner, straight to the Cathedral. The organ was playing—the winter's day was already growing grey—as he passed under the street-arch into the Cathedral yard, and made his way into the ancient solemn edifice.

CHAPTER VI

THE 29TH DECEMBER

THERE was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral besides the Dean and some of his clergy, and the choristers, young and old, that performed the beautiful evening prayer. But Mr. Tusher was one of the officiants, and read from the eagle in an authoritative voice, and a great black periwig ; and in the stalls, still in her black widow's hood, sat Esmond's dear mistress, her son by her side, very much grown, and indeed a noble-looking youth, with his mother's eyes, and his father's curling brown hair, that fell over his *point de Venise*—a pretty picture such as Vandyke might have painted. Mons. Pigaud's portrait of my Lord Viscount, done at Paris afterwards, gives but a French version of his manly, frank, English face. When he looked up there were two sapphire beams out of his eyes such as no painter's palette has the colour to match, I think. On this day there was not much chance of seeing that particular beauty of my young lord's countenance ; for the truth is, he kept his eyes shut for the most part, and, the anthem being rather long, was asleep.

But the music ceasing, my lord woke up, looking about him, and his eyes lighting on Mr. Esmond, who was sitting opposite him, gazing with no small tenderness and melancholy upon two persons who had had so much of

his heart for so many years, Lord Castlewood, with a start, pulled at his mother's sleeve (her face had scarce been lifted from her book), and said, " Look, mother! " so loud that Esmond could hear on the other side of the church, and the old Dean on his throned stall. Lady Castlewood looked for an instant as her son bade her, and held up a warning finger to Frank. Esmond felt his whole face flush, and his heart throbbing, as that dear lady beheld him once more. The rest of the prayers were speedily over. Mr. Esmond did not hear them ; nor did his mistress, very likely, whose hood went more closely over her face, and who never lifted her head again until the service was over, the blessing given, and Mr. Dean, and his procession of ecclesiastics, out of the inner chapel.

Young Castlewood came clambering over the stalls before the clergy were fairly gone, and running up to Esmond eagerly embraced him. " My dear, dearest old Harry ! " he said, " are you come back ? Have you been to the wars ? You'll take me with you when you go again ? Why didn't you write to us ? Come to mother! "

Mr. Esmond could hardly say more than a " God bless you, my boy! " for his heart was very full and grateful at all this tenderness on the lad's part; and he was as much moved at seeing Frank as he was fearful about that other interview which was now to take place, for he knew not if the widow would reject him as she had done so cruelly a year ago.

" It was kind of you to come back to us, Henry," Lady Esmond said. " I thought you might come."

" We read of the fleet coming to Portsmouth. Why did you not come from Portsmouth ? " Frank asked, or my Lord Viscount, as he now must be called.

Esmond had thought of that too. He would have given one of his eyes so that he might see his dear friends again once more ; but believing that his mistress had forbidden him her house, he had obeyed her, and remained at a distance.

" You had but to ask, and you knew I would be here," he said.

She gave him her hand, her little fair hand ; there was only her marriage ring on it. The quarrel was all over. The year of grief and estrangement was past. They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once.

" Your heart was never in the church, Harry," the widow said, in her sweet low tone, as they walked away together. (*Now, it seemed they had never been parted, and again, as if they had been ages asunder.*) " I always thought 'twas a pity to shut you out from the world. You would but have pined and chafed at Castlewood ; and 'tis better you should make a name for yourself. I often said so to my dear lord. How he loved you! 'Twas my lord that made you stay with us."

" I asked no better than to stay near you always," said Mr. Esmond.

" But to go was best, Harry. When the world cannot give peace, you will know where to find it ; but one of your strong imagination and eager desires must try the world first before he tires of it. 'Twas not to be thought of—that you should remain as chaplain to a country gentleman and tutor to a little boy. You are of the blood of the Esmonds, kinsman, and that was always wild in youth. Look at Francis. He is but fifteen, and I scarce

can keep him in my nest. His talk is all of war and pleasure, and he longs to serve in the next campaign. Perhaps he and the young Lord Churchill shall go the next. Lord Marlborough has been good to us. You know how kind they were in my misfortune. And so was your- your father's widow. No one knows how good the world is, till grief comes to try us. 'Tis through my Lady Marlborough's goodness that Beatrix hath her place at Court; and Frank is under my Lord Chamberlain. And the dowager lady, your father's widow, has promised to provide for you, has she not ? "

Esmond said, " Yes. As far as present favour went, Lady Castlewood was very good to him. And should her mind change," he added gaily, " as ladies' minds will, I am strong enough to bear my own burden, and make my way somehow. Not by the sword very likely—thousands have a better genius for that than I—but there are many ways in which a young man of good parts and education can get on in the world ; and I am pretty sure, one way or other, of promotion! " Indeed, he had found patrons already in the army, and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never parted, slowly, with the grey twilight closing round them.

" And now we are drawing near to home," she continued, " I knew you would come, Harry, if—if it was but to forgive me for having spoken unjustly to you after that horrid—horrid misfortune. I was half frantic with grief then when I saw you. And I know now—they have told me—that wretch, whose name I can never mention, even has said it: how you tried to avert the quarrel, and would have taken it on yourself, my poor child. But

it was God's will that I should be punished, and that my dear lord should fall."

" He gave me his blessing on his death-bed," Esmond said. " Thank God for that legacy ! "

" Amen, amen ! dear Henry," says the lady, pressing his arm. " I knew it. Mr. Atterbury, of St. Bride's, who was called to him, told me so. And I thanked God, too, and in my prayers ever since remembered it."

" You had spared me many a bitter night had you told me sooner," Mr. Esmond said.

" I know it, I know it," she answered, in a tone of such sweet humility as made Esmond repent that he should ever have dared to reproach her. " I know how wicked my heart has been ; and I have suffered too, my dear. I confessed to Mr. Atterbury- I must not tell any more. But I knew you would come back ; I own that. That is no one's fault. And to-day, Henry, in the anthem, when they sang it, ' When the Lord turned the captivity of Zion, we were like them that dream,' I thought, yes, like them that dream—them that dream. And then it went, ' They that sow in tears shall reap in joy ; and he that goeth forth and weepeth, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him ; ' I looked up from the book, and saw you. I was not surprised when I saw you. I knew you would come, my dear, and saw the gold sunshine round your head."

She smiled an almost wild smile as she looked up at him. The moon was up by this time, glittering keen in the frosty sky. He could see, for the first time now clearly, her sweet, careworn face.

" Do you know what day it is ? " she continued. " It is the 29th of December—it is your birthday ! But last

year we did not drink it—no, no. My lord was cold, and my Harry was likely to die ; and my biam was m a fever ; and we had no wine. But now—now you are come again, bringing your sheaves with you, my dear." She burst into a wild flood of weeping as she spoke ; she laughed and sobbed on the young man's heart, crying our wildly, " Bringing your sheaves with you—your sheave with you ! "

CHAPTER VII

i AM MADE WELCOME AT WALCOTE

As they came up to the house at Walcote, the windows from within were lighted up with friendly welcome ; the supper-table was spread in the oak parlour; it seemed as if forgiveness and love were awaiting the returning prodigal. Two or three familiar faces of domestics were on the look-out at the porch—the old housekeeper was there, and young Lockwood from Castlewood in my lord's livery of tawny and blue. His dear mistress pressed his arm as they passed into the hall. Her eyes beamed out on him with affection indescribable. " Welcome ! " was all she said, as she looked up, putting back her fair curls and black hood. A sweet rosy smile blushed on her face. Harry thought he had never seen her look so charming. Her face was lighted with a joy that was brighter than beauty. She took a hand of her son, who was in the hall waiting his mother—she did not quit Esmond's arm.

" Welcome, Harry ! " my young lord echoed after her. " Here we are all come to say so. Here's old Pincot—hasn't she grown handsome ? And here's Jack Lockwood. He'll make a famous grenadier, Jack; and so shall I. We'll both 'list under you, cousin. As soon as I am seventeen, I go to the army—every gentleman goes to the army. Look ! who comes here—ho, ho ! " he burst into a laugh. " 'Tis Mistress Trix, with a new ribbon. I knew

she would put one on as soon as she heard a captain was coming to supper."

This laughing colloquy took place in the hall of Walcote House, in the midst of which is a staircase that leads from an open gallery, where are the doors of the sleeping chambers ; and from one of these, a wax candle in her hand, and illuminating her, came Mistress Beatrix—the light falling indeed upon the scarlet ribbon which she wore, and upon the most brilliant white neck in the world.

Esmond had left a child and found a woman, grown beyond the common height, and arrived at such a dazzling completeness of beauty that his eyes might well show surprise and delight at beholding her. In hers there was a brightness so lustrous and melting, that I have seen a whole assembly follow her as if by an attraction irresistible ; and that night the great Duke was at the playhouse after Ramillies, every soul turned and looked (she chanced to enter at the opposite side of the theatre at the same moment) at her, and not at him. She was a brown beauty—that is, her eyes, hair, and eyebrows and eyelashes were dark, her hair curling with rich undulations, and waving over her shoulders; but her complexion was as dazzling white as snow in sunshine, except her cheeks, which were a bright red, and her lips, which were of a still deeper crimson. Her mouth and chin, they said, were too large and full; and so they might be for a goddess in marble, but not for a woman whose eyes were fire, whose look was love, whose voice was the sweetest low song, whose shape was perfect symmetry, health, decision, activity, whose foot as it planted itself on the ground was firm but flexible, and whose motion, whether rapid or slow, was always perfect

grace—agile as a nymph, lofty as a queen—now melting, now imperious, now sarcastic: there was no single movement of hers but was beautiful. As he thinks of her, he who writes feels young again, and remembers a paragon.

So she came holding her dress with one fair rounded arm, and her taper before her, tripping down the stair to greet Esmond.

"She hath put on her scarlet stockings and white shoes," says my lord, still laughing. "O my fine mistress! is this the way you set your cap at the Captain?" She approached, shining smiles upon Esmond, who could look at nothing but her eyes. She advanced holding forward her head, as if she would have him kiss her as he used to do when she was a child.

"Stop," she said, "I am grown too big! Welcome, Cousin Harry!" and she made him an arch curtsy, sweeping down to the ground almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile. Love seemed to radiate from her. Harry eyed her with such a rapture as the first lover is described as having by Milton.

"N'est-ce pas?" says my lady, in a low, sweet voice, still hanging on his arm.

Esmond turned round with a start and a blush, as he met his mistress's clear eyes. He had forgotten her, rapt in admiration of the *filia pulcrrior*.

"Right foot forward, toe turned out, so. Now drop the curtsy, and show the red stockings, Trix. They've silver clocks, Harry. The Dowager sent 'em. She went to put 'em on," cries my lord.

"Hush, you stupid child," says Miss, smothering her

brother with kisses ; and then she must come and kiss her mamma, looking all the while at Harry, over his mistress's shoulder. And if she did not kiss him, she gave him both her hands, and then took one of his in both hands, and said, " O Harry, we're so, so glad you're come!"

" There are woodcocks for supper," says my lord. " Huzzay ! It was such a hungry sermon."

" And it is the 29th of December ; and our Harry has come home."

" Huzzav, old Pincot! " again says my lord ; and my dear lady's lips looked as if they were trembling with a prayer. She would have Harry lead in Beatrix to the supper-room, going herself with my young Lord Viscount; and to this party came Tom Tusher directly, whom four at least out of the company of five wished away. Away he went, however, as soon as the sweetmeats were put down ; and then, by the great crackling fire, his mistress or Beatrix, with her blushing graces, filling his glass for him, Harry told the story of his campaign, and passed the most delightful night his life had ever known. The sun was up long ere he was, so deep, sweet, and refreshing was his slumber.

After breakfast was over, and the young people were gone, his dear lady began talking of her children with Mr. Esmond, and of the characters of one and the other, and of her hopes and fears for both of them. " 'Tis not while they are at home," she said "† and in their mother's nest, I fear for them ; 'tis when they are gone into the world, whither I shall not be able to follow them. Beatrix will begin her service next year. You may have heard a rumour about—about my Lord Blandford. They were both children, and it is but idle talk. I know my kins-

woman would never let him make such a poor marriage as our Beatrix would be. There's scarce a princess in Europe that she thinks is good enough for him or for her ambition."

" There's not a princess in Europe to compare with her," says Esmond.

" In beauty ? No, perhaps not," answered my lady. " She is most beautiful, isn't she ? 'Tis not a mother's partiality that deceives me. I marked you yesterday when she came down the stair, and read it in your face. We look when you don't fancy us looking, and see better than you think, dear Harry ; and just now when they spoke about your poems—you writ pretty lines when you were but a boy—you thought Beatrix was a pretty subject for verse, did not you, Harry ? " (The gentleman could only blush for a reply.) " And so she is ; nor are you the first her pretty face has captivated. 'Tis quickly done. Such a pair of bright eyes as hers learn their power very soon, and use it very early." And, looking at him keenly with hers, the fair widow left him.

Sitting at dinner two days after Esmond's arrival (it was the last day of the year), and so happy a one to Harry Esmond, that to enjoy it was quite worth all the previous pain which he had endured and forgot, my young lord, filling a bumper, and bidding Harry take another, drank to his sister, saluting her under the title of " Marchioness."

" Marchioness ! " says Harry, not without a pang of wonder, for he was curious and jealous already.

" Nonsense, my lord," says Beatrix, with a toss of her head. My Lady Viscountess looked up for a moment at Esmond, and cast her eyes down.

" The Marchioness of Blandford," says Frank. " Don't you know—hath not Rouge Dragon told you ? " (My lord used to call the Dowager at Chelsea by this and other names.) " Blandford has a lock of her hair. The Duchess found him on his knees to Mistress Trix, and boxed his ears, and said Dr. Hare should whip him."

" I wish Mr. Tusher would whip you too," says Beatrix.

My lady only said, " I hope you tell none of these silly stories elsewhere than at home, Francis."

" I think we had best leave the gentlemen to their wine and their talk," says Mistress Beatrix, rising up with the air of a young queen, tossing her rustling, flowing draperies about her, and quitting the room, followed by her mother.

Lady Castle wood again looked at Esmond, as she stooped down and kissed Frank. " Do not tell those silly stories, child," she said. " Do not drink much wine, sir ; Harry never loved to drink wine." And she went away, too, in her black robes, looking back on the young man with her fair, fond face.

" Egad ! it's true," says Frank, sipping his wine with the air of a lord. " What think you of this Lisbon—real Collares ? 'Tis better than your heady port. We got it out of one of the Spanish ships that came from Vigo last year. My mother bought it at Southampton, as the ship was lying there—the *Rose*, Captain Hawkins."

" Why, I came home in that ship," says Harry.

" And it brought home a good fellow and good wine," says my lord. " I say, Harry, I wish thou hadst not that cursed bar sinister."

" And why not the bar sinister ? " asks the other.

" Suppose I go to the army and am killed—every

gentleman goes to the army—who is to take care of the women ? Trix will never stop at home ; mother's in love with you—yes, I think mother's in love with you. She was always praising you, and always talking about you ; and when she went to Southampton, to see the ship, I found her out. But you see it is impossible. We are of the oldest blood in England ; we came in with the Conqueror ; we were only baronets—but what then ? we were forced into that. James the First forced our great-grandfather. We are above titles ; we old English gentry don't want 'em ; the Queen can make a duke any day. Look at Blandford's father, Duke Churchill, and Duchess Jennings, what were they, Harry ? Where were they when our ancestor rode with King Henry at Agincourt, and filled up the French king's cup after Poitiers ? 'Fore George, sir, why shouldn't Blandford marry Beatrix ? By G— ! he *shall* marry Beatrix, or tell me the reason why. We'll marry with the best blood of England, and none but the best blood of England. You are an Esmond, and you can't help your birth, my boy. Let's have another bottle. I had many a night with my father. You stood to him like a man, Harry ; you backed your blood ; you can't help your misfortune, you know—no man can help that."

The elder said he would go in to his mistress's tea-table. The young lad, with a heightened colour and voice, began singing a snatch of a song, and marched out of the room. Esmond heard him presently calling his dogs about him, and cheering and talking to them, and by a hundred of his looks and gestures, tricks of voice and gait, was reminded of the dead lord, Frank's father.

And so the Sylvester night passed away. The family

parted long before midnight, Lady Castle wood remembering, no doubt, former New Years' Eves, when healths were drunk, and laughter went round in the company of him to whom years, past, and present, and future, were to be as one ; and so cared not to sit with her children and hear the Cathedral bells ringing the birth of the year 1703. Esmond heard the chimes as he sat in his own chamber, ruminating by the blazing fire there, and listened to the last notes of them, looking out from his window towards the city, and the great grey towers of the Cathedral lying under the frosty sky, with the keen stars shining above.

CHAPTER VIII

FAMILY TALK

THE next day, although Esmond gave no sign of what was going on in his mind, but strove to be more than ordinarily gay and cheerful when he met his friends at the morning meal, his dear mistress, whose clear eyes it seemed no emotion of his could escape, perceived that something troubled him; for she looked anxiously towards him more than once during the breakfast, and when he went up to his chamber afterwards she presently followed him, and knocked at his door.

As she entered, no doubt the whole story was clear to her at once, for she found our young gentleman packing his valise, pursuant to the resolution which he had come to over-night of making a brisk retreat out of this temptation.

She closed the door very carefully behind her, and then leant against it, very pale, her hands folded before her, looking at the young man, who was kneeling over his work of packing. "Are you going so soon?" she said.

He rose up from his knees, blushing, perhaps, to be so discovered, in the very act, as it were, and took one of her fair little hands—it was that which had her marriage ring on—and kissed it.

"It is best that it should be so, dearest lady," he said.

"I knew you were going, at breakfast. I—I thought

you might stay. What has happened ? Why can't you remain longer with us ? What has Frank told you—you were talking together late last night ? "

" I had but three days' leave from Chelsea," Esmond said, as gaily as he could. " My aunt—she lets me call her aunt—is my mistress now ! I owe her my lieutenancy and my laced coat. She has taken me into high favour ; and my new General is to dine at Chelsea to-morrow—General Lumley, madam—who has appointed me his aide-de-camp, and on whom I must have the honour of waiting. See, here is a letter from the Dowager. The post brought it last night ; and I would not speak of it, for fear of disturbing our last merry meeting."

My lady glanced at the letter, and put it down with a smile that was somewhat contemptuous. " I have no need to read the letter," says she (indeed, 'twas as well she did not ; for the Chelsea missive, in the poor Dowager's usual French jargon, permitted him a longer holiday than he said. " *Je vous donne*," quoth her ladyship, " *oui jour, pour vous fatigay parfaitement de vos parens fatigans* ")—" I have no need to read the letter," says she. " What was it Frank told you last night ? "

" He told me little I did not know," Mr. Esmond answered. " But I have thought of that little, and here's the result: I have no right to the name I bear, dear lady ; and it is only by your sufferance that I am allowed to keep it. If I thought for an hour of what has perhaps crossed your mind too——"

" Yes, I did, Harry," said she ; " I thought of it, and think of it. I would sooner call you my son than the greatest prince in Europe—yes, than the greatest prince. For who is there so good and so brave, and who would

love her as you would ? But there are reasons a mother can't tell."

" I know them," said Mr. Esmond, interrupting her with a smile. " I know there's Sir Wilmot Crawley of Queen's Crawley, and Mr. Anthony Henley of the Grange, and my Lord Marquis of Blandford, that seems to be, the favoured suitor. You shall ask me to wear my Lady Marchioness's favours and to dance at her ladyship's wedding."

" Oh ! Harry, Harry, it is none of these follies that frighten me," cried out Lady Castlewood. " Lord Churchill is but a child ; his outbreak about Beatrix was a mere boyish folly. His parents would rather see him buried than married to one below him in rank. And do you think that I would stoop to sue for a husband for Francis Esmond's daughter ; or submit to have my girl smuggled into that proud family to cause a quarrel between son and parents, and to be treated only as an inferior ? I would disdain such a meanness. Beatrix would scorn it. Ah ! Henry, 'tis not with you the fault lies, 'tis with her. I know you both, and love you : need I be ashamed of that love now ? No, never, never ; and 'tis not you, dear Harry, that is unworthy. 'Tis for my poor Beatrix I tremble—whose headstrong will frightens me ; whose jealous temper (they say I was jealous too, but, pray God, I am cured of that sin) and whose vanity no words or prayers of mine can cure—only suffering, only experience, and remorse afterwards. Oh ! Henry, she will make no man happy who loves her. Go away, my son ; leave her ; love us always, and think kindly of us ; and for me, my dear, you know that these walls contain all that I love in the world."

My young Lord Viscount was exceedingly sorry when he heard that Harry could not come to the cock-match with him, and must go to London ; but no doubt my lord consoled himself when the Hampshire cocks won the match, and he saw every one of the battles, and crowed properly over the conquered Sussex gentlemen.

As Esmond rode towards town his servant, coming up to him, informed him with a grin that Mistress Beatrix had brought out a new gown and blue stockings for that day's dinner, in which she intended to appear, and had flown into a rage and given her maid a slap on the face soon after she heard he was going away. Mistress Beatrix's woman, the fellow said, came down to the servants' hall crying, and with the mark of a blow still on her cheek. But Esmond peremptorily ordered him to fall back and be silent; and rode on with thoughts enough of his own to occupy him—some sad ones, some inexpressibly dear and pleasant.

His mistress, from whom he had been a year separated, was his dearest mistress again. The family from which he had been parted, and which he loved with the fondest devotion, was his family once more. If Beatrix's beauty shone upon him, it was with a friendly lustre, and he could regard it with much such a delight as he brought away after seeing the beautiful pictures of the smiling Madonnas in the convent at Cadiz, when he was dispatched thither with a flag. And as for his mistress, 'twas difficult to say with what a feeling he regarded her. 'Twas happiness to have seen her ; 'twas no great pang to part; a filial tenderness, a love that was at once respect and protection, filled his mind as he thought of her.

CHAPTER IX

I MAKE THE CAMPAIGN OF 1704

MR. ESMOND rode up to London then, where, if the Dowager had been angry at the abrupt leave of absence he took, she was mightily pleased at his speedy return.

He went immediately and paid his court to his new general, General Lumley, who received him graciously, having known his father, and also, he was pleased to say, having had the very best accounts of Mr. Esmond from the officer whose aide-de-camp he had been at Vigo. During this winter Mr. Esmond was gazetted to a lieutenancy in Brigadier Webb's regiment of Fusileers, then with their colonel in Flanders ; but being now attached to the suite of Mr. Lumley, Esmond did not join his own regiment until more than a year afterwards, and after his return from the campaign of Blenheim, which was fought the next year. The campaign began very early, our troops marching out of their quarters before the winter was almost over, and investing the city of Bonn, on the Rhine, under the Duke's command. His Grace joined the army in deep grief of mind, with crape on his sleeve, and his household in mourning; and the very same packet which brought the Commander-in-Chief over, brought letters to the forces which preceded him, and one from his dear mistress to Esmond, which interested him **not** a little.

The young Marquis of Blandford, his Grace's son, who had been entered in King's College in Cambridge (whither my Lord Viscount had also gone, to Trinity, with Mr. Tusher as his governor), had been seized with smallpox, and was dead at sixteen years of age ; and so poor Frank's schemes for his sister's advancement were over, and that innocent childish passion nipped in the birth.

Towards the end of May the army reached Coblentz ; and next day his Grace, and the generals accompanying him, went to visit the Elector of Trèves at his Castle of Ehrenbreitstein, the horse and dragoons passing the Rhine whilst the Duke was entertained at a grand feast by the Elector. All as yet was novelty, festivity, and splendour—a brilliant march of a great and glorious army through a friendly country, and sure through some of the most beautiful scenes of nature which I ever witnessed.

The foot and artillery, following after the horse as quick as possible, crossed the Rhine under Ehrenbreitstein, and so to Castel, over against Mayntz, in which city his Grace, his generals, and his retinue were received at the landing-place by the Elector's coaches, carried to his Highness's palace amidst the thunder of cannon, and then once more magnificently entertained. Gidlingen, in Bavaria, was appointed as the general rendezvous of the army, and thither, by different routes, the whole forces of English, Dutch, Danes, and German auxiliaries took their way. The foot and artillery under General Churchill passed the Neckar, at Heidelberg ; and Esmond had an opportunity of seeing that city and palace, once so famous and beautiful (though shattered and battered by the French, under Turenne, in the late war), where

his grandsire had served the beautiful and unfortunate Electress-Palatine, the first King Charles's sister.

At Mindelsheim, the famous Prince of Savoy came to visit our commander, all of us crowding eagerly to get a sight of that brilliant and intrepid warrior ; and our troops were drawn up in battalia before the Prince, who was pleased to express his admiration of this noble English army. At length we came in sight of the enemy between Dillingen and Lawingen, the Brentz lying between the two armies. The Elector, judging that Donauwort would be the point of his Grace's attack, sent a strong detachment of his best troops to Count Darcos, who was posted at Schellenberg, near that place, where great intrenchments were thrown up, and thousands of pioneers employed to strengthen the position.

On the 2nd of July his Grace stormed the post, with what success on our part need scarce be told. His Grace advanced with six thousand foot, English and Dutch, thirty squadrons, and three regiments of Imperial Cuirassiers, the Duke crossing the river at the head of the cavalry. Although our troops made the attack with unparalleled courage and fury—rushing up to the very guns of the enemy, and being slaughtered before their works—we were driven back many times, and should not have carried them, but that the Imperialists came up under the Prince of Baden, when the enemy could make no head against us. We pursued him into the trenches, making a terrible slaughter there, and into the very Danube, where a great part of his troops, following the example of their generals, Count Darcos and the Elector himself, tried to save themselves by swimming. Our army entered Donauwort, which the Bavarians

evacuated, and where 'twas said the Elector purposed to have given us a warm reception by burning us in our beds—the cellars of the houses, when we took possession of them, being found stuffed with straw. But though the links were there, the link-boys had run away. The townsmen saved their houses, and our General took possession of the enemy's ammunition in the arsenals, his stores, and magazines. Five days afterwards, a great " Te Deum " was sung in Prince Lewis's army, and a solemn day of thanksgiving held in our own; the Prince of Savoy's compliments coming to his Grace the Captain-General during the day's religious ceremony, and concluding, as it were, with an Amen.

And now, having seen a great military march through a friendly country ; the pomps and festivities of more than one German court; the severe struggle of a hotly contested battle, and the triumph of victory, Mr. Esmond beheld another part of military duty—our troops entering the enemy's territory, and putting all around them to fire and sword; burning farms, wasted fields, shrieking women, slaughtered sons and fathers, and drunken soldiery, cursing and carousing in the midst of tears, terror, and murder. Why does the stately Muse of History, that delights in describing the valour of heroes and the grandeur of conquest, leave out these scenes, so brutal, mean, and degrading, that yet form by far the greater part of the drama of war ? Our chief, whom England and all Europe, saving only the Frenchmen, worshipped almost, had this of the godlike in him, that he was impassible before victory, before danger, before defeat. Before the greatest obstacle or the most trivial ceremony; before a hundred thousand men drawn in

battalia, or a peasant slaughtered at the door of his burning hovel; before a carouse of drunken German lords, or a monarch's court, or a cottage table where his plans were laid, or an enemy's battery vomiting flame and death, and strewing corpses round about him,—he was always cold, calm, resolute, like fate. Perhaps he could not have been the great man he was had he had a heart either for love or hatred, or pity or fear, or regret or remorse. He achieved the highest deed of daring, or deepest calculation of thought, as he performed the very meanest action of which a man is capable—told a lie, or cheated a fond woman, or robbed a poor beggar of a halfpenny, with a like awful serenity and equal capacity of the highest and lowest acts of our nature. He could draw upon tears or smiles alike, and whenever need was for using this cheap coin. He would cringe to a shoeblack, as he would flatter a minister or a monarch ; be haughty, be humble, threaten, repent, weep, grasp your hand—or stab you whenever he saw occasion—but yet those of the army who knew him best, and had suffered most from him, admired him most of all.

After the great victory of Blenheim, the enthusiasm of the army for the Duke, even of his bitterest personal enemies in it, amounted to a sort of rage—nay, the very officers who cursed him in their hearts were among the most frantic to cheer him. Who could refuse his meed of admiration to such a victory and such a victor ? Not he who writes. A man may profess to be ever so much a philosopher, but he who fought on that day must feel a thrill of pride as he recalls it.

The French right was posted near to the village of Blenheim, on the Danube, where the Marshal Tallard's

quarters were ; their line extending through, it may be, a league and a half, before Lutzingen and up to a woody hill, round the base of which, and acting against the Prince of Savoy, were forty of his squadrons.

Here was a village that the Frenchmen had burned, the wood being, in fact, a better shelter and easier of guard than any village.

Before these two villages and the French lines ran a little stream, not more than two foot broad, through a marsh (that was mostly dried up from the heats of the weather), and this stream was the only separation between the two armies—ours coming up and ranging themselves in line of battle before the French, at six o'clock in the morning, so that our line was quite visible to theirs; and the whole of this great plain was black and swarming with troops for hours before the cannonading began.

On one side and the other this cannonading lasted many hours ; the French guns being in position in front of their line, and doing severe damage among our horse especially, and on our right wing of Imperialists under the Prince of Savoy, who could neither advance his artillery nor his lines, the ground before him being cut up by ditches, morasses, and very difficult of passage for the guns.

It was past midday when the attack began on our left, where Lord Cutts commanded, the bravest and most beloved officer in the English army. And now, as if to make his experience in war complete, our young aide-de-camp, having seen two great armies facing each other in line of battle, and had the honour of riding with orders from one end to other of the line, came in for a not uncommon accompaniment of military glory and was

knocked on the head, along with many hundred of brave fellows, almost at the very commencement of this famous day of Blenheim. A little after noon, the disposition for attack being completed with much delay and difficulty, and under a severe fire from the enemy's guns, that were better posted and more numerous than ours, a body of English and Hessians, with Major-General Rowe commanding at the extreme left of our line, marched upon Blenheim, advancing with great gallantry, the Major-General on foot, with his officers, at the head of the column, and marching, with his hat off, intrepidly in the face of the enemy, who was pouring in a tremendous fire from his guns and musketry, to which our people were instructed not to reply, except with pike and bayonet when they reached the French palisades. To these Rowe walked intrepidly, and struck the woodwork with his sword before our people charged it. He was shot down at the instant, with his colonel, major, and several officers; and our troops, cheering and huzzahing, and coming on, as they did, with immense resolution and gallantry, were nevertheless stopped by the murderous fire from behind the enemy's defences, and then attacked in flank by a furious charge of French horse, which swept out of Blenheim, and cut down our men in great numbers. Three fierce and desperate assaults of our foot were made and repulsed by the enemy; so that our columns of foot were quite shattered, and fell back, scrambling over the little rivulet, which we had crossed so resolutely an hour before, and pursued by the French cavalry, slaughtering us and cutting us down.

