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THE
HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

Printed by RAMZAN ALI SHAH at the National Press, Allahabad.

THE VICTORY SERIES FOR INDIAN STUDENTS No. 23.

THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

BY

W. M. THACKERAY

ABRIDGED AND SIMPLIFIED

BY

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ALLAHABAD
THE NATIONAL PRESS

1922

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PREFACE

CRITICS are generally agreed that a complete appreciation of Thackeray's *The History of Henry Esmond* demands of the reader a student's knowledge of the society, history, and literature of the period in which the plot is laid. On the other hand, youthful undergraduates studying English in Indian Colleges would be extremely ill-advised to defer their study of a novel so justly famous and by a writer so deservedly celebrated until they had acquired such a stock of knowledge; and this abridged and annotated edition of the classic has accordingly been specially prepared to meet their needs. It is hoped that the edition will also commend itself to the ordinary reader of fiction, who, if he were to postpone his perusal of *Esmond* until his knowledge of the period satisfied the critics' demands, would in all probability never read the book at all.

J. S. A.

INTRODUCTION.

William Makepeace Thackeray, who shares with his illustrious contemporary, Charles Dickens, the distinction of being the most popular of Victorian novelists, was born in the year 1811 at Calcutta, where his father was an officer of the Bengal Civil Service. He was educated at the great English public school of Charterhouse and at Trinity College, Cambridge, which he entered in 1829. In his novels he draws freely upon his experiences at both these celebrated seats of learning.

Leaving Cambridge in 1830 without taking his degree, Thackeray adopted the profession of letters, and, after the usual trials and struggles of the literary aspirant, achieved fame and "that eternitie promised by our ever-living poet" by his five great novels, *Vanity Fair* (1846), *Pendennis* (1850), *The History of Henry Esmond* (1852), *The Newcomes* (1854), and *The Virginians* (1857).

His other novels include *The Great Hoggarty Diamond* (1837), *The Memoirs of Barry Lyndon* (1844), and three which were published after he became editor in 1859 of the *Cornhill Magazine*, viz., *Lovel the Widower*, *The Adventures of Philip*, and *Denis Duval*, the last being unfinished at his death in 1863.

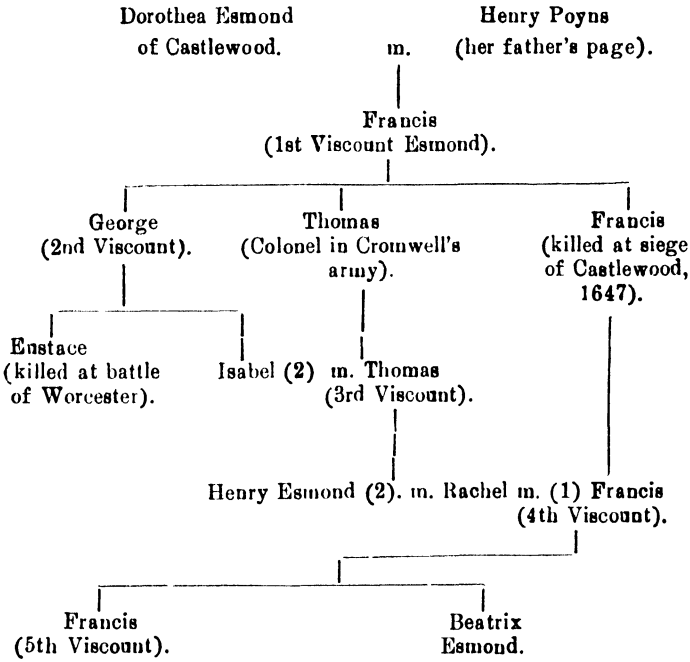
Of works which do not come so definitely in the category of Novels the most popularly known are *The Yellowplush Papers* (1838), *The Snob Papers* (1839), and a delightful burlesque entitled

Rebecca and Rowena, which purports to be a sequel to Sir Walter Scott's famous novel of *Ivanhoe*, and was published about 1844 in *Novels by Eminent Hands*. His lecture series on *The English Humourists of the 18th Century* and *The Four Georges*, which he delivered in Scotland and America, and published in 1857, are important contributions to the study of English literature and social history.

The historical and literary research which the preparation of these lectures entailed was of the highest value to Thackeray in writing his *The History of Henry Esmond*, and enabled him to produce a novel which, while rivalling *Vanity Fair* as his most popular work, is unique in its fidelity to the age in which the plot is laid, and in the consistency with which " the illusion of a past time " (to borrow the felicitous phrase of his biographer) has been maintained.

The story is written in the form of Memoirs by Henry Esmond of the fortunes of the noble family of the Esmonds of Castlewood during the reigns of William of Orange and Queen Anne. We are introduced into the society of that most interesting age ; and we are permitted to pronounce a verdict upon its controversies and to meet its great historical figures,—Steele, Addison, and Swift ; Harley, Bolingbroke, and Marlborough. We are privileged to accompany the last-named in the famous campaigns which he fought against the French in the early years of the 18th century and to take part in his magnificent victories of Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet. Finally, we follow the progress of a Jacobite plot to restore to the English throne the Chevalier de St. George, son of the Stuart King James II, exiled in 1688 ; and with the failure of the plot the Memoirs end.

For the clearer understanding of the story it is perhaps desirable to indicate at the outset the Esmond family relationships, as in the accompanying table :—



This table establishes the relationship of Henry Esmond with Isabel, second wife of Thomas, 3rd Viscount Esmond, and with the wife and family of Francis, the 4th Viscount ; and it makes clear the ambiguous position in which his father's secret marriage has placed him with respect to these members of the house of Esmond, of which he is in reality chief.

Thackeray has sketched the character of each with fidelity to historical truth and care for historical detail.

The portrait of the Dowager Viscountess Isabel of Castlewood recalls the descriptions by Samuel Pepys of a favourite of king Charles II, for example the Duchess of Portsmouth; it is a brilliant picture of a lady of society who retains the fashions, pursuits, and political ideas of the Restoration Court.

The three Viscounts, whose characters are delineated for us in succession, are not less true to type. Alike in their love of field-sports and gaming, and in their lax morality, they recall the robust and boisterous spirit which permeates the pages of Smollett and Fielding; while the character-sketch of the younger Lady Castlewood, wife of the 4th Viscount, has all the charm of Richardson's heroines, together with a human naturalness which they lack entirely, and a gentle and humane spirit which is reminiscent of the *Spectator* essays.

In her aversion from the whirl of court life, in her devout religious feeling, and in her kindly and unostentatious charity, this "countrified widow of Walcote" might well be daughter to Sir Roger de Coverley. She occupies a central place in the memoirs, and her character is delineated with considerable fulness. One associates her with the greatest scenes in the story;—*e.g.*, the visit paid to Henry Esmond in prison; the "bringing home the sheaves" chapter in Book II; the banishment of Beatrix to Castlewood at the end of Book III. It is a little difficult, therefore, to accept unreservedly Charlotte Brontè's judgment that the delineation of this character is unjust to the Sex. To listen at a keyhole, as Thackeray makes Lady Castlewood do during the quarrel scene with Lord Mohun in the First Book, so incurring Miss Brontè's displeasure, is ignoble only when done to further one's own private interests. But Lady Castlewood listens, it is clear, in her desperate anxiety to forestall and dispel a danger which threatens the tranquillity of those dearest to her. Shakespeare's 'great ladies' are instinct with

courtesy and thoughtfulness for others, and Thackeray's portrait of Lady Castlewood has a place in the same gallery.

Thackeray has somewhere put on record his fear, real or assumed, that Henry Esmond, the writer of the memoirs, is a prig. The explanation of this probably lies in the very full treatment which has been accorded to the character-delineation of this intelligent, contemplative, and rather sober young man, who enters into the life of the time, and upholds the traditions of his family, with a keen understanding of men and motives. " No man is a hero unto his valet ;" and no writer of an introspective autobiography may hope for unswerving loyalty from his readers. To reveal the thoughts which inspire us and the motives which impel us is (one must admit) to forfeit the esteem of our friends ; and there is no doubt that we become unusually intimate with Henry Esmond as we follow his career from page-boy at Castlewood to Colonel in Marlborough's army. He is equipped, moreover, with an historical insight and judgment more in keeping (it has been hinted) with the democratic principles of the 19th century, and more proper to a Carlyle and a Macaulay than to a nobleman and soldier of the age of Queen Anne. But Esmond's " dangerous admiration " for Oliver Cromwell, his considered opinion of William of Orange, and his final verdict upon the Stuart dynasty, are a strong echo of thoughts faintly expressed from time to time by Evelyn the Diarist and Pepys the Diarist ; further, if this Jacobite Colonel's political sympathies become more and more decidedly in accord with those of the author of *The Four Georges*, their gradual change is, at any rate, the inevitable and justifiable result of the events which the Memoirs chronicle.