And now the conquerors were met by a furious charge of English **horse under** Esmond's **general**, General Lum-

ley, behind whose squadrons the flying foot found refuge, and formed again, whilst Lumley drove back the French horse, charging up to the village of Blenheim and the palisades where Rowe, and many hundred more gallant Englishmen, lay in slaughtered heaps. Beyond this moment, and of this famous victory, Mr. Esmond knows nothing ; for a shot brought down his horse and our young gentleman on it, who fell crushed and stunned under the animal, and came to his senses he knows not how long after, only to lose them again from pain and loss of blood. A dim sense as of people groaning round about him, a wild incoherent thought or two for her who occupied so much of his heart now, and that here his career, and his hopes, and misfortunes were ended, he remembers in the course of these hours. When he woke up, it was with a pang of extreme pain. His breastplate was taken off ; his servant was holding his head up—the good and faithful lad of Hampshire¹ was blubbering over his master, whom he found and had thought dead ; and a surgeon was probing a wound in the shoulder, which he must have got at the same moment when his horse was shot and fell over him. The battle was over at this end of the field by this time ; the village was in possession of the English ; its brave defenders prisoners, or fled, or drowned, many of them, in the neighbouring waters of Donau. But for honest Lockwood's faithful search after his master, there had no doubt been an end of Esmond here, and of this his story. The marauders were out rifling the bodies as they lay on the field, and Jack had brained one

1My mistress, before I went this campaign, sent me John Lockwood out of Walcote, who hath ever since remained with me.—H. E.

of these gentry with the club-end of his musket, who had eased Esmond of his hat and periwig, his purse, and fine silver-mounted pistols which the Dowager gave him, and was fumbling in his pockets for further treasure, when Jack Lockwood came up and put an end to the scoundrel's triumph.

Hospitals for our wounded were established at Blenheim, and here, for several weeks, Esmond lay in very great danger of his life. The wound was not very great from which he suffered, and the ball extracted by the surgeon on the spot where our young gentleman received it; but a fever set in next day, as he was lying in hospital, and that almost carried him away. Jack Lockwood said he talked in the wildest manner during his delirium—that he called himself the Marquis of Esmond, and, seizing one of the surgeon's assistants who came to dress his wounds, swore that he was Madam Beatrix, and that he would make her a duchess if she would but say yes. He was passing the days in these crazy fancies, whilst the army was singing "Te Deum" for the victory, and those famous festivities were taking place at which our Duke, now made a Prince of the Empire, was entertained by the King of the Romans and his nobility. His Grace went home by Berlin and Hanover, and Esmond lost the festivities which took place at those cities, and which his general shared in company of the other general officers who travelled with our great captain. When he could move, it was by the Duke of Wiirtemberg's city of Stuttgard that he made his way homewards, revisiting Heidelberg again, whence he went to Mannheim, and hence had a tedious but easy water journey down the river of Rhine, which he had thought a delightful and beautiful

voyage indeed, but that his heart was longing for home, and something far more beautiful and delightful.

As bright and welcome as the eyes almost of his mistress shone the lights of Harwich, as the packet came in from Holland. It was not many hours ere he, Esmond, was in London, of that you may be sure, and received with open arms by the old Dowager of Chelsea, who vowed, in her jargon of French and English, that he had the *air noble*, that his pallor embellished him, that he was an Amadis and deserved a Gloriana; and oh! flames and darts! what was his joy at hearing that his mistress was come into waiting, and was now with her Majesty at Kensington.

CHAPTER X

AN OLD STORY ABOUT A FOOL AND A WOMAN

THOUGH Esmond had been appointed to a lieutenancy in the Fusileer regiment, of which that celebrated officer, Brigadier John Richmond Webb, was colonel, he had never joined the regiment, nor been introduced to its excellent commander, though they had made the same campaign together, and been engaged in the same battle. It was in London, in Golden Square, where Major-General Webb lodged, that Captain Esmond had the honour of first paying his respects to his friend, patron, and commander of after-days.

He came of a very ancient Wiltshire family, which he respected above all families in the world. He could prove a lineal descent from King Edward the First, and his first ancestor, Roaldus de Richmond, rode by William the Conqueror's side on Hastings field. "We were gentlemen, Esmond," he used to say, "when the Churchills were horse-boys." He was a very tall man, standing in his pumps six feet three inches (in his great jack-boots, with "his tall fair periwig, and hat and feather, he could not have been less than eight feet high). "I am taller than Churchill," he would say, surveying himself in the glass, "and I am a better-made man ; and if the women won't like a man that hasn't a wart on his nose, faith, I can't help myself, and Churchill has the better of me there."

During those eighteen months which had passed since Esmond saw his dear mistress, her good father, the old Dean, quitted this life, firm in his principles to the very last, and enjoining his family always to remember that the Queen's brother, King James the Third, was their rightful sovereign. He made a very edifying end, as his daughter told Esmond ; and not a little to her surprise, after his death (for he had lived always very poorly) my lady found that her father had left no less a sum than £3,000 behind him, which he bequeathed to her.

With this little fortune Lady Castlewood was enabled, when her daughter's turn at Court came, to come to London, where she took a small genteel house at Kensington, in the neighbourhood of the Court, bringing her children with her ; and here it was that Esmond found his friends.

The Mistress of the Robes, the greatest lady in England after the Queen, or even before her Majesty, as the world said, though she never could be got to say a civil word to Beatrix, whom she had promoted to her place of maid of honour, took her brother into instant favour. When young Castlewood, in his new uniform, and looking like a prince out of a fairy tale, went to pay his duty to her Grace, she looked at him for a minute in silence, the young man blushing and in confusion before her, then fairly burst out a-crying, and kissed him before her daughters and company. " He was my boy's friend," she said, through her sobs. " My Blandford might have been like him." And everybody saw, after this mark of the Duchess's favour, that my young lord's promotion was secure, and people crowded round the favourite's

favourite, who became vainer and gayer and more good-humoured than ever.

Meanwhile Madam Beatrix was making her conquests on her own side ; and amongst them was one poor gentleman, who had been shot by her young eyes two years before, and had never been quite cured of that wound. He knew, to be sure, how hopeless any passion might be, directed in that quarter ; and not being dangerously smitten in the first instance, Esmond pretty soon got the better of his complaint, and if he had it still, did not know he had it, and bore it easily. But when he returned after Blenheim, the young lady of sixteen, who had appeared the most beautiful object his eyes had ever looked on two years back, was now advanced to a perfect ripeness and perfection of beauty, such as instantly enthralled the poor devil, who had already been a fugitive from her charms. Then he had seen her but for two days, and fled. Now he beheld her day after day, and when she was at Court watched after her ; when she was at home, made one of the family party ; when she went abroad, rode after her mother's chariot ; when she went to church, was sure to be there, though he might not listen to the sermon, and be ready to hand her to her chair if she deigned to accept of his services, and select him from a score of young men who were always hanging round about her. When she went away, accompanying her Majesty to Hampton Court, a darkness fell over London. Gods, what nights has Esmond passed, thinking of her, rhyming about her, talking about her !

This passion did not escape—how should it ?—the clear eyes of Esmond's mistress. He told her all. Day after day he would seek his dear mistress, pour insane hopes,

supplications, rhapsodies, raptures, into her ear. She listened, smiled, consoled, with untiring pity and sweetness. Esmond was the eldest of her children, so she was pleased to say ; and as for her kindness, who ever had or would look for aught else from one who was an angel of goodness and pity ? After what has been said, 'tis needless almost to add that poor Esmond's suit was unsuccessful.

Gay as the town was, 'twas but a dreary place for Mr. Esmond, whether his charmer was in it or out of it, and he was glad when his General gave him notice that he was going back to his division of the army, which lay in winter-quarters at Bois-le-Duc. His dear mistress bade him farewell with a cheerful face ; her blessing he knew he had always, and wheresoever fate carried him. Mistress Beatrix was away in attendance on her Majesty at Hampton Court, and kissed her fair finger-tips to him by way of adieu, when he rode thither to take his leave. She received her kinsman in a waiting-room, where there were half a dozen more ladies of the Court, so that his high-flown speeches, had he intended to make any (and very likely he did), were impossible ; and she announced to her friends that her cousin was going to the army in as easy a manner as she would have said he was going to a chocolate-house. He asked, with a rather rueful face, if she had any orders for the army ? and she was pleased to say that she would like a mantle of Mechlin lace. She made him a saucy curtsy in reply to his own dismal bow. The Dowager at Chelsea was not sorry to part with him this time. " Mon cher, vous êtes triste comme un

sermon," she did him the honour to say to him; indeed, gentlemen in his condition are by no means amusing companions, and besides, the fickle old woman had now found a much more amiable favourite, and *raffoled* for her darling lieutenant of the Guard. Frank remained behind for a while, and did not join the army till later, in the suite of his Grace, the Commander-in-Chief. His dear mother, on the last day before Esmond went away, and when the three dined together, made Esmond promise to befriend her boy, and besought Frank to take the example of his kinsman as of a loyal gentleman and brave soldier, so she was pleased to say; and at parting betrayed not the least sign of faltering or weakness, though, God knows, that fond heart was fearful enough when others were concerned, though so resolute in bearing its own pain.

Esmond's General embarked at Harwich. 'Twas a grand sight to see Mr. Webb dressed in scarlet on the deck, waving his hat as our yacht put off, and the guns saluted from the shore. Harry did not see his viscount again, until three months after, at Bois-le-Duc, when his Grace the Duke came to take the command, and Frank brought a budget of news from home: how he had supped with this actress, and got tired of that; how he had got the better of Mr. St. John, both over the bottle, and with Mrs. Mountford of the Haymarket Theatre (a veteran charmer of fifty, with whom the young scapegrace chose to fancy himself in love); how his sister was always at her tricks, and had jilted a young baron for an old earl, "I can't make out Beatrix," he said; "she cares for none of us—she only thinks about herself; she is never happy unless she is quarrelling. But as for my mother

—my mother, Harry, is an angel." Harry tried to impress on the young fellow the necessity of doing everything in his power to please that angel—not to drink too much, not to go into debt, not to run after the pretty Flemish girls, and so forth, as became a senior speaking to a lad. " But Lord bless thee ! " the boy said, " I may do what I like, and I know she will love me all the same ; " and so, indeed, he did what he liked. Everybody spoiled him, and his grave kinsman as much as the rest.

CHAPTER XI

THE CAMPAIGN OF 1706

ON Whit-Sunday, the famous 23rd of May, 1706, my young lord first came under the fire of the enemy, whom we found posted in order of battle, their lines extending three miles or more, over the high ground behind the little Gheet river, and having on his left the little village of Anderkirk or Autre-église, and on his right Ramillies, which has given its name to one of the most brilliant and disastrous days of battle that history ever hath recorded.

Our Duke here once more met his old enemy of Blenheim, the Bavarian Elector and the Maréchal Villeroy, over whom the Prince of Savoy had gained the famous victory of Chiari. What Englishman or Frenchman doth not know the issue of that day ? Having chosen his own ground, having a force superior to the English, and, besides the excellent Spanish and Bavarian troops, the whole Maison-du-Roy with him, the most splendid body of horse in the world—in an hour (and in spite of the prodigious gallantry of the French Royal Household, who charged through the centre of our line and broke it), this magnificent army of Villeroy was utterly routed by troops that had been marching for twelve hours, and by the intrepid skill of a commander who did, indeed, seem in the presence of the enemy to be the very Genius of Victory.

Major-General Webb commanded on the left of our line, and had his own regiment under the orders of their beloved colonel. Neither he nor they belied their character for gallantry on this occasion ; but it was about his dear young lord that Esmond was anxious, never having sight of him save once in the whole course of the day, when he brought an order from the Commander-in-Chief to Mr. Webb. When our horse, having charged round the right flank of the enemy by Overkirk, had thrown him into entire confusion, a general advance was made, and our whole line of foot, crossing the little river and the morass, ascended the high ground where the French were posted, cheering as they went, the enemy retreating before them. 'Twas a service of more glory than danger, the French battalions never waiting to exchange push of pike or bayonet with ours, and the gunners flying from their pieces, which our line left behind us as they advanced and the French fell back.

At first it was a retreat orderly enough ; but presently the retreat became a rout, and a frightful slaughter of the French ensued on this panic, so that an army of sixty thousand men was utterly crushed and destroyed in the course of a couple of hours. It was as if a hurricane had seized a compact and numerous fleet, flung it all to the winds, shattered, sunk, and annihilated it : *qfflavit Deus, et dissipati sunt*. The French army of Flanders was gone ; their artillery, their standards, their treasure, provisions, and ammunition were all left behind them.

The pursuit, and a dreadful carnage which ensued (for the dregs of a battle, however brilliant, are ever a base residue of rapine, cruelty, and drunken plunder), was carried far beyond the field of Ramillies.

Honest Lock wood, Esmond's servant, no doubt wanted to be among the marauders himself, and take his share of the booty ; for when, the action over, and the troops got to their ground for the night, the Captain bade Lockwood get a horse, he asked, with a very rueful countenance, whether his honour would have him come too ; but his honour only bade him go about his own business, and Jack hopped away quite delighted as soon as he saw his master mounted. Esmond made his way, and not without danger and difficulty, to his Grace's headquarters, and found for himself very quickly where the aide-de-camps' quarters were, in an out-building of a farm, where several of these gentlemen were seated, drinking and singing, and at supper. If he had any anxiety about his boy, 'twas relieved at once. One of the gentlemen was singing a song to a tune that Mr. Farquhar and Mr. Gay both had used in their admirable comedies, and very popular in the army of that day. After the song came a chorus, " Over the hills and far away ; " and Esmond heard Frank's fresh voice, soaring, as it were over the songs of the rest of the young men—a voice that had always a certain artless, indescribable pathos with it, and indeed which caused Mr. Esmond's eyes to fill with tears now, out of thankfulness to God the child was safe and still alive to laugh and sing.

When the song was over Esmond entered the room, where he knew several of the gentlemen present, and there sat my young lord, having taken off his cuirass, his waistcoat open, his face flushed, his long yellow hair hanging over his shoulders, drinking with the rest, the youngest, gayest, handsomest there. As soon as he saw Esmond, he clapped down his glass, and running towards

his friend put both his arms round him and embraced him. The other's voice trembled with joy as he greeted the lad ; he had thought but now as he stood in the courtyard under the clear shining moonlight, " Great God ! what a scene of murder is here within a mile of us ; what hundreds and thousands have faced danger to-day ! and here are these lads singing over their cups, and the same moon that is shining over yonder horrid field is looking down on Walcote very likely, while my lady sits and thinks about her boy that is at the war." As Esmond embraced his young pupil now, 'twas with the feeling of quite religious thankfulness and an almost paternal pleasure that he beheld him.

Round his neck was a star with a striped ribbon, that was made of small brilliants, and might be worth a hundred crowns. " Look," says he, " won't that be a pretty present for mother ? "

" Who gave you the Order ? " says Harry, saluting the gentlemen ; " did you win it in battle ? "

" I won it," cried the other, " with my sword and my spear. There was a mousquetaire that had it round his neck—such a big mousquetaire, as big as General Webb. I called out to him to surrender, and that I'd give him quarter. He called me a *petit polisson*, and fired his pistol at me, and then sent it at my head with a curse. I rode at him, sir, drove my sword right under his armhole, and broke it in the rascal's body. I found a purse in his holster with sixty-five louis in it, and a bundle of love-letters, and a flask of Hungary-water. There are the ten pieces you lent me. I should like to have a fight every day ; " and he pulled at his little moustache, and bade a servant bring a supper to Captain Esmond.

CHAPTER XII

I MEET AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE IN FLANDERS, AND FIND MY MOTHER'S GRAVE AND MY OWN CRADLE THERE

BEING one day in the Church of St. Gudule, at Brussels, admiring the antique splendour of the architecture (and always entertaining a great tenderness and reverence for the Mother Church, that hath been as wickedly persecuted in England as ever she herself persecuted in the days of her prosperity), Esmond saw kneeling at a side altar an officer in a green uniform coat, very deeply engaged in devotion. Something familiar in the figure and posture of the kneeling man struck Captain Esmond, even before he saw the officer's face. As he rose up, putting away into his pocket a little black breviary, such as priests use, Esmond beheld a countenance so like that of his friend and tutor of early days, Father Holt, that he broke out into an exclamation of astonishment, and advanced a step towards the gentleman, who was making his way out of church. The German officer, too, looked surprised when he saw Esmond, and his face, from being pale, grew suddenly red. By this mark of recognition the Englishman knew that he could not be mistaken ; and though the other did not stop, but on the contrary rather hastily walked away towards the door, Esmond pursued him.

" My Father ! " says Esmond in English.

" Silence ! I do not understand. I do not speak English," says the other in Latin.

Esmond smiled at this sign of confusion, and replied in the same language, " I should know my Father in any garment, black or white, shaven or bearded ; " for the Austrian officer was habited quite in the military manner, and had as warlike a mustachio as any Pandour.

He laughed. We were on the church steps by this time, passing through the crowd of beggars that usually is there holding up little trinkets for sale and whining for alms. " You speak Latin," says he, " in the English way, Harry Esmond ; you have forsaken the old true Roman tongue you once knew." His tone was very frank and friendly quite—the kind voice of fifteen years back ; he gave Esmond his hand as he spoke.

" Others have changed their coats too, my Father," says Esmond, glancing at his friend's military decoration.

" Hush ! I am Mr. or Captain von Holtz, in the Bavarian Elector's service, and on a mission to his Highness the Prince of Savoy. You can keep a secret, I know' from old times."

" Captain von Holtz," says Esmond, " I am your very humble servant."

" And you, too, have changed your coat," continues the other in his laughing way. " I have heard of you at Cambridge and afterwards—we have friends everywhere—and I am told that Mr. Esmond at Cambridge was as good a fencer as he was a bad theologian."

" So," thinks Esmond, " my old *maitre d'armes* was a Jesuit, as they said."

" Perhaps you are right," says the other, reading his thoughts quite as he used to do in old days. " You were all but killed at Hochstedt of a wound in the left side. You were before that at Vigo, aide-de-camp to the Duke of Ormond. You got your company the other day after Ramillies. Your General and the Prince-Duke are not friends. He is of the Webbs of Lydiard Tregoze, in the county of York, a relation of my Lord St. John. Your cousin, M. de Castlewood, served his first campaign this year in the Guard. Yes, I do know a few things, as you see."

Captain Esmond laughed in his turn. " You have indeed a curious knowledge," he says. A foible of Mr. Holt's, who did know more about books and men than perhaps almost any person Esmond had ever met, was omniscience ; thus, in every point he here professed to know he was nearly right, but not quite. Esmond's wound was in the right side, not the left; his first general was General Lumley; Mr. Webb came out of Wiltshire, not out of Yorkshire; and so forth. Esmond did not think fit to correct his old master in these trifling blunders, but they served to give him a knowledge of the other's character; and he smiled to think that this was his oracle of early days, only now no longer infallible or divine.

" Yes," continues Father Holt, or Captain von Holtz, " for a man who has not been in England these eight years, I know what goes on in London very well. The old Dean is dead, my Lady Castlewood's father. Do you know that your recusant bishops wanted to consecrate him Bishop of Southampton, and that Collier is Bishop of Thetford by the same imposition ? The Princess Anne

has the gout, and eats too much. When the King returns, Collier will be an archbishop."

" Amen ! " says Esmond, laughing ; " and I hope to see your Eminence no longer in jack-boots, but red stockings, at Whitehall."

" You are always with us—I know that; I heard of that when you were at Cambridge. So was the late lord ; so is the young Viscount."

" And so was my father before me," said Mr. Esmond, looking calmly at the other, who did not, however, show the least sign of intelligence in his impenetrable grey eyes. How well Harry remembered them and their look ! only crows' feet were wrinkled round them—marks of black old Time, who had settled there.

Esmond's face chose to show no more sign of meaning than the Father's. There may have been on the one side and the other just the faintest glitter of recognition, as you see a bayonet shining out of an ambush ; but each party fell back, when everything was again dark.

" And you, *mon capitaine*, where have you been ? " says Esmond, turning away the conversation from this dangerous ground, where neither chose to engage.

" I may have been in Pekin," says he, " or I may have been in Paraguay—who knows where ? I am now Captain von Holtz, in the service of his Electoral Highness, come to negotiate exchange of prisoners with his Highness of Savoy."

I think Holt loved to make a parade of mystery, as it were, and would appear and disappear at our quarters as suddenly as he used to return and vanish in the old days at Castlewood. He had passes between both armies, and seemed to know (but with that inaccuracy which belonged

to the good Father's omniscience) equally well what passed in the French camp and in ours. One day he would give Esmond news of a great *feste* that took place in the French quarters. Another day he had the news of his Majesty's ague ; the King had not had a fit these ten days, and might be said to be well. Captain Holtz made a visit to England during this time, so eager was he about negotiating prisoners ; and 'twas on returning from this voyage that he began to open himself more to Esmond, and to make him, as occasion served, at their various meetings, several of those confidences which are here set down all together.

The reason of his increased confidence was this : upon going to London, the old director of Esmond's aunt the Dowager paid her ladyship a visit at Chelsea, and there learned from her that Captain Esmond was acquainted with the secret of his family, and was determined never to divulge it. The knowledge of this fact raised Esmond in his old tutor's eyes (so Holt was pleased to say), and he admired Harry very much for this abnegation.

" The family at Castle wood have done far more for me than my own ever did," Esmond said. " I would give my life for them. Why should I grudge the only benefit that 'tis in my power to confer on them ? " The good Father's eyes filled with tears at this speech, which to the other seemed very simple; he embraced Esmond, and broke out into many admiring expressions. He said he was a *noble coeur* ; that he was proud of him, and fond of him as his pupil and friend ; regretted more than ever that he had lost him, and been forced to leave him in those early times when he might have brought him into that only true church to which the Father belonged,

and enlisted him in the noblest army in which a man ever engaged—meaning his own Society of Jesus, which numbers (says he) in its troops the greatest heroes the world ever knew ; soldiers that have won triumphs a thousand times more brilliant than those of the greatest general, that have achieved glories and palms incomparably brighter than those awarded to the most splendid earthly conquerors—crowns of immortal light, and seats in the high places of heaven.

Esmond was thankful for his old friend's good opinion, however little he might share the Jesuit Father's enthusiasm. " I have thought of that question, too," says he, " dear Father," and he took the other's hand—" thought it out for myself, as all men must, and contrive to do the right, and trust to Heaven as devoutly in my way as you in yours. Another six months of you as a child, and I had desired no better. I used to weep upon my pillow at Castlewood as I thought of you ; and I might have been a brother of your order, and who knows," Esmond added, with a smile, " a priest in full orders, and with a pair of mustachios, and a Bavarian uniform."

" My son," says Father Holt, turning red, " in the cause of religion and loyalty all disguises are fair."

Holt's friendship encouraged Captain Esmond to ask (what he long wished to know, and none could tell him) some history of the poor mother whom he had often imagined in his dreams, and whom he never knew. He described to Holt those circumstances which are already put down in the first part of this story—the promise he had made to his dear lord, and that dying friend's confession—and he besought Mr. Holt to tell him what he

knew regarding the poor woman from whom he had been taken.

"She was of this very town," Holt said, and took Esmond to see the street where her father lived, and where, as he believed, she was born. " In 1676, when your father came hither in the retinue of the late king (then Duke of York, and banished hither in disgrace), Captain Thomas Esmond became acquainted with your mother, pursued her, and made a victim of her. He hath told me in many subsequent conversations, which I felt bound to keep private then, that she was a woman of great virtue and tenderness, and in all respects a most fond, faithful creature. He called himself Captain Thomas, having good reason to be ashamed of his conduct towards her, and hath spoken to me many times with sincere remorse for that, as with fond love for her many amiable qualities. He owned to having treated her very ill, and that at this time his life was one of profligacy, gambling, and poverty. She became with child of you, was cursed' by her own parents at that discovery, though she never upbraided, except by her involuntary tears and the misery depicted on her countenance, the author of her wretchedness and ruin.

" Thomas Esmond—Captain Thomas, as he was called—became engaged in a gaming-house brawl, of which the consequence was a duel, and a wound so severe that he never (his surgeon said) could outlive it. Thinking his death certain, and touched with remorse, he sent for a priest of the very Church of St. Gudule where I met you, and on the same day, after making his submission to our church, was married to your mother a few weeks before you were born. My Lord Viscount Castlewood, Marquis

of Esmond, by King James's patent, which I myself took to your father, your lordship was christened at St. Gudulc by the same cure who married your parents, and by the name of Henry Thomas, son of E. Thomas, officier Anglois, and Gertrude Maes. You see you belong to us from your birth, and why I did not christen you when you became my dear little pupil at Castlewood.

" Your father's wound took a favourable turn—perhaps his conscience was eased by the right he had done—and to the surprise of the doctors he recovered. But as his health came back, his wicked nature too returned. He was tired of the poor girl whom he had ruined ; and receiving some remittance from his uncle, my lord the old Viscount, then in England, he pretended business, promised return, and never saw your poor mother more.

" He owned to me, in confession first, but afterwards in talk before your aunt, his wife—else I never could have disclosed what I now tell you—that on coming to London he writ a pretended confession to poor Gertrude Maes— Gertrude Esmond—of his having been married in England previously before uniting himself with her; said that his name was not Thomas ; that he was about to quit Europe for the Virginian plantations, where, indeed, your family had a grant of land from King Charles the First; sent her a supply of money—the half of the last hundred guineas he had— entreated her pardon, and bade her farewell.

" Poor Gertrude never thought that the news in this letter might be untrue as the rest of your father's conduct to her. But though a young man of her own degree, who knew her history, and whom she liked before she saw the English gentleman who was the cause of all her

misery, offered to marry her, and to adopt you as his own child, and give you his name, she refused him. This refusal only angered her father, who had taken her home. She never held up her head there, being the subject of constant unkindness after her fall. And some devout ladies of her acquaintance offering to pay a little pension for her, she went into a convent, and you were put out to nurse.

" A sister of the young fellow who would have adopted you as his son was the person who took charge of you. Your mother and this person were cousins. She had just lost a child of her own, which you replaced, your own mother being too sick and feeble to feed you ; and presently your nurse grew so fond of you that she even grudged letting you visit the convent where your mother was, and where the nuns petted the little infant, as they pitied and loved its unhappy parent. Her vocation became stronger every day, and at the end of two years she was received as a sister of the house.

" Your nurse's family were silk-weavers out of France, whither they returned to Arras in French Flanders, shortly before your mother took her vows, carrying you with them, then a child of three years old. 'Twas a town, before the late vigorous measures of the French king, full of Protestants, and here your nurse's father, old Pastoureau, he with whom you afterwards lived at Ealing, adopted the reformed doctrines, perverting all his house with him. They were expelled thence by the edict of his Most Christian Majesty, and came to London, and set up their looms in Spittlefields. The old man brought a little money with him, and carried on his trade, but in a poor way. He was a widower. By this time his

daughter, a widow too, kept house for him, and his son and he laboured together at their vocation. Meanwhile your father had publicly owned his conversion just before King Charles's death, was reconciled to my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and married, as you know, to his daughter.

" It chanced that the younger Pastoureau, going with a piece of brocade to the mercer who employed him, on Ludgate Hill, met his old rival coming out of an ordinary there. Pastoureau knew your father at once, seized him by the collar, and upbraided him as a villain, who had seduced his mistress, and afterwards deserted her and her son. Mr. Thomas Esmond also recognized Pastoureau at once, besought him to calm his indignation, and not to bring a crowd round about them, and bade him to enter into the tavern out of which he had just stepped, when he would give him any explanation. Pastoureau entered, and heard the landlord order the drawer to show Captain Thomas to a room. It was by his Christian name that your father was familiarly called at his tavern haunts.

" I must tell you that Captain Thomas, or my Lord Viscount afterwards, was never at a loss for a story, and could cajole a woman or a dun with a volubility, and an air of simplicity at the same time, of which many a creditor of his has been the dupe. His tales used to gather verisimilitude as he went on with them. He strung together fact after fact with a wonderful rapidity and coherence. It required, saving your presence, a very long habit of acquaintance with your father to know when his lordship was telling the truth or no.

" He told me with rueful remorse when he was ill—

for the fear of death set him instantly repenting—and with shrieks of laughter when he was well, his lordship having a very great sense of humour, how in half an hour's time, and before a bottle was drunk, he had completely succeeded in biting poor Pastoureau. The seduction he owned to ; that he could not help. He was quite ready with tears at a moment's warning, and shed them profusely to melt his credulous listener. He wept for your mother even more than Pastoureau did, who cried very heartily, poor fellow, as my lord informed me. He swore upon his honour that he had twice sent money to Brussels, and mentioned the name of the merchant with whom it was lying for poor Gertrude's use. He did not even know whether she had a child or no, or whether she was alive or dead ; but got these facts easily out of honest Pastoureau's answers to him. When he heard that she was in a convent, he said he hoped to end his days in one himself, should he survive his wife, whom he hated, and had been forced by a cruel father to marry ; and when he was told that Gertrude's son was alive, and actually in London, ' I started,' says he ; ' for then, damme, my wife was expecting to he-in, and I thought should this old Put, my father-in-law, run rusty, here would be a good chance to frighten him.'

" He expressed the deepest gratitude to the Pastoureau family for their care of the infant—you were now near six years old—and on Pastoureau bluntly telling him, when he proposed to go that instant and see the darling child, that they never wished to see his ill-omened face again within their doors ; that he might have the boy, though they should all be very sorry to lose him ; and that they would take his money, they being poor, if he gave it, or

bring him up, by God's help, as they had hitherto done, without, he acquiesced in this at once, with a high, and said, ' Well, 'twas better that the dear child should remain with friends who had been so admirably kind to him,' and in his talk to me afterwards honestly praised and admired the weaver's conduct and spirit.

" Your father," Mr. Holt went on to say, " was good-natured with his money when he had it : and having that day received a supply from his uncle, gave the weaver ten pieces with perfect freedom, and promised him further remittances. He took down eagerly Pastoureau's name and place of abode in his table-book ; and when the other asked him for his own, gave, with the utmost readiness, his name as Captain Thomas, New Lodge, Penzance, Cornwall. He said he was in London for a few days only on business connected with his wife's property ; described her as a shrew, though a woman of kind disposition ; and depicted his father as a Cornish squire, in an infirm state of health, at whose death he hoped for something handsome, when he promised richly to reward the admirable protector of his child, and to provide for the boy.

" Your little pension was paid regularly enough ; and when your father became Viscount Castlewood on his uncle's demise, I was employed to keep a watch over you, and 'twas at my instance that you were brought home. Your foster-mother was dead. Her father made acquaintance with a woman, whom he married, who quarrelled with his son. The faithful creature came back to Brussels to be near the woman he loved, and died, too, a few months before her. Will you see **her** cross in **the** **convent cemetery?** **The Superior is an old penitent**

of mine, and remembers Soeur Marie Madeleine fondly still."

Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, casting their shadows across the grassy mounds, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. He fancied her in tears and darkness, kneeling at the foot of her cross, under which her cares were buried. Surely he knelt down, and said his own prayer there, not in sorrow so much as in awe (for even his memory had no recollection of her), and in pity for the pangs which the gentle soul in life had been made to suffer. To this cross she brought them ; for this heavenly bridegroom she exchanged the husband who had wooed her, the traitor who had left her. A thousand such hillocks lay round about, the gentle daisies springing out of the grass over them, and each bearing its cross and *requiescat*. A nun, veiled in black, was kneeling hard by, at a sleeping sister's bedside, so fresh made that the spring had scarce had time to spin a coverlet for it. Beyond the cemetery walls you had glimpses of life and the world, and the spires and gables of the city. A bird came down from a roof opposite, and lit first on a cross, and then on the grass below it, whence it flew away presently with a leaf in its mouth. Then came a sound as of chanting from the chapel of the sisters hard by. Others had long since filled the place which poor Mary Magdalene once had there, were kneeling at the same stall, and hearing the same hymns and prayers in which her stricken heart had found consolation. Might she sleep in peace—might she sleep in peace; and we

too when our struggles and pains are over! But the earth is the Lord's, as the heaven is; we are alike His creatures here and yonder. I took a little flower off the hillock and kissed it, and went my way, like the bird that had just lighted on the cross by me, back into the world again.

CHAPTER XIII

*[THE CAMPAIGN OF 1708. DUEL WITH MOHUN.
RETURN TO ENGLAND]*

MY Lord Mohun, who had a troop in Lord Macclesfield's regiment of the Horse Guards, rode this campaign with the Duke. He had sunk by this time to the very worst reputation; he had had another fatal duel in Spain; he had married, and forsaken his wife ; he was a gambler, a profligate, and debauchee. He joined just before Oudenarde ; and, as Esmond feared, as soon as Frank Castlewood heard of his arrival, Frank was for seeking him out, and killing him. The wound my lord got at Oudenarde prevented their meeting ; but that was nearly healed, and Mr. Esmond trembled daily lest any chance should bring his boy and this known assassin together. They met at the mess-table of Handyside's regiment at Lille, the officer commanding not knowing of the feud between the two noblemen.

Esmond had not seen the hateful, handsome face of Mohun for nine years, since they had met on that fatal night in Leicester Field. It was degraded with crime and passion now ; it wore the anxious look of a man who has three deaths, and who knows how many hidden shames, and lusts, and crimes on his conscience. He bowed with a sickly low bow, and slunk away when our host presented us round to one another. Frank Castlewood had not

known him till then, so changed was he. He knew the boy well enough.

'Twas curious to look at the two—especially the young man, whose face flushed up when he heard the hated name of the other, and who said, in his bad French and his brave boyish voice, " He had long been anxious to meet my Lord Mohun." The other only bowed, and moved away from him. To do him justice, he wished to have no quarrel with the lad.

Esmond put himself between them at table. " D—— it," says Frank, " why do you put yourself in the place of a man who is above you in degree ? My Lord Mohun should walk after me. I want to sit by my Lord Mohun."

Esmond whispered to Lord Mohun that Frank was hurt in the leg at Oudenarde, and besought the other to be quiet. Quiet enough he was for some time, disregarding the many taunts which young Castlewood flung at him, until after several healths, when my Lord Mohun got to be rather in liquor.

" Will you go away, my lord ? " Mr. Esmond said to him, imploring him to quit the table.

' No, by G——," says my Lord Mohun. " I'll not go away for any man." He was quite flushed with wine by this time.

The talk got round to the affairs of yesterday. Lord Mohun did not know that Esmond was Webb's aide-de-camp. He began to tell some stories against the General, which, from t'other side of Esmond, young Castlewood contradicted.

' I can't bear any more of this," says my Lord Mohun.

" Nor can I, my lord," says Mr. Esmond, starting up.

" **The** story my Lord Mohun has told respecting General

Webb is false, gentlemen—false, I repeat; " and making a low bow to Lord Mohun, and without a single word more, Esmond got up and left the dining-room. These affairs were common enough among the military of those days. There was a garden behind the house, and all the party turned instantly into it; and the two gentlemen's coats were off and their points engaged within two minutes after Esmond's words had been spoken. If Captain Esmond had put Mohun out of the world, as he might, a villain would have been punished and spared further villainies. But who is one man to punish another? I declare upon my honour that my only thought was to prevent Lord Mohun from mischief with Frank; and the end of this meeting was, that after half a dozen passes my lord went home with a hurt which prevented him from lifting his right arm for three months.

" Oh, Harry! why didn't you kill the villain? " young Castlewood asked. " I can't walk without a crutch, but I could have met him on horseback with sword and pistol." But Harry Esmond said, " 'Twas best to have no man's life on one's conscience, not even that villain's." And this affair, which did not occupy three minutes, being over, the gentlemen went back to their wine, and my Lord Mohun to his quarters, where he was laid up with a fever which had spared mischief had it proved fatal. And very soon after this affair Harry Esmond and his General left the camp for London; whither a certain reputation had preceded the Captain, for my Lady Castlewood of Chelsea received him as if he had been a conquering hero. She gave a great dinner to Mr. Webb, where the General's chair was crowned with laurels, and her ladyship called Esmond's health in a toast, to which

my kind General was graciously pleased to bear the strongest testimony; and took down a mob of at least forty coaches to cheer our General as he came out of the House of Commons, the day when he received the thanks of Parliament for his action. The mob huzzahed and applauded him, as well as the fine company: it was splendid to see him waving his hat, and bowing, and laying his hand upon his Order of Generosity. He introduced Mr. Esmond to Mr. St. John and the Right Honourable Robert Harley, Esquire, as he came out of the House walking between them; and was pleased to make many flattering observations regarding Mr. Esmond's behaviour during the three last campaigns.

Mistress Beatrix Esmond had been a dozen times on the point of making great matches, so the Court scandal said; but for his part Esmond never would believe the stories against her, and came back, after three years' absence from her, not so frantic as he had been perhaps, but still hungering after her and no other—still hopeful, still kneeling, with his heart in his hand for the young lady to take. We were now got to 1709. She was near twenty-two years old, and three years at Court, and without a husband.

" 'Tis not for want of being asked," Lady Castlewood said, looking into Esmond's heart, as she could, with that perceptiveness affection gives. " But she will make no mean match, Harry; she will not marry as I would have her; the person whom I should like to call my son—and Henry Esmond knows who that is—is best served by my not pressing his claim. Beatrix is so wilful, that what I would urge on her she would be sure to resist. The man who would marry her will not be happy with

her, unless he be a great person, and can put her in a great position. Beatrix loves admiration more than love, and longs, beyond all things, for command. Why should a mother speak so of her child? You are my son too, Harry. You should know the truth about your sister. I thought you might cure yourself of your passion," my lady added fondly. " Other people can cure themselves of that folly, you know. But I see you are still as infatuated as ever. When we read your name in the *Gazette*, I pleaded for you, my poor boy. Poor boy, indeed! You are growing a grave old gentleman, now, and I am an old woman. She likes your fame well enough, and she likes your person. She says you have wit, and fire, and good-breeding, and are more natural than the fine gentlemen of the Court. But this is not enough. She wants a commander-in-chief, and not a colonel. Were a duke to ask her, she would leave an earl whom she had promised. I told you so before. I know not how my poor girl is so worldly."

" Well," says Esmond, " a man can but give his best and his all. She has that from me. What little reputation I have won, I swear I cared for it because I thought Beatrix would be pleased with it. What care I to be a colonel or a general? I would have had a little fame, that she might wear it in her hat. If she wants my life, I would give it her. If she marries another, I will say Gó d bless him. I make no boast, nor no complaint. I think my fidelity is folly, perhaps. But so it is. I cannot help myself. I love her. You are a thousand times better—the fondest, the fairest, the dearest of women. Sure, dear lady, I see all Beatrix's faults as well as you do. But she is my fate. 'Tis endurable.

I shall not die for not having her. I think I should be no happier if I won her."

"I wish she would have you," said Harry's fond mistress, giving a hand to him. He kissed the fair hand ('twas the prettiest dimpled little hand in the world, and my Lady Castlewood, though now almost forty years old, did not look to be within ten years of her age).

"Why," says he, "should she hear me? She knows what I would say. Far or near, she knows I'm her slave. I have sold myself for nothing, it may be. Well, 'tis the price I choose to take. I am worth nothing, or I am worth all."

"You are such a treasure," Esmond's mistress was pleased to say, "that the woman who has your love shouldn't change it away against a kingdom, I think."

From Bruxelles, knowing how the Lady Castlewood always liked to have a letter about the famous 29th of December, my lord writ her a long and full one, and in this he must have described the affair with Mohun; for when Mr. Esmond came to visit his mistress one day, early in the new year, to his great wonderment she and her daughter both came up and saluted him, and after them the Dowager of Chelsea, too, whose chairman had just brought her ladyship from her village to Kensington across the fields. After this honour, I say, from the two ladies of Castlewood, the Dowager came forward in great state, with her grand tall head-dress of King James's reign, that she never forsook, and said, "Cousin Henry, all our family have met; and we thank you, cousin, for your noble conduct towards the head of our house." And pointing to her blushing cheek, she made Mr. Esmond aware that he was to enjoy the rapture of an

embrace there. Having saluted one cheek, she turned to him the other. "Cousin Harry," said both the other ladies, in a little chorus, "we thank you for your noble conduct;" and then Harry became aware that the story of the Lille affair had come to his kinswomen's ears. It pleased him to hear them all saluting him as one of their family.

The tables of the dining-room were laid for a great entertainment; and the ladies were in gala dresses—my Lady of Chelsea in her highest tour, my Lady Viscountess out of black, and looking fair and happy, and the Maid of Honour attired with that splendour which naturally distinguished her, and wearing on her beautiful breast the French officer's star which Frank had sent home after Ramillies.

"You see, 'tis a gala day with us," says she, glancing down to the star complacently, "and we have our orders on. Does not mamma look charming? 'Twas I dressed her!"

On the table was a fine sword, with a red velvet scabbard, and a beautiful chased silver handle, with a blue riband for a sword-knot. "What is this?" says the Captain, going up to look at this pretty piece.

Mrs. Beatrix advanced towards it. "Kneel down," says she: "we dub you our knight with this"—and she waved the sword over his head. "My Lady Dowager hath given the sword, and I give the riband, and mamma hath sewn on the fringe."

"Put the sword on him, Beatrix," says her mother. "You are our knight, Harry—our true knight. Take a mother's thanks and prayers for defending her son, my dear, dear friend." She could say no more; and even

the Dowager was affected, for a couple of rebellious tears made sad marks down those wrinkled old roses which Esmond had just been allowed to salute.

" We had a letter from dearest Frank," his mother said, " three days since, whilst you were on your visit to your friend Captain Steele, at Hampton. He told us all that you had done, and how nobly you had put yourself between him and that—that wretch."

" And I adopt you from this day," says the Dowager; " and I wish I was richer, for your sake, son Esmond," she added with a wave of her hand ; and as Mr. Esmond dutifully went down on his knee before her ladyship, she cast her eyes up to the ceiling, and invoked a blessing from that quarter upon the newly-adopted son.

" Dear Frank," says the other Viscountess, " how fond he is of his military profession ! He is studying fortification very hard. I wish he were here. We shall keep his coming of age at Castlewood next year."

" If the campaign permit us," says Mr. Esmond.

" I am never afraid when he is with you," cries the boy's mother. " I am sure my Henry will always defend him."

" But there will be a peace before next year ; we know it for certain," cries the Maid of Honour. " Lord Marlborough will be dismissed, and that horrible Duchess turned out of all her places. Her Majesty won't speak to her now. Did you see her at Bushy, Harry ? She is furious, and she ranges about the park like a lioness, and tears people's eyes out."

" And the Princess Anne will send for somebody," says my Lady of Chelsea, taking out her medal and kissing it.

" Did you see the King at Oudenarde, Harry ? " his

mistress asked. She was a staunch Jacobite, and would no more have thought of denying her king than her God.

" I saw the young Hanoverian only," Harry said.
" The Chevalier de St. George— "

" The King, sir, the King ! " said the ladies and Miss Beatrix ; and she clapped her pretty hands and cried,
" Vive le Roy ! "

By this time there came a thundering knock, that drove in the doors of the house almost. It was three o'clock, and the company were arriving; and presently the servant announced Captain Steele and his lady.

Captain and Mrs. Steele, who were the first to arrive, had driven to Kensington from their country-house, the Hovel at Hampton Wick. " Not from our mansion in Bloomsbury Square," as Mrs. Steele took care to inform the ladies. Indeed Harry had ridden away from Hampton that very morning, leaving the couple by the ears ; for from the chamber where he lay, in a bed that was none of the cleanest, and kept awake by the company which he had in his own bed, and the quarrel which was going on in the next room, he could hear both night and morning the curtain lecture which Mrs. Steele was in the habit of administering to poor Dick.

Besides the Captain and his lady, there was a great and notable assemblage of company, my Lady of Chelsea having sent her lacqueys and liveries to aid the modest attendance at Kensington. There was Lieutenant-General Webb, Harry's kind patron, of whom the Dowager took possession, and who resplended in velvet and gold lace ; there was Harry's new acquaintance, the Right Honourable Henry St. John, Esquire, the General's kinsman, who was charmed with the Lady Castlewood, even more than

with her daughter ; there was one of the greatest noblemen in the kingdom, the Scots Duke of Hamilton, just created Duke of Brandon in England; and two other noble lords of the Tory party, my Lord Ashburnham, and another I have forgot; and for ladies, her Grace the Duchess of Ormond and her daughters, the Lady Mary and the Lady Betty, the former one of Mistress Beatrix's colleagues in waiting on the Queen.

" What a party of Tories ! " whispered Captain Steele to Esmond, as we were assembled in the parlour before dinner. Indeed, all the company present, save Steele, were of that faction.

By some mistake, just as he was going to pop into the vacant place, Esmond was placed far away from Beatrix's chair, who sat between his Grace and my Lord Ashburnham, and shrugged her lovely white shoulders, and cast a look as if to say, " Pity me," to her cousin. My Lord Duke and his young neighbour were presently in a very animated and close conversation. Mrs. Beatrix could no more help using her eyes than the sun can help shining, and setting those it shines on a-burning. By the time the first course was done the dinner seemed long to Esmond ; by the time the soup came he fancied they must have been hours at table; and as for the sweets and jellies, he thought they never would be done.

At length the ladies rose, Beatrix throwing a Parthian glance at her duke as she retreated ; a fresh bottle and glasses were fetched, and toasts were called. Mr. St. John asked his Grace the Duke of Hamilton and the company to drink to the health of his Grace the Duke of Brandon. Another lord gave General Webb's health, " and may he get the command the bravest officer in the world de-

serves." Mr. Webb thanked the company, complimented his aide-de-camp, and fought his famous battle over again.

And now his Grace of Hamilton, rising up with flashing eyes (we had all been drinking pretty freely), proposed a toast to the lovely, to the incomparable Mrs. Beatrix Esmond. We all drank it with cheers, and my Lord Ashburnham especially, with a shout of enthusiasm.

"What a pity there is a Duchess of Hamilton!" whispers St. John, who drank more wine and yet was more steady than most of the others, and we entered the drawing-room where the ladies were at their tea.

The drawing-room was all dark to poor Harry, in spite of the grand illumination. Beatrix scarce spoke to him. When my Lord Duke went away, she practised upon the next in rank, and plied my young Lord Ashburnham with all the fire of her eyes and the fascinations of her wit. Most of the party were set to cards; and Mr. St. John, after yawning in the face of Mrs. Steele, whom he did not care to pursue any more, and talking in his most brilliant, animated way to Lady Castlewood, whom he pronounced to be beautiful, of a far higher order of beauty than her daughter, presently took his leave and went his way. The rest of the company speedily followed, my Lord Ashburnham the last, throwing fiery glances at the smiling young temptress, who had bewitched more hearts than his in her thrall.

No doubt, as a kinsman of the house, Mr. Esmond thought fit to be the last of all in it; he remained after the coaches had rolled away—after his dowager aunt's chair and flambeaux had marched off in the darkness towards Chelsea, and the town's-people had gone to bed, who had been drawn into the square to gape at the un-

usual assemblage of chairs and chariots, lacqueys and torchmen. The poor, mean wretch lingered yet for a few minutes, to see whether the girl would vouchsafe him a smile, or a parting word of consolation. But her enthusiasm of the morning was quite died out, or she chose to be in a different mood. She fell to joking about the dowdy appearance of Lady Betty, and mimicked the vulgarity of Mrs. Steele ; and then she put up her little hand to her mouth and yawned, lighted a taper, and shrugged her shoulders, and, dropping Mr. Esmond a saucy curtsy, sailed off to bed.

" The day began so well, Henry, that I had hoped it might have ended better," was all the consolation that poor Esmond's fond mistress could give him ; and as he trudged home through the dark alone, he thought with bitter rage in his heart, and a feeling of almost revolt against the sacrifice he had made. " She would have me," thought he, " had I but a name to give her. But for my promise to her father, I might have my rank and my mistress too."

After this *feste*, my young Lord Ashburnham's coach was for ever rolling in and out of Kensington Square ; and at every assembly in the town, wherever the Maid of Honour made her appearance, you might be pretty sure to see the young gentleman, in a new suit every week, and decked out in all the finery that his tailor or embroiderer could furnish for him. My lord was for ever paying Mr. Esmond compliments—bidding him to dinner, offering him horses to ride, and giving him a thousand uncouth marks of respect and goodwill. At last, one night at the coffee-house, whither my lord came considerably flushed and excited with drink, he rushes up to Mr.

Esmond, and cries out, " Give me joy, my dearest Colonel; I am the happiest of men."

" The happiest of men needs no dearest Colonel to give him joy," says Mr. Esmond. " What is the cause of this supreme felicity ? "

" Haven't you heard ? " says he. " Don't you know ? I thought the family told you everything : the adorable Beatrix hath promised to be mine."

" What! " cries out Mr. Esmond, who had spent happy hours with Beatrix that very morning—had writ verses for her, that she had sung at the harpsichord.

" Yes," says he ; " I waited on her to-day. I saw you walking towards Knightsbridge as I passed in my coach; and she looked so lovely, and spoke so kind, that I couldn't help going down on my knees, and—and—sure I am the happiest of men. And I'm very young ; but she says I shall get older; and you know I shall be of age in four months; and there's very little difference between us ; and I'm so happy. Let us have a bottle—a dozen bottles—and drink the health of the finest woman in England."

Esmond left the young lord tossing off bumper after bumper, and strolled away to Kensington to ask whether the news was true. 'Twas only too sure : his mistress's sad, compassionate face told him the story ; and then she related what particulars she knew, and how my young lord had made his offer half an hour after Esmond went away that morning, and in the very room where the song lay yet on the harpsichord which Esmond had writ, and they had sung together.

BOOK III

CONTAINING THE END OF MR. ESMOND'S ADVENTURES IN ENGLAND

CHAPTER I

I COME TO AN END OF MY BATTLES AND BRUISES

WHEN he heard this news of Beatrix's engagement in marriage, Colonel Esmond knocked under to his fate, and resolved to surrender his sword, that could win him nothing now he cared for ; and in this dismal frame of mind he determined to retire from the regiment, to the great delight of the captain next in rank to him, who happened to be a young gentleman of good fortune, who eagerly paid Mr. Esmond a thousand guineas for his majority in Webb's regiment, and was knocked on the head the next campaign.

Both the ladies of Castlewood approved of Mr. Esmond quitting the army ; and his kind General coincided in his wish of retirement, and helped in the transfer of his commission, which brought a pretty sum into his pocket. But when the Commander-in-Chief came home, and was forced, in spite of himself, to appoint Lieutenant-General Webb to the command of a division of the army in Flanders, the Lieutenant-General prayed Colonel Esmond so urgently to be his aide-de-camp and military secretary, that Esmond could not resist his kind patron's entreaties, and again took the field, not attached to any regiment, but under Webb's orders.

We drank my Lord Castlewood's health and majority,

the 25th of September, the army being then before Mons. And here Colonel Esmond was not so fortunate as he had been in actions much more dangerous, and was hit by a spent ball just above the place where his former wound was, which caused the old wound to open again; fever, spitting of blood, and other ugly symptoms, to ensue ; and, in a word, brought him near to death's door. The kind lad, his kinsman, attended his elder comrade with a very praiseworthy affectionateness and care until he was pronounced out of danger by the doctors, when Frank went off, passed the winter at Bruxelles, and besieged, no doubt, some other fortress there. Very few lads would have given up their pleasures so long and so gaily as Frank did ; his cheerful prattle soothed many long days of Esmond's pain and languor. Frank was supposed to be still at his kinsman's bedside for a month after he had left it, for letters came from his mother at home full of thanks to the younger gentleman for his care of his elder brother (so it pleased Esmond's mistress now affectionately to style him); nor was Mr. Esmond in a hurry to undeceive her, when the good young fellow was gone for his Christmas holiday.

Young Castlewood came flying back from Bruxelles as soon as he heard that fighting was to begin ; and the arrival of the Chevalier de St. George was announced about May. " It's the King's third campaign, and it's mine," Frank liked saying. He was come back a greater Jacobite than ever, and Esmond suspected that some fair conspirators at Bruxelles had been inflaming the young man's ardour.

One day, three officers on horseback, on the French side, appeared at some little distance, and stopped as if

eyeing us, when one of them left the other two, trode close up to us who were by the stream.

" Please to take Mr. Hamilton's services to my Lord Marlborough—my Lord Duke," says the gentleman in English ; and, looking to see that the party we or not hostilely disposed, he added, with a smile, " There is a friend of yours, gentlemen, yonder; he bids me to say that he saw some of your faces on the 11th of September last year."

As the gentleman spoke, the other two officers rode up, and came quite close. We knew at once who it was. It was the King, then two-and-twenty years old, tall and slim, with deep brown eyes that looked melancholy, though his lips wore a smile. We took off our hats and saluted him. No man, sure, could see for the first time, without emotion, the youthful inheritor of so much fame and misfortune. It seemed to Mr. Esmond that the Prince was not unlike young Castlewood, whose age and figure he resembled. The Chevalier de St. George acknowledged the salute, and looked at us hard.

The news of the Prince's visit was all through the camp quickly, and scores of ours went down in hopes to see him. Major Hamilton, whom he had talked with, sent back by a trumpet several silver pieces for officers with us. Mr. Esmond received one of these ; and that medal, and a recompence not uncommon amongst Princes, were the only rewards he ever had from a Royal person, whom he endeavoured not very long after to serve.

Esmond quitted the army almost immediately after this, following his General home; and, indeed, being advised to travel in the fine weather, and attempt to take no further part in the campaign. But he heard from

the army, that of the many who crowded to see the Chevalier de St. George, Frank Castlewood had made himself most conspicuous : my Lord Viscount riding across the little stream bareheaded to where the Prince was, and dismounting and kneeling before him to do him homage.

CHAPTER II

I GO HOME, AND HARP ON THE OLD STRING

AFTER quitting Mons and the army, and as he was waiting for a packet at Ostend, Esmond had a letter from his young kinsman Castlewood at Bruxelles, conveying intelligence whereof Frank besought him to be the bearer to London, and which caused Colonel Esmond no small anxiety.

The young scapegrace, being one-and-twenty years old, and being anxious to sow his "wild otes," as he wrote, had married Mademoiselle de Wertheim, daughter of Count de Wertheim, Chamberlain to the Emperor, and having a post in the Household of the Governor of the Netherlands. "P.S.," the young gentleman wrote: "Clotilda is *older than me*, which perhaps may be objected to her; but I am so *old a raik* that the age makes no difference, and I am *determined* to reform. We were married at St. Gudule, by Father Holt. She is heart and soul for the *good cause*. And here the cry is *Vif-le-Roy*, which my mother will *join in*, and Trix *too*. Break this news to 'em gently; and tell Mr. Finch, my agent, to press the people for their rents, and send me the *ryno* anyhow. Clotilda sings, and plays on the spinet *beautifully*. She is a fair beauty. And if it's a son, you shall stand *Godfather*. I'm going to leave the army, having had *enuf of soldering*; and my Lord Duke *recommends*

me. I shall pass the winter here, and stop at least until Clo's lying-in. I call her *old Clo*, but nobody else shall. She is the cleverest woman in all Bruxelles—understanding painting, music, poetry, and perfect at *cookery and puddens*. I boded with the Count, that's how I came to know her. There are four Counts her brothers. One an Abbey—three with the Prince's army. They have a lawsuit for *an immense fortune*, but are now in a *pore way*. Break this to mother, who'll take anything from you. And write, and bid Finch write *amediatly*. Hostel de l'Aigle Noire, Bruxelles, Flanders."

So Frank had married a Roman Catholic lady, and an heir was expected, and Mr. Esmond was to carry this intelligence to his mistress at London. 'Twas a difficult embassy, and the Colonel felt not a little tremor as he neared the capital.

He reached his inn late, and sent a messenger to Kensington to announce his arrival and visit the next morning. The messenger brought back news that the Court was at Windsor, and the fair Beatrix absent and engaged in her duties there. Only Esmond's mistress remained in her house at Kensington; she appeared in Court but once in the year. Beatrix was quite the mistress and ruler of the little mansion, inviting the company thither, and engaging in every conceivable frolic of town pleasure; whilst her mother, acting as the young lady's protectress and elder sister, pursued her own path, which was quite modest and secluded.

As soon as ever Esmond was dressed (and he had been awake long before the town), he took a coach for Kensington, and reached it so early that he met his dear mistress coming home from morning prayers. She carried

her prayer-book, never allowing a footman to bear it, as everybody else did ; and it was by this simple sign Esmond knew what her occupation had been. He called to the coachman to stop, and jumped out as she looked towards him. She wore her hood as usual, and she turned quite pale when she saw him. They soon were at the door of her ladyship's house—and within it.

With a sweet sad smile she took his hand and kissed it.

" How ill you have been ! how weak you look, my dear Henry ! " she said.

'Tis certain the Colonel did look like a ghost, except that ghosts do not look very happy, 'tis said. Esmond always felt so on returning to her after absence, indeed whenever he looked in her sweet, kind face.

" I am come back to be nursed by my family," says he. " If Frank had not taken care of me after my wound, very likely I should have gone altogether."

" Poor Frank, good Frank ! " says his mother. " You'll always be kind to him, my lord," she went on. " The poor child never knew he was doing you a wrong."

" My lord ! " cries out Colonel Esmond. " What do you mean, dear lady ? "

" I am no lady," says she ; " I am Rachel Esmond, Francis Esmond's widow, my lord. I cannot bear that title. Would we had never taken it from him who has it now. But we did all in our power, Henry—we did all in our power ; and my lord and I—that is——"

" Who told you this tale, dearest lady ? " asked the Colonel.

" Have you not had the letter I writ you ? I writ to you at Mons directly I heard it," says Lady Esmond.

" And from whom ? " again asked Colonel Esmond ;

and his mistress then told him that on her deathbed the Dowager Countess, sending for her, had presented her with this dismal secret as a legacy. " 'Twas very malicious of the Dowager," Lady Esmond said, " to have had it so long, and to have kept the truth from me." " Cousin Rachel," she said—and Esmond's mistress could not forbear smiling as she told the story—" Cousin Rachel," cries the Dowager, " I have sent for you, as the doctors say I may go off any day in this dysentery ; and to ease my conscience of a great load that has been on it. You always have been a poor creature and unfit for great honour, and what I have to say won't, therefore, affect you so much. You must know, cousin Rachel, that I have left my house, plate, and furniture, three thousand pounds in money, and my diamonds that my late revered Saint and Sovereign, King James, presented me with, to my Lord Viscount Castlewood."

" To my Frank ? " says Lady Castlewood. " I was in hopes——"

" To Viscount Castlewood, my dear ; Viscount Castlewood and Baron Esmond of Shandon in the Kingdom of Ireland, Earl and Marquis of Esmond under patent of his Majesty King James the Second, conferred upon my husband the late Marquis—for I am Marchioness of Esmond before God and man."

" And have you left poor Harry nothing, dear Marchioness ? " asks Lady Castlewood (she hath told me the story completely since with her quiet, arch way—the most charming any woman ever had—and I set down the narrative here at length, so as to have done with it). " And have you left poor Harry nothing ? " asks my dear lady.

" Poor Harry ! " says the old lady. " So you want something left to poor Harry—he, he ! (reach me the drops, cousin). Well, then, my dear, since you want poor Harry to have a fortune, you must understand that ever since the year 1691, a week after the battle of the Boyne, where the Prince of Orange defeated his royal sovereign and father, for which crime he is now suffering in flames (ugh! ugh!), Harry Esmond hath been Marquis of Esmond and Earl of Castlewood in the United Kingdom, and Baron and Viscount Castlewood of Shandon in Ireland ; and his eldest son will be, by courtesy, styled Earl of Castlewood—he, he ! What do you think of that, my dear ? "

" Gracious mercy ! how long have you known this ? " cries the other lady (thinking perhaps that the old Marchioness was wandering in her wits).

" My husband, before he was converted, was a wicked wretch," the sick sinner continued. " When he was in the Low Countries he seduced a weaver's daughter and added to his wickedness by marrying her. And then he came to this country and married me—a poor girl—a poor innocent young thing, I say " (" though she was past forty, you know, Harry, when she married ; and as for being innocent——")—" Well," she went on, " I knew nothing of my lord's wickedness for three years after our marriage ; and after the burial of our poor little boy, I had it done over again, my dear—I had myself married by Father Holt in Castlewood chapel, as soon as ever I heard the creature was dead. And having a great illness then, arising from another sad disappointment I had, the priest came and told me that my lord had a son before our marriage, and that the child was at nurse in

England ; and I consented to let the brat be brought home, and a queer little melancholy child it was when it came.

" Our intention was to make a priest of him ; and he was bred for this, until you perverted him from it, you wicked woman. And I had again hopes of giving an heir to my lord, when he was called away upon the King's business, and died fighting gloriously at the Boyne Water.

" Should I be disappointed- I owed your husband no love, my dear, for he had jilted me in the most scandalous way—and I thought there would be time to declare the little weaver's son for the true heir. But I was carried off to prison, where your husband was so kind to me—urging all his friends to obtain my release—that I relented towards him, especially as my director counselled me to be silent, and that it was for the good of the King's service that the title of our family should continue with your husband the late Viscount, whereby his fidelity would be always secured to the King. And the proof of this is, that a year before your husband's death, when he thought of taking a place under the Prince of Orange, Mr. Holt went to him, and told him what the state of the matter was, and obliged him to raise a large sum for his Majesty, and engaged him in the true cause so heartily, that we were sure of his support on any day when it should be considered advisable to attack the usurper. Then his sudden death came, and there was a thought of declaring the truth. But 'twas determined to be best for the King's service to let the title still go with the younger branch ; and there's no sacrifice a Castlewood wouldn't make for that cause, my dear.

" As for Colonel Esmond, he knew the truth already."

(" And then, Harry," my mistress said, " she told me of what had happened at my dear husband's death-bed.")
" He doth not intend to take the title, though it belongs to him. But it eases my conscience that you should know the truth, my dear. And your son is lawfully Viscount Castlewood so long as his cousin doth not claim the rank."

This was the substance of the Dowager's revelation. Dean Atterbury had knowledge of it, Lady Castlewood said—and Esmond very well knows how ; that divine being the clergyman for whom the late lord had sent on his death-bed—and when Lady Castlewood would instantly have written to her son, and conveyed the truth to him, the Dean's advice was that a letter should be writ to Colonel Esmond rather—that the matter should be submitted to his decision, by which alone the rest of the family were bound to abide.

" And can my dearest lady doubt what that will be ? " says the Colonel.

" It rests with you, Harry, as the head of our house."