No criticism, whether on the score of fairness to the Sex or in respect of truth to contemporary manners, has assailed Thackeray's creation of Beatrix Esmond, whose portrait is painted for us

at full length, from the girlish charm of her earliest childhood to the prime of her bewitching womanhood. Indeed, the picture is completed by the author in *The Virginians*, sequel to *Esmond*, where she reappears with all the fire and sparkling animation of the days of her youthful triumphs. The complete sketch is the finest thing in Thackeray's gallery,—finer even than Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair*, its only rival,—and is one of the master-pieces of imaginative character-portrayal.

One calls to mind first of all Beatrix Esmond's imperious beauty of face and figure, and recalls particularly the two scenes in which the artist in Thackeray has accorded it full justice,—the scenes of her descent of the staircase upon her waiting guests. She has the same commanding loveliness as another beauty of the same Age and Society, the Belinda of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*. But coupled with the girl's fairness there is her direct candour. She is sincere ; and her sincerity and charm atone for her confessed worldliness. Like Becky Sharp she has intelligence rather than virtue ; but there the resemblance ends. Becky allures her victims with the cunning of the serpent in Eden : Beatrix bewitches and intoxicates her lovers with the fascination of her mother Eve,

> " More lovely than Pandora, whom the gods
> Endow'd with all their gifts."

The illusion of a past time is maintained not only in the character-portraiture of the memoirs but also in the consistently antique flavour of their style and diction. The rather Thackerayan modernity of Esmond's political views has already been mentioned ; apart from that the work is marvellously faithful throughout to the idea of its conception,—the reminiscences of an 18th century gentleman written for the entertainment of his grandchildren.

It is from this very fact, however, that the possibility arises of reducing *The History of Henry Esmond* to proportions more suited to youthful readers. However praiseworthy from the point of view of art—and of this there need be no question—it is undesirable from the point of view of college study to reproduce in Thackeray's elaborate detail a character study so untrue to historical fact as his sketch of the Chevalier de St. George, who, for the sake of the story, is divorced entirely from his rather sombre religious temperament, and is made the repositary of all the vices and failings of his unfortunate race.

For somewhat similar reasons it has been held desirable to cut down considerably the descriptions of the Duke of Marlborough, and to excise completely the incidents of his quarrel with General Webb. Stern necessity has called for a softening of Thackeray's colouring of the character of Richard Steele, and to a slighter extent, of Addison and Swift ; the youthful student, who relies too implicitly on the printed word, is advised to go first for his facts to a standard work on English literature. Finally, the emphasis laid throughout the Memoirs on some of the least reputable habits of the Age has not been reproduced in this edition, as being out of sympathy with modern taste, and unsuitable for immature students.

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THE HISTORY OF HENRY ESMOND

CHAPTER I

An Account of the family of Castlewood Hall.

When Francis, fourth Viscount Castlewood, came to take possession of his house of Castlewood in the year 1691, the only tenant of the place besides the domestics was a lad of twelve years of age, whom my Lady Viscountess lighted upon, going over the house with the housekeeper on the day of her arrival. The boy was in the room known as the Yellow Gallery, where the portraits of the family used to hang, and the new and fair lady of Castlewood found the sad, lonely little occupant of this gallery busy over his great book. Knowing who the stranger 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. '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 wonder, for she 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 a dazzling bloom; her lips smiling, and her eyes beaming with a kindness which made Harry Esmond's heart beat with surprise.

With a look of infinite pity and tenderness in her eyes, she took his hand, 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 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: and my Lord burst out into another great laugh at this.

'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, and she came up and put out a little hand to him A keen and delightful pang of gratitude, happiness, affection, filled the orphan child's heart as he received from the protectors whom Heaven had sent to him these touching words and tokens of friendliness and kindness. But an hour since he had felt quite alone in the world; when he heard the

bells ringing that morning to welcome the arrival of the new lord and lady, they had rung only anxiety to him, for he knew not how the new owner would deal with him ; and those to whom he formerly looked for protection were forgotten or dead. Pride and doubt too had kept him within doors, when the Vicar and the people of the village, and the servants of the house, had gone out to welcome my Lord Castlewood—for Henry Esmond was no servant, though a dependant ; and in the midst of the noise and acclamations attending the arrival of the new lord, no one took any notice of young Henry Esmond, who sat unobserved and alone in the Book-room, until the afternoon of that day, when his new friends found him.

When my Lord and Lady were going away thence, 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 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—viz., 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 ; and how the Roundheads attacked the clock-tower, which my Lord's father was slain in defending.

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.

'Thou shalt sup with us, Harry, to-night !' says my Lord. 'Shan't refuse a lady, shall he, Trix ?'—and they all wondered at Harry's performance as a trencherman, 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.

When Esmond 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 long before the house was astir, longing to see that fair lady and her children, 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 ; and then he informed 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

Relates how Francis, fourth Viscount, arrives at Castlewood.

'Tis known that the name of Esmond and the estate of Castlewood came into possession of the present family through Dorothea, daughter and heiress of Edward, Earl and Marquis Esmond, and Lord of Castlewood, who married, 23 Eliz., Henry Poyns, a page in the household of her father. Francis, son and heir of the above Henry and Dorothea, who took the maternal name, which the family has borne subsequently, was made Knight and Baronet by King James the First; and, being of a military disposition, remained long in Germany with the Elector-Palatine.

On his return home Sir Francis was rewarded for his services and many sacrifices, by his late Majesty James the First, who graciously conferred upon this tried servant the post of Warden of the Butteries and Groom of the King's Posset, which high and confidential office he filled in that king's and his unhappy successor's reign.

His age and infirmities obliged Sir Francis to perform his duty by deputy; and his son, Sir George Esmond, first as his father's lieutenant, and afterwards as inheritor of his father's title and dignity, performed this office during almost the whole of the reign of King Charles the First, and his two sons who succeeded him.

Sir George Esmond was conspicuous for his loyalty to the Royal cause and person; and His Majesty, by patent under the Privy Seal, dated Oxford, Jan. 1643, was pleased to advance Sir Francis Esmond to the dignity of Viscount Castlewood, of Shandon, in Ireland; and the Viscount's estate being much impoverished by loans to the King, which

in those troublesome times His Majesty could not repay, a grant of land in the plantations of Virginia was given to the Lord Viscount.

The first Viscount Castlewood died within a few months after he had been advanced to his honours. He was succeeded by his eldest son, the before-named George : and left issue besides, Thomas, a colonel in the King's army, who afterwards joined the Usurper's Government ; and Francis, in holy orders, who was slain whilst defending the House of Castlewood against the Parliament, in the year 1647.

George, Lord Castlewood, had no male issue save his one son, Eustace Esmond, who was killed at Worcester. The lands about Castlewood were apportioned to the Commonwealth men ; Castlewood being concerned in almost all 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. She was maid of honour to Queen Henrietta Maria, and 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, became heir to the title. His father had taken the Parliament side in the quarrels, and so had been estranged from the chief of his house ; and my Lord Castlewood was enraged to think that his title should pass to a rascally Roundhead. He would have had a match between his daughter Isabel and her cousin, the son of that Francis Esmond who was killed at Castlewood siege. And the lady, it was said, took a fancy to the young man, who was her junior by several years ; but having paid his court, and being admitted to the intimacy of the house, he suddenly flung up his suit when it seemed to be pretty prosperous, without giving a pretext for his behaviour.

He retired in the sulks to Tangier, whence he returned after two years service, settling on a small property he had near to Winchester, and became a country gentleman, and never came to Court again in King Charles's time. But his uncle Castlewood was never reconciled to him ; nor, for some time afterwards, his cousin whom he had refused.

By places, pensions, bounties from France, and gifts from the King, Lord Castlewood, who had spent in the Royal service his youth and fortune, managed to keep a good house and figure at Court, and to save a considerable sum of ready money And now, his heir and nephew, Thomas Esmond, began to bid for his uncle's favour. Thomas had served with the Emperor, and with the Dutch. In these campaigns he was more remarked for duelling, brawling, and play, than for any conspicuous gallantry in the field, and came back to England with a character by no means improved by his foreign experience.

His cousin was now of more than middle age, and had nobody's word but her own for the beauty which she said she once possessed. She was lean, and yellow, and long in the tooth ; all the red and white in all the toy-shops in London could not make a beauty of her—in fine, a woman who might be easy of conquest, but whom only a very bold man would think of conquering. This bold man was Thomas Esmond. He had a fancy to my Lord Castlewood's savings, the amount of which rumour had very much exaggerated. Madame Isabel was said to have royal jewels of great value ; whereas poor Tom Esmond's last coat but one was in pawn.

My Lord had at this time a fine house in Lincoln's Inn Fields, nigh to the Portugal ambassador's chapel. Tom Esmond now came to church assiduously. He looked so lean and shabby that he passed without difficulty for a repentant sinner ; and, so, becoming converted, you may be sure took his uncle's priest for a director.