" It was settled twelve years since, by my dear lord's bedside," says Colonel Esmond. " The children must know nothing of this. Frank and his heirs after him must bear our name. 'Tis his rightfully. I have not even a proof of that marriage of my father and mother, though my poor lord, on his death-bed, told me that Father Holt had brought such a proof to Castlewood. I would not seek it when I was abroad. I went and looked at my poor mother's grave in her convent. What matter to her now ? No court of law on earth, upon my mere word, would deprive my Lord Viscount and set me up. I am the head of the house, dear lady : but Frank is

Viscount of Castlewood still. And rather than disturb him, I would turn monk, or disappear in America."

As he spoke so to his dearest mistress, for whom he would have been willing to give up his life, or to make any sacrifice any day, the fond creature flung herself down on her knees before him, and kissed both his hands in an outbreak of passionate love and gratitude, such as could not but make him feel very proud and thankful that God had given him the power to show his love for her, and to prove it by some little sacrifice on his own part.

Before such a partial judge as Esmond's dear mistress owned herself to be, any cause which he might plead was sure to be given in his favour ; and accordingly he found little difficulty in reconciling her to the news whereof he was bearer, of her son's marriage to a foreign lady, Papist though she was.

However, the next mail which came from Bruxelles, after Frank had received his mother's letters there, brought back a joint composition from himself and his wife, who could spell no better than her young scapegrace of a husband, full of expressions of thanks, love, and duty to the Dowager Viscountess, as my poor lady now was styled ; and along with this letter there came a private letter for Colonel Esmond from poor Frank, with another dismal commission for the Colonel to execute, at his best opportunity ; and this was to announce that Frank had seen fit, " by the exhortations of Mr. Holt, the influence of his Clotilda, and the blessing of Heaven and the saints," says my lord demurely, " to change his religion, and be received into the bosom of that church of which his sovereign, many of his family, and the greater part of the civilized world, were members."

If Esmond had wanted to keep this secret, he could not; for a day or two after receiving this letter, a notice from Bruxelles appeared in the *Post-Boy* and other prints, announcing that "a young Irish lord, the Viscount C-stlew—d, just come to his majority, and who had served the last campaigns with great credit, as aide-de-camp to his Grace the Duke of Marlborough, had declared for the Popish religion at Bruxelles, and had walked in a procession barefoot, with a wax taper in his hand." The notorious Mr. Holt, who had been employed as a Jacobite agent during the last reign, and many times pardoned by King William, had been, the *Post-Boy* said, the agent of this conversion.

The most beautiful woman in England in 1712, when Esmond returned to this country, a lady of high birth, and though of no fortune to be sure, with a thousand fascinations of wit and manners, Beatrix Esmond was now six-and-twenty years old, and Beatrix Esmond still. Of her hundred adorers she had not chosen one for a husband ; and those who had asked had been jilted by her, and more still had left her. The young beauties were beginning to look down on Beatrix as an old maid, and sneer, and call her one of Charles the Second's ladies, and ask whether her portrait was not in the Hampton Court Gallery ? But still she reigned, at least in one man's opinion, superior over all the little misses that were the toasts of the young lads, and in Esmond's eyes was ever perfectly lovely and young.

Who knows how many were nearly made happy by possessing her, or, rather, how many were fortunate in escaping this siren ? 'Tis a marvel to think that her mother was the purest and simplest woman in the whole

world, and that this girl should have been born from her. I am inclined to fancy, my mistress, who never said a harsh word to her children (and but twice or thrice only to one person), must have been too fond and pressing with the maternal authority ; for her son and her daughter both revolted early, nor after their first flight from the nest could they ever be brought back quite to the fond mother's bosom. Lady Castlewood, and perhaps it was as well, knew little of her daughter's life and real thoughts. Mrs. Beatrix asserted her own authority so resolutely that her mother quickly gave in. The Maid of Honour had her own equipage ; went from home and came back at her own will: her mother was alike powerless to resist her or to lead her, or to command or to persuade her.

She had been engaged once, twice, thrice, to be married, Esmond believed. When he quitted home, it hath been said, she was promised to my Lord Ashburnham ; and now, on his return, behold his lordship was just married to Lady Mary Butler, the Duke of Ormond's daughter, and his twelve thousand a year of fortune, for which Miss Beatrix had rather coveted him, was out of her power. To her Esmond could say nothing in regard to the breaking of this match ; and, asking his mistress about it, all Lady Castlewood answered was : "Do not speak to me about it, Harry. I cannot tell you how or why they parted, and I fear to inquire. I have told you before, that with all her kindness, and wit, and generosity, and that sort of splendour of nature she has, I can say but little good of poor Beatrix, and look with dread at the marriage she will form. Her mind is fixed on ambition only, and making a great figure ; and, this achieved, she

will tire of it, as she does of everything. Heaven help her husband, whoever he shall be ! My Lord Ashburnham was a most excellent young man, gentle and yet manly, of very good parts, and a kind temper—kind and enduring I'm sure he must have been, from all that he had to endure. But he quitted her at last, from some crowning piece of caprice or tyranny of hers; and now he has married a young woman that will make him a thousand times happier than my poor girl ever could."

The rupture, whatever its cause was, caused a good deal of low talk; and Mr. Esmond was present at my lord's appearance at the Birthday with his bride, over whom the revenge that Beatrix took was to look so imperial and lovely that the modest, downcast young lady could not appear beside her, and Lord Ashburnham, who had his reasons for wishing to avoid her, slunk away quite shamefaced, and very early. This time his Grace the Duke of Hamilton, whom Esmond had seen about her before, was constant at Miss Beatrix's side. He was one of the most splendid gentlemen of Europe, accomplished by books, by travel, by long command of the best company ; distinguished as a statesman, having been ambassador in King William's time, and a noble speaker in the Scots Parliament, where he had led the party that was against the Union; a gentleman so high in stature, accomplished in wit, and favoured in person, that he might pretend to the hand of any Princess in Europe.

" Should you like the Duke for a cousin ? " says Mr. Secretary St. John, whispering to Colonel Esmond in French ; " it appears that the widower consoles himself."

[Left alone with Beatrix, Esmond tries a last desperate proposal,]

" I'm a dismal shepherd, to be sure," said Esmond, with a blush, " and require a nymph that can tuck my bedclothes up, and make me water-gruel. Well, Jack Lock wood can do that. He took me out of the fire upon his shoulders, and nursed me through my illness as love will scarce ever do—only good wages, and a hope of my clothes, and the contents of my portmanteau. How long was it that Jacob served an apprenticeship for Rachel ? "

" For mamma ? " says Beatrix. " Is it mamma your honour wants, and that I should have the happiness of calling you papa ? "

Esmond blushed again. " I spoke of a Rachel that a shepherd courted five thousand years ago, when shepherds were longer lived than now. And my meaning was, that since I saw you first after our separation—a child you were then——"

" And I put on my best stockings to captivate you, I remember, sir——"

" You have had my heart ever since then, such as it was ; and such as you were, I cared for no other woman. What little reputation I have won, it was that you might be pleased with it ; and indeed, it is not much, and I think a hundred fools in the army have got and deserved quite as much. Was there something in the air of that dismal old Castlewood that made us all gloomy, and dissatisfied, and lonely under its ruined old roof ? "

" Dear, dreary old place ! " cries Beatrix. " Mamma hath never had the heart to go back thither since we left it, when—never mind how many years ago." And she flung back her curls, and looked over her fair shoulder

at the mirror superbly, as if she said, " Time, I defy you."

" Yes," says Esmond, who had the art, as she owned, of divining many of her thoughts, " you can afford to look in the glass still, and only be pleased by the truth it tells you. As for me, do you know what my scheme is ? I think of asking Frank to give me the Virginian estate King Charles gave our grandfather." (She gave a superb curtsy, as much as to say, " Our grandfather, indeed ! Thank you, Mr. Bastard.") " Yes, I know you are thinking of my bar-sinister, and so am I. A man cannot get over it in this country—unless, indeed, he wears it across a king's arms, when 'tis a highly honourable coat; and I am thinking of retiring into the plantations, and building myself a wigwam in the woods, and perhaps, if I want company, suiting myself with a squaw. We will send your ladyship furs over for the winter ; and, when you are old, we'll provide you with tobacco. I am not quite clever enough, or not rogue enough—I know not which—for the Old World. I may make a place for myself in the New, which is not so full, and found a family there. When you are a mother yourself, and a great lady, perhaps I shall send you over from the plantation some day a little barbarian that is half Esmond, half Mohock ; and you will be kind to him for his father's sake, who was, after all, your kinsman, and whom you loved a little."

"What folly you are talking, Harry," says Miss Beatrix, looking with her great eyes.

" 'Tis sober earnest," says Esmond. And, indeed, the scheme had been dwelling a good deal in his mind for some time past, and especially since his return home, when he found how hopeless, and even degrading to

himself, his passion was. " No," says he, then. " I have tried half a dozen times now. I can bear being away from you well enough ; but being with you is intolerable " (another low curtsy on Mistress Beatrix's part), " and I will go. I have enough to buy axes and guns for my men, and beads and blankets for the savages ; and I'll go and live amongst them."

" *Mon ami*," she says, quite kindly, and taking Esmond's hand with an air of great compassion, " you can't think that in our position anything more than our present friendship is possible. You are our elder brother; as such we view you, pitying your misfortune, not rebuking you with it. Why, you are old enough and grave enough to be our father. I always thought you a hundred years old, Harry, with your solemn face and grave air. I feel as a sister to you, and can no more. Isn't that enough, sir ? " And she put her face quite close to his—who knows with what intention ?

" It's too much," says Esmond, turning away. " I can't bear this life, and shall leave it. I shall stay, I think, to see you married, and then freight a ship, and call it the *Beatrix*, and bid you all——"

Here the servant, flinging the door open, announced his Grace the Duke of Hamilton ; and Esmond started back with something like an imprecation on his lips, as the nobleman entered, looking splendid in his star and green riband. He gave Mr. Esmond just that gracious bow which he would have given to a lacquey who fetched him a chair or took his hat, and seated himself by Miss Beatrix, as the poor Colonel went out of the room with a hang-dog look.

Esmond's mistress was in the lower room as he passed

downstairs. She often met him as he was coming away from Beatrix, and she beckoned him into the apartment.

' Has she told you, Harry ? ' Lady Castle wood said.

" She has been very frank—very," says Esmond.

" But—but about what is going to happen ? "

" What is going to happen ? " says he, his heart beating.

" His Grace the Duke of Hamilton has proposed to her," says my lady. " He made his offer yesterday. They will marry as soon as his mourning is over ; and you have heard his Grace is appointed Ambassador to Paris, and the Ambassadors goes with him."

CHAPTER III

BEATRIX'S NEW SUITOR

THE gentleman whom Beatrix had selected was, to be sure, twenty years older than the Colonel, with whom she quarrelled for being too old ; but this one was but a nameless adventurer, and the other the greatest duke in Scotland, with pretensions even to a still higher title. My Lord Duke of Hamilton had, indeed, every merit belonging to a gentleman, and he had had the time to mature his accomplishments fully, being upwards of fifty years old when Madame Beatrix selected him for a bridegroom. Duke Hamilton, then Earl of Arran, had been educated at the famous Scottish university of Glasgow, and, coming to London, became a great favourite of Charles the Second, who made him a lord of his bed-chamber, and afterwards appointed him ambassador to the French king, under whom the Earl served two campaigns as his Majesty's aide-de-camp and he was absent on this service when King Charles died.

King James continued my lord's promotion—made him Master of the Wardrobe and Colonel of the Royal Regiment of Horse; and his lordship adhered firmly to King James, being of the small company that never quitted that unfortunate monarch till his departure out of England; and then it was, in 1688 namely, that he made the friendship with Colonel Francis Esmond, that

had always been, more or less, maintained in the two families.

His lordship was a widower, having married, in 1698, Elizabeth, daughter of Digby Lord Gerard, by which marriage great estates came into the Hamilton family ; and out of these estates came, in part, that tragic quarrel which ended the Duke's career.

An old army acquaintance of Colonel Esmond's, honest Tom Trett, who had sold his company, married a wife, and turned merchant in the city, was dreadfully gloomy for a long time, though living in a fine house on the river, and carrying on a great trade to all appearance. At length Esmond saw his friend's name in the *Gazette* as a bankrupt; and a week after this circumstance my bankrupt walks into Mr. Esmond's lodging with a face perfectly radiant with good-humour, and as jolly and careless as when they had sailed from Southampton ten years before for Vigo. " This bankruptcy," says Tom, " has been hanging over my head these three years. The thought had prevented my sleeping; and I have looked at poor Polly's head on t'other pillow, and then towards my razor on the table, and thought to put an end to myself, and so give my woes the slip. But now we are bankrupts : Tom Trett pays as many shillings in the pound as he can; his wife has a little cottage at Fulham, and her fortune secured to herself. I am afraid neither of bailiff nor of creditor, and for the last six nights have slept easy." So it was that when Fortune shook her wings and left him, honest Tom cuddled himself up in his ragged virtue, and fell asleep.

Esmond did not tell his friend how much his story applied to Esmond too ; but he laughed at it, and used

it, and determined to put a cheerful face on his bankruptcy. Perhaps Beatrix was a little offended at his gaiety. "Is this the way, sir, that you receive the announcement of your misfortune," says she ; "and do you come smiling before me, as if you were glad to be rid of me ?"

Esmond would not be put off from his good-humour. "I have been hankering after the grapes on the wall," says he, "and lost my temper because they were beyond my reach : was there any wonder ? They're gone now, and another has them—a taller man than your humble servant has won them." And the Colonel made his cousin a low bow.

"A taller man, Cousin Esmond !" says she. "A man of spirit would have scaled the wall, sir, and seized them ! A man of courage would have fought for 'em, not gaped for 'em."

"A Duke has but to gape and they drop into his mouth," says Esmond, with another low bow.

"Yes, sir," says she, "a Duke is a taller man than you. And why should I not be grateful to one such as his Grace, who gives me his heart and his great name ? It is a great gift he honours me with. I know 'tis a bargain between us ; and I accept it, and will do my utmost to perform my part of it. 'Tis no question of sighing and phi'andering between a nobleman of his Grace's age and a girl who hath little of that softness in her nature. Why should I not own that I am ambitious, Harry Esmond ? and if it be no sin in a man to covet honour, why should a woman too not desire it ? Shall I be frank with you, Harry, and say that if you had not been so humble, you might have fared better with me ? A woman of my spirit, cousin,

is to be won by gallantry, and not by sighs and rueful faces. All the time you are worshipping and singing hymns to me I know very well I am no goddess, and grow weary of the incense. So would you have been weary of the goddess too when she was called Mrs. Esmond, and got out of humour because she had not pin-money enough, and was forced to go about in an old gown. I should have been sulky, and scolded ; and of all the proud wretches in the world, Mr. Esmond is the proudest, let me tell him that. You never fall into a passion ; but you never forgive, I think. Had you been a great man, you might have been good-humoured. But being nobody, sir, you are too great a man for me ; and I'm afraid of you, cousin—there! and I won't worship you, and you'll never be happy except with a woman who will. Why, after I belonged to you, and after one of my tantrums, you would have put the pillow over my head some night and smothered me, as the black man does the woman in the play that you're so fond of. What's the creature's name ?—Desdemona. You would, you little black-eyed Othello ! "

" I think I should, Beatrix," says the Colonel.

" And I want no such ending. I intend to live to be a hundred, and to go to ten thousand routs and balls, and to play cards every night of my life till the year eighteen hundred. And I like flattery and compliments, and you give me none ; and I like to be made to laugh, sir, and who's to laugh at *your* dismaliface, I should like to know % and I like a coach-and-six, or a coach-and-eight; and I like diamonds, and a new gown every week ; and people to say, ' That's the Duchess—How well her Grace looks—Make way for Madame l'Ambassadrice

d'Angleterre—Call her Excellency's people '—that's what I like. And as for you, you want a woman to bring your slippers and cap, and to sit at your feet whilst you read your Shakespeares and Miltons and stuff. Mamma would have been the wife for you, had you been a little older; though you look *ten* years older than she does—you do, you glum-faced, blue-bearded, little old man ! You might have sat, like Darby and Joan, and billed and cooed like a pair of old pigeons on a perch. I want my wings, and to use them, sir." And she spread out her beautiful arms, as if indeed she could fly off like the pretty "Gawrie," whom the man in the story was enamoured of.

"And what will your Peter Wilkins say to your flight ?" says Esmond, who never admired this fair creature more than when she rebelled and laughed at him.

"A Duchess knows her place," says she, with a laugh. "Why, I have a son already made for me, and thirty years old (*my* Lord Arran), and four daughters. How they will scold, and what a rage they will be in, when, I come to take the head of the table ! But I give them only a month to be angry ; and at the end of that time they shall love me every one, and so shall Lord Arran, and so shall all his Grace's Scots vassals and followers in the Highlands. I'm bent on it ; and when I take a thing in my head, 'tis done. His Grace is the greatest gentleman in Europe, and I'll try and make him happy ; and, when the King comes back, you may count on my protection, Cousin Eomond—for come back the King will and shall, and I'll bring him back from Versailles, if he comes under my hoop."

"I hope the world will make you happy, Beatrix," says Esmond, with a sigh. "You'll be Beatrix till you

are my Lady Duchess, will you not ? I shall then make your Grace my very lowest bow."

" None of these sighs and this satire, cousin," she says. " I take his Grace's great bounty thankfully—yes, thankfully ; and will wear his honours becomingly. I do not say he hath touched my heart; but he has my gratitude, obedience, admiration. I have told him that, and no more ; and with that his noble heart is content. I have told him all—even the story of that poor creature that I was engaged to, and that I could not love ; and I gladly gave his word back to him, and jumped for joy to get back my own. I am twenty-five years old."

" Twenty-six, my dear," says Esmond.

" Twenty-five, sir—I choose to be twenty-five ; and in eight years no man hath ever touched my heart. Yes—you did once, for a little, Harry, when you came back after Lille, and engaging with that murderer Mohun, and saving Frank's life. I thought I could like you ; and mamma begged me hard, on her knees, and I did—for a day. But the old chill came over me, Henry, and the old fear of you and your melancholy ; and I was glad when you went away, and engaged with my Lord Ashburnham, that I might hear no more of you—that's the truth. You are too good for me, somehow. I could not make *you* happy, and should break my heart in trying, and not being able to love you. But if you had asked me when we gave you the sword, you might have had me, sir ; and we both should have been miserable by this time. I talked with that silly lord all night just to vex you and mamma ; and I succeeded, didn't I ? It seems a thousand years ago ; and, though we are here sitting in the same room, there's a great wall between us.

My dear, kind, faithful, gloomy old cousin! I can like you now, and admire you too, sir, and say that you are brave, and very kind, and very true, and a fine gentleman for all—for all your little mishap at your birth," says she, wagging her arch head.

" And now, sir," says she, with a curtsy, " we must have no more talk except when mamma is by, or his Grace is with us ; for he does not half like you, cousin, and is as jealous as the black man in your favourite play."

Though the very kindness of the words stabbed Mr. Esmond with the keenest pang, he did not show his sense of the wound by any look of his (as Beatrix, indeed, afterwards owned to him), but said, with a perfect command of himself and an easy smile, " The interview must not end yet, my dear, until I have had my last word. Stay, here comes your mother " (indeed she came in here with her sweet anxious face, and Esmond, going up, kissed her hand respectfully). " My dear lady may hear, too, the last words, which are no secrets, and are only a parting benediction accompanying a present for your marriage from an old gentleman your guardian, and in this character let me make my Lady Duchess her wedding present. They are the diamonds my father's widow left me. They are good enough for a duchess, though not bright enough for the handsomest woman in the world." And he took the case out of his pocket in which the jewels were, and presented them to his cousin.

She gave a cry of delight, for the stones were indeed very handsome, and of great value ; and the next minute the necklace was where Belinda's cross is in Mr. Pope's admirable poem, and glittering on the whitest and most perfectly-shaped neck in all England.

The girl's delight at receiving these trinkets was so great that, after rushing to the looking-glass and examining the effect they produced upon that fair neck which they surrounded, Beatrix was running back with her arms extended, and was perhaps for paying her cousin with a price that he would have liked to receive from those beautiful rosy lips of hers ; but at this moment the door opened, and his Grace the bridegroom-elect was announced.

He looked very black upon Mr. Esmond, to whom he made a very low bow indeed, and kissed the hand of each lady in his most ceremonious manner. He had come in his chair from the palace hard by, and wore his two stars of the Garter and the Thistle.

" Look, my Lord Duke," says Mistress Beatrix, advancing to him, and showing the diamonds on her breast.

" Diamonds," says his Grace. " H'm! they seem pretty."

" They are a present on my marriage," says Beatrix.

" From her Majesty ? " asks the Duke. " The Queen is very good."

" From my cousin Henry—from our cousin Henry," cry both the ladies in a breath.

" I have not the honour of knowing the gentleman. I thought that my Lord Castlewood had no brother, and that on your ladyship's side there were no nephews."

" From our cousin, Colonel Henry Esmond, my lord," says Beatrix, taking the Colonel's hand very bravely—" who was left guardian to us by our father, and who hath a hundred times shown his love and friendship for our family."

" The Duchess of Hamilton receives no diamonds but from her husband, madam," says the Duke ; " may I pray you to restore these to Mr. Esmond ? "

" Beatrix Esmond may receive a present from our kinsman and benefactor, my Lord Duke," says Lady Castlewood, with an air of great dignity. " She is my daughter yet; and if her mother sanctions the gift, no one else hath the right to question it."

" Kinsman and benefactor! " says the Duke. " I know of no kinsman ; and I do not choose that my wife should have for benefactor a——"

" My lord ! " says Colonel Esmond.

" I am not here to bandy words," says his Grace: " frankly I tell you that your visits to this house are too frequent, and that I choose no presents for the Duchess of Hamilton from gentlemen that bear a name they have no right to."

" My lord! " breaks out Lady Castlewood, " Mr. Esmond hath the best right to that name of any man in the world; and 'tis as old and as honourable as your Grace's."

My Lord Duke smiled, and looked as if Lady Castlewood was mad, that was so talking to him.

"If I called him benefactor," said my mistress, " it is because he has been so to us—yes, the noblest, the truest, the bravest, the dearest of benefactors. He would have saved my husband's life from Mohun's sword. He did save my boy's, and defended him from that villain. Are those no benefits ? "

" I ask Colonel Esmond's pardon," says his Grace, if possible more haughty than before. " I would say not a word that should give him offence, and thank him for

his kindness to your ladyship's family. My Lord Mohun and I are connected, you know, by marriage—though neither by blood nor friendship ; but I must repeat what I said, that my wife can receive no presents from Colonel Esmond."

" My daughter may receive presents from the Head of our House ; my daughter may thankfully take kindness from her father's, her mother's, her brother's dearest friend ; and be grateful for one more benefit besides the thousand we owe him," cries Lady Castlewood. " What is a string of diamond stones compared to that affection he hath given us—our dearest preserver and benefactor ? We owe him not only Frank's life, but our all—yes, our all," says my mistress, with a heightened colour and a trembling voice. " The title we bear is his, if he would claim it. 'Tis we who have no right to our name ; not he that's too great for it. He sacrificed his name at my dying lord's bedside ; gave up rank and honour, because he loved us so nobly. His father was Viscount of Castlewood and Marquis of Esmond before him ; and he is his father's lawful son and true heir, and we are the recipients of his bounty, and he the chief of a house that's as old as your own. And if he is content to forgo his name that my child may bear it, we love him and honour him and bless him under whatever name he bears "—and here the fond and affectionate creature would have knelt to Esmond again, but that he prevented her ; and Beatrix, running up to her with a pale face and a cry of alarm, embraced her, and said, " Mother, what is this ? "

" 'Tis a family secret, my Lord Duke," says Colonel Esmond. " Poor Beatrix knew nothing of it ; nor did my lady till a year ago. And I have as good a right to

resign my title as your Grace's mother to abdicate hers to you."

" I should have told everything to the Duke of Hamilton," said my mistress, " had his Grace applied to me for my daughter's hand, and not to Beatrix. I should have spoken with you this very day in private, my lord, had not your words brought about this sudden explanation. And now 'tis fit Beatrix should hear it, and know, as I would have all the world know, what we owe to our kinsman and patron."

And then in her touching way, and having hold of her daughter's hand, and speaking to her rather than my Lord Duke, Lady Castlewood told the story which you know already—lauding up to the skies her kinsman's behaviour. On his side Mr. Esmond explained the reasons, that seemed quite sufficiently cogent with him, why the succession in the family, as at present it stood, should not be disturbed, and he should remain as he was, Colonel Esmond.

" And Marquis of Esmond, my lord," says his Grace, with a low bow. " Permit me to ask your lordship's pardon for words that were uttered in ignorance, and to beg for the favour of your friendship. To be allied to you, sir, must be an honour under whatever name you are known " (so his Grace was pleased to say); " and in return for the splendid present you make my wife, your kinswoman, I hope you will please to command any service that James Douglas can perform. I shall never be easy until I repay you a part of my obligations at least; and ere very long, and with the mission her Majesty hath given me," says the Duke, " that may perhaps be in my power. I shall esteem it as a

favour, my lord, if Colonel Esmond will give away the bride."

" And if he will take the usual payment in advance, he is welcome," says Beatrix, stepping up to him; and, as Esmond kissed her, she whispered, " Oh, why didn't I know you before ? "

My Lord Duke was as hot as a flame at this salute, but said never a word. Beatrix made him a proud curtsy, and the two ladies quitted the room together.

" When does your Excellency go for Paris ? " asks Colonel Esmond.

" As soon after the ceremony as may be," his Grace answered. " 'Tis fixed for the first of December; it cannot be sooner. The equipage will not be ready till then. The Queen intends the embassy should be very grand; and I have law business to settle. That ill-omened Mohun has come, or is coming, to London again. We are in a lawsuit about my late Lord Gerard's property; and he hath sent to me to meet him."

CHAPTER IV

MOHUN APPEARS FOR THE LAST TIME IN THIS HISTORY

BESIDES my Lord Duke of Hamilton and Brandon, who for family reasons had kindly promised his protection and patronage to Colonel Esmond, he had other great friends in power now, both able and willing to assist him, and he might, with such allies, look forward to as fortunate advancement in civil life at home as he had got rapid promotion abroad. His Grace was magnanimous enough to offer to take Mr. Esmond as secretary on his Paris embassy ; but no doubt he intended that proposal should be rejected : at any rate, Esmond could not bear the thoughts of attending his mistress farther than the church-door after her marriage, and so declined that offer which his generous rival made him.

Of the famous wits of that age, who have rendered Queen Anne's reign illustrious, and whose works will be in all Englishmen's hands in ages yet to come, Mr. Esmond saw many, but at public places chiefly, never having a great intimacy with any of them, except with honest Dick Steele and Mr. Addison, who parted company with Esmond, however, when that gentleman became a declared Tory, and lived on close terms with the leading persons of that party. Addison kept himself to a few friends, and very rarely opened himself except in their

company. A man more upright and conscientious than he it was not possible to find in public life, and one whose conversation was so various, easy, and delightful. The pleasantest of the wits I knew were the Doctors Garth and Arbuthnot, and Mr. Gay, the author of "Trivia," the most charming kind soul that ever laughed at a joke or cracked a bottle. The famous Mr. Congreve I saw a dozen of times at Button's, a splendid wreck of a man, magnificently attired, and though gouty, and almost blind, bearing a brave face against fortune.

The great Mr. Pope (of whose prodigious genius I have no words to express my admiration) was quite a puny lad at this time, appearing seldom in public places. There were hundreds of men, wits, and pretty fellows frequenting the theatres and coffee-houses of that day. I think the most brilliant of that sort I ever saw was not till fifteen years afterwards, when I paid my last visit to England, and met young Harry Fielding, son of the Fielding that served in Spain and afterwards in Flanders with us, and who for fun and humour seemed to top them all. As for the famous Doctor Swift, I can say of him, *Vidi tantum*. He was in London all these years up to the death of the Queen; and in a hundred public places where I saw him, but no more. I have always thought of him and of Marlborough as the two greatest men of that age. I have read his books (who doth not know them ?) here in our calm woods, and imagine a giant to myself as I think of him—a lonely fallen Prometheus, groaning as the vulture tears him.

'Twas but three days after the 15th of November, 1712 (Esmond minds him well of the date), that he went by invitation to dine with his General, the foot of whose

table he used to take on these festive occasions, as he had done at many a board, hard and plentiful, during the campaign. This was a great feast, and of the latter sort. The honest old gentleman loved to treat his friends splendidly : his Grace of Ormond, before he joined his army as generalissimo ; my Lord Viscount Bolingbroke, one of her Majesty's Secretaries of State ; my Lord Orkney, that had served with us abroad, being of the party. His Grace of Hamilton, Master of the Ordnance, and in whose honour the feast had been given, upon his approaching departure as Ambassador to Paris, had sent an excuse to General Webb at two o'clock, but an hour before the dinner: nothing but the most immediate business, his Grace said, should have prevented him having the pleasure of drinking a parting glass to the health of General Webb. His absence disappointed Esmond's old chief, who suffered much from his wounds besides ; and though the company was grand, it was rather gloomy. St. John came last, and brought a friend with him. " I ' m sure," says my General, bowing very politely, " my table hath always a place for Doctor Swift."

The talk was about the affairs of the day, or rather about persons than affairs : my Lady Marlborough's fury, her daughters in old clothes and mob-caps looking out from their windows and seeing the company pass to the Drawing-room ; the gentleman-usher's horror when the Prince of Savoy was introduced to her Majesty in a tie-wig, no man out of a full-bottomed periwig ever having kissed the Royal hand before ; about the Mohawks and the **damage** they were doing, rushing through the **town, killing and murdering.** Some one said the ill-

omened face of Mohun had been seen at the theatre the night before, and Macartney and Meredith with him. Meant to be a feast, the meeting, in spite of drink and talk, was as dismal as a funeral. Every topic started subsided into gloom. His Grace of Ormond went away because the conversation got upon Denain, where we had been defeated in the last campaign. Esmond's General was affected at the allusion to this action too, for his comrade of Wynendael, the Count of Nassau Woudenberg, had been slain there. Mr. Swift, when Esmond pledged him, said he drank no wine, and took his hat from the peg and went away, beckoning my Lord Bolingbroke to follow him ; but the other bade him take his chariot and save his coach-hire—he had to speak with Colonel Esmond; and when the rest of the company withdrew to cards, these two remained behind in the dark.

Bolingbroke always spoke freely when he had drunk freely. His enemies could get any secret out of him in that condition ; women were even employed to ply him, and take his words down. I have heard that my Lord Stair, three years after, when the Secretary fled to France and became the Pretender's Minister, got all the information he wanted by putting female spies over St. John in his cups. He spoke freely now : " Jonathan knows nothing of this for certain, though he suspects it ; and, by George, Webb will take an Archbishopric, and Jonathan a—no—damme—Jonathan will take an Archbishopric from James, I warrant me, gladly enough. Your Duke hath the string of the whole matter in his hand," the Secretary went on. " We have that which will force Marlborough to keep his distance, and he goes out of

London in a fortnight. Prior hath his business ; he left me this morning. And mark me, Harry, should fate carry off our august, our beloved, our most gouty and plethoric Queen, and Defender of the Faith, *la bonne cause triomphera*. *A la santé de la bonne cause !* Everything good comes from France. Wine comes from France; give us another bumper to the *bonne cause*." We drank it together.