This charitable father reconciled him with the old lord his uncle, who, a short time before, would not speak to him. After this reconciliation with his uncle Thomas Esmond very soon began to grow sleek, and to show signs of the benefits of good living. He fasted rigorously twice a week, to be sure ; but he made amends on the other days : and, to show how great his appetite was, he ended by swallowing his cousin. There were endless jokes about this marriage at Court : but Tom rode thither in his uncle's coach now, called him father, and, having won, could afford to laugh. The marriage took place very shortly before King Charles died : whom the Viscount of Castlewood speedily followed.

The issue of this marriage was one son, whom the parents watched with an intense eagerness and care ; but who, in spite of nurses and physicians, had only a brief existence.

Holding the purse-strings in her own control, Lady Castlewood could command her husband's obedience, and so broke up her establishment at London after the child's death ; and brought her establishment, her maids, lapdogs, and gentlewomen, her priest, and his Lordship her husband, to Castlewood Hall, which she had never seen since she 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, lapdogs, and cockatoos on the opposite seat, six horses to her carriage, and servants armed and mounted following it and preceding it But the folks in the village 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, 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.

The 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, was looked upon as the real queen of the castle, and mistress of all it contained.

CHAPTER III.

WHITHER, IN THE TIME OF THOMAS, THIRD VISCOUNT, I HAD PRECEDED HIM AS PAGE TO ISABELLA.

COMING up to London again some time after, Lord Castlewood despatched a retainer of his to a little cottage in the village of Ealing, near to London, where there lived a little lad, who went by the name of Henry Thomas.

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 Huguenots ; and being called the little Frenchman by other boys on Ealing Green. He soon learnt to speak English perfectly, and to forget some of his French : children forget easily. Some earlier and fainter recollections the child had of a different country ; and a town with tall white houses ; and a ship. But these were quite indistinct in the boy's mind, as indeed the memory of Ealing soon became.

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, and that he was to live at the great house of Castlewood, 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 Covent Garden.

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

'C' est bien ça', 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 them, and two or three men with pistols leading the baggage-horses.

On the second 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; what languages he knew; whether he could read and write, and sing, and so forth. And Mr. Holt found that Harry could read and write, and possessed the two languages of French and English very well. That day he so pleased the gentlemen by his talk, that they had him to dine with them at the inn, and encouraged him in his prattle; and Monsieur Blaise, with whom he rode and dined the day before, waited upon him now.

For the remainder of the journey Harry rode with the priest, who was so kind to him, that the child had grown to

be quite fond and familiar with him by the journey's end, and had scarce a thought in his little heart which by that time he had not confided to his new friend.

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 curtseys 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.

Taking Harry by the hand 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 up a stair, and through an ante-room to my Lady's drawing-room. 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, sat 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; 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 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; and an odour of musk was shaken out of her garments whenever she moved or quitted the room.

Mrs Tusher, the parson's wife, was with my Lady. She had been waiting-woman to her Ladyship in the late Lord's time, and, having her soul in that business, took naturally to it when the Viscountess of Castlewood returned to inhabit her father's house.

'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 hope 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 her. Since the Empress of Ealing, he had seen nothing so awful. His awe perhaps pleased the lady to whom this artless flattery was bestowed; for having gone down on his knee and performed

his obeisance, she said, 'Page Esmond, my groom of the chamber will inform you what your duties are; 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. 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; and then the Father, took him away, 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, 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 Hall of Castlewood was built with two courts, whereof one only, the fountain-court, was now inhabited, the other having been battered down in the Cromwellian wars. In the fountain-court was the great hall, near to the kitchen and butteries; a dozen of living-rooms looking to the north, and communicating with the little chapel that faced eastwards and the buildings stretching from that to the main gate, and with the hall (which looked to the west)

into the court now dismantled. This court had been the more magnificent of the two, until the Protector's cannon tore down one side of it before the place was taken and stormed. The besiegers entered at the terrace under the clock-tower, slaying every man of the garrison, and at their head my Lord's uncle, Francis Esmond.

The Restoration did not bring enough money to the Lord Castlewood to restore this ruined part of his house; where were the morning parlours, above them the long music-gallery, and before which stretched the garden-terrace, where, however, the flowers grew again which the boots of the Roundheads had trodden in their assault, and which was restored without much cost, and only a little care, by both ladies who succeeded the second Viscount in the government of this mansion. Round the terrace garden was a low wall with a wicket leading to the wooded height beyond, that is called Cromwell's Battery to this day.

Young Harry Esmond learned the domestic part of his duty from the groom of her Ladyship's chamber; serving the Countess 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 my Lord and my Lady were seldom without visitors and there came also in these times to Father Holt many private visitors, whom Henry Esmond had little difficulty in recognising as ecclesiastics of the Father's persuasion, whatever their dresses might be. These were closeted with the Father constantly, and often came and rode away without paying their devoirs to my Lord and Lady.

Father Holt began speedily to be so much occupied with these meetings as rather to neglect the education

of the little lad. 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; the greatest career here, and in heaven the surest reward; 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.

CHAPTER IV

I am Placed under a Popish Priest and Bred to that Religion—Viscountess Castlewood.

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, 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. By love, by brightness of wit and good-humour that charmed all, by an authority which he knew how to assume, by a mystery and silence about him which increased the child's reverence for him, he won Harry's absolute fealty, and would have kept it, doubtless, if schemes greater and more important than a poor little boy's admission into orders had not called him away.

After being at home for a few months, 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. The boy read in the library, and bewildered his little brains with the great books he found there. After a while, he 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.

In Father Holt's time little Harry Esmond acted as his familiar, and faithful little servitor ; beating his clothes, folding his vestments, 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.

When Father Holt was not by, my Lord and my Lady quarrelled and abused each other so as to frighten the little page on duty. The poor boy trembled before his mistress, who made nothing of boxing his ears, and tilting the silver basin in his face which it was his business to present to her after dinner. She has repaired, by subsequent kindness to him. these severities, which it must be owned made his childhood very unhappy. She was but unhappy herself at this time, poor soul ! and I suppose made her dependants lead her own sad life. I think my Lord was as much afraid of her as her page was, and the only person of the household who mastered her was Mr. Holt Harry was only too glad when the Father dined at table, and to slink away and prattle with him afterwards, or read with him, or walk with him.

Blessed be the king who introduced cards, and the kind inventors of piquet and cribbage, for they employed six hours at least of her Ladyship's day, during which her family was pretty easy. Without this occupation my Lady frequently declared she should die. Mr. Holt would sit with her at piquet during hours together, at which time she behaved herself properly ; and as for Doctor Tusher, I believe he would have left a parishioner's dying bed, if summoned to play a rubber with his patroness at Castlewood. Sometimes, when they were pretty comfortable together, my Lord took a hand.

It always seemed to young Harry Esmond that my Lord treated him with more kindness when his lady was not present, and Lord Castlewood would take the lad sometimes on his little journeys a-hunting or a-birding; he loved to play at cards and tric-trac with him, which games the boy learned to pleasure his lord: and was growing to like him better daily, showing a special pleasure if Father Holt gave a good report of him. However, in my Lady's presence, my Lord affected to treat the lad roughly, and rebuked him sharply for little faults, for which he in a manner asked pardon of young Esmond when they were private, saying if he did not speak roughly, she would, and his tongue was not such a bad one as his lady's—a point whereof the boy, young as he was, was very well assured.

Very soon afterwards, my Lord and Lady went to London with Mr. Holt, leaving, however, the page behind them. He used to go to school to Doctor Tusher when he was at home, though the Doctor was much occupied too. There was a great stir and commotion everywhere, even in the little quiet village of Castlewood, whither a party of people came from the town, who would have broken Castlewood Chapel windows, but the village people turned out, and even old Sievewright, the republican blacksmith, along with them: for my Lady, though she was a Papist, and had many odd ways, was kind to the tenantry, and there was always a plenty of beef, and blankets, and medicine for the poor at Castlewood Hall.

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 the idle little page used to hear.

He liked the solitude of the great house very well; he had all the 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 awake in his little bed when he heard the door of the Chaplain's room open, and a man coughing in the passage. Harry jumped up, thinking it was a robber, 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 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; 'see all and say nothing. You are faithful, I know. All you have to do is to hold your tongue. Let us burn these papers and say nothing to anybody.'

So 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; and he was, in consequence, in no wise astonished that the priest should now appear before him in a riding dress, 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 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 large 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.'

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.'

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 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 staunchions 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; 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.

The Prince of Orange was then at Salisbury, as young Esmond learned from seeing Doctor Tusher in his best cassock, with a great orange cockade in his broad-leafed hat, walking up and down in front of his parsonage. He heard him say he was going to pay his duty to his Highness the Prince, as he mounted his pad and rode away. The village people had orange cockades too, and his friend the blacksmith's laughing daughter pinned one into Harry's old hat, which he tore out indignantly when they bade him to cry 'God save the Prince of Orange and the Protestant religion!' but the people only laughed, for they liked the boy in the village, where his

solitary condition moved the general pity, and where he found friendly welcomes and faces in many houses. Father Holt had many friends there too, for he not only would fight the blacksmith at theology, never losing his temper, but laughing the whole time in his pleasant way ; but he cured him of an ague with quinquina, and was always ready with a kind word for any man that asked it, so that they said in the village 'twas a pity the two were Papists.

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, 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, and they opened 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. 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.

'We are prisoners,' says she; 'in everything but chains we are prisoners. Let them come, let them consign me to dungeons, or strike off my head from this poor little throat' (and she clasped it in her long fingers). 'The blood of the Esmonds will always flow freely for their kings.'

The public misfortune had the effect of making my Lord and his Lady better friends than they ever had been since their courtship. My Lord Viscount had shown both loyalty and spirit, when these were rare qualities in the dispirited party about the King; and the praise he got elevated him not a little in his wife's good opinion, and perhaps in his own. He wakened up from the listless and supine life which he had been leading; was always riding to and fro in consultation with this friend or that of the King's; the page of course knowing little of his doings, but remarking only his greater cheerfulness and altered demeanour.

Father Holt came to the Hall constantly, but officiated no longer openly as Chaplain; he was always fetching and carrying: strangers, military and ecclesiastic, 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 not tell. Of course he could not help remarking that the priest's journeys were constant, and understanding by a hundred signs that some active though secret business employed him: what this was may pretty well be guessed by what soon happened to my Lord.

No garrison or watch was put into Castlewood when my Lord came back, but a guard was in the village; and one or other of them was always on the Green keeping a look-out on our great gate. 'Twas lucky that we had a gate which their Worships knew nothing about. My Lord and Father Holt

must have made constant journeys at night. What was happening 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: and was the most considerable person in our part of the county for the affairs of the King.

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, 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!'

'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 cow-boy 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.

'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 : 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 have shot an officer on duty, and let his orderly escape," says my Lord

' " Blaise," says Mr Holt, writing two lines on his tablebook, one for my Lady, and one for you, Master Harry; " you must go back to Castlewood, 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.

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 burnt that in the brazier. By the

time the papers were quite destroyed it was daylight. Harry ran back to his mistress again. She told him to bid the coach be got ready, and that she would ride away anon.

But just as the Viscountess stepped forth from her room, ready for departure, young John 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. John 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 Viscountess.

At first my Lady was for dying like Mary, Queen of Scots. But 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 the best place wherein to await them was 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. 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, where now was nobody but young Harry Esmond, the page.

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

'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 Castlewood,' say 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 forego.

'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 Castlewood, a nonjuring peer—of Robert Tusher, Vicar of Castlewood—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 though, rather carelessly, with a smile on his face, as if he was only conducting the examination for form's sake.

'I have found nothing which concerns the Government as yet' says he. '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 her Ladyship shrieked, 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. 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 government had basely treated him for services done in that cause.

The seizure of the papers effected, the gentlemen did not pursue their further search through Castlewood House very rigorously. They examined Mr. Holt's room, being led thither by his pupil, who opened the door for the gentlemen, and conducted them into the room.

When the gentlemen came to the half-burned papers in the brazier, they examined them eagerly enough, and their young guide was a little amused at their perplexity.

'What are these?' says one.

'They're written in a foreign language,' says the lawyer. 'What are you laughing at, little whelp?' adds he, turning round as he saw the boy smile.

'Mr. Holt said they were sermons,' Harry said, 'and bade me to burn them.'

'Sermons indeed—it's treason, I would lay a wager,' cries the lawyer.

'Egad! it's Greek to me,' says Captain Westbury. 'Can you read it, little boy?'

'Yes, sir, a little,' Harry said.

'Then read, and read in English, sir, on your peril,' said the lawyer. And Harry began to translate:—

'"Hath not one of your own writers said, 'The children of Adam are now labouring as much as he himself ever did, about the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, shaking the boughs thereof, and seeking the fruit, being for the most part unmindful of the tree of life' O blind generation! 'tis this tree of knowledge to which the serpent has led you"'—and here the boy was obliged to stop, the rest of the page being charred by the fire: and asked of the lawyer, 'Shall I go on, sir?'

The lawyer said. 'This boy is deeper than he seems: who knows that he is not laughing at us?'

'Let's have in Dick the Scholar,' cried Captain Westbury, laughing: and he called to a trooper out of the window—'Ho, Dick! come in here and construe'

A thick-set soldier, with a square good-humoured face, came in at the summons, saluting his officer.

'Tell us what is this, Dick,' says the lawyer.

'My name is Steele, sir,' says the soldier. 'I may be Dick for my friends, but I don't name gentlemen of your cloth amongst them.'

'Well then, Steele.'

'Mr. Steele, sir, if you please. When you address a gentleman of His Majesty's Horse Guards, be pleased not to be so familiar.'

'I didn't know, sir,' said the lawyer.

'How should you? I take it you are not accustomed to meet with gentlemen,' says the trooper.

'Hold thy prate, and read that bit of paper,' says Westbury.

''Tis Latin,' says Dick, glancing at it, and again saluting his officer, 'and from a sermon of Mr. Cudworth's': and he translated the words pretty much as Henry Esmond had rendered them.

'What a young scholar you are!' says the Captain to the boy.

'Depend on 't, he knows more than he tells,' says the lawyer. 'I think we will pack him off in the coach with old Jezebel.'

'For construing a bit of Latin?' said the Captain, very good-naturedly.

'I would as lief go there as anywhere,' Harry Esmond said simply, 'for there is nobody to care for me.'

There must have been something touching in the child's voice, or in this description of his solitude—for the Captain looked at him very good-naturedly, and the trooper called Steele put his hand kindly on the lad's head, and said some words in the Latin tongue.

'What does he say?' says the lawyer.

'Faith, ask Dick yourself,' cried Captain Westbury.

'I said I was not ignorant of misfortune myself, and had learned to succour the miserable, and that's not *your* trade, Mr. Sheepskin,' said the trooper.

'You had better leave Dick the Scholar alone, Mr. Corbet,' the Captain said. And Harry Esmond, always touched by a kind face and kind word, felt very grateful to this good-natured champion.

The horses were by this time harnessed to the coach; and the Countess and Victoire came down and were put into the vehicle.

The Viscountess, giving Harry 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.'

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 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.

After the departure of the Countess, Dick the Scholar took Harry Esmond under his special protection, and would examine him in his humanities, and talk to him both of French and Latin. 'I am no common soldier,' Dick would say, and indeed it was easy to see by his learning, breeding, and many accomplishments, that he was not. 'I am of one of the most ancient families in the empire; I have had my education at a famous school, and a famous university.'

And though the troopers of the King's Life Guards were all gentlemen, yet the rest of the gentlemen seemed ignorant and vulgar boors to Harry Esmond, with the exception of this good-natured Corporal Steele the Scholar, and Captain Westbury and Lieutenant Trant, who were always kind to the lad. They remained for some weeks or months encamped in Castlewood, and Harry learned from them, from time to time, how the lady at Hexton Castle was treated, and the particulars of her confinement there.

And it appeared she found some friends in her misfortune. Colonel Francis Esmond, my Lord's cousin and her Ladyship's, who had married the Dean of Winchester's daughter, hearing of his kinswoman's strait, came to visit her Ladyship in prison, offering to his uncle's daughter any friendly services which lay in his power. And he brought his lady and little daughter to see the prisoner, to the latter of whom, a child of great beauty and many winning ways the old Viscountess took not a little liking, although between her Ladyship and the child's mother there was little more love than formerly. So the little Beatrix was permitted often to go and visit the imprisoned Viscountess, who, in so far as the child and its father were concerned, got to abate in her anger towards that branch of the Castlewood family.

And now there befell an event by which this lady 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. 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, but the pursuit being hot for them, 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 title 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, 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 reading his book in the arbour.

'Here's news for Frank Esmond. Something has happened to Lord Castlewood, Captain Westbury said, in a very grave tone. '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, 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.

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.'

Henry 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? The counsel of the two friends was, that little Harry should stay where he was, and abide his fortune: so Esmond stayed on at Castlewood, 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: they read together, and they played bowls together, and Harry was sorry when the kind soldiers vacated Castlewood, looking forward with no small anxiety to his fate when the new lord and lady of the house came to live there. He had lived to be 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, and did not seem at rest until it had found a friend, who would take charge of it.

The instinct which led Henry Esmond to admire and love the gracious person 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. 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. 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.

My Lady had on her side her three idols: first and foremost her lord, Harry's patron, the good Viscount of Castlewood. All wishes of his were laws with her. If he had a headache, she was ill. 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. 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. 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.