" Will the *bonne cause* turn Protestant ? " asked Mr. Esmond.

" No, hang it," says the other ; " he'll defend our Faith, as in duty bound, but he'll stick by his own. The Hind and the Panther shall run in the same car, by Jove! Give us more wine; here's a health to the *bonne cause*, kneeling — *damme*, let's drink it kneeling! " He was quite flushed and wild with wine as he was talking.

" And suppose," says Esmond, who always had this gloomy apprehension, " the *bonne cause* should give us up to the French, as his father and uncle did before him?"

" Give us up to the French ! " starts up Bolingbroke ; " is there any English gentleman that fears that ? You who have seen Blenheim and Ramillies, afraid of the French ! Your ancestors and mine, and brave old Webb's yonder, have met them in a hundred fields, and our children will be ready to do the like. Give us up to the French, pshaw! "

" His uncle did," says Mr. Esmond.

" And what happened to his grandfather ? " broke out St. John, filling out another bumper. " Here's to the greatest monarch England ever saw ; here's to the Eng-

lishman that made a kingdom of her. Our great King came from Huntingdon, not Hanover; our fathers didn't look for a Dutchman to rule us. Let him come, and we'll keep him, and we'll show him Whitehall. If he's a traitor, let us have him here to deal with him. And then there are spirits here as great as any that have gone before. Traitor ! treason ! what names are these to scare you and me ? Are all Oliver's men dead, or his glorious name forgotten in fifty years ? Are there no men equal to him, think you, as good—ay, as good ? God save the King ! and, if the monarchy fails us, God save the British Republic ! "

He filled another great bumper, and tossed it up and drained it wildly, just as the noise of rapid carriage-wheels approaching was stopped at our door, and after a hurried knock and a moment's interval, Mr. Swift came into the hall, ran upstairs to the room we were dining in, and entered it with a perturbed face. St. John, excited with drink, was making some wild quotation out of *Macbeth*, but Swift stopped him.

" Drink no more, my lord, for God's sake ! " says he. " I come with the most dreadful news."

" Is the Queen dead ? " cries out Bolingbroke, seizing on a water-glass.

" No, Duke Hamilton is dead; he was murdered an hour ago by Mohun and Macartney. They had a quarrel this morning; they gave him not so much time as to write a letter. He went for a couple of his friends, and he is dead ; and Mohun, too, the bloody villain, who was set on him. They fought in Hyde Park just before sunset ; the Duke killed Mohun, and Macartney came up and stabbed him, and the dog is fled. I have your chariot

below. Send to every part of the country and apprehend that villain ; come to the Duke's house and see if any life be left in him. "

" Oh, Beatrix, Beatrix," thought Esmond, " and here ends my poor girl's ambition ! "

CHAPTER V

POOR BEATRIX

THERE had been no need to urge upon Esmond the necessity of a separation between him and Beatrix ; Fate had done that completely. And I think, from the very moment poor Beatrix had accepted the Duke's offer, she began to assume the majestic air of a Duchess, nay, Queen Elect, and to carry herself as one sacred and removed from us common people. Her mother and kinsman both fell into her ways. There was a certain charm about this girl of which neither Colonel Esmond nor his fond mistress could forgo the fascination. In spite of her faults, and her pride and wilfulness, they were forced to love her ; and, indeed, might be set down as the two chief flatterers of the brilliant creature's court.

With the horrible news of this catastrophe, which was confirmed by the weeping domestics at the Duke's own door, Esmond rode homewards as quick as his lazy coach would carry him, devising all the time how he should break the intelligence to the person most concerned in it ; and if a satire upon human vanity could be needed, that poor soul afforded it in the altered company and occupations in which Esmond found her. For days before, her chariot had been rolling the street from mercer to toyshop, from goldsmith to laceman. Her taste was perfect, or at least the fond bridegroom had thought so, and had

given her entire authority over all tradesmen, and for all the plate, furniture, and equipages with which his Grace the Ambassador wished to adorn his splendid mission. She must have her picture by Kneller, a duchess not being complete without a portrait; and a noble one he made, and actually sketched in, on a cushion, a coronet which she was about to wear. She vowed she would wear it at King James the Third's coronation ; and never a princess in the land would have become ermine better. Esmond found the antechamber crowded with milliners and toyshop women, obsequious goldsmiths with jewels, salvers, and tankards ; and mercers' men with hangings, and velvets, and brocades. My Lady Duchess elect was giving audience to one famous silversmith from Exeter Change, who brought with him a great chased salver, of which he was pointing out the beauties as Colonel Esmond entered. " Come," says she, " cousin, and admire the taste of this pretty thing." I think Mars and Venus were lying in the golden bower; that one gilt Cupid carried off the war-god's casque, another his sword, another his great buckler upon which my Lord Duke Hamilton's arms with ours were to be engraved, and a fourth was kneeling down to the reclining goddess with the ducal coronet in his hands, God help us ! The next time Mr. Esmond saw that piece of plate, the arms were changed, the ducal coronet had been replaced by a viscount's : it formed part of the fortune of the thrifty goldsmith's own daughter, when she married my Lord Viscount Squanderfield two years after.

" Isn't this a beautiful piece ? " says Beatrix, examining it, and she pointed out the arch graces of the Cupids, and the fine carving of the languid, prostrate Mars.

Esmond sickened as he thought of the warrior dead in his chamber, his servants and children weeping around him ; and of this smiling creature attiring herself, as it were, for that nuptial death-bed. "'Tis a pretty piece of vanity," says he, looking gloomily at the beautiful creature : there were flambeaux in the room lighting up the brilliant mistress of it. She lifted up the great gold salver with her fair arms.

"Vanity," says she haughtily. "What is vanity in you, sir, is propriety in me. You ask a Jewish price for it, Mr. Graves ; but have it I will, if only to spite Mr. Esmond."

"Oh, Beatrix, lay it down!" says Mr. Esmond. "Herodias! you know not what you carry in the charger."

She dropped it with a clang, the eager goldsmith running to seize his fallen ware. The lady's face caught the fright from Esmond's pale countenance, and her eyes shone out like beacons of alarm. "What is it, Henry?" says she, running to him, and seizing both his hands. "What do you mean by your pale face and gloomy tones?"

"Come away, come away!" says Esmond, leading her. She clung frightened to him, and he supported her upon his heart, bidding the scared goldsmith leave them. The man went into the next apartment, staring with surprise, and hugging his precious charger.

"Oh, my Beatrix, my sister!" says Esmond, still holding in his arms the pallid and affrighted creature, "you have the greatest courage of any woman in the world ; prepare to show it now. for you have a dreadful trial to bear."

She sprang away from the friend who would have protected her. "Hath he left me?" says she. "We had words this morning—he was very gloomy, and I angered him; but he dared not, he dared not!" As she spoke a burning blush flushed over her whole face and bosom. Esmond saw it reflected in the glass by which she stood, with clenched hands pressing her swelling heart.

"He has left you," says Esmond, wondering that rage rather than sorrow was in her looks.

"And he is alive," cries Beatrix, "and you bring me this commission! He has left me, and you haven't dared to avenge me! You, that pretend to be the champion of our house, have let me suffer this insult! Where is Castlewood? I will go to my brother."

"The Duke is not alive, Beatrix," said Esmond.

She looked at her cousin wildly, and fell back to the wall as though shot in the breast. "And you come here, and—and—you killed him?"

"No; thank Heaven!" her kinsman said, "the blood of that noble heart doth not stain my sword! In its last hour it was faithful to thee, Beatrix Esmond. Vain and cruel woman! kneel and thank the awful Heaven which awards life and death, and chastises pride, that the noble Hamilton died true to you—at least that 'twas not your quarrel, or your pride, or your wicked vanity, that drove him to his fate. He died by the bloody sword which already had drunk your own father's blood. God help and pardon thee, Beatrix, as He brings this awful punishment to your hard and rebellious heart."

Esmond had scarce done speaking when his mistress came in. The colloquy between him and Beatrix had

lasted but a few minutes, during which time Esmond's servant had carried the disastrous news through the household. The army of Vanity Fair, waiting without, gathered up all their fripperies and fled aghast. Tender Lady Castlewood had been in talk above with Dean Atterbury, the pious creature's almoner and director; and the Dean had entered with her, as a physician whose place was at a sick-bed. Beatrix's mother looked at Esmond and ran towards her daughter, with a pale face and open heart and hands, all kindness and pity. But Beatrix passed her by ; nor would she have any of the medicaments of the spiritual physician. " I am best in my own room and by myself," she said. Her eyes were quite dry ; nor did Esmond ever see them otherwise, save once, in respect to that grief. She gave him a cold hand as she went out. " Thank you, brother," she said, in a low voice, and with a simplicity more touching than tears ; " all you have said is true and kind, and I will go away and ask pardon." The three others remained behind, and talked over the dreadful story. The death of Mohun, her husband's murderer, was more awful to my mistress than even the Duke's unhappy end. Esmond gave at length what particulars he knew of their quarrel, and the cause of it. The two noblemen had long been at war with respect to the Lord Gerard's property, whose two daughters my Lord Duke and Mohun had married. They had met by appointment that day at the lawyer's in Lincoln's Inn Fields ; had words which, though they appeared very trifling to those who heard them, were not so to men exasperated by long and previous enmity. Mohun asked my Lord Duke where he could see his Grace's friends, and within an hour had sent two of his

own to arrange this deadly duel. It was pursued with such fierceness, and sprang from so trifling a cause, that all men agreed at the time that there was a party, of which these three notorious brawlers were but agents, who desired to take Duke Hamilton's life away. They fought three on a side, as in that tragic meeting twelve years back, which hath been recounted already, and in which Mohun performed his second murder. They rushed in, and closed upon each other at once without any feints or crossing of swords even, and stabbed one at the other desperately, each receiving many wounds ; and Mohun having his death-wound, and my Lord Duke lying by him, Macartney came up and stabbed his Grace as he lay on the ground, and gave him the blow of which he died. Colonel Macartney denied this, of which the horror and indignation of the whole kingdom would nevertheless have him guilty, and fled the country, whither he never returned.

What was the real cause of the Duke Hamilton's death ?—a paltry quarrel that might easily have been made up, and with a ruffian so low, base, profligate, and degraded with former crimes and repeated murders, that a man of such renown and princely rank as my Lord Duke might have disdained to sully his sword with the blood of such a villain. But his spirit was so high that those who wished his death knew that his courage was like his charity, and never turned any man away ; and he died by the hands of Mohun, and the other two cut-throats that were set on him. The Queen's ambassador to Paris died—the loyal and devoted servant of the House of Stuart, and a Royal Prince of Scotland himself, and carrying the confidence, the repentance of Queen Anne

along with his own open devotion, and the goodwill of millions in the country more, to the Queen's exiled brother and sovereign.

That party to which Lord Mohun belonged had the benefit of his service, and now were well rid of such a ruffian. He and Meredith, and Macartney, were the Duke of Marlborough's men. His Grace was a Whig now and a Hanoverian, and as eager for war as Prince Eugene himself. I say not that he was privy to Duke Hamilton's death ; I say that his party profited by it and that three desperate and bloody instruments were found to effect that murder.

As Esmond and the Dean walked away from Kensington discoursing of this tragedy, and how fatal it was to the cause which they both had at heart, the street-criers were already out with their broadsides, shouting through the town the full, true, and horrible account of the death of Lord Mohun and Duke Hamilton in a duel. A fellow had got to Kensington, and was crying it in the square there at very early morning, when Mr. Esmond happened to pass by. He drove the man from under Beatrix's very window, whereof the casement had been set open. The sun was shining, though 'twas November : he had seen the market-carts rolling into London, the guard relieved at the palace, the labourers trudging to their work in the gardens between Kensington and the City—the wandering merchants and hawkers filling the air with their cries. The world was going to its business again, although dukes lay dead and ladies mourned for them, and kings, very likely, lost their chances. So night and day pass away, and to-morrow comes, and our place knows us not. Esmond thought of the courier now gal-

loping on the North road, to inform him who was Earl of Arran yesterday that he was Duke of Hamilton to-day ; and of a thousand great schemes, hopes, ambitions, that were alive in the gallant heart, beating a few hours since, and now in a little dust quiescent.

CHAPTER VI

I VISIT CASTLE WOOD ONCE MORE

THUS, for a third time, Beatrix's ambitious hopes were circumvented, and she might well believe that a special malignant fate watched and pursued her, tearing her prize out of her hand just as she seemed to grasp it, and leaving her with only rage and grief for her portion.

My young Lord Viscount Castlewood had not come to England to keep his majority, and had now been absent from the country for several years. The year when his sister was to be married and Duke Hamilton died, my lord was kept at Bruxelles by his wife's lying-in.

In the autumn of the year 1713, Lord Castlewood thought of returning home. The long-debated peace had been proclaimed this year at the end of March, and France was open to us. Just as Frank's poor mother had made all things ready for Lord Castlewood's reception, and was eagerly expecting her son, it was by Colonel Esmond's means that the kind lady was disappointed of her longing, and obliged to defer once more the darling hope of her heart.

Esmond took horses to Castlewood. He had not seen its ancient grey towers and well-remembered woods for nearly fourteen years, and since he rode thence with my lord, to whom his mistress with her young children by her side waved an adieu. What ages seemed to have

passed since then ! what years of action and passion, of care, love, hope, disaster! The children were grown up now, and had stories of their own. As for Esmond, he felt to be a hundred years old. His dear mistress only seemed unchanged ; she looked and welcomed him quite as of old. Esmond's mistress knew he would like to sleep in the little room he used to occupy ; 'twas made ready for him, and wall-flowers and sweet herbs set in the adjoining chamber, the chaplain's room.

All night long he was dreaming his boyhood over again, and waking fitfully ; he half fancied he heard Father Holt calling to him from the next chamber, and that he was coming in and out from the mysterious window.

Esmond rose up before the dawn ; passed into the next room, where the air was heavy with the odour of the wall-flowers ; looked into the brazier where the papers had been burnt, into the old presses where Holt's books and papers had been kept, and tried the spring and whether the window worked still. The spring had not been touched for years, but yielded at length, and the whole fabric of the window sank down. He lifted it, and it relapsed into its frame : no one had ever passed thence since Holt used it sixteen years ago.

Next Esmond opened that long cupboard over the woodwork of the mantelpiece, big enough to hold a man, and in which Mr. Holt used to keep sundry secret properties of his. The two swords he remembered so well as a boy lay actually there still, and Esmond took them out and wiped them, with a strange curiosity of emotion. There were a bundle of papers here, too, which no doubt had been left at Holt's last visit to the place, in my Lord Viscount's life, that very day when the priest had been

arrested and taken to Hexham Castle. Esmond made free with these papers, and found treasonable matter of King William's reign ; a letter from the Duke of Berwick too, and one from the King at St. Germain's, offering to confer upon his trusty and well-beloved Francis Viscount Castlewood the titles of Earl and Marquis of Esmond, bestowed by patent royal, and in the fourth year of his reign, upon Thomas Viscount Castlewood and the heirs-male of his body, in default of which issue the ranks and dignities were to pass to Francis aforesaid.

This was the paper, whereof my lord had spoken, which Holt showed him the very day he was arrested, and for an answer to which he would come back in a week's time. I put these papers hastily into the crypt whence I had taken them, being interrupted by a tapping of a light finger at the ring of the chamber-door: 'twas my kind mistress, with her face full of love and welcome. She, too, had passed the night wakefully, no doubt; but neither asked the other how the hours had been spent. There are things we divine without speaking, and know though they happen out of our sight. They walked out, hand in hand, through the old court, and to the terrace-walk, where the grass was glistening with dew.

The house would not be up for some hours yet (it was July, and the dawn was only just awake); and here Esmond opened himself to his mistress of the business he had in hand, and what part Frank was to play in it. Never was such a glorious scheme to her partial mind, never such a devoted knight to execute it. An hour or two may have passed whilst they were having their colloquy. Beatrix came out to them just as their talk was over,

her tall beautiful form robed in sable (which she wore without ostentation ever since last year's catastrophe) sweeping over the green terrace, and casting its shadows before her across the grass.

She made us one of her grand curtsies smiling, and called us " the young people." She was older, paler, and more majestic than in the year before; her mother seemed the younger of the two. She never once spoke of her grief, Lady Castlewood told Esmond, or alluded, save by a quiet word or two, to the death of her hopes.

When Beatrix came back to Castlewood, she took to visiting all the cottages and all the sick. She set up a school of children, and taught singing to some of them. We had a pair of beautiful old organs in Castlewood Church, on which she played admirably, so that the music there became to be known in the country for many miles round, and no doubt people came to see the fair organist as well as to hear her.

Esmond's visit home was but for two days, the business he had in hand calling him away and out of the country. Ere he went, he saw Beatrix but once alone, and then she summoned him out of the long tapestry room, where he and his mistress were sitting, quite as in old times, into the adjoining chamber, that had been Viscountess Isabel's sleeping apartment, and where Esmond perfectly well remembered seeing the old lady sitting up in the bed, in her night-rail, that morning when the troop of guard came to fetch her. The most beautiful woman in England lay in that bed now, whereof the great damask hangings were scarce faded since Esmond saw them last.

Here stood Beatrix in her black robes, holding a box in her hand. 'Twas that which Esmond had given her before her marriage, stamped with a coronet which the disappointed girl was never to wear, and containing his aunt's legacy of diamonds.

" You had best take these with you, Harry," says she ; " I have no need of diamonds any more." There was not the least token of emotion in her quiet low voice. She held out the black shagreen case with her fair arm, which did not shake in the least. Esmond saw that she wore a black velvet bracelet on it, with my Lord Duke's picture in enamel : he had given it her but three days before he fell.

Esmond said the stones were his no longer, and strove to turn off that proffered restoration with a laugh. " Of what good," says he, " are they to me ? "

" You will give them to your wife, cousin," says she. " My cousin, your wife has a lovely complexion and shape."

" Beatrix," Esmond burst out, the old fire flaming out, as it would at times, " will you wear those trinkets at your marriage ? You whispered once you did not know me : you know me better now ; how I sought, what I have sighed for, for ten years, what forgone ! "

" A price for your constancy, my lord ! " says she ; " such a *preux chevalier* wants to be paid ! Oh, fie, cousin ! "

Again Esmond spoke out : " If I do something you have at heart, something worthy of me and you, something that shall make me a name with which to endow you, will you take it ? There was a chance for me once, **you** said ; is it impossible to recall it ? If I come back

to you and bring you fame, will that please you ? If I do what you desire most—what he who is dead desired most—will that soften you ? "

" What is it, Henry ? " says she, her face lighting up ;
" what mean you ? "

" Ask no questions," he said ; " wait, and give me but time. If I bring back that you long for, that I have a thousand times heard you pray for, will you have no reward for him who has done you that service ? Put away those trinkets—keep them ; it shall not be at my marriage, it shall not be at yours, but if man can do it, I swear a day shall come when there shall be a feast in your house, and you shall be proud to wear them."

" You are going out of the country," says Beatrix, in some agitation.

" Yes, to-morrow," says Esmond.

" To Lorraine, cousin ? " says Beatrix, laying her hand on his arm : 'twas the hand on which she wore the Duke's bracelet. " Stay, Harry ! " continued she, with a tone that had more despondency in it than she was accustomed to show. " Hear a last word. I do love you ; I do admire you : who would not, that has known such love as yours has been for us all ? But I think I have no heart—at least, I have never seen the man that could touch it ; and, had I found him, I would have followed him in rags had he been a private soldier, or to sea, like one of those buccaneers you used to read to us about when we were children. You were ever too much of a slave to win my heart ; even my Lord Duke could not command it. I had not been happy had I married him. I knew that three months after our engagement—and was too vain

to break it. Oh, Harry! I cried once or twice not for him, but with tears of rage because I could do no more for him. And were I joined to you, I should have the same sense of servitude, the same longing to escape. We should both be unhappy, and you the most who are as jealous as the Duke was himself. I tried to love him—I tried, indeed I did. I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, cousin. But 'twas not for these I took to him. I took him to have a great place in the world; and I lost it. I am not good, Harry; my mother is gentle and good like an angel. I wonder how she should have had such a child. She is weak, but she would die rather than do a wrong; I am stronger than she, but I would do it out of defiance. Oh, I am sick and weary of the world! I wait but for one thing; and when 'tis done, I will take Frank's religion and your poor mother's, and go into a nunnery, and end like her. Shall I wear the diamonds then?—they say the nuns wear their best trinkets the day they take the veil. I will put them away as you bid me. Farewell, cousin! Mamma is pacing the next room, racking her little head to know what we have been saying. She is jealous—all women are. I sometimes think that is the only womanly quality I have.

"Farewell! Farewell, brother!" She gave him her cheek as a brotherly privilege. The cheek was as cold as marble.

Esmond's mistress showed no sign of jealousy when he returned to the room where she was. She had schooled herself so as to look quite inscrutably when she had a mind. Amongst her other feminine qualities, she had that of being a perfect dissembler.

He rid away from Castlewood to attempt the task he was bound on, and stand or fall by it ; in truth, his state of mind was such that he was eager for some outward excitement to counteract that gnawing malady which he was inwardly enduring.

CHAPTER VII

I TRAVEL TO FRANCE, AND BRING HOME A PORTRAIT OF RIGAUD

MR. ESMOND did not think fit to take leave at Court, or to inform all the world of Pall Mall and the coffee-houses that he was about to quit England, and chose to depart in the most private manner possible. He procured a pass as for a Frenchman, through Doctor Atterbury, who did that business for him, getting the signature even from Lord Bolingbroke's office, without any personal application to the Secretary. Lockwood, his faithful servant, he took with him to Castlewood, and left behind there ; giving out ere he left London that he himself was sick, and gone to Hampshire for country air, and so departed as silently as might be upon his business.

As Frank Castle wood's aid was indispensable for Mr. Esmond's scheme, his first visit was to Bruxelles (passing by way of Antwerp, where the Duke of Marlborough was in exile) ; and in the first-named place Harry found his dear young Benedick, the married man, who appeared to be rather out of humour with his matrimonial chain, and clogged with the obstinate embraces which Clotilda kept round his neck.

Castlewood was born in the same year as the Prince of Wales ; had not a little of the Prince's air, height, and figure ; and, especially since he had seen the Chevalier

de St. George on the occasion before-named, took no small pride in his resemblance to a person so illustrious ; which likeness he increased by all the means in his power, wearing fair brown periwigs, such as the Prince wore, and ribbons, and so forth, of the Chevalier's colour.

This resemblance was, in truth, the circumstance on which Mr. Esmond's scheme was founded ; and having secured Frank's secrecy and enthusiasm, he left him, to continue his journey, and see the other personages on whom its success depended.

Mr. Esmond did not open himself to the Prince at once. His Majesty was scarce in a condition to hear him ; and he doubted whether a King who drank so much could keep a secret in his fuddled head, or whether a hand that shook so was strong enough to grasp at a crown. However, at last, and after taking counsel with the Prince's advisers, amongst whom were many gentlemen, honest and faithful, Esmond's plan was laid before the King. The Prince liked the scheme well enough ; 'twas easy and daring, and suited to his reckless gaiety and lively youthful spirit. In the morning, after he had slept his wine off, he was very gay, lively, and agreeable. His manner had an extreme charm of archness, and a kind simplicity.

Having his own forebodings regarding his scheme should it ever be fulfilled, and his usual sceptic doubts as to the benefit which might accrue to the country by bringing a tipsy young monarch back to it, Colonel Esmond had his audience of leave.

By this time my Lord Viscount Castlewood was got to Paris, where, as the London prints presently announced, her ladyship **was brought** to bed of a son and heir. **For**

a long while afterwards she was in a delicate state of health, and ordered by the physicians not to travel; otherwise 'twas well known that the Viscount Castlewood proposed returning to England, and taking up his residence at his own seat.

Whilst he remained at Paris, my Lord Castlewood had his picture done by the famous French painter, Monsieur Rigaud, a present for his mother in London ; and this piece Esmond took back with him when he returned to that city, which he reached about May, in the year 1714, very soon after which time my Lady Castlewood and her daughter, and their kinsman, Colonel Esmond, who had been at Castlewood all this time, likewise returned to London, her ladyship occupying her house at Kensington, Mr. Esmond returning to his lodgings at Knightsbridge, nearer the town, and once more making his appearance at all public places, his health greatly improved by his long stay in the country.

The portrait of my lord, in a handsome gilt frame, was hung up in the place of honour in her ladyship's drawing-room. His lordship was represented in his scarlet uniform of Captain of the Guard, with a light brown periwig, a cuirass under his coat, a blue ribbon, and a fall of Bruxelles lace. Many of her ladyship's friends admired the piece beyond measure, and flocked to see it. Bishop Atterbury, Mr. Lesly, good old Mr. Collier, and others amongst the clergy, were delighted with the performance, and many among the first quality examined and praised it; only that I must own Doctor Tusher happening to come up to London, and seeing the picture (it was ordinarily covered by a curtain, but on this day Miss Beatrix happened to be looking at it when the Doctor

arrived), the Vicar of Castlewood vowed he could not see any resemblance in the piece to his old pupil, except, perhaps, a little about the chin and the periwig. But we all of us convinced him that he had not seen Frank for five years or more ; that he knew no more about the Fine Arts than a plough-boy, and that he must be mistaken ; and we sent him home assured that the piece was an excellent likeness. As for my Lord Bolingbroke, who honoured her ladyship with a visit occasionally, when Colonel Esmond showed him the picture he burst out laughing, and asked what devilry he was engaged on ? Esmond owned simply that the portrait was not that of Viscount Castlewood ; besought the Secretary on his honour to keep the secret ; said that the ladies of the house were enthusiastic Jacobites, as was well known ; and confessed that the picture was that of the Chevalier St. George.

For the plan which Colonel Esmond had in view, and the stroke he intended, 'twas necessary that the very smallest number of persons should be put in possession of his secret. It scarce was known, except to three or four out of his family, and it was kept to a wonder.

On the 10th of June, 1714, there came by Mr. Prior's messenger from Paris a letter from my Lord Viscount Castlewood to his mother, saying that he had been foolish in regard of money matters ; that he was ashamed to own he had lost at play, and by other extravagances ; and that instead of having great entertainments as he had hoped at Castlewood this year, he must live as quiet as he could, and make every effort to be saving. So far every word of poor Frank's letter was true.

" His Clotilda," Castlewood went on to say, " was

still delicate, and the physicians thought her lying-in had best take place at Paris. He should come without her ladyship, and be at his mother's house about the 17th or 18th day of June, proposing to take horse from Paris immediately, and bringing but a single servant with him ; and he requested that the lawyers of Gray's Inn might be invited to meet him with their account, and the land-steward come from Castlewood with his, so that he might settle with them speedily, raise a sum of money whereof he stood in need, and be back to his Viscountess by the time of her lying-in." Then his lordship gave some of the news of the town, sent his remembrance to kinsfolk, and so the letter ended. 'Twas put in the common post; and no doubt the French police and the English there had a copy of it, to which they were exceeding welcome.

Two days after another letter was dispatched by the public post of France in the same open way ; and this, after giving news of the fashion at Court there, ended by the following sentences, in which, but for those that had the key, 'twould be difficult for any man to find any secret lurked at all:

" (The King will take) medicine on Thursday. His Majesty is better than he hath been of late, though incommoded by indigestion from his too great appetite. Madame Maintenon continues well. They have performed a play of Mons. Racine at St. Cyr. The Duke of Shrewsbury and Mr. Prior, our envoy, and all the English nobility here were present at it. (The Viscount Castlewood's passports) were refused to him, 'twas said ; his lordship being sued by a goldsmith for *Vaisselle plate*, and a pearl necklace supplied to Mademoiselle Meruel of the French Comedy. 'Tis a pity such news should get

abroad (and travel to England) about our young nobility here. Mademoiselle Meruel has been sent to the Fort l'Evesque ; they say she has ordered not only plate, but furniture, and a chariot and horses (under that lord's name), of which extravagance his unfortunate Viscountess knows nothing.

" (His Majesty will be) eighty-two years of age on his next birthday. The Court prepares to celebrate it with a great *feste*. Mr. Prior is in a sad way about their refusing at home to send him his plate. All here admired my Lord Viscount's portrait, and said it was a masterpiece of Rigaud. Have you seen it ? It is (at the Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington Square). I think no English painter could produce such a piece.

" Our poor friend the Abbé hath been at the Bastille, but is now transported to the Conciergerie (where his friends may visit him. They are to ask for) a remission of his sentence soon. Let us hope the poor rogue will have repented in prison.

" (The Lord Castlewood) has had the affair of the plate made up, and departs for England.

" Is not this a dull letter ? I have a cursed headache with drinking with Mat and some more over-night, and tipsy or sober am

" Thine ever——."

All this letter, save some dozen of words which I have put above between brackets, was mere idle talk, though the substance of the letter was as important as any letter well could be. It told those that had the key, that *The King will take the Viscount Castlewood's passports and travel to England under that lord's name. His Majesty will be at the Lady Castlewood's house in Kensington*

Square, where his friends may visit him. They are to ask for the Lord Castlewood. This note may have passed under Mr. Prior's eyes, and those of our new allies the French, and taught them nothing ; though it explains sufficiently to persons in London what the event was which was about to happen, as 'twill show those who read my memoirs a hundred years hence what was that errand on which Colonel Esmond of late had been busy. Silently and swiftly to do that about which others were conspiring, and thousands of Jacobites all over the country clumsily caballing; alone to effect that which the leaders here were only talking about—to bring the Prince of Wales into the country openly in the face of all, under Bolingbroke's very eyes, the walls placarded with the proclamation signed with the Secretary's name, and offering five hundred pounds reward for his apprehension : this was a stroke, the playing and winning of which might well give any adventurous spirit pleasure. The loss of the stake might involve a heavy penalty, but all our family were eager to risk that for the glorious chance of winning the game.

CHAPTER VIII

THE ORIGINAL OF THE PORTRAIT COMES TO ENGLAND

'TWAS announced in the family that my Lord Castlewood would arrive, having a confidential French gentleman in his suite, who acted as secretary to his lordship, and who being a Papist, and a foreigner of a good family, though now in rather a menial place, would have his meals served in his chamber, and not with the domestics of the house. The Viscountess gave up her bed-chamber contiguous to her daughter's, and having a large convenient closet attached to it, in which a bed was put up, ostensibly for Monsieur Baptiste, the Frenchman ; though, 'tis needless to say, when the doors of the apartment were locked, and the two guests retired within it, the young Viscount became the servant of the illustrious Prince whom he entertained, and gave up gladly the more convenient and airy chamber and bed to his master. Madam Beatrix also retired to the upper region, her chamber being converted into a sitting-room for my lord. The better to carry the deceit, Beatrix affected to grumble before the servants, and to be jealous that she was turned out of her chamber to make way for my lord.

No small preparations were made, you may be sure, and no slight tremor of expectation caused the hearts of the gentle ladies of Castlewood to flutter, before the arrival of the personages who were about to honour their house.