A pretty sight it was to see this fair young lady of Castlewood, her little daughter at her knee, and her domestics gathered round her, reading the Morning Prayer of the English Church Esmond long remembered how she looked and spoke, kneeling reverently before the sacred book, the sun shining upon her golden hair until it made a halo round about her A dozen of the servants of the house kneeled in a line opposite their mistress. For a while Harry Esmond kept apart from these mysteries, but Doctor Tusher showing him that the prayers read were those of the Church of all ages, and the boy's own inclination prompting him to be always as near as he might to his mistress, and to think all things she did right, from listening to the prayers in the ante-chamber, he came presently to kneel down with the rest of the household in the parlour; and before a couple of years my Lady had made a thorough convert. Indeed the boy loved his catechiser so much that he would have subscribed to anything she bade him, and was never tired of listening

to her fond discourse and simple comments upon the book, which she read to him in a voice of which it was difficult to resist the sweet persuasion and tender appealing kindness. The happiest period of all his life was this ; and the young mother, with her daughter and son, and the orphan lad whom she protected, read and worked and played, and were children together. If the lady looked forward—as what fond woman does not ?—towards the future, she had no plans from which Harry Esmond was left out ; and a thousand and a thousand times, in his passionate and impetuous way, he vowed that no power should separate him from his mistress ; and only asked for some chance to happen by which he might show his fidelity to her. Now, at the close of his life, as he sits and recalls in tranquillity the happy and busy scenes of it, he can think, not ungratefully, that he has been faithful to that early vow. Such a life is so simple that years may be chronicled in a few lines. But few men's life-voyages are destined to be all prosperous ; and this calm of which we are speaking was soon to come to an end.

'Twas easy for Harry to see, however much his lady persisted in obedience and admiration for her husband, that my Lord tired of his quiet life, and grew weary, and then testy, at those gentle bonds with which his wife would have held him All the high-flown raptures and devotional ceremonies with which his wife treated him, first sent him to sleep, and then drove him out of doors ; for the truth must be told, that my Lord was a jolly gentleman, with very little of the august or divine in his nature, though his fond wife persisted in revering it—and, besides, he had to pay a penalty for this love, which persons of his disposition seldom like to defray : and in a word, if he had a loving wife, had a very jealous and exacting one. Then he wearied of this jealousy ; then he broke away from it ; then came, no doubt, complaints and recriminations ; then, perhaps, promises

of amendment not fulfilled; then upbraidings not the more pleasant because they were silent, and only sad looks and tearful eyes conveyed them. Then, perhaps, the pair reached that other stage which is not uncommon in married life, when the woman perceives that the god of the honeymoon is a god no more; only a mortal like the rest of us.

Very likely the Lady Castlewood had ceased to adore her husband herself long before she got off her knees, or would allow her household to discontinue worshipping him. To do him justice, my Lord never exacted this subservience: he laughed and joked and drank his bottle, and swore when he was angry, much too familiarly for any one pretending to sublimity; and did his best to destroy the ceremonial with which his wife chose to surround him. And it required no great conceit on young Esmond's part to see that his own brains were better than his patron's, who, indeed, never assumed any airs of superiority over the lad, or over any dependant of his, save when he was displeased, in which case he would express his mind in oaths very freely; and who, on the contrary, perhaps, spoiled 'Parson Harry,' as he called young Esmond, by constantly praising his parts and admiring his boyish stock of learning.

So long, then, as the world moved according to Lord Castlewood's wishes, he was good-humoured enough; of a temper naturally sprightly and easy, liking to joke, especially with his inferiors, and charmed to receive the tribute of their laughter.

He was fond of the parade of dress, and passed as many hours daily at his toilette as an elderly coquette. And as he liked her to be well dressed, his lady spared no pains in that matter to please him; indeed, she would dress her head or cut it off if he had bidden her.

It must be owned, even with regard to that angel, Esmond's 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. 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 Castlewood. The housekeeper was old ; my Lady's own waiting-woman squinted, and was marked with the small-pox; the house maids and scullion were ordinary country wenches, to whom Lady Castlewood was kind, as her nature made her to everybody almost ; but as soon as ever she had to do with a pretty woman, she was cold, retiring, and haughty. The country ladies found this fault in her ; and though the men all admired her, their wives and daughters complained of her coldness and airs, and said that Castlewood was pleasanter in Lady Jezebel's time than at present.

CHAPTER VIII

After Good Fortune comes Evil

One day in the year 1694 Doctor Tusher ran into Castlewood House, with a face of consternation, saying that smallpox had made its appearance at the blacksmith's house in the village, and that one of the maids there was down with the malady.

The blacksmith, besides his forge and irons, 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 called Nancy Sievewright, a bouncing, fresh-looking lass, whose face was as red as the hollyhocks in 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. Poor thing, Harry meant or imagined no harm ; and she, no doubt, as little ; but the truth is, they were always meeting ; it was, 'Lord, Mr. Henry!' and 'How do you do, Nancy?' many and many a time in the week. I blush as I think of poor Nancy now, in a red bodice and buxom purple cheeks and a canvas petticoat ; and that I devised schemes, and set traps, and made speeches in my heart, which I seldom had courage to say when in presence of that humble enchantress, who knew nothing beyond milking a cow, and opened her black eyes with wonder, when I made one of my fine speeches. Poor Nancy! from the midst of far-off years thine honest country face beams out ; and I remember thy kind voice as if I had heard it yesterday.

When Doctor Tusher brought the news that the smallpox was at the 'Three Castles,' 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 Sievewright 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 on 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 small-pox 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.

When, then, the news was brought that the little boy at the 'Three Castles' was ill with the small-pox, 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. And when Beatrix, her brother being now gone to bed, was for taking her place upon Esmond's knee, he started back and placed the great chair on which he was sitting between him and her— saying in the French language to Lady Castlewood,—'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 with the mien of a princess.

'Hey-day!' says my Lord, who was standing by the fireplace—'Hey-day! Rachel, what are you in a passion about?' '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 small-pox on his knee. And he comes home reeking from that place—yes, reeking from it—and takes my boy into his lap without shame. 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. He turned quite white from red, which he had been.

'I cannot help my birth, madam,' he said, 'nor my other misfortune. And as for your boy, if—if my coming nigh to him pollutes him now, it was not so always. Good-night, 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.

My Lady blushed faintly and 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 blushed again 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,' 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, two years before our marriage, 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, and, 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 the 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: and I should never have thought of treating you otherwise until—until these *circumstances* came to light And I shall beg my Lord to despatch you as quickly 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 curtsey, 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. 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 small-pox, which spared the hall no more than it did the cottage.

CHAPTER IX

I HAVE THE SMALL-POX, 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. When he visited her during convalescence, Harry could not but think that her Ladyship's beauty was very much injured by the small-pox. When the marks of the disease cleared away, they did not, it is true, leave furrows or scars on her face ; 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.

There would be no need to mention these trivialities, but that they actually influenced many lives, as trifles will in the world. 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. 'How your hair has come off ! And mine, too,' she added, with another sigh. 'Come, Frank, come, my child. You are well, praised be Heaven. *Your* locks are not thinned by this dreadful small-pox ; nor your poor face scarred—is it, my angel ?'

Frank began to shout and whimper at the idea of such a misfortune. From the very earliest time the young lord had been taught to admire his good looks by his mother ; and esteemed them as highly as any reigning beauty valued hers.

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 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 as Esmond—she and her brother were both dead of the small-pox, and buried under the Castlewood yew-trees.

When my Lady heard of the fate which had befallen poor Nancy, 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. 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 ?'

And this was, indeed, the very first walk which my Lady took, leaning on Esmond's arm, after her illness. But her visit brought no consolation to the old father ; and he showed no softness, or desire to speak. 'The Lord gave and took away,' he said ; and he knew what His servant's duty was. He wanted for nothing—less now than ever before, as there were fewer mouths to feed. He wished her Ladyship and Master Esmond good-morning—he had grown tall in his illness, and was but very little marked ; and with this, and a surly bow, he went in from the smithy to the house, leaving my Lady, somewhat silenced and shamefaced, at the door.

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 small-pox 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; 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.

'And now for my Lady,' he said, 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. My Lord sat silent at his dinner, drinking. It seemed as if, since has return, nothing she could do or say could please him.

When a master and mistress are at strife in a house, the subordinates in the family take the one side or the other. Harry Esmond stood in so great fear of my Lord, that he would run a league barefoot to do a message for him; but his attachment for Lady Esmond was such a passion of grateful

regard, that to spare her a grief, or to do her a service, he would have given his life daily: and it was by the very depth and intensity of this regard that he began to divine how unhappy his adored lady's life was, and that a secret care was weighing upon her.

When Lady Castlewood found that with her beauty her reign had ended, and the days of her love were over, she began as best she might to put out small ventures of happiness ; and hope for little gains and returns, as a merchant on 'Change, having lost his thousands, embarks a few guineas upon the next ship. She laid out her all upon her children ; giving all her thoughts to their welfare—learning, that she might teach them ; and improving her own many natural gifts and feminine accomplishments, that she might impart them to her young ones. She made herself a good scholar of French, Italian, and Latin ; hiding these gifts from her husband out of fear, perhaps, that they should offend him, for my Lord was no bookman, and would have been angry that his wife could construe out of a Latin book of which he could scarce understand two words. Young Esmond was usher, or house tutor, under her or over her, as it might happen. During my Lord's many absences, these school-days would go on uninterruptedly : the mother and daughter learning with surprising quickness ; the latter by fits and starts only, and as suited her wayward humour. As for the little lord, it must be owned that he took after his father in the matter of learning—liked marbles and play a great deal better than Corderius and Lily ; marshalled the village boys, and had a little court of them, already flogging them, and domineering over them with a fine imperious spirit, that made his father laugh when he beheld it, and his mother fondly warn him. Doctor Tusher said he was a young nobleman of gallant spirit ; and Harry Esmond, who was his tutor, and eight years his little lordship's senior, had hard work sometimes to keep his own temper, and hold his authority over his rebellious little chief and kinsman.

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. 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 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. She was a critic, not by reason but by feeling; the sweetest commentator of those books they read together; and the happiest hours of young Esmond's life, perhaps, were those passed in the company of this kind mistress and her children.

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 there comes a messenger from Winchester, 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 £2000 among her six nieces, the Deans'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 indifferent 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.

'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.'

'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?'

'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. '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.'

Harry Esmond's departure resolved upon, it seemed as if the Lady Castlewood 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. And, Harry,' said she, (and she spoke with a tear in her eye and a tremor in her voice), 'it may happen in the course of nature that I shall be called away from them: and their father—and—and they will need true friends and protectors. 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. What matters whether or no I make my way in life? 'Tis enough that I have your love and kindness surely; and to make you happy is duty enough for me.'

'Happy!' says she; 'but indeed I ought to be, with my children, and——'

'Not happy!' cried Esmond, 'If not happiness, it may be ease. Let me stay and work for you—let me stay and be your servant.'

'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.

My Lady's bedchamber window looked out over the country, and you could see from it the purple hills beyond Castlewood 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. The village people had Good-bye to say to him too. All knew that Master Harry was going to college, and most of them had a kind word and a look of farewell I do not stop to say what adventures he began to imagine, or what career to devise for himself before he had ridden three miles from home. He had not read Monsieur Galland's ingenious Arabian tales as yet ; but be sure that there are other folks who build castles in the air, and have fine hopes, and kick them down too, besides honest Alnaschar.

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. Their road lay through London, where my Lord Viscount would also have Harry stay a few days to show him the pleasures of the town before he entered upon his University studies, and whilst here Harry's patron conducted the young man to my Lady Dowager's house at Chelsey near London.

Her Ladyship the Viscountess Dowager occupied a handsome new house in Chelsey, with a garden behind it, and facing the river, always a bright and animated sight with its swarms of sailors, barges, and wherries.

She received the young man with even more favour than she showed to the elder, for she chose to carry on the conversation in French, in which my Lord Castlewood was no great proficient, and expressed her satisfaction at finding that Mr. Esmond could speak fluently in that language. ' 'Twas the only one fit for polite conversation,' she condescended to say, ' and suitable to persons of high breeding.'

My Lady Viscountess deigned to ask his Lordship news of his wife and children : she had heard that Lady Castlewood had had the small-pox ; she hoped she was not so *very* much disfigured as people said.

At this remark about his wife's malady, my Lord Viscount winced and turned red ; but the Dowager, in speaking of the disfigurement of the young lady, turned to her looking-glass and examined her old wrinkled countenance in it with such a grin of satisfaction, that it was all her guests could do to refrain from laughing in her ancient face.

She asked Harry what his profession was to be; and my Lord, saying that the lad was to take orders, and have the living of Castlewood when old Doctor Tusher vacated it, she did not seem to show any particular anger at the notion of Harry's becoming a Church of England clergyman, nay, was rather glad than otherwise that the youth should be so provided for. She bade Mr. Esmond not to forget to pay her a visit whenever he passed through London, and carried her graciousness so far as to send a purse with twenty guineas for him, to the tavern at which my Lord put up.

After seeing the town, and going to the plays, my Lord Castlewood and Esmond rode together to Cambridge, spending two pleasant days upon the journey. Those rapid new coaches were not established, as yet, that performed the whole journey between London and the University in a single day; however, the road was pleasant and short enough to Harry Esmond, and he always gratefully remembered that happy holiday which his kind patron gave him.

Mr Esmond was entered a pensioner of Trinity College in Cambridge, to which famous college my Lord had also in his youth belonged; 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. When the lads used to assemble 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 Castlewood, whither he longed to return. 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, who was of Emmanuel College, 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 As for honest Doctor Bridge, the tutor found, after a few trials of wit with the pupil, that the young man was an ugly subject for wit, and that the laugh was often turned against him. This did not make tutor and pupil any better friends; but had, so far, an advantage for Esmond, that Mr. Bridge was induced to leave him alone; and so long as he kept his chapels, and did the college exercises required of him, Bridge was content not to see Harry's glum face in his class, and to leave him to read and sulk for himself in his own chamber.

A poem or two in Latin and English, which were pronounced to have some merit, and a Latin oration, 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.

Harry had very liberal allowances, for his dear mistress of Castlewood not only regularly supplied him, but the Dowager of Chelsey made her donation annual, and received Esmond at her house near London every Christmas; but, in spite of these benefactions, Esmond was constantly poor; whilst 'twas a wonder with how small a stipend from his father Tom Tusher contrived to make a good figure. 'Tis true that Harry spent, gave, and lent his money very freely, which Thomas never did. Not but that he was a merry fellow, too, in his way; he loved a joke, if by good fortune he understood it, and took his share generously of a bottle if another paid for it, and especially if there was a young lord in company to drink it. In these cases there was not a harder drinker in the University than Mr. Tusher could be; and it was edifying to behold him, fresh shaved and with smug face, singing out 'Amen!' at early chapel in the morning. In his reading, poor Harry permitted himself

to go a-gadding after all the Nine Muses, and so very likely had but little favour from any one of them ; whereas Tom Tusher, who had no more turn for poetry than a ploughboy, nevertheless, by a dogged perseverance got himself a prize, and some credit in the University, and a fellowship at his college, as a reward for his scholarship. In this time of Mr. Esmond's life, he got the little reading which he ever could boast of, and passed a good part of his days greedily devouring all the books on which he could lay hand. In this desultory way the works of most of the English, French, and Italian poets came under his eyes, and he had a smattering of the Spanish tongue likewise, besides the ancient languages, of which, at least of Latin, he was a tolerable master.

Lonely as he was generally, Esmond yet had one or two very warm friendships for his companions of those days. One of these 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 recommendations 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 Condè, 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 *escrime*.

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 person 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. The young lord was shooting up to be like his gallant father in look, though with his mother's kind eyes : the lady of Castlewood herself seemed grown, too, since Harry saw her—in her look more stately, in her face still as ever most tender and friendly, a greater air of command and decision than had appeared in that guileless sweet countenance. The tone of her voice was so much deeper and sadder when she welcomed him, that it quite startled Esmond, who looked up at her surprised as she spoke, when she withdrew her eyes from him ; nor did she ever look at him afterwards when his own eyes were gazing upon her. A something hinting at grief and secret, and filling his mind with alarm undefinable, seemed to speak with that low thrilling voice of hers, and look out of those clear sad eyes. Her greeting to Esmond was so cold that it almost pained the lad, and he faltered in answering the questions which she began to put to him. Was he happy at Cambridge ? Did he study too hard ? She hoped not. He had grown very tall, and looked very well.

'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.

The children, who are always house tell-tales, soon made him acquainted with the little history of the house and family. Papa had been to London twice. Papa often went away now. Many gentlemen came to stop with papa, and he had got a new game from London, a French game, called a billiard—that the French king played it very well: and the Dowager Lady Castlewood had sent Miss Beatrix a present; and Doctor Tusher was a cross old plague, and they did not like to learn from him at all; and papa did not care about them

learning, and laughed when they were at their books, but mamma liked them to learn, and taught them: and 'I don't think papa is fond of mamma,' said Miss Beatrix, with her great eyes. She had come quite close up to Harry Esmond by the time this prattle took place, and was on his knee, and had examined all the points of his dress, and all the good or bad features of his homely face.

'You shouldn't say that papa is not fond of mamma,' said the boy, at this confession. 'Mamma never said so; and mamma forbade you to say it, Miss Beatrix.'