The chamber was ornamented with flowers; the bed covered with the very finest of linen, the two ladies insisting on making it themselves, and kneeling down at the bedside and kissing the sheets out of respect for the web that was to hold the sacred person of a King. The toilet was of silver and crystal; there was a copy of " Eikon Basiliké " laid on the writing-table ; a portrait of the martyred King hung always over the mantel, having a sword of my poor Lord Castlewood underneath it, and a little picture or emblem which the widow loved always to have before her eyes on waking, and in which the hair of her lord and her two children was worked together. Her books of private devotions, as they were all of the English Church, she carried away with her to the upper apartment which she destined for herself. The ladies showed Mr. Esmond, when they were completed, the fond preparations they had made. 'Twas then Beatrix knelt down and kissed the linen sheets. As for her mother, Lady Castlewood made a curtsy at the door, as she would have done to the altar on entering a church, and owned that she considered the chamber in a manner sacred.

The company in the servants' hall never for a moment supposed that these preparations were made for any other person than the young Viscount, the lord of the house, whom his fond mother had been for so many years without seeing. The guest would not arrive till supper-time, and my lord would prefer having that meal in his own chamber. You may be sure the brightest plate of the house was laid out there, and can understand why it was that the ladies insisted that they alone would wait upon the young chief of the family.

Taking horse, Colonel Esmond rode rapidly to Rochester, and there awaited the King in that very town where his father had last set his foot on the English shore. A room had been provided at an inn there for my Lord Castlewood and his servant; and Colonel Esmond timed his ride so well that he had scarce been half an hour in the place, and was looking over the balcony into the yard of the inn, when two travellers rode in at the inn gate, and the Colonel running down, the next moment embraced his dear young lord.

My lord's companion, acting the part of a domestic, dismounted, and was for holding the Viscount's stirrup ; but Colonel Esmond, calling to his own man, who was in the court, bade him take the horses and settle with the lad who had ridden the post along with the two travellers, crying out in a cavalier tone in the French language to my lord's companion, and affecting to grumble that my lord's fellow was a Frenchman, and did not know the money or habits of the country. " My man will see to the horses, Baptiste," says Colonel Esmond. " Do you understand English ? " " Very leetle." " So; follow my lord and wait upon him at dinner in his own room." The landlord and his people came up presently bearing the dishes : 'twas well they made a noise and stir in the gallery, or they might have found Colonel Esmond on his knee before Lord Castle wood's servant, welcoming his Majesty to his kingdom, and kissing the hand of the King. We told the landlord that the Frenchman would wait on his master; and Esmond's man was ordered to keep sentry in the gallery without the door. The Prince dined with a good appetite, laughing and talking very gaily, and condescendingly bidding his two companions to sit

with him at table. He was in better spirits than poor Frank Castlewood, who Esmond thought might be woe-begone on account of parting with his divine Clotilda ; but the Prince wishing to take a short siesta after dinner, and retiring to an inner chamber where there was a bed, the cause of poor Frank's discomfiture came out, and bursting into tears, with many expressions of fondness, friendship, and humiliation, the faithful lad gave his kinsman to understand that he now knew all the truth, and the sacrifices which Colonel Esmond had made for him.

Seeing no good in acquainting poor Frank with that secret, Mr. Esmond had entreated his mistress also not to reveal it to her son. The Prince had told the poor lad all as they were riding from Dover. " I had as lief he had shot me, cousin," Frank said. " I knew you were the best, and the bravest, and the kindest of all men " (so the enthusiastic young fellow went on); " but I never thought I owed you what I do, and can scarce bear the weight of the obligation."

" I stand in the place of your father," says Mr. Esmond kindly; " and sure a father may dispossess himself in favour of his son. Don't be a fool and cry : you make a much taller and handsomer viscount than ever I could." But the fond boy, with oaths and protestations, could not be got for some little time to put up with Esmond's raillery ; wanted to kneel down to him, and kissed his hand ; asked him and implored him to order him something—to bid Castlewood give his own life up or take somebody else's—anything, so that he might show his gratitude for the generosity Esmond showed him.

" The K——, *he* laughed," Frank said, pointing to the

door where the sleeper was, and speaking in a low tone. " I don't think he should have laughed as he told me the story. As we rode along from Dover, talking in French, he spoke about you, and your coming to him at Bar. He called you ' le grand sérieux,' Don Bellianis of Greece, and I don't know what names ; mimicking your manner " (here Castlewood laughed himself)—" and he did it very well. He seems to sneer at everything. He is not like a king; somehow, Harry, I fancy you are like a king. He does not seem to think what a stake we are all playing, He hath a house at Chaillot, where he used to go and bury himself for weeks away from the Queen, with all sorts of bad company," says Frank, with a demure look. " You may smile, but I am not the wild fellow I was ; no, no, I have been taught better," says Castlewood devoutly, making a sign on his breast.

" Thou art my dear brave boy," says Colonel Esmond, touched at the young fellow's simplicity; " and there will be a noble gentleman at Castlewood so long as my Frank is there."

The impetuous young lad was for going down on his knees again, with another explosion of gratitude, but that we heard the voice from the next chamber of the august sleeper, just waking, calling out, " Eh, La-Fleur, un verre d'eau! " His Majesty came out yawning. " A pest," says he, " upon your English ale! 'tis so strong that,, *ma foi*, it hath turned my head."

' We rode very quickly to London, reaching Kensington at nightfall. Mr. Esmond's servant was left behind at Rochester to take care of the tired horses, whilst we had fresh beasts provided along the road. And galloping by the **Prince's** side, the Colonel explained to the Prince of

Wales what his movements had been; who the friends were that knew of the expedition; whom, as Esmond conceived, the Prince should trust; entreating him, above all, to maintain the very closest secrecy until the time should come when his Royal Highness should appear.

The party reached London by nightfall, leaving their horses at the Posting-House over against Westminster, and being ferried over the water, where Lady Esmond's coach was already in waiting. In another hour we were all landed at Kensington, and the mistress of the house had that satisfaction which her heart had yearned after for many years—once more to embrace her son, who, on his side, with all his waywardness, ever retained a most tender affection for his parent.

She did not refrain from this expression of her feeling, though the domestics were by, and my Lord Castlewood's attendant stood in the hall. Esmond had to whisper to him in French to take his hat off. Monsieur Baptiste was constantly neglecting his part with an inconceivable levity: more than once on the ride to London little observations of the stranger, light remarks, and words betokening the greatest ignorance of the country the Prince came to govern, had hurt the susceptibility of the two gentlemen forming his escort; nor could either help owning in his secret mind that they would have had his behaviour otherwise, and that the laughter and the lightness, not to say licence, which characterized his talk, scarce befitted such a great Prince and such a solemn occasion. Not but that he could act at proper times with spirit and dignity. He had behaved, as we all knew, in a very courageous manner on the field. Esmond had seen a copy of the letter the Prince writ with his own

hand when urged by his friends in England to abjure his religion, and admired that manly and magnanimous reply by which he refused to yield to the temptation. Monsieur Baptiste took off his hat, blushing at the hint Colonel Esmond ventured to give him, and said : " Tenez, elle est jolie, la petite mère. Foi de Chevalier ! elle est charmante ; mais Tautre, qui est cette nymphe, cet astre qui brille, cette Diane qui descend sur nous ? " And he started back, and pushed forward, as Beatrix was descending the stair. She was in colours for the first time at her own house ; she wore the diamonds Esmond gave her ; it had been agreed between them that she should wear these brilliants on the day when the King should enter the house ; and a Queen she looked, radiant in charms, and magnificent and imperial in beauty.

Castlewood himself was startled by that beauty and splendour. He stepped back and gazed at his sister as though he had not been aware before how perfectly lovely she was, and I thought blushed as he embraced her. The Prince could not keep his eyes off her ; he quite forgot his menial part, though he had been schooled to it, and a little light portmanteau prepared expressly that he should carry it. He pressed forward before my Lord Viscount. 'Twas lucky the servants' eyes were busy in other directions, or they must have seen that this was no servant, or at least a very insolent and rude one.

Afain Colonel Eamond was obliged to cry out, "Baptiste," in a loud, imperious voice, " have a care to the valise ! " at which hint the wilful young man ground his teeth together with something very like a curse between them, and then gave a brief look of anything but pleasure to his Mentor. Being reminded, however, he shouldered

the little portmanteau, and carried it up the stair, Esmond preceding him, and a servant with lighted tapers. He flung down his burden sulkily in the bedchamber. "A Prince that will wear a crown must wear a mask," says Mr. Esmond in French.

"Ah, peste ! I see how it is," says Monsieur Baptiste, continuing the talk in French. "The Great Serious is seriously"—alarmed for Monsieur Baptiste," broke in the Colonel. Esmond neither liked the tone with which the Prince spoke of the ladies, nor the eyes with which he regarded them.

[Lord Castlewood and his mother and sister came up the stair a minute afterwards, and, so soon as the domestics had quitted the apartment, the Prince gave his subjects an audience of a few minutes, and then the two ladies and Colonel Esmond went down to the lower rooms.]

Esmond looked at Beatrix, blazing with her jewels on her beautiful neck. "I have kept my word," says he. "And I mine," says Beatrix, looking down on the diamonds.

When the time came for the supper, of which we were advertised by a knocking overhead, Colonel Esmond and the two ladies went to the upper apartment, where the Prince already was, and by his side the young Viscount, of exactly the same age, shape, and with features not dissimilar, though Frank's were the handsomer of the two. The Prince sat down, and bade the ladies sit. The gentlemen remained standing: there was, indeed, but one more cover laid at the table. "Which of you will take it ?" says he.

"The head of our house," says Lady Castlewood,

taking her son's hand, and looking towards Colonel Esmond with a bow and a great tremor of the voice; " the Marquis of Esmond will have the honour of serving the King."

" I shall have the honour of waiting on his Royal Highness," says Colonel Esmond, filling a cup of wine, and, as the fashion of that day was, he presented it to the King on his knee.

" I drink to my hostess and her family," says the Prince, with no very well-pleased air; but the cloud passed immediately off his face, and he talked to the ladies in a lively, rattling strain, quite undisturbed by poor Mr. Esmond's yellow countenance, that, I dare say, looked very glum.

Esmond's man, honest John Lockwood, had served his master and the family all his life, and the Colonel knew that he could answer for John's fidelity as for his own. John returned with the horses from Rochester betimes the next morning, and the Colonel gave him to understand that on going to Kensington, where he was free of the servants' hall, and indeed courting Miss Beatrix's maid, he was to ask no questions and betray no surprise, but to vouch stoutly that the young gentleman he should see in a red coat there was my Lord Viscount Castlewood, and that his attendant in grey was Monsieur Baptiste the Frenchman. He was to tell his friends in the kitchen such stories as he remembered of my Lord Viscount's youth at Castlewood—what a wild boy he was ; how he used to drill Jack and cane him, before ever he was a soldier; everything, in fine, he knew respecting my Lord Viscount's early days. Jack's ideas of painting had not been much cultivated during his

residence in Flanders with his master; and, before my young lord's return, he had been easily got to believe that the picture brought over from Paris, and now hanging in Lady Castlewood's drawing-room, was a perfect likeness of her son, the young lord. And the domestics having all seen the picture many times, and catching but a momentary imperfect glimpse of the two strangers on the night of their arrival, never had a reason to doubt the fidelity of the portrait; and next day, when they saw the original of the piece habited exactly as he was represented in the painting, with the same periwig, ribands, and uniform of the Guard, quite naturally addressed the gentleman as my Lord Castlewood, my Lady Viscountess's son.

The secretary of the night previous was now the Viscount; the Viscount wore the secretary's grey frock; and John Lockwood was instructed to hint to the world below stairs that my lord being a Papist, and very devout in that religion, his attendant might be no other than his chaplain from Bruxelles; hence, if he took his meals in my lord's company there was little reason for surprise. Frank was further cautioned to speak English with a foreign accent, which task he performed indifferently well, and this caution was the more necessary because the Prince himself scarce spoke our language like a native of the island; and John Lockwood laughed with the folks below stairs at the manner in which my lord, after five years abroad, sometimes forgot his own tongue, and spoke it like a Frenchman. "I warrant," says he, "that with the English beef and beer, his lordship will soon get back the proper use of his mouth"; and, to do his new lordship justice, he took to beer and beef very kindly.

The Prince drank so much, and was so loud and imprudent in his talk after his drink, that Esmond often trembled for him. His meals were served as much as possible in his own chamber, though frequently he made his appearance in Lady Castlewood's parlour and drawing-room, calling Beatrix "sister," and her ladyship "mother," or "madam," before the servants. And, choosing to act entirely up to the part of brother and son, the Prince sometimes saluted Mrs. Beatrix and Lady Castlewood with a freedom which his secretary did not like, and which, for his part, set Colonel Esmond tearing with rage.

For Lady Castlewood, although she scarce spoke a word, 'twas easy to gather from her demeanour, and one or two hints she dropped, how deep her mortification was at finding the hero whom she had chosen to worship all her life—and whose restoration had formed almost the most sacred part of her prayers—no more than a man, and not a good one. She thought misfortune might have chastened him ; but that instructress had rather rendered him callous than humble. His devotion, which was quite real, kept him from no sin he had a mind to. His talk showed good-humour, gaiety, even wit enough ; but there was a levity in his acts and words that shocked the simplicity and purity of the English lady whose guest he was. Esmond spoke his mind to Beatrix pretty freely about the Prince, getting her brother, too, to put in a word of warning. Beatrix was entirely of their opinion. She thought he was very light, very light and reckless ; she could not even see the good looks Colonel Esmond had spoken of. The Prince had bad teeth, and a decided squint. His eyes were fine, but there was certainly a

cast in them. She rallied him at table with wonderful wit; she spoke of him invariably as of a mere boy ;she was more fond of Esmond than ever, praised him to her Brother, praised him to the Prince when his Royal Highness~wa"s~pleased to sneer at the Colonel, and warmly espoused his cause. " And if your Majesty does not give him the Garter his father had, when the Marquis of Esmond comes to your Majesty's Court, I will hang myself in my own garters, or will cry my eyes out." " Rather than lose those," says the Prince, " he shall be made Archbishop and Colonel of the Guard " (it was Frank Castlewood who told me of this conversation over their supper).

" Yes," cries she, with one of her laughs—I fancy I hear it now. Thirty years afterwards I hear that delightful music. " Yes, he shall be Archbishop of Esmond and Marquis of Canterbury."

" And what will your ladyship be ? " says the Prince ; " you have but to choose your place."

" I," says Beatrix, " will be mother of the maids to the Queen of his Majesty King James the Third—vive le Roy ! " and she made him a great curtsy, and drank a part of a glass of wine in his honour.

" The Prince seized hold of the glass and drank the last drop of it," Castlewood said ; " and my mother, looking very anxious, rose up and asked leave to retire. But thai Trix is my mother's daughter, Harry," Frank continued, " I don't know what a horrid fear I should have of her. I wish—I wish this business were over. You are older than I am, and wiser, and better, and I owe you everything, and would die for you ; but I wish the end of this were come."

Neither of us very likely passed a tranquil night; horrible doubts and torments racked Esmond's soul. 'Twas a scheme of personal ambition—he knew it. What cared he, in his heart, who was King? Were not his very sympathies and secret convictions on the other side—on the side of People, Parliament, Freedom? And here was he, engaged for a Prince that had scarce heard the word liberty; that priests and women, tyrants by nature, both made a tool of. The misanthrope was in no better humour after hearing that story, and his grim face more black and yellow than ever.

CHAPTER IX

WE ENTERTAIN A VERY DISTINGUISHED GUEST AT KENSINGTON

ON the 27th day of July, a lady who held the most intimate post about the Queen, came in her chair from the Palace hard by, bringing to the little party in Kensington Square intelligence of the very highest importance. The final blow had been struck, and my Lord of Oxford and Mortimer was no longer Treasurer. The staff was as yet given to no successor, though my Lord Bolingbroke would undoubtedly be the man. And now the time was come, the Queen's Abigail said, and now my Lord Castlewood ought to be presented to the Sovereign.

The Court lady with whom our plan was concerted, the Court physician, and the Bishop of Rochester, who were the other two most active participators in our plan, had held many councils in our house at Kensington and elsewhere, as to the means best to be adopted for presenting our young adventurer to his sister the Queen. The simple and easy plan proposed by Colonel Esmond had been agreed to by all parties, which was that on some rather private day, when there were not many persons about the Court, the Prince should appear there as my Lord Castlewood, should be greeted by his sister-in-waiting, and led by that other lady into the closet of the Queen. And according to her Majesty's health or humour, and the circumstances that might arise during the interview,

it was to be left to the discretion of those present at it, and to the Prince himself, whether he should declare that it was the Queen's own brother, or the brother of Beatrix Esmond, who kissed her Royal hand. And this plan being determined on, we were all waiting in very much anxiety for the day and signal of execution.

Two mornings after that supper, it being the 27th day of July, the Bishop of Rochester breakfasting with Lady Castlewood and her family, and the meal scarce over, Doctor A.'s coach drove up to our house at Kensington, and the Doctor appeared amongst the party there, enlivening a rather gloomy company ; for the mother and daughter had had words in the morning in respect to the transactions of that supper, and other adventures perhaps, and on the day succeeding. Beatrix's haughty spirit brooked remonstrances from no superior, much less from her mother, the gentlest of creatures, whom the girl commanded rather than obeyed. And feeling she was wrong, and that by a thousand coquetries (which she could no more help exercising on every man that came near her, than the sun can help shining on great and small) she had provoked the Prince's dangerous admiration, and allured him to the expression of it, she was only the more wilful and imperious the more she felt her error.

To this party, the Prince being served with chocolate in his bed-chamber, where he lay late sleeping away the fumes of his wine, the Doctor came, and by the urgent and startling nature of his news dissipated instantly that private and minor unpleasantness under which the family of Castlewood was labouring.

He asked for the guest: the guest was above in his own apartment. He bade *Monsieur Baptiste* go up to

his master instantly, and requested that *My Lord Viscount Casthwood* would straightway put his uniform on, and come away in the Doctor's coach, now at the door.

He then informed Madam Beatrix what her part of the comedy was to be. "In half an hour," says he, "her Majesty and her favourite lady will take the air in the Cedar-walk behind the New Banqueting-house. Her Majesty will be drawn in a garden-chair, Madam Beatrix Esmond and *her brother, my Lord Viscount Castlewood*, will be walking in the private garden—here is Lady Masham's key—and will come unawares upon the Royal party. The man that draws the chair will retire, and leave the Queen, the favourite, and the maid of honour and her brother together. Mistress Beatrix will present her brother, and then!—and then my Lord Bishop will pray for the result of the interview, and his Scots clerk will say Amen! Quick, put on your hood, Madam Beatrix. Why doth not his Majesty come down? Such another chance may not present itself for months again."

The Prince was late and lazy, and indeed had all but lost that chance through his indolence. The Queen was actually about to leave the garden just when the party reached it. The Doctor, the Bishop, the maid of honour and her brother went off together in the physician's coach, and had been gone half an hour when Colonel Esmond came to Kensington Square.

The news of this errand, on which Beatrix was gone, of course for a moment put all thoughts of private jealousy out of Colonel Esmond's head. In half an hour more the coach returned. The Bishop descended from it first, and gave his arm to Beatrix, who now came out. His lordship went back into the carriage again, and the maid of honour

entered the house alone. We were all gazing at her from the upper window, trying to read from her countenance the result of the interview from which she had just come.

She came into the drawing-room in a great tremor, and very pale. She asked for a glass of water as her mother went to meet her ; and after drinking that, and putting off her hood, she began to speak. " We may all hope for the best," says she ; " it has cost the Queen a fit. Her Majesty was in her chair in the Cedar-walk, accompanied only by Lady——, when we entered by the private wicket from the west side of the garden, and turned towards her, the Doctor following us. They waited in a side walk hidden by the shrubs, as we advanced towards the chair. My heart throbbed so, I scarce could speak; but my Prince whispered, ' Courage, Beatrix,' and marched on with a steady step. His face was a little flushed, but he was not afraid of the danger. He who fought so bravely at Malplaquet fears nothing." Esmond and Castlewood looked at each other at this compliment, neither liking the sound of it.

" The Prince uncovered," Beatrix continued ; " and I saw the Queen turning round to Lady Masham, as if asking who these two were. Her Majesty looked very pale and ill, and then flushed up. The favourite made us a signal to advance, and I went up, leading my Prince by the hand, quite close to the chair. * Your Majesty will give my Lord Viscount your hand to kiss,' says her lady; and the Queen put out her hand, which the Prince kissed, kneeling on his knee, he who should kneel to no mortal man or woman.

" ' You have been long from England, my lord,' says

the Queen. ' Why were you not here to give a home to your mother and sister ? '

" ' I am come, Madam, to stay now, if the Queen desires me,' says the Prince, with another low bow.

" ' You have taken a foreign wife, my lord, and a foreign religion. Was not that of England good enough for you ? '

" ' In returning to my father's church,' says the Prince, ' I do not love my mother the less, nor am I the less faithful servant of your Majesty.'

" Here," says Beatrix, " the favourite gave me a little signal with her hand to fall back (which I did, though I died to hear what should pass), and whispered something to the Queen, which made her Majesty start, and utter one or two words in a hurried manner, looking towards the Prince, and catching hold with her hand of the arm of her chair. He advanced still nearer towards it. He began to speak very rapidly. I caught the words, ' Father—blessing—forgiveness.' And then presently the Prince fell on his knees, took from his breast a paper he had there, handed it to the Queen, who, as soon as she saw it, flung up both her arms with a scream, and took away that hand nearest the Prince, and which he endeavoured to kiss. He went on speaking with great animation of gesture, now clasping his hands together on his heart, now opening them as though to say, ' I am here, your brother, in your power.' Lady Masham ran round on the other side of the chair, kneeling too, and speaking with great energy. She clasped the Queen's hand on her side, and picked up the paper her Majesty had let fall. The Prince rose, and made a further speech, as though he would go ; the favourite on the other hand urging her

mistress, and then, running back to the Prince, brought him back once more close to the chair. Again he knelt down and took the Queen's hand, which she did not withdraw, kissing it a hundred times ; my lady all the time, with sobs and supplications, speaking over the chair. This while the Queen sat with a stupefied look, crumpling the paper with one hand, as my Prince embraced the other. Then of a sudden she uttered several piercing shrieks, and burst into a great fit of hysteric tears and laughter. ' Enough, enough, sir, for this time,' I heard Lady Masham say ; and the chairman, who had withdrawn round the Banqueting-room, came back, alarmed by the cries. ' Quick,' says Lady Masham, ' get some help'; and I ran towards the Doctor, who, with the Bishop of Rochester, came up instantly. Lady Masham whispered the Prince he might hope for the very best, and to be ready to-morrow ; and he hath gone away to the Bishop of Rochester's house, to meet several of his friends there. And so the great stroke is struck," says Beatrix, going down on her knees, and clasping her hands. " God save the King ! Go'd save the King ! "

Beatrix's tale told, and the young lady herself calmed somewhat of her agitation, we asked with regard to the Prince, who was absent with Bishop Atterbury, and were informed that 'twas likely he might remain abroad the whole day. Beatrix's three kinsfolk looked at one another at this intelligence: 'twas clear the same thought was passing through the minds of all.

But who should begin to break the news ? Monsieur Baptiste—that is, Frank Castlewood—turned very red, and looked towards Esmond. The Colonel bit his lips, and fairly beat a retreat into the window. It was Lady

Castlewood that opened upon Beatrix with the news which we knew would do anything but please her.

"We are glad," says she, taking her daughter's hand, and speaking in a gentle voice, "that the guest is away."

Beatrix drew back in an instant, looking round at us three, and as if divining a danger. "Why glad?" says she, her breast beginning to heave. "Are you so soon tired of him?"

"We think one of us is devilishly too fond of him," cries out Frank Castlewood.

"And which is it—you, my lord? or is it mamma, who is jealous because he drinks my health? or is it the head of the family" (here she turned with an imperious look towards Colonel Esmond), "who has taken of late to preach the King sermons?"

"We do not say you are too free with his Majesty—"

"I thank you, madam," says Beatrix, with a toss of the head and a curtsy.

'But her mother continued, with very great calmness and dignity—"At least we have not said so, though we might, were it possible for a mother to say such words to her own daughter—your father's daughter."

"*Eh! mon père,*" breaks out Beatrix, "was no better than other persons' fathers." And again she looked towards the Colonel.

We all felt a shock as she uttered those two or three French words. Her manner was exactly imitated from that of our foreign guest.

"You had not learned to speak French a month ago, Beatrix," says her mother sadly, "nor to speak ill of your father."

Beatrix, no doubt, saw that slip she had made in her

flurry, for she blushed crimson. " I have learned to honour the King," says she, drawing up.

" If you respected your mother a little more," Frank said, " Trix, you would do yourself no hurt."

" I am no child," says she, turning round on him. " We have lived very well these five years without the benefit of your advice or example, and I intend to take neither now. Why does not the head of the house speak ? " she went on ; " he rules everything here. When his chaplain has done singing the psalms, will his lordship deliver the sermon ? " The Prince had used almost the very same words in regard to Colonel Esmond that the imprudent girl repeated in her wrath.

" You show yourself a very apt scholar, madam," says the Colonel; and turning to his mistress, " Did your guest use these words in your ladyship's hearing, or was it to Beatrix in private that he was pleased to impart his opinion regarding my tiresome sermon ? "

" Have you seen him alone ?" cries my lord, starting up with an oath ; " by God, have you seen him alone ? "

" Were he here, you wouldn't dare so to insult me! " cries Frank's sister. " Keep your oaths, my lord, for your wife; we are not used here to such language. Till you came, there used to be kindness between me and mamma; and I cared for her when you never did, when you were away for years with your horses and your mistress, and your Popish wife."

" By——," says my lord, rapping out another oath, " Clotilda is an angel! How dare you say a word against Clotilda ? "

Colonel Esmond could not refrain from a smile, to see how easy Frank's attack was drawn off by that feint.

" I fancy Clotilda is not the subject in hand," says Mr. Esmond, rather scornfully; " her ladyship is at Paris, a hundred leagues off, preparing baby-linen. It is about my Lord Castlewood's sister, and not his wife, the question is."

" He is not my Lord Castlewood," says Beatrix ; " and he knows he is not. He is Colonel Francis Esmond's son, and no more, and he wears a false title, and he lives on another man's land ; and he knows it." Here was another desperate sally of the poor beleaguered garrison, and an *alerte* in another quarter. " Again I beg your pardon," says Esmond. " If there are no proofs of my claim, I have no claim. If my father acknowledged no heir, yours was his lawful successor, and my Lord Castlewood hath as good a right to his rank and small estate as any man in England. But that again is not the question, as you know very well. Let us bring our talk back to it, as you will have me meddle in it. And I will give you frankly my opinion, that a house where a Prince lies all day, who respects no woman, is no house for a young unmarried lady; that you were better in the country than here; that he is here on a great end, from which no folly should divert him ; and that having nobly done your part of this morning, Beatrix, you should retire off the scene awhile, and leave it to the other actors of the play."

Having twice sallied out and been beaten back, she now, as I expected, tried the *ultima ratio* of women, and had recourse to tears. Her beautiful eyes filled with them. I never could bear in her, nor in any woman, that expression of pain. " I am alone," sobbed she ; " you are three against me—my brother, my mother, and you.

What have I done, that you should speak and look so unkindly at me ? Is it my fault that the Prince should, as you say, admire me ? Did I bring him here ? Did I do aught but what you bade me, in making him welcome ? Did you not teach me, mother, night and morning to pray for the King, before even ourselves ? What would you have of me, cousin—for you are the chief of the conspiracy against me ; I know you are, sir, and that my mother and brother are acting but as you bid them—whither would you have me go ? "

" I would but remove from the Prince," says Esmond gravely, " a dangerous temptation. Heaven forbid I should say you would yield ; I would only have him free of it. Your honour needs no guardian, please God, but his imprudence doth. He is so far removed from all women by his rank, that his pursuit of them cannot but be unlawful. We would remove the dearest and fairest of our family from the chance of that insult ; and that is why we would have you go, dear Beatrix."

" Harry speaks like a book," says Frank, with one of his oaths, " and, by——, every word he saith is true. You can't help being handsome, Trix ; no more can the Prince help following you. My counsel is that you go out of harm's way ; for, by the Lord, were the Prince to play any tricks with you, King as he is, or is to be, Harry Esmond and I would have justice of him."

" Are not two such champions enough to guard me ? " says Beatrix, something sorrowfully ; " sure, with you two watching, no evil could happen to me."

" In faith, I think not, Beatrix," says Colonel Esmond ; " nor, if the Prince knew us, would he try."

" We will go, then," says Beatrix, turning a little pale.

" Lady Masham is to give me warning to-night how her Majesty is, and to-morrow——"

" I think we had best go to-day, my dear," says my Lady Castlewood ; " we might have the coach, and sleep at Hounslow, and reach home to-morrow. 'Tis twelve o'clock ; bid the coach, cousin, be ready at one."

" For shame ! " burst out Beatrix, in a passion of tears and mortification. " You disgrace me by your cruel precautions ; my own mother is the first to suspect me, and would take me away as my jailer. I will not go with you, mother ; I will go as no one's prisoner. If I wanted to deceive, do you think I could find no means of evading you ? My family suspects me. As those mistrust me that ought to love me most, let me leave them. I will go, but I will go alone: to Castlewood, be it. I have been unhappy there, and lonely enough ; let me go back, but spare me at least the humiliation of setting a watch over my misery, which is a trial I can't bear. Let me go when you will; but alone, or not at all. You three can stay and triumph over my unhappiness ; and I will bear it, as I have borne it before. Let my jailer-in-chief go order the coach that is to take me away. I thank you, Henry Esmond, for your share in the conspiracy. All my life long I'll thank you, and remember you ; and you, brother, and you, mother, how shall I show my gratitude to you for your careful defence of my honour ? "

She swept out of the room with the air of an empress, flinging glances of defiance at us all, and leaving us conquerors of the field; but scared, and almost ashamed of our victory. It did indeed seem hard and cruel that we three should have conspired the banishment and humiliation of that fair creature. We looked at each

other in silence : 'twas not the first stroke by many of our actions in that unlucky time which, being done, we wished undone.

In a half-hour, it might be, after our talk she came back, her countenance wearing the same defiant air which it had borne when she left us. She held a shagreen case in her hand : Esmond knew it as containing his diamonds which he had given to her for her marriage with Duke Hamilton, and which she had worn so splendidly on the inauspicious night of the Prince's arrival. " I have brought back," says she, " to the Marquis of Esmond the present he deigned to make me in days when he trusted me better than now. I will never accept a benefit or a kindness from Henry Esmond more; and I give back these family diamonds, which belonged to one king's mistress, to the gentleman that suspected I would be another. Have you been upon your message of coach-caller, my Lord Marquis ? Will you send your valet to see that I do not run away ? " We were right; yet, by her manner, she had put us all in the wrong: we were conquerors; yet the honours of the day seemed to be with the poor oppressed girl.

CHAPTER X

OUR GUEST QUILTS US AS NOT BEING HOSPITABLE ENOUGH

BEATRIX'S departure took place within an hour, her maid going with her in the post-chaise, and a man armed on the coach-box to prevent any danger of the road. Esmond and Frank thought of escorting the carriage; but she indignantly refused their company, and another man was sent to follow the coach, and not to leave it till it had passed over Hounslow Heath on the next day. And these two forming the whole of Lady Castlewood's male domestics, Mr. Esmond's faithful John Lockwood came to wait on his mistress during their absence, though he would have preferred to escort Mrs. Lucy, his sweetheart, on her journey into the country.

We had a gloomy and silent meal. It seemed as if a darkness was over the house, since the bright face of Beatrix had been withdrawn from it. In the afternoon came a message from the favourite to relieve us somewhat from this despondency. "The Queen hath been much shaken," the note said; "she is better now, and all things will go well. Let *my Lord Castlewood* be ready against we send for him."

At night there came a second billet: "There hath been a great battle in Council. Lord Treasurer hath broke his staff, and hath fallen never to rise again; no successor is

appointed. Lord B——receives a great Whig company to-night at Golden Square. If he is trimming, others are true. The Queen hath no more fits, but is a-bed now, and more quiet. Be ready against morning, when I still hope all will be well."

The Prince came home shortly after the messenger who bore this billet had left the house. His Royal Highness was so much the better for the Bishop's liquor, that to talk affairs to him now was of little service. He was helped to the Royal bed ; he called Castle wood familiarly by his own name; he quite forgot the part upon the acting of which his crown, his safety depended. 'Twas lucky that my Lady Castlewood's servants were out of the way, and only those heard him who would not betray him. He inquired after the adorable Beatrix, with a Royal hiccup in his voice. He was easily got to bed, and in a minute or two plunged in that deep slumber and forgetfulness with which Bacchus rewards the votaries of that god. We wished Beatrix had been there to see him in his cups. We regretted, perhaps, that she was gone.

One of the party at Kensington Square was fool enough to ride to Hounslow that night, and to the inn which the family used ordinarily in their journeys out of London. Esmond desired my landlord not to acquaint Madam Beatrix with his coming, and had the grim satisfaction of passing by the door of the chamber where she lay with her maid, and of watching her chariot set forth in the early morning. He saw her smile, and slip money into the man's hand who was ordered to ride behind the coach as far as Bagshot. The road being open, and the other servant armed, it appeared she dispensed with the escort of a second domestic ; and this fellow, bidding his young

mistress adieu with many bows, went and took a pot of ale in the kitchen, and returned in company with his brother servant, John Coachman, and his horses, back to London.

They were not a mile out of Hounslow when the two worthies stopped for more drink, and here they were scared by seeing Colonel Esmond gallop by them. The man said, in reply to Colonel Esmond's stern question, that his young mistress had sent her duty ; only that, no other message. She had had a very good night, and would reach Castlewood by nightfall. The Colonel had no time for further colloquy, and galloped on swiftly to London, having business of great importance there, as my reader very well knoweth. The thought of Beatrix riding away from the danger soothed his mind not a little.

The account of the previous evening was known all over the town early next day. A violent altercation had taken place before the Queen in the Council Chamber ; and all the coffee-houses had their version of the quarrel. The news brought my Lord Bishop early to Kensington Square, where he awaited the waking of his Royal master above stairs, and spoke confidently of having him proclaimed as Prince of Wales and heir to the throne before that day was over. The Bishop had entertained on the previous afternoon certain of the most influential gentlemen of the true British party. His Royal Highness had charmed all, both Scots and English, Papists and Churchmen. " Even Quakers," says he, " were at our meeting ; and, if the stranger took a little too much British punch and ale, he will soon grow more **accustomed** to those liquors, and my Lord Castlewood," says the Bishop with

a laugh, " must bear the cruel charge of having been for once in his life a little tipsy. He toasted your lovely sister a dozen times, at which we all laughed," says the Bishop, " admiring so much fraternal affection.—Where is that charming nymph, and why doth she not adorn your ladyship's tea-table with her bright eyes ? "

Her ladyship said, dryly, that Beatrix was not at home that morning.

The Prince's meals were commonly served in the chamber which had been Beatrix's bedroom, adjoining that in which he slept; and the dutiful practice of his entertainers was to wait until their Royal guest bade them take their places at table before they sat down to partake of the meal. On this night, as you may suppose, only Frank Castlewood and his mother were in waiting when the supper was announced to receive the Prince, who had passed the whole of the day in his own apartment, with the Bishop as his Minister of State, and Colonel Esmond officiating as Secretary of his Council.

The Prince's countenance wore an expression by no means pleasant when, looking towards the little company assembled, and waiting for him, he did not see Beatrix's bright face there as usual to greet him. He asked Lady Esmond for his fair introducer of yesterday. Her ladyship only cast her eyes down, and said quietly, Beatrix could not be of the supper that night; nor did she show the least sign of confusion, whereas Castlewood turned red, and Esmond was no less embarrassed..

Our guest swallowed his supper very sulky; it was not till the second bottle his Highness began to rally. When Lady Castlewood asked leave to depart, he sent a message to Beatrix, hoping she would be present at the

next day's dinner, and applied himself to drink, and to talk afterwards, for which there was subject in plenty.

Next day, at dinner a single cover was laid for his Royal Highness, and the two gentlemen alone waited on him. We had had a consultation in the morning with Lady Castlewood, in which it had been determined that, should his Highness ask further questions about Beatrix, he should be answered by the gentlemen of the house.

He was evidently disturbed and uneasy, looking towards the door constantly, as if expecting some one. There came, however, nobody, except honest John Lockwood, when he knocked with a dish, which those within took from him.

The Prince tried to cover his displeasure—he was but a clumsy dissembler at that time, and when out of humour could with difficulty keep a serene countenance—and having made some foolish attempts at trivial talk he came to his point presently, and in as easy a manner as he could, saying to Lord Castlewood, he hoped, he requested, his lordship's mother and sister would be of the supper that night. As the time hung heavy on him, and he must not go abroad, would not Miss Beatrix hold him company at a game of cards ?

At this, looking up at Esmond, and taking the signal from him, Lord Castlewood informed his Royal Highness¹ that his sister Beatrix was not at Kensington, and that her family had thought it best she should quit the town.

" Not at Kensington ! " says he. " Is she ill ? she was well yesterday; wherefore should she quit the town ?

'In London we addressed the Prince as Royal Highness invariably, though the women persisted in giving him the title of King.

Is it at your orders, my lord, or Colonel Esmond's, who seems the master of this house ? "

" Not of this, sir," says Frank very nobly ; " only of our house in the country, which he hath given to us. This is my mother's house, and Walcote is my father's ; and the Marquis of Esmond knows he hath but to give his word, and I return his to him."

" The Marquis of Esmond !—the Marquis of Esmond," says the Prince, tossing off a glass, " meddles too much with my affairs, and presumes on the service he hath done me. If you want to carry your suit with Beatrix, my lord, by locking her up in jail, let me tell you that is not the way to win a woman."

" I was not aware, sir, that I had spoken of my suit to Madam Beatrix to your Royal Highness."

" Bah, bah, Monsieur! we need not be a conjurer to see that. It makes itself seen at all moments. You are jealous, my lord, and the maid of honour cannot look at another face without yours beginning to scowl. That which you do is unworthy, Monsieur—is inhospitable—is, is *lâche*, yes, *lâche* " (he spoke rapidly in French, his rage carrying him away with each phrase). "I come to your house ; I risk my life ; I pass it in *ennui*; I repose myself on your fidelity; I have no company but your lordship's sermons, or the conversations of that adorable young lady; and you take her from me, and you, you rest! *Merci*, Monsieur ! I shall thank you when I have the means ; I shall know to recompense a devotion a little importunate, my lord—a little importunate. For a month past your airs of protector have annoyed me beyond measure. You deign to offer me the crown, and bid me take it on my knees like King John—eh ? I know

my history, Monsieur, and mock myself of frowning barons. I admire your mistress, and you send her to a Bastille of the province ; I enter your house, and you mistrust me. I will leave it, Monsieur ; from to-night I will leave it. I have other friends whose loyalty will not be so ready to question mine. Bring me a coach and let me quit this place, or let the fair Beatrix return to it. I will not have your hospitality at the expense of the freedom of that fair creature."

This harangue was uttered with rapid gesticulations such as the French use, and in the language of that nation—the Prince striding up and down the room, his face flushed, and his hands trembling with anger. He was very thin and frail from repeated illness and a life of pleasure. Either Castlewood or Esmond could have Broke him across their knee, and in half a minute's struggle put an end to him; and here he was insulting us both, and scarce deigning to hide from the two whose honour it most concerned, the passion he felt for the young lady of our family. My Lord Castlewood replied to the Prince's tirade very nobly and simply.

" Sir," says he, " your Royal Highness is pleased to forget that others risk their lives, and for your cause. Very few Englishmen, please God, would dare to lay hands on your sacred person, though none would ever think of respecting ours. Our family's lives are at your service, and everything we have except our honour."

" Honour ! bah, sir, who ever thought of hurting your honour ? " says the Prince with a peevish air.

" We implore your Royal Highness never to think of hurting it," says Lord Castlewood with a low bow. The night being warm, the windows were open both towards

the Gardens and the Square. Colonel Esmond heard through the closed door the voice of the watchman calling the hour, in the square on the other side. He opened the door communicating with the Prince's room. Martin, the servant that had rode with Beatrix to Hounslow, was just going out of the chamber as Esmond entered it; and when the fellow was gone, and the watchman again sang his cry of " Past ten o'clock, and a starlight night," Esmond spoke to the Prince in a low voice, and said, " Your Royal Highness hears that man."

" *Après, Monsieur ?* " says the Prince.

" I have but to beckon him from the window, and send him fifty yards, and he returns with a guard of men, and I deliver up to him the body of the person calling himself James the Third, for whose capture Parliament hath offered a reward of £500, as your Royal Highness saw on our ride from Rochester. I have but to say the word ; and by the Heaven that made me, I would say it if I thought the Prince, for his honour's sake, would not desist from insulting ours."

" Has your lordship anything to say," says the Prince, turning to Frank Castlewood, and quite pale with anger — " any threat or any insult, with which you would like to end this agreeable night's entertainment ? "

" I follow the head of our house," says Castlewood, bowing gravely. " At what time shall it please the Prince that we should wait upon him in the morning ? "

" You will wait on the Bishop of Rochester early ; you will bid him bring his coach hither, and prepare an apartment for me in his own house, or in a place of safety. The King will reward you handsomely, never fear, for all you have done in his behalf. I wish you a good-night.

and shall go to bed; unless it pleases the Marquis of Esmond to call his colleague, the watchman, and that I should pass the night with the Kensington guard. Fare you well; be sure I will remember you ! My Lord Castlewood, I can go to bed to-night without need of a chamberlain." And the Prince dismissed us with a grim bow, locking one door as he spoke, that into the supping-room, and the other through which we passed, after us. It led into the small chamber which Frank Castlewood or *Monsieur Baptiste* occupied, and by which Martin entered when Colonel Esmond but now saw him in the chamber.

At an early hour next morning the Bishop arrived, and was closeted for some time with his master in his own apartment, where the Prince laid open to his counsellor the wrongs which, according to his version, he had received from the gentlemen of the Esmond family. The worthy prelate came out from the conference with on air of great satisfaction. He was a man full of resources, and of a most assured fidelity ; but captious, and of a most jealous temper, that could not help exulting at the downfall of any favourite, and he was pleased in spite of himself to hear that the Esmond Ministry was at an end.

" I have soothed your guest," says he, coming out to the two gentlemen and the widow, who had been made acquainted with somewhat of the dispute of the night before. (By the version we gave her, the Prince was only made to exhibit anger because we doubted of his intentions in respect to Beatrix; and to leave us, because we questioned his honour.) " But I think, all things considered, 'tis as well he should leave this house; and then,

my Lady Castlewood," says the Bishop, " my pretty Beatrix may come back to it."

" She is quite as well at home at Castlewood," Esmond's mistress said, " till everything is over."

" You shall have your title, Esmond, that I promise you," says the good Bishop, assuming the airs of a Prime Minister. " The Prince hath expressed himself most nobly in regard of the little difference of last night; and I promise you he hath listened to my sermon, as well as to that, of other folks," says the Doctor archly. " He hath every great and generous quality, with perhaps a weakness for the sex which belongs to his family, and hath been known in scores of popular sovereigns from King David downwards."

The Prince entered the room presently with a smile on his face, and if he felt any offence against us on the previous night, at present exhibited none. He offered a hand to each gentleman with great courtesy. " If all your bishops preach so well as Doctor Atterbury," says he, " I don't know, gentlemen, what may happen to me. I spoke very hastily, my lords, last night, and ask pardon of both of you. But I must not stay any longer," says he, " giving umbrage to good friends, or keeping pretty girls away from their homes. My Lord Bishop hath found a safe place for me, hard by at a curate's house, whom the Bishop can trust, and whose wife is so ugly as to be beyond all danger. We will decamp into those new quarters ; and I leave you, thanking you for a hundred kindnesses here. Where is my hostess, that I may bid her farewell ? to welcome her in a house of my own soon, I trust, where my friends shall have no cause to quarrel with me."

Lady Castlewood arrived presently, blushing with great grace, and tears filling her eyes as the Prince graciously saluted her. She looked so charming and young, that the Doctor, in his bantering way, could not help speaking of her beauty to the Prince, whose compliment made her blush, and look more charming still.

CHAPTER XI

A GREAT SCHEME, AND WHO BAULKED IT

MEANWHILE, there was no slight difference of opinion amongst the councillors surrounding the Prince, as to the plan his Highness should pursue. His female Minister at Court, fancying she saw some amelioration in the Queen, was for waiting a few days, or hours it might be, until he could be brought to her bedside and acknowledged as her heir. Mr. Esmond was for having him march thither, escorted by a couple of troops of Horse Guards, and openly presenting himself to the Council. During the whole of the night of the 29th-30th July, the Colonel was engaged with gentlemen of the military profession, whom 'tis needless here to name ; suffice it to say, that several of them had exceeding high rank in the army, and one of them in especial was a General, who, when he heard the Duke of Marlborough was coming on the other side, waved his crutch over his head with a huzzah at the idea that he should march out and engage him. Of the three Secretaries of State, we knew that one was devoted to us. The Governor of the Tower was ours; the two companies on duty at Kensington barracks were safe; and we had intelligence, very speedy and accurate, of all that took place at the Palace within.

At noon, on the 30th of July, a message came to the Prince's friends that the Committee of Council was sitting

at Kensington Palace, their Graces of Ormond and Shrewsbury, the Archbishop of Canterbury, and the three Secretaries of State, being there assembled. In an hour afterwards hurried news was brought that the two great Whig Dukes, Argyle and Somerset, had broke into the Council Chamber without a summons and taken their seat at table. After holding a debate there, the whole party proceeded to the chamber of the Queen, who was lying in great weakness, but still sensible ; and the Lords recommended his Grace of Shrewsbury as the fittest person to take the vacant place of Lord Treasurer : her Majesty gave him the staff, as all know. " And now," writ my messenger from Court, "*now or never is the time.*"

Now or never was the time indeed. In spite of the Whig Dukes, our side had still the majority in the Council; and Esmond, to whom the message had been brought (the personage at Court not being aware that the Prince had quitted his lodging in Kensington Square), and Esmond's gallant young aide-de-camp, Frank Castlewood, putting on sword and uniform, took a brief leave of their dear lady, who embraced and blessed them both, and went to her chamber to pray for the issue of the great event which was then pending.

Castlewood sped to the barracks to give warning to the captain of the Guard there; and then went to the " King's Arms " tavern at Kensington, where our friends were assembled, having come by parties of twos and threes, riding or in coaches, and were got together in the upper chamber, fifty-three of them, their servants, who had been instructed to bring arms likewise, being below in the garden of the tavern, where they were served with

drink. Out of this garden is a little door that leads into the road of the Palace, and through this it was arranged that masters and servants were to march, when that signal was given, and that Personage appeared for whom all were waiting. There was in our company the famous officer next in command to the Captain-General of the Forces, his Grace the Duke of Ormond, who was within at the Council. There were with him two more lieutenant-generals, nine major-generals and brigadiers, seven colonels, eleven Peers of Parliament, and twenty-one members of the House of Commons. The Guard was with us within and without the Palace; the Queen was with us; the Council (save the two Whig Dukes, that must have succumbed) : the day was our own, and with a beating heart Esmond walked rapidly to the Mall at Kensington, where he had parted with the Prince on the night before. For three nights the Colonel had not been to bed : the last had been passed summoning the Prince's friends together, of whom the great majority had no sort of inkling of the transaction pending, until they were told that he was actually on the spot, and were summoned to strike the blow. The night before and after the altercation with the Prince, my gentleman, having suspicions of his Royal Highness, and fearing lest he should be minded to give us the slip and fly off after his fugitive beauty, had spent, if the truth must be told, at the " Greyhound " tavern, over against my Lady Castle-Wood's house in Kensington Square, with an eye on the door, lest the Prince should escape, from it. The night before that he had passed in his boots at the " Crown " at Hounslow, where he must watch forsooth all night, in order to get one moment's glimpse pf Beatrix in the

morning. And fate had decreed that he was to have a fourth night's ride and wakefulness before his business was ended.

He ran to the curate's house in Kensington Mall, and asked for Mr. Bates, the name the Prince went by. The curate's wife said Mr. Bates had gone abroad very early in the morning in his boots, saying he was going to the Bishop of Rochester's house at Chelsea. But the Bishop had been at Kensington himself two hours ago to seek for Mr. Bates, and had returned in his coach to his own house when he heard that the gentleman was gone thither to seek him.

This absence was most unpropitious, for an hour's delay might cost a kingdom. Esmond had nothing for it but to hasten to the "King's Arms," and tell the gentlemen there assembled that Mr. George (as we called the Prince there) was not at home, but that Esmond would go fetch him; and taking a General's coach that happened to be there, Esmond drove across the country to Chelsea, to the Bishop's house there.

The porter said two gentlemen were with his lordship, and Esmond ran past this sentry up to the locked door of the Bishop's study, at which he rattled, and was admitted presently. Of the Bishop's guests, one was a brother prelate, and the other the Abbé G——.

"Where is Mr. George?" says Mr. Esmond; "now is the time." The Bishop looked scared. "I went to his lodging," he said, "and they told me he was come hither. I returned as quick as coach would carry me; and he hath not been here."

The Colonel burst out with an oath—that was all he could say to their reverences—ran down the stairs again,

and bidding the coachman, an old friend and fellow-campaigner, drive as if he was charging the French with his master at Wynendael, they were back at Kensington in half an hour.

Again Esmond went to the curate's house. Mr. Bates had not returned. The Colonel had to go with this blank errand to the gentlemen at the " King's Arms," that were grown very impatient by this time.

Out of the window of the tavern, and looking over the garden wall, you can see the green before Kensington Palace, the Palace gate (round which the Ministers' coaches were standing), and the barrack building. As we were looking out from this window in gloomy discourse, we heard presently trumpets blowing ; and some of us ran to the window of the front room, looking into the High Street of Kensington, and saw a regiment of Horse coming.

" It's Ormond's Guards," says one.

" No, by God, it's Argyle's old regiment! " says my General, clapping down his crutch.

It was, indeed, Argyle's regiment that was brought from Westminster, and that took the place of the regiment at Kensington on which we could rely.

" Oh, Harry ! " says one of the Generals there present, " you were born under an unlucky star. I begin to think that there's no Mr. George, nor Mr. Dragon either. 'Tis not the peerage I care for—for our name is so ancient and famous that merely to be called Lord Lydiard would do me no good—but 'tis the chance you promised me of fighting Marlborough."

As we were talking, Castlewood entered the room with a disturbed air.

" What news, Frank ? " says the Colonel. " Is Mr. George coming at last ? "

" Damn him, look here ! " says Castlewood, holding out a paper. " I found it in the book—the what you call it, ' Eikum Basilikum.' That villain Martin put it there ; he said his young mistress bade him. It was directed to me, but it was meant for him, I know, and I broke the seal and read it."

The whole assembly of officers seemed to swim away before Esmond's eyes as he read the paper. All that was written on it was : " Beatrix Esmond is sent away to prison, to Castlewood, where she will pray for happier days."

" Can you guess where he is ? " says Castlewood.

" Yes," says Colonel Esmond. He knew full well; Frank knew full well. Our instinct told whither that traitor had fled.

He had courage to turn to the company and say, " Gentlemen, I fear very much that Mr. George will not be here to-day. Something hath happened—and—and—I very much fear some accident may befall him, which must keep him out of the way. Having had your noon's draught, you had best pay the reckoning and go home. There can be no game where there is no one to play it."

Some of the gentlemen went away without a word; others called to pay their duty to her Majesty and ask for her health. The little army disappeared into the darkness out of which it had been called ; there had been no writings, no paper to implicate any man. Some few officers and Members of Parliament had been invited overnight to breakfast at the " King's Arms," at Kensington ; and they had called for their bill, and gone home.

CHAPTER XII

AUGUST 1st, 1714

" DOES my mistress know of this ? " Esmond asked of Frank, as they walked along.

" My mother found the letter in the book, on the toilet-table. She had writ it ere she had left home," Frank said. " Mother met her on the stairs, with her hand upon the door, trying to enter, and never left her after that till she went away. He did not think of looking at it there, nor had Martin the chance of telling him. I believe the poor devil meant no harm, though I half killed him"; he thought 'twas to Beatrix's brother he was bringing the letter."

Frank never said a word of reproach to me for having brought the villain amongst us. As we knocked at the door I said, " When will the horses be ready ? " Frank pointed with his cane ; they were turning the street that moment.

We went up and bade adieu to our mistress. She was in a dreadful state of agitation by this time, and that Bishop was with her whose company she was so fond of.

" Did you tell him, my lord," says Esmond, " that Beatrix was at Castlewood ? " The Bishop blushed and stammered. " Well," says he, " I——"

" You served the villain right," broke out Mr. Esmond, " and he has lost a crown by what you told him."

My mistress turned quite white. " Henry, Henry," says she, " do not kill him ! "

" It may not be too late," says Esmond ; " he may not have gone to Castlewood. Pray God it is not too late." The Bishop was breaking out with some *banal* phrases about loyalty, and the sacredness of the Sovereign's person. But Esmond sternly bade him hold his tongue, burn all papers, and take care of Lady Castlewood ; and in five minutes he and Frank were in the saddle, John Lockwood behind them, riding towards Castlewood at a rapid pace.

We were just got to Alton, when who should meet us but old Lockwood, the porter from Castlewood, John's father, walking by the side of the Hexton flying-coach, who slept the night at Alton. Lockwood said his young mistress had arrived at home on Wednesday night, and this morning, Friday, had dispatched him with a packet for my lady at Kensington, saying the letter was of great importance.

We took the freedom to break it, while Lockwood stared with wonder, and cried out his " Lord bless me's " and " Who'd a thought it's " at the sight of his young lord, whom he had not seen these seven years.

The packet from Beatrix contained no news of importance at all. It was written in a jocular strain, affecting to make light of her captivity. She asked whether she might have leave to visit Mrs. Tusher, or to walk beyond the court and the garden wall. She gave news of the peacocks, and a fawn she had there. She bade her mother send her certain gowns and smocks by old Lockwood. She sent her duty to a certain Person, if certain other persons permitted her to take such a freedom ; how that,

as she was not able to play cards with him, she hoped he would read good books, such as Doctor Atterbury's sermons and "Eikon Basiliké"—she was going to read good books. She thought her pretty mamma would like to know she was not crying her eyes out.

"Who is in the house besides you, Lockwood?" says the Colonel.

"There be the laundry-maid, and the kitchen-maid, Madam Beatrix's maid, the man from London, and that be all; and he sleepeth in my lodge, away from the maids," says old Lockwood.

Esmond scribbled a line with a pencil on the note, giving it to the old man, and bidding him go on to his lady. We knew why Beatrix had been so dutiful on a sudden, and why she spoke of "Eikon Basiliké." She writ this letter to put the Prince on the scent, and the porter out of the way.

"We have a fine moonlight night for riding on," says Esmond. "Frank, we may reach Castlewood in time yet." All the way along they made inquiries at the post-houses when a tall young gentleman in a grey suit, with a light brown periwig, just the colour of my lord's, had been seen to pass. He had set off at six that morning, and we at three in the afternoon. He rode almost as quickly as we had done; he was seven hours ahead of us still when we reached the last stage.

We rode over Castlewood Downs before the breaking of dawn. We passed the very spot where the car was upset fourteen years since, and Mohun lay. The village was not up yet, nor the forge lighted, as we rode through it, passing by the elms, where the rooks were still roosting, and by the church, and over the bridge. We got

off our horses at the bridge, and walked up to the gate.

" If she is safe," says Frank, trembling, and his honest eyes filling with tears, " a silver statue to Our Lady ! " He was going to rattle at the great iron knocker on the oak gate, but Esmond stopped his kinsman's hand. He had his own fears, his own hopes, his own despairs and griefs, too ; but he spoke not a word of these to his companion, or showed any signs of emotion.

He went and tapped at the little window at the porter's lodge, gently but repeatedly, until the man came to the bars.

" Who's there ? " says he, looking out; it was the servant from Kensington.

" My Lord Castlewood and Colonel Esmond," we said from below. " Open the gate and let us in without any noise."

" My Lord Castlewood ? " says the other. " My lord's here, and in bed."

" Open, d—n you," says Castlewood, with a curse.

" I shall open to no one," says the man, shutting the glass window as Frank drew a pistol. He would have fired at the porter, but Esmond again held his hand.

" There are more ways than one," says he, " of entering such a great house as this." Frank grumbled that the west gate was half a mile round. " But I know of a way that's not a hundred yards off," says Mr. Esmond ; and leading his kinsman close along the wall, and by the shrubs which had now grown thick on what had been an old moat about the house, they came to the buttress, at the side of which the little window was which was Father Holt's private door. Esmond climbed up to this easily,

broke a pane that had been mended, and touched the spring inside; and the two gentlemen passed in that way treading as lightly as they could, and so going through the passage into the court, over which the dawn was now reddening, and where the fountain plashed in the silence.

They sped instantly to the porter's lodge, where the fellow had not fastened his door that led into the court; and pistol in hand, came upon the terrified wretch, and bade him be silent. Then they asked him (Esmond's head reeled, and he almost fell as he spoke) when Lord Castlewood had arrived % He said on the previous evening, about eight of the clock. " And what then ? " His lordship supped with his sister. " Did the man wait ? " Yes, he and my lady's maid both waited. The other servants made the supper ; and there was no wine, and they could give his lordship but milk, at which he grumbled; and—and Madam Beatrix kept Miss Lucy always in the room with her. And there being a bed across the court, in the Chaplain's room, she had arranged my lord was to sleep there. Madam Beatrix had come downstairs laughing with the maids, and had locked herself in ; and my lord had stood for a while talking to her through the door, and she laughing at him. And then he paced the court awhile ; and she came again to the upper window, and my lord implored her to come down and walk in the room. But she would not, and laughed at him again, and shut the window. And so my lord, uttering what seemed curses, but in a foreign language, went to the Chaplain's room to bed.

" Was this all ? " All, the man swore upon his honour—all, as he hoped to be saved. Stop, there was one thing more. My lord, on arriving, and once or twice

during supper, did kiss his sister, as was natural, and she kissed him. At this Esmond ground his teeth with rage, and wellnigh throttled the amazed miscreant who was speaking ; whereas Castlewood, seizing hold of his cousin's hand, burst into a great fit of laughter.

" If it amuses thee," says Esmond in French, " that your sister should be exchanging kisses with a stranger, I fear poor Beatrix will give thee plenty of sport." Esmond darkly thought how Hamilton, Ashburnham, had before been masters of those roses that the young Prince's lips were now feeding on. He sickened at that notion. Her cheek was desecrated, her beauty tarnished ; shame and honour stood between it and him. The love was dead within him. Had she a crown to bring him with her love, he felt that both would degrade him.

But this wrath against Beatrix did not lessen the angry feelings of the Colonel against the man who had been the occasion, if not the cause, of the evil. Frank sat down on a stone bench in the courtyard and fairly fell asleep, while Esmond paced up and down the court, debating what should ensue. What mattered how much or how little had passed between the Prince and the poor faithless girl ? They were arrived in time perhaps to rescue her person, but not her mind. Had she not instigated the young Prince to come to her—suborned servants, dismissed others, so that she might communicate with him ? The treacherous heart within her had surrendered, though the place was safe ; and it was to win this that he had given a life's struggle and devotion—this that she was ready to give away for the bribe of a coronet or the wink of the Prince's eye.

When he had thought his thoughts out, he shook up poor Frank from his sleep, who rose yawning, and said he had been dreaming of Clotilda. " You must back me," says Esmond, " in what I am going to do. I have been thinking that yonder scoundrel may have been instructed to tell that story, and that the whole of it may be a lie. If it be, we shall find it out from the gentleman who is asleep yonder. See if the door leading to my lady's rooms " (so we called the rooms at the north-west angle of the house)—" see if the door is barred as he saith." We tried; it was indeed, as the lacquey had said, closed within.

" It may have been opened and shut afterwards," says poor Esmond ; "the foundress of our family let our ancestor in that way."

" What will you do, Harry, if—if what that fellow saith should turn out untrue ? " The young man looked scared and frightened into his kinsman's face ; I dare say it wore no very pleasant expression.

" Let us first go see whether the two stories agree," says Esmond ; and went in at the passage and opened the door into what had been his own chamber now for well-nigh five-and-twenty years. A candle was still burning, and the Prince asleep dressed on the bed. Esmond did not care for making a noise. The Prince started up in his bed, seeing two men in his chamber. " Qui est lá ? " says he, and took a pistol from under his pillow.

" It is the Marquis of Esmond," says the Colonel, " come to welcome his Majesty to his house of Castle wood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the Bang's orders, I passed the night before last, **after leaving** his Majesty, **in** waiting upon the friends of

the King. It is a pity that his Majesty's desire to see the country and to visit our poor house should have caused the King to quit London without notice yesterday, when the opportunity happened which, in all human probability, may not occur again ; and had the King not chosen to ride to Castle wood, the Prince of Wales might have slept at St. James's."

" 'Sdeath ! gentlemen/" says the Prince, starting off his bed, whereon he was lying in his clothes, " the Doctor was with me yesterday morning, and, after watching by my sister all night, told me I might not hope to see the Queen."

" It would have been otherwise," says Esmond with another bow, " as by this time the Queen may be dead in spite of the Doctor. The Council was met, a new Treasurer was appointed, the troops were devoted to the King's cause; and fifty loyal gentlemen of the greatest names of this kingdom were assembled to accompany the Prince of Wales, who might have been the acknowledged heir of the throne, or the possessor of it, by this time, had your Majesty not chosen to take the air. We were ready; there was only one person that failed us, your Majesty's gracious——"

" *Morbleu*, Monsieur, you give me too much Majesty," said the Prince, who had now risen up, and seemed to be looking to one of us to help him to his coat. But neither stirred.

" We shall take care," says Esmond, " not much oftener to offend in that particular."

" What mean you, my lord ? " says the Prince, and muttered something which Esmond caught up.

" The snare, Sir," said he, " was not of our laying ; it

is not we that invited you. We came to avenge, and not to compass, the dishonour of our family."

"Dishonour ! *Morbleu*, there has been no dishonour," says the Prince, turning scarlet; "only a little harmless playing."

"That was meant to end seriously."