'Twas this, no doubt, that accounted for the sadness in Lady Castlewood's eyes, and the plaintive vibrations of her voice And thus it was that, waking up from dreams, books, and visions of college honours, Harry Esmond found himself, on his return home, in the midst of this actual tragedy of life. The persons whom he loved best in the world, and to whom he owed most, were living unhappily together. The gentlest and kindest of women was suffering ill-usage and shedding tears in secret: the man who made her wretched by neglect, if not by violence, was Harry's benefactor and patron.

Much of the quarrels and hatred which arise between married people come in my mind from the husband's rage and revolt at discovering that his slave and bed-fellow, who is to minister to all his wishes, and is church-sworn to honour and obey him—is his superior; and that *he*, and not she, ought to be the subordinate of the twain: and in these controversies, I think, lay the cause of my Lord's anger against his lady. When he left her, she began to think for herself, and her thoughts were not in his favour. After the illumination, when the love-lamp is put out, and by the common daylight we look at the picture, what a daub it looks! what a clumsy effigy! How many men and wives come to this knowledge, think you? And if it be painful to a woman to find herself mated for life to a boor, and ordered

to love and honour a dullard ; it is worse still for the man himself perhaps, whenever in his dim comprehension the idea dawns that his slave and drudge yonder is, in truth, his superior ; that the woman who does his bidding, and submits to his humour, should be his lord ; that she can think a thousand things beyond the power of his muddled brains ; and that in yonder head, on the pillow opposite to him, lie a thousand feelings, mysteries of thought, latent scorns and rebellions, whereof he only dimly perceives the existence as they look out furtively from her eyes : treasures of love doomed to perish without a hand to gather them ; sweet fancies and images of beauty that would grow and unfold themselves into flower ; bright wit that would shine like diamonds could it be brought into the sun ; and the tyrant in possession crushes the outbreak of all these, drives them back like slaves into the dungeon and darkness, and chafes without that his prisoner is rebellious, and his sworn subject undutiful and refractory. So the lamp was out in Castlewood Hall, and the lord and lady there saw each other as they were. With her illness and altered beauty my Lord's fire for his wife disappeared ; with his selfishness and faithlessness her foolish fiction of love and reverence was rent away. Love !—who is to love what is base and unlovely ? Respect !—who is to respect what is gross and sensual ? Not all the marriage oaths sworn before all the parsons in the world, can bind to that monstrous allegiance. This couple was living apart then ; the woman happy to be allowed to love and tend her children, and thankful to have saved such treasures as these out of the wreck in which the better part of her heart went down.

So, into the sad secret of his patron's household, Harry Esmond became initiated, he scarce knew how. It had passed under his eyes two years before, when he could not understand it ; but reading, and thought, and experience of men, had oldened him ; and one of the deepest sorrows of a life which had never, in truth, been very happy, came

upon him now, when he was compelled to understand and pity a grief which he stood quite powerless to relieve.

It has been said my Lord would never take the oath of allegiance, nor his seat as a peer of the kingdom of Ireland, where, indeed, he had but a nominal estate; and refused an English peerage which King William's government offered him as a bribe to secure his loyalty.

He might have accepted this, and would, doubtless, but for the earnest remonstrances of his wife, who, being a simple-hearted woman, with but one rule of faith and right, never thought of swerving from her fidelity to the exiled family, or of recognising any other sovereign but King James, and no temptation could induce her to acknowledge the Prince of Orange as rightful monarch, nor to let her lord so acknowledge him. So my Lord Castlewood remained a nonjuror all his life nearly, though his self-denial caused him many a pang, and left him sulky and out of humour.

All through King William's life, 'tis known there were constant intrigues for the restoration of the exiled family; but if my Lord Castlewood took any share of these, as is probable, 'twas only for a short time, and when Harry Esmond was too young to be introduced into such important secrets.

But in the year 1695, when that conspiracy of Sir John Fenwick was set on foot, Father Holt appeared at Castlewood, and brought a young friend with him, a gentleman whom 'twas easy to see that both my Lord and the Father treated with uncommon deference. Harry Esmond saw this gentleman, and knew and recognised him in after life, as shall be shown in its place; and he has little doubt now that my Lord Viscount was implicated somewhat in the transactions which always kept Father Holt employed and travelling hither and thither, under a dozen of different names and disguises.

It was the next year that the Fenwick conspiracy blew up, which is a matter of public history now, and which ended in the execution at Tyburn of Sir John and many more.

'Tis known that when Sir John was apprehended, discovery was made of a great number of names of gentlemen engaged in the conspiracy : when, with a noble wisdom and clemency, the Prince burnt the list of conspirators furnished to him, and said he would know no more. Now it was after this that Lord Castlewood swore his great oath, that he would never, so help him Heaven, be engaged in any transaction against that brave and merciful man ; and so he told Holt when the indefatigable priest visited him, and would have had him engage in a further conspiracy. After this my Lord ever spoke of King William as he was—as one of the wisest, the bravest, and the greatest of men.

The last conference which Mr. Holt had with his Lordship took place when Harry was come home for his first vacation from college, and their talk, whatever it might be, left my Lord Viscount very much disturbed in mind—so much so, that his wife, and his young kinsman, Henry Esmond, could not but observe his disquiet. Young Esmond feared for his money affairs, into the condition of which he had been initiated ; and that the expenses, always greater than his revenue, were causing Lord Castlewood disquiet.

One of the causes why my Lord Viscount had taken young Esmond into his special favour was a trivial one, that has not before been mentioned. A very few months after my Lord's coming to Castlewood, in the winter-time, 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.

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, 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.

My Lady seldom drank wine; but on certain days of the year, such as birthdays 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 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.

CHAPTER XII

My Lord Mohun comes among us for no Good

There had ridden one day to Castlewood two gentlemen: 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; 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; he had served a couple of campaigns on the Danube, and witnessed the rescue of Vienna from the Turk. 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 the two noblemen came, my Lord would not hear of their departure before dinner. 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.

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 Mohun made himself very welcome at Castlewood to all persons, having a joke or a new game at romps for the children, all the talk of the town for my Lord, and music and gallantry and plenty of the *beau langage* for my Lady, and for Harry Esmond, who was never tired of hearing his stories of his campaigns and his life at Vienna, Venice, Paris, and the famous cities of Europe which he had visited both in peace and war. And he sang at my Lady's harpsichord, and played cards or backgammon, or his new game of billiards with my Lord (of whom he invariably got the better) ; always having a consummate good-humour, and bearing himself with a certain manly grace, that might exhibit somewhat of the camp and Alsatia perhaps, but that had its charm, and stamped him a gentleman.

'Twas a point of honour with the fine gentlemen of those days to lose or win magnifi ently at their horse-matches, or games of cards and dice —and you could never tell, from the demeanour of these two lords afterwards, which had been successful and which the loser at their games. And when my Lady hinted to my Lord that he played more than she liked, he dismissed her with a 'pish,' and swore that nothing was more equal than play betwixt gentlemen, if they did but keep it up long enough. And these kept it up long enough, you may be sure A man of fashion of that time often passed a quarter of his day at cards, and another quarter at drink : I have known many a pretty fellow, who was a wit, too, ready of repartee, and possessed of a thousand graces, who would be puzzled if he had to write more than his name.

There is scarce any thoughtful man or woman, I suppose, but can look back upon his course of past life, and remember

some point, trifling as it may have seemed at the time of occurrence, which has nevertheless turned and altered his whole career. And so it was but a light word flung in the air, a mere freak of perverse child's temper, that brought down a whole heap of crushing woes upon that family whereof Henry Esmond formed a part.

It happened, then, that Harry Esmond came home to Castlewood for his last vacation, with good hopes of a fellowship at his College, and a contented resolve to advance his fortune that way. 'Twas in the first year of the present century, Mr. Esmond being then twenty-two years old. He found his quondam pupil shot up into this beauty of which we have spoken, and promising yet more; her brother, my Lord's son, a handsome, high-spirited, brave lad, generous and frank, and kind to everybody, save perhaps his sister, with whom Frank was at war (and not from his but her fault)—adoring his mother, whose joy he was: and taking her side in the unhappy matrimonial differences which were now permanent, while of course Mistress Beatrix ranged with her father. When heads of families fall out, it must naturally be that their dependants wear the one or the other party's colour; and even in the parliaments in the servants' hall or the stables, Harry, who had an early observant turn, could see which were my Lord's adherents and which my Lady's, and conjecture pretty shrewdly how their unlucky quarrel was debated. Our lacqueys sit in judgment on us My Lord's intrigues may be ever so stealthily conducted, but his valet knows them; and my Lady's woman carries her mistress' private history to the servants' scandal-market, and exchanges it against the secrets of other abigails.

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.

My Lady looked sad and grave so that Harry asked the cause of her disquietude. She said 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 hands 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 Castlewood, 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 wating 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—'

'Go out of the room, you little viper!' cried out my Lord Castlewood, out of all patience; 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.'

'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 Heaven 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, 'Hang 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.