"I swear," the Prince broke out impetuously, "upon the honour of a gentleman, my lords——"

"That we arrived in time. No wrong hath been done, Frank," says Colonel Esmond, turning round to young Castlewood, who stood at the door as the talk was going on. "See! here is a paper whereon his Majesty hath deigned to commence some verses in honour, or dishonour, of Beatrix. Here is 'Madame' and 'Flamme,' 'Cruelle' and 'Rebelle,' and 'Amour' and 'Jour,' in the Royal writing and spelling. Had the Gracious lover been happy, he had not passed his time in sighing." In fact, and actually as he was speaking, Esmond cast his eyes down towards the table, and saw a paper on which my young Prince had been scrawling a madrigal, that was to finish his charmer on the morrow.

"Sir," says the Prince, burning with rage (he had assumed his Royal coat unassisted by this time), "did I come here to receive insults ?"

"To confer them, may it please your Majesty," says the Colonel, with a very low bow ; "and the gentlemen of our family are come to thank you."

"*Malediction !*" says the young man, tears starting into his eyes with helpless rage and mortification.

"What will you with me, gentlemen ?"

"If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment," says Esmond, preserving his grave tone, "I have

some papers there which I would gladly submit to you, and by your permission I will lead the way ; " and, taking the taper up, and backing before the Prince with very great ceremony, Mr. Esmond passed into the little Chaplain's room, through which we had just entered into the house. " Please to set a chair for his Majesty, Frank," says the Colonel to his companion, who wondered almost as much at this scene, and was as much puzzled by it, as the other actor in it. Then going to the crypt over the mantelpiece, the Colonel opened it, and drew thence the papers which so long had lain there.

" Here, may it please your Majesty," says he, " is the Patent of Marquis sent over by your Royal father at St. Germain's to Viscount Castlewood, my father; here is the witnessed certificate of my father's marriage to my mother, and of my birth and christening: I was christened of that religion of which your sainted sire gave all through life so shining an example. These are my titles, dear Frank, and this what I do with them: here go Baptism and Marriage, and here the Marquisate and the August Sign-Manual, with which your predecessor was pleased to honour our race." And as Esmond spoke he set the papers burning in the brazier. " You will please, sir, to remember," he continued, " that our family hath ruined itself by fidelity to yours ; that my grandfather spent his estate, and gave his blood and his son to die for your service; that my dear lord's grandfather (for lord you are now, Frank, by right and title too) died for the same cause ; that my poor kinswoman, my father's second wife, after giving away her honour to your wicked perjured race, sent all her wealth to the King, and got in return that precious title that lies in ashes, and this

inestimable yard of blue riband. I lay this at your feet and stamp upon it; I draw this sword, and break it and deny you; and, had you completed the wrong you designed us, by Heaven I would have driven it through your heart, and no more pardoned you than your father pardoned Monmouth. Frank will do the same; won't you, cousin?"

Frank, who had been looking on with a stupid air at the papers as they flamed in the old brazier, took out his sword and broke it, holding his head down. "I go with my cousin," says he, giving Esmond a grasp of the hand. "Marquis or not, by——, I stand by him any day. I beg your Majesty's pardon for swearing; that is—that is—I'm for the Elector of Hanover. It's all your Majesty's own fault. The Queen's dead most likely by this time. And you might have been King, if you hadn't come dangling after Trix."

"Thus to lose a crown," says the young Prince, starting up, and speaking French in his eager way; "to lose the loveliest woman in the world; to lose the loyalty of such hearts as yours—is not this, my lords, enough of humiliation?—Marquis, if I go on my knees, will you pardon me?—No, I can't do that, but I can offer you reparation, that of honour; that of gentlemen. Favour me by crossing the sword with mine: yours is broke—see, yonder in the *armoire* are two;" and the Prince took them out as eager as a boy, and held them towards Esmond. "Ah! you will? *Merci, monsieur, merci!*"

Extremely touched by this immense mark of condescension and repentance for wrong done, Colonel Esmond bowed down so low as almost to kiss the gracious young hand that conferred on him such an honour, and took his

guard in silence. The swords were no sooner met, than Castlewood knocked up Esmond's with the blade of his own, which he had broke off short at the shell; and the Colonel, falling back a step, dropped his point with another very low bow, and declared himself perfectly satisfied.

" Eh bien, Vicomte ! " says the young Prince, who was a boy, and a French boy, " il ne nous reste qu'une chose à faire." He placed his sword upon the table, and the fingers of his two hands upon his breast. " We have one more thing to do," says he ; " you do not divine it ? " He stretched out his arms—" *Embrassons-nous !* "

The talk was scarce over when Beatrix entered the room. What came she to seek there ? She started and turned pale at the sight of her brother and kinsman, drawn swords, broken sword-blades, and papers yet smouldering in the brazier.

" Charming Beatrix," says the Prince, with a blush which became him very well, " these lords have come a-horseback from London, where my sister lies in a despaired state, and where her successor makes himself desired. Pardon me for my escapade of last evening. I had been so long a prisoner, that I seized the occasion of a promenade on horseback, and my horse naturally bore me towards you. I found you a Queen in your little Court, where you deigned to entertain me. Present my homages to your maids of honour. I sighed as you slept, under the window of your chamber, and then retired to seek rest in my own. It was there that these gentlemen agreeably aroused me.—Yes, milords, for that is a happy day that makes a Prince acquainted, at whatever cost to

his vanity, with such a noble heart as that of the Marquis of Esmond.—Mademoiselle, may we take your coach to town ? I saw it in the hangar, and this poor Marquis must be dropping with sleep."

" Will it please the King to breakfast before he goes ? " was all Beatrix could say. The roses had shuddered out of her cheeks ; her eyes were glaring ; she looked quite old. She came up to Esmond and hissed out a word or two. " If I did not love you before, cousin," says she, " think how I love you now! " If words could stab, no doubt she would have killed Esmond ; she looked at him as if she could.

But her keen words gave no wound to Mr. Esmond; his heart was too hard. As he looked at her, he wondered that he could ever have loved her. His love of ten years was over ; it fell down dead on the spot, at the Kensington tavern, where Frank brought him the note out of " Eikon Basiliké." The Prince blushed and bowed low, as she gazed at him, and quitted the chamber. I have never seen her from that day.

Horses were fetched and put to the chariot presently. My lord rode outside; and as for Esmond, he was so tired that he was no sooner in the carriage than he fell asleep, and never woke till night, as the coach came into Alton.

As we drove to the " Bell " Inn, comes a mitred coach with our old friend Lockwood beside the coachman. My Lady Castlewood and the Bishop were inside. She gave a little scream when she saw us. The two coaches entered the inn almost together, the landlord and people coming out with lights to welcome the visitors.

We in our coach sprang out of it, as soon as ever we saw the dear lady, and, above all, the Doctor in his cassock. What was the news ? Was there yet time ? Was the Queen alive ? These questions were put hurriedly, as Boniface stood waiting before his noble guests to bow them up the stair.

" Is she safe ? " was what Lady Castlewood whispered in a flutter to Esmond.

" All's well, thank God ! " says he, as the fond lady took his hand and kissed it, and called him her preserver and her dear. *She* wasn't thinking of Queens and crowns.

The Bishop's news was reassuring : at least all was not lost; the Queen yet breathed, or was alive when they left London six hours since. (" It was Lady Castlewood who insisted on coming," the Doctor said.) Argyle had marched up regiments from Portsmouth, and sent abroad for more. The Whigs were on the alert, a pest on them (I am not sure but the Bishop swore as he spoke); and so too were our people. And all might be saved, if only the Prince could be at London in time. We called for horses, instantly to return to London. We never went up poor crestfallen Boniface's stairs, but into our coaches again—the Prince and his Prime Minister in one, Esmond in the other, with only his dear mistress as his companion.

Castlewood galloped forwards on horseback to gather the Prince's friends, and warn them of his coming. We travelled through the night, Esmond discoursing to his mistress of the events of the last twenty-four hours—of Castlewood's ride and his, of the Prince's generous behaviour and their reconciliation. The night seemed

short enough, and the starlit hours passed away serenely in that fond company.

So we came along the road, the Bishop's coach heading ours ; and, with some delays in procuring horses, we got to Hammersmith about four o'clock on Sunday morning, the first of August, and half an hour after, it being then bright day, we rode by my Lady Warwick's house, and so down the street of Kensington.

Early as the hour was, there was a bustle in the street, and many people moving to and fro. Round the gate leading to the Palace, where the guard is, there was especially a great crowd. And the coach ahead of us stopped, and the Bishop's man got down to know what the concourse meant.

There presently came from out of the gate—Horse Guards with their trumpets, and a company of heralds with their tabards. The trumpets blew, and the herald-at-arms came forward and, proclaimed GEORGE, by the Grace of God, of Great Britain, France, and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith. And the people shouted, " God save the King ! "

Among the crowd shouting and waving their hats, I caught sight of one sad face, which I had known all my life, and seen under many disguises. It was no other than poor Mr. Holt's, who had slipped over to England to witness the triumph of the good cause ; and now beheld its enemies victorious, amidst the acclamations of the English people. The poor fellow had forgot to huzzah, or to take his hat off, until his neighbours in the crowd remarked his want of loyalty, and cursed him for a Jesuit in disguise, when he ruefully uncovered and began to cheer. Sure he was the most unlucky of men ; he **never**

played a game but he lost it, or engaged in a conspiracy but 'twas certain to end in defeat.

With the sound of King George's trumpets, a fide vain hopes of the weak and foolish young Pretence were blown away; and with that music, too, I may say, the drama of my own life was ended.

It was at Bruxelles, whither we retreated *after* the failure of our plot—our Whig friends advising is 'to keep out of the way—that the great joy of my life was bestowed upon me, and that my dear mistress became my wife. Let the last words I write thank her, and bless her.

By the kindness of Mr. Addison, all danger of prosecution, and every obstacle against our return to England, was removed; and my son Frank's gallantry in Scotland made his peace with the King's government. But we two cared no longer to live in England; and Frank formally and joyfully yielded over to us the possession of that estate which we now occupy, far away from Europe and its troubles, on the beautiful banks of the Potomac, where we have built a new Castle wood, and think with grateful hearts of our old home. In our transatlantic country we have a season, the calmest and most delightful of the year, which we call the Indian summer: I often say the autumn of our life resembles that happy and serene weather, and am thankful for its rest and its sweet sunshine. Heaven hath blessed us with a child, which each parent loves for her resemblance to the other. Our diamonds are turned into ploughs and axes for our plantations; and into negroes, the happiest and merriest, I think, in all this country: and the only

jewel by which my wife sets any store, and from which she hath never parted, is that gold button she took from my arm on the day when she visited me in prison, and which she wore ever after, as she told me, on the tenderest heart in the world.

THE END.

NOTES

P. 4, 1. 2. Dea certè : " Assuredly a goddess " ; Aeneas's exclamation on meeting Venus disguised as a huntress (Virgil, *Aeneid*, I. 328).

P. 15, J. 2. Babylonish scarlet woman : an allegorical figure in the Book of Revelation, identified by the Puritans with the Church of Rome.

1.31. parrain : French, god-father.

P. 10,1. 11. C'est bien ça : French, "That's it, right enough."

P. 18,1. 8. Parbleu ! : a softened form of the French oath, *par Dieu*. So *Morbleu !* (p. 327) is for *Mart Dieu* (God's death).

P. 19,1. 16. gold clocks : gilt thread embroidered on the side of the stockings.

J. 17. pantofles : slippers (French, *pantoufle*).

P. 28, I. 2. canaille : French, rabble.

P. 30, 1. 8. réveillez : military waking-signal (properly the plural imperative of a French verb, " Awake ye ! ")

P. 31, 1. 10. famuli : Latin, attendants.

P. 33,1. 20. buffet : French, side-board.

P. 38,1. 29. M. le Marquis : for the explanation of this title, see Bk. III. ch. vi. p. 265.

P. 45,1. 10. night-rail : dressing-gown, as was also the 'night-gown' of Lady Macbeth.

P. 49,1. 26. unicum filium suum dilectissimum : Latin, his one and only well-beloved son.

P. 50, 1. 24. Scholar Dick : Richard Steele, 1071-1729, less famous than Addison, but by many good judges even more admired as a writer of English prose. Thackeray has inwoven some sentences here from Steele's account of his father's death in the *Taller*, No. 181.

P. 67,1. 14. Venice glass : a hand-mirror. Venice is still famous for its manufacture of glass.

P. 72,1.1. " Green Sleeves " : a favourite Elizabethan tune,

mentioned in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (Act II. Sc. 1, also Act V. Sc. 5).

Lillibulero : an Irish refrain mentioned in Sterne's *Tristram Shandy* and Scott's *Waverley*.

P. 73, 1. 32. **spinnet**: a keyboard instrument of music, smaller than the piano, and more limited in scale.

P. 75, 1. 5. **bay**: of a reddish-brown colour, **sorrel**: of a bright chestnut colour.

P. 76, 1.21. **laced with brandy**: having a glass of brandy mingled with the ale ; perhaps a metaphor from lace-trimming.

P. 80,1.9. **greges** : Latin, classes (literally, 'flocks').

P. 82, 1. 16. **escrime** : French, fencing.

P. 88, 1. 3. **Lord Mohun** : pronounce like *moon*.

P. 97, 1. 22. **Beati pacifici**: Latin, "Blessed are the peacemakers."

P. 102,1. 11. **memento mori**: "Remember you must die"—a frequent inscription on sundials.

P. 111,1. 25. **botte de Jésuite** : French, pass or thrust learnt by Esmond from his Jesuit friend at Cambridge.

P. 118,1. 25. **Benedicti benedicentes**: Latin, "Blessed are they that bless."

P. 125, 1. 2. **deliquium**: Latin medical term, 'swoon.'

P. 126, 1. 14. **pleaded his clergy**: more fully, 'pleaded his benefit of clergy' ; i.e. claimed the right to escape full penalty on a first conviction on the ground that he had clerkly knowledge. In the twelfth century the privileges of the clergy in the courts were extended to laymen who could read and write. Mohun's counsel successfully appealed to the old custom.

P. 133, 1. 15. **cup ... of assay**: a small cup with which wine or food was "assayed" (tried) by tasting before being offered to an exalted personage.

P. 135,1. 6. **elderly goddess Diana** : Sir Peter Lely had painted Isabel Esmond in the character of Diana. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries noble ladies were often portrayed as classical goddesses.

1. 14. **mother-in-law**: now only used of the mother of a husband or wife, but Thackeray and many writers before him used it for step-mother.

P. 137,1. 30. **mais vous êtes. . .** : "Well, you are a noble young man !"

P. 138, 1. 27. **a pair of colours**: a commission as ensign. The two senior ensigns of a regiment carried silk flags, one known **as the King's colour**, the other **as the regimental colour**.

P. 139, 1. 21. **a pension on the Stamp Office**: a pension paid through the Stamp Office and included in the accounts of that part of the administration.

P. 145, 1. 8. **beaver**: a hat of beaver fur.

1. 9. **buckled periwig**: curled wig.

1. 9. **holland shirts**: shirts of fine linen woven in Holland.

P. 150, 1. 10. **point de Venise**: collar of Venetian lace.

P. 155, 1. 4. **Bringing your sheaves with you**: *Psalm cxxvi*. 6.

P. 158, 1. 27. **filia pulcrior**: the fairer daughter; quoted from Horace, *Odes*, I. xvi. 1.

P. 162, 1. 32. **the Sylvester night**: New Year's eve, the festival of St. Sylvester.

P. 105, 1. 19. **Je vous donne**, etc.: French, but in her ladyship's very English spelling, "I give you a week to tire completely of your tiresome relatives."

P. 177, 1. 10. **Amadis**: Amadis of Gaul, the most famous hero of chivalry in old Spanish romance.

P. 181, 1. 32. **Mon cher**, etc.: "My dear, you are as dull as a sermon."

P. 182, 1. 4. **raffoléd for**: French, raved about, doted on.

P. 185, 1. 25. **afflavit Deus**: "God breathed, and they were scattered"; the inscription on the medal struck to commemorate the destruction of the Spanish Armada.

P. 185, 1. 16. **Mr. Farquhar**: George Farquhar, author of *The Beaux' Stratagem* and other comedies, born in Ireland 1677, died in 1707. **Mr. Gay**: John Gay, author of *Fables* and *The Beggar's Opera*, was born in Devon in 1685; he was a friend of Pope and Swift, and died in 1732.

P. 187, 1. 21. **mousquetaire**: French, musketeer.

1. 24. **petit polisson**: French, little blackguard.

P. 189, 1. 8. **Pandour**: "Brutal Croatian soldier. Originally a local force raised (1741) by Baron Trenck and afterwards incorporated in the Austrian army" (Weekley).

1. 32. **maitre d'armes**: fencing master.

P. 190, 1. 37. **recusant bishops**: those bishops who refused to acknowledge William and Mary as sovereigns of England.

P. 192, 1. 3. **feste**: older form of *fête*, the French for * festival.'

P. 208, 1. 10. **her highest tour**: *tour de force*, achievement.

P. 210, 1. 31. **Henry St. John**: Viscount Bolingbroke.

P. 217, 1. 9. **majority**: rank of major.

P. 232, 1. 10. **served an apprenticeship for Rachel**: see *Genesis* xxix. 20.

P. 240,1. 11. the pretty "Gawrie" ... in the story: an anachronism, for the *Life and Adretures of Peter Walkouts*- anonymous, but thought to be by Robert Paltock--was not published till 1750. It is a marvellous story of a seaman who is wrecked near the South Pole, passes through a subterranean cavern into a kind of new world, meets there with a 'Gawrie or Flying Woman,' whose life he preserves and whom he afterwards marries.

P. 242,1. 30. Pope's admirable poem : *The Pape of the Lock*.

P. 249, 1. 7. Mr. Congreve: William Congreve, 1070-1720, the most famous of the Restoration dramatists.

1.18. Harry Fielding: famous novelist, author of *Joseph Andrews* and *Tom Jones* ; born 1707, died 1754.

P. 250,1. 29. tie-wig : a small wig tied behind with ribbon.

1.30. Mohawks: young ruffians who in the early eighteenth century infested the London streets to the terror of peaceable citizens; they were called after a tribe of North American Indians, ('p. the use of *apache m* modern French.

P. 251, 1. 25. Jonathan : Jonathan Swift, the famous Dean of St. Patrick's Dublin, author of *Gullirer's Travels*.

P. 252,1. 5. A la santé de la bonne cause ! " To the health of the good cause ! "—i.e. of the Pretender.

1. 13. The Hind and the Panther: the title of Dryden's poetical satire, 1087. The Hind is the Church of Rome, the Panther the Church of England.

P. 250, 1. 4. Kneller: 1048-1723, a German portrait-painter, succeeded Sir Peter Lely as painter to the English court.

P. 261,1. 16 broadsides : broadsheets.

P. 205, 1. 1. Hexham Castle would seem to be a slip of Thackeray's pen for Hexton: see p. 141, 1. 20.

P. 267,1. 26. preux chevalier : gallant knight.

P. 275,1. 26. St. Cyr: Madame de Maintenon's famous school for girls. Racine's tragedy of " Esther " was performed there.

P. 270, 1. 7. Eikon Basiliké : " The Royal Portrait," supposed by the Royalists to have been written by Charles I in prison ; it was probably written by Gaudin, Bishop of Exeter after the Restoration.

P. 282,1. 5. le grand sérieux : the solemn gentleman.

Don Bellianis: like Amadis of Gaul, a legendary hero of the romances of chivalry.

P. 284,1. 5. Tenez, elle est jolie, etc.: " Ah, the little mother is pretty ! By the word of a gentleman, she's charming. But who is the other, this nymph, this blazing star, this Diana who descends upon us ? "

P. 291, 15. my Lord of Oxford : Robert Harley.

1. 9. the Queen's Abigail: waiting-maid: the name of a character in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Scornful Lady*, perhaps suggested by 1 *Samuel*, xxv. **41.**

1. 12. the Bishop of Rochester : Bishop Atterbury, who was in the conspiracy.

P. 299, 1. 28. ultima ratio : Latin, last argument.

P. 308, 1. 21. lâche : French, cowardly and mean.

P. 310, I. 11. Après, monsieur ? " Well, sir ? "

P. 330, 1. 26. armoire : cupboard.

P. 331, 1. 8. il ne nous reste . . . : " There remains but one thing for us to do. . . . Let us embrace."

QUESTIONS AND SUBJECTS FOR ESSAYS

1. Write a prose description of Castlewood as Henry Esmond first saw it; or write a sonnet on the same subject.

2. An imaginary description of Henry Esmond's life in the French family at Spitalfields.

3. A letter from Henry Esmond at Castlewood to Father Holt.

4. A letter from Henry Esmond at Cambridge to his benefactress at Castlewood.

5. Would you like to have lived in the days of Queen Anne ?

6. Can you quote or suggest a satisfactory definition of the word 'gentleman' ? Show how Thackeray's conception of Henry Esmond brings out the qualities we look for in an English gentleman.

7. Thackeray's characters "leave the mixed enigmatical impression of life itself" (Elton). Illustrate from this novel.

8. Historical novels have been condemned as "spurious history deviating into fiction." Explain this criticism and discuss the justice of it in regard to *Esmond*.

9. What is gained by making Esmond tell his own story ?

10. "Those piercing moments of vision which we remember so well." Give examples of such "piercing moments of vision" from *Esmond*.

11. Could *Esmond* be dramatized ? Show the difference between a novel and a drama by explaining what would need to be left out and what would need to be put in.

12. Why did Thackeray change Mohun's Christian name from Charles to Henry ?

13. Why was the plot to make the Young Pretender King nearly successful, and why did it fail ?

14. Does *Esmond* give any ground for the charge brought against Thackeray that he was "cynical" ?

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

1. There are many editions of Thackeray's novels, the most important being the 'biographical' edition of 1899, with introductions by the novelist's eldest daughter, Anne Thackeray Ritchie, and the very complete 'Oxford' edition of 1908, edited by Professor Saintsbury.

2. It was Thackeray's desire that no biography of him should be written. The very full notice of his life in the *Dictionary of National Biography* may be taken as authoritative, since it is from the pen of Thackeray's son-in-law, Leslie Stephen. The volume on Thackeray in the *English Men of Letters* series is by Trollope, but disappointing.

3. For the critical study of Thackeray's art the following will be found useful : Alton's *Survey of English Literature, 1830-1880*, vol. 2; Saintsbury's *History of Nineteenth-Century Literature*; the *Cambridge History of English Literature*, vol. 13; Percy Lubbock, *The Craft of Fiction*.

4. A good history of Queen Anne's reign should be consulted. The social life of the time is reflected in *The Tatler* and *The Spectator*, and can most agreeably be studied there. But Traill's *Social England* (reprinted as *Our Country*), vol. 4, is very useful, and chapter 2 of Leslie Stephen's *Literature and Society in the Eighteenth Century* may be read.

5. *A Noble Rake: the Life of Charles, fourth Lord Mohun*, by Professor R. Forsythe (Harvard University Press and Milford, 1928) is an elaborate study of the historical background of *Esmond*. Professor Forsythe points out certain departures from historic fact in Thackeray (e.g. Mohun's Christian name was Charles, not Harry, and he was not quite the villain that Thackeray painted), but his conclusion is that *Esmond* is "one of the most nearly perfect presentations in literature of the life and actions and thoughts of a past age."

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES

General Aoitior: J. H. FOWLER, M.A.

LATE ASSISTANT MASTER AT CLIPTON COLLEGE.

*Now issued in attractive doth binding with a design on the side and
with gilt lettering and ornamentation on the back*

1. ADDISON-ESSAYS FROM. Edited by J. H. FOWLER, M A. Is. 9d.
2. ANDERSEN STORIES FROM Selected by Mrs. P. A. HARNETT. Limp,
is 8d Boards, is od,
3. ARABIAN NIGHTS-STORIES FROM Edited by A. J. MARTIN, M.A.
I amp, is. 8d. Boards, is od
108. ARNOLD-PROSE SELECTIONS FROM MATTHEW ARNOLD. Edited by
Pi of E. T. CAMPAGNAC. IS 9d
- 1 AUSTEN-PRIDE AND PREJUDICE. Abudged by H. A. 'I TREBI. E. M.A. ,is 6d.
- 5 -SENSE AND SENSIBILITY. Abridged and Faited by Mrs. F. S BOAS
Musrated. 2S
- 6,7. BALLADS OLD AND NEW. Selected and Edited by H. B. COIRRIIL, M A
Part 1 , IS 9d. Part II , Limp, is 3d. Boarils, is 6d
8. BATES-A NATURALIST ON THE AMAZONS. Abudged and Edited by F. A
BRUTON, M.A. 80 filustrations ,is. 6d
124. A BOOK OF BLANK VERSE. Selected and Edited by E. E.Rii NO-IDS is. 6d
9. BORROW-WANDERINGS IN SPAIN. Edited by F. A.CAVENAGH, M.A
Limp, IS 6d. Boards, is. 9d.
- 0,11. BRITAIN- TALES OF OLD. By E. P. ROBERTS. Part I. is. 6d Part II.
Limp, is 3d Boards, is. 6d.
12. BROWNING-SELECTIONS FROM. Edited by Mrs, M. G. GLAZERBOOK. is,6d
0. - PIPPA PASSES. Editrd by Dr. E. A PARKFR. IS 9d.
20. - BALAUSTION'S ADVENTURE. By Dr. E. A. PARKER IS. yd
- 14. BUCKLEY-CHILDREN OF THE DAWN. Old Tales of Greece. By E. F.**
BUCKLEY. With Inuodn lion by A. SIDGWICK ; Notes and subjects for Essay,
by J. H. Fow! Ik. Pan 1 , is 6d Part II., Limp, is 3d Boards, is 6d
15. BUNYAN-PILGRIM'S PROGRESS. Abridged and Edited by C. F. KNOX,
M.A. is 9d.
16. BYRON—CHILDE HAROLD. Cantos III. and IV. Edited by J. H. FOWLER,
M A. Limp, is. 6d. Boards, is. 9d.
17. CARLYLE—ABBOT SAMSON Chapters from "Past and Piesent," Book II.
Edited by F. A. CAVENACH. M A. is. 9d
- 19 - HEROES AND HERO-WORSHIP. Edited by H. M. BULLER, M.A 2 vols.
Vol. I , 2s. Vol II., 2s.
20. CAVENDISH-LIFE OF **WOLSEY**. Edited by MARY TOUT, M.A. Limp, is 3d.
Boards, is 6d
1. **CERVANTES-DON QUIXOTE**. Abridged and Edited by C F. KNOX. IS. 9d.
2. COBBETT—RURAL RIDES—Selections. Edited by GUY BOAS, IS. 9d.
3. DEFOE-ROBINSON CRUSOE. Abridged and Edited by J. HUTCHISON, IS. 9d.
- 4, **DICKENS-DAVID COPPERFIELD**. Abridged by H. A. TREBLE, M.A. is. 9d.
5. — A CHRISTMAS **CAROL**. Edited by C. F. KNOX. Limp, is. 3d. Boards, is 6d
- . - A TALE OF TWO CITIES. Abridged and Edited by C. H RUSSELL, M.A. is. 9d
- . - **NICHOLAS NICKLEBY**. Abridged and Edited by C. F. KNOX, IS 9d.
- . - THE OLD CURIOSITY **SHOP**. Abridged and Edited by D. M. STUART, IS. 9d.
- . **DUMAS—THE THREE MUSKETEERS**. Abridged and Edited by C. J. BROWN,
M.A., and H. S. WALKER, M.A. is. 9d,

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES—*Continued.*

29. ELIOT SILAS MARNER. Abridged by MAY COPSEY. IS 9d
- 113 FROUDE-HISTORY OF ENGLAND. Chapter I. Edited by E. H. B. A MAY is 6d
30. GASKELL-CRANFORD Abridged and Edited by Mrs F. S. BOAS Illust Limp, is. 6d. Boards, is 9d
31. GIBBON-**THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.** (Chapters I -III of the I and Fall.) Edited by J. H. JOWER, M. A Limp, is 3d Boards, is 6d
32. - **THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE.** Narratives Seleacer and Eirnd by J. H. POWEFEM. A. First Series. is 6d
33. GOLDSMITH VICAR OF WAKEFIELD. Abridged by Mrs. E. S. BOAS,
116. - **THE GOOD-NATURED MAN.** Edited by ROBERT HERPING, M. A. I
117. — **SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER** Edited by ROBERT HERPING, M. A is
34. GRIMM-FAIRY TALES A Selection. Edtted by A. T. MARIN M A
121. HARDY.-**THE DYNASTS-Scenes.** Selected and Edited by J. H. Fa M A. is 9d.
122. — **THE TRUMPET MAJOR.** Abridged by C. V. KNOX Edited by POWIIR M. A. is 9d
35. HAWTHORNE-STORIES FROM A WONDER-BOOK FOR GIRLS BOYS I edited by J. H. POWFFER, M. A. Limp, is by Boands, is 9d
- 36,37. TANGLEWOOD TALES Edited by J. H. FOWILLR, M. A Part I.. Part II, 'is 9d
38. HINDU TALES FROM THE SANSKRIT. Translated by S. M. MURA by Mis A Bun is 9d
- 39, 40. HISTORY-A BOOK OF POETRY ILLUSTRATIVE OF ENGLISH
- 41 42. by G. Powsh. B. A. Part I A.n 6r-148 Part II The T udots and - Part III. The Harlovenan Dnasty is each. the 3 parts in I vol,
43. INDIAN HISTORY- TALES FROM. PA MKS A. S. R.»K Limp, IS 3d. I is, 6d.
44. IRVING RIP VAN WINKLE, The Legend of Sleepy Hollow, and Sketches. Edited by AH M Butt RF, M A is 9d
45. KEARY-HEROES OF ASGARD. By A. and BE KEARY. Adapted and Ed M R. Part 1 . IS. 9d.
46. KEATS- Selections. (Without " LAMIA.") Edited by B. GROOM, M. A.
46. — Selections (With " LAMIA.") Edited by B. GROOM, M A is. 9d.
47. KINGSLEY- ANDROMEDA, with the Story of Perseus prefixed I by keokuk, M. A. IS 6d
- 48, 49. LAMB- TALES FROM SHAKESPEARE. Edited by H. A. TREBLE, M. A. Series. Limp, is 3d. Boards, is 6d Sec ond Series. Limp, is. 6d. Boards,
50. LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (18th Century). Edited by G. G. L M A. Limp, is. 3d. Boards, IS 6d.
51. LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (19th Century). First Series. Edit G. G. LOANE. M A IS 6d.
114. LONGER NARRATIVE POEMS (19th Century). Second Series Edited. G G LOANE M A. IS 9d.
52. LONGFELLOW SHORTER POEMS. Edited by H. B. COPIERHIL, M. A.
53. MACAULAY—ESSAY ON SIR W. TEMPLE. Edited by G. A. AT WENT M A Limp, is 6d Boards, is 9d.
54. - **ESSAY ON FRANCES BURNEY.** Edited by A. D. GREENWOOD. IS. 3d. Boards, is 6d
55. - **ESSAY ON CLIVE.** Edited by H. M. BUTTER, M A. is. 9d.
- 56 —**ESSAY ON WARREN HASTINGS.** Edited by H. M BUTTER, M. A. is. 9d. Boards, 2s.