'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.

Mohun was as much master at Castlewood as the owner of the Hall itself; and his equipages filled the stables, where, indeed, there was room in plenty for many more horses than Harry Esmond's impoverished patron could afford to keep. He had arrived on horse-back; but when his gout broke out my Lord Mohun sent to London for a light chaise he had, drawn by a pair of small horses. When this carriage came, his Lordship was eager to drive the Lady Castlewood abroad in it, and did so many times, and at a rapid pace, greatly to his companion's enjoyment, who loved the swift motion and the healthy breezes over the downs which lie hard upon Castlewood, and stretch thence towards the sea. As this amusement was very pleasant to her, and her lord, far from showing any mistrust of her intimacy with Lord Mohun, encouraged her to be his companion—as if willing by his present extreme confidence to make up for any past mistrust

which his jealousy had shown—the Lady Castlewood enjoyed herself freely in this harmless diversion . and it seemed that she grew the more free with Lord Mohun, and pleased with his company, because of some sacrifice which his gallantry was pleased to make in her favour.

Under an affected carelessness of demeanour, and though there was no outward demonstration of doubt upon his patron's part since the quarrel between the two lords, Harry yet saw that Lord Castlewood was watching his guest very narrowly. On the point of honour Esmond knew how touchy his patron was ; and watched him almost as a physician watches a patient, and it seemed to him that this one was slow to take the disease, though he could not throw off the poison when once it had mingled with his blood. We read in Shakspeare that when jealousy is once declared, nor poppy nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the East, will ever soothe it or medicine it away.

In fine, the symptoms seemed to be so alarming to this young physician, that Harry thought it would be his duty to warn my Lord Mohun. So one day, when in rather a pettish humour his Lordship had sent to Lady Castlewood, who had promised to drive with him, and now refused to come, Harry said, ' My Lord, if you will kindly give me a place by your side I will thank you ; I have much to say to you, and would like to speak to you alone.'

' You honour me by giving me your confidence, Mr. Henry Esmond,' says the other, with a very grand bow. My Lord was always a fine gentleman, and young as he was there was that in Esmond's manner which showed that he was a gentleman too, and that none might take a liberty with him—so the pair went out, and mounted the little carriage, which was in waiting for them in the court.

' My Lord,' says Harry Esmond, after they were out into the country, and pointing to my Lord Mohun's foot, which was swathed in flannel, and put up rather

ostentatiously on a cushion—'my Lord, I studied medicine at Cambridge.'

'Indeed, Parson Harry,' says he; 'and are you going to take out a diploma: and cure your fellow-students of the——'

'Of the gout,' says Harry, interrupting him, and looking him hard in the face; 'I know a good deal about the gout.'

'I hope you may never have it. 'Tis an infernal disease,' says my Lord, 'and its twinges are diabolical. Ah!' and he made a dreadful wry face, as if he just felt a twinge.

'Your Lordship would be much better if you took off all that flannel—it only serves to inflame the toe,' Harry continued, looking his man full in the face.

'Oh! it only serves to inflame the toe, does it?' says the other, with an innocent air.

'If you took off that flannel, and flung that absurd slipper away, and wore a boot,' continues Harry.

'You recommend me boots, Mr. Esmond?' asks my Lord

'Yes, boots and spurs. I saw your Lordship three days ago run down the gallery fast enough,' Harry goes on. 'I am sure that taking gruel at night is not so pleasant as claret to your Lordship; and besides it keeps your Lordship's head cool for play, whilst my patron's is hot and flustered with drink.'

''Sdeath, sir, you dare not say that I don't play fair?' cries my Lord, whipping his horses, which went away at a gallop.

'You are cool when my Lord is drunk,' Harry continued; 'your Lordship gets the better of my patron. I have watched you as I looked up from my books.'

'You young Argus!' says Lord Mohun, who liked Harry Esmond—and for whose company and wit, and a certain daring manner, Harry had a great liking too—'You young Argus! you may look with all your hundred eyes and see we play fair. I've played away an estate of a night, but no man can say I ever took an advantage beyond the advantage of the game.'

'You are playing awful stakes, my Lord, in my patron's house,' Harry said, 'and more games than are on the cards.'

'What do you mean, sir?' cries my Lord, turning round, with a flush on his face.

'I mean,' answers Harry, in a sarcastic tone, 'that your gout is well—if ever you had it.'

'Sir!' cried my Lord, getting hot.

'And to tell the truth, I believe your Lordship has no more gout than I have. At any rate, change of air will do you good, my Lord Mohun. And I mean fairly that you had better go from Castlewood.'

'And were you appointed to give me this message?' cries the Lord Mohun. 'Did Frank Esmond commission you?'

'No one did. 'Twas the honour of my family that commissioned me.'

'And you are prepared to answer this?' cries the other, furiously lashing his horses.

'Quite, my Lord; your Lordship will upset the carriage if you whip so hotly.'

'By George, you have a brave spirit!' my Lord cried out, bursting into a laugh. 'I suppose 'tis that infernal *botte de Jesuite* that makes you so bold,' he added.

''Tis the peace of the family I love best in the world,' Harry Esmond said warmly—''tis the honour of a noble

benefactor—the happiness of my dear mistress and her children. I owe them everything in life, my Lord; and would lay it down for any one of them. What brings you here to disturb this quiet household? What keeps you lingering month after month in the country? What makes you feign illness and invent pretexts for delay? Is it to win my poor patron's money? Be generous, my Lord, and spare his weakness for the sake of his wife and children. I never had a mother, but I love this lady as one. I worship her as a devotee worships a saint. To hear her name spoken lightly seems blasphemy to me. I implore you, I beseech you, to leave her. Danger will come out of it.'

'Danger, psha!' says my Lord, giving a cut to the horses, which at this minute 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 escaped with 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. It was young Frank who spied out Lord Mohun's scarlet coat as he lay on the ground, and the party made up to that unfortunate gentleman and Esmond, who was now standing over him. His large periwig and feathered hat had fallen off, and he

was bleeding profusely from a wound on the forehead, and looking 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 Tusher 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, Harry! she drops down, and I thought she was dead too. And you never saw such a way as papa was in: he swore one of his great oaths; and he turned quite pale; and then he began to laugh somehow, and he told the Doctor to take his horse, and me to follow him; and we left him. And 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

'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 Ride 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 seemed to avoid being alone with his guest. Nor did he ride any distance with Lord Mohun, as his custom was with most of his friends; but contented himself with following Lord Mohun downstairs to his horses, and by bowing and wishing him a good-day in the courtyard. 'I shall see you in London before very long, Mohun,' my Lord said, with a smile: 'when we will settle our accounts together.'

'Do not let them trouble you, Frank,' said the other good-naturedly, and holding out his hand, looked rather surprised at the grim and stately manner in which his host received his parting salutation: and so, followed by his people, he rode away.

Harry Esmond was witness of the departure. It was very different to my Lord's coming, for which great preparation had been made (the old house putting on its best appearance to welcome its guest), 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; 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, 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 their shadow; and my Lord leaning over the fountain. 'Tis strange how that scene remained 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.

It was Lady Castlewood—she had been laughing all the morning, and especially gay and lively before her husband and his guest—who, as soon as the two gentlemen went together from her room, ran to Harry, the expression of her countenance quite changed now, and with a face and eyes full of care, and said, 'Follow them, Harry, I am sure something has gone wrong.' And so it was that Esmond was made an eavesdropper at this lady's orders: and retired to his own chamber, to give himself time in truth to try and compose a story which would soothe his mistress, for he could not but have his own apprehension that some serious quarrel was pending between the two gentlemen.

And now for several days the little company at Castlewood sat at table as of evenings; this care, though unnamed and invisible, being nevertheless present alway, in the minds of at least three persons there. My Lord was exceeding gentle and kind. Whenever he quitted the room, his wife's eyes followed him. He behaved to her with a kind of mournful courtesy and kindness remarkable in one of his blunt ways and ordinary rough manner. He called her by her Christian name often and fondly, was very soft and gentle with the

children, and being lax about church generally, he went thither and performed all the offices with great devotion.

'He paces his room all night: what is it? Henry, find out what it is,' Lady Castlewood said constantly to her young dependant. 'He has sent three letters to London,' she said another day.

'Indeed, madam, they were to a lawyer,' Harry answered, who knew of these letters, and had seen a part of the correspondence, which related to a new loan my Lord was raising: and when the young man remonstrated with his patron, my Lord said he 'was only raising money to pay off an old debt on the property which must be discharged.'

Regarding the money, Lady Castlewood was not in the least anxious. Few fond women feel money-distressed; indeed you can hardly give a woman a greater pleasure than to bid her pawn her diamonds for the man she loves.

Harry Esmond's vacation was just over, and, as has been said, he was preparing to return to the University for his last term before taking his degree and entering into the Church. He had made up his mind for this office, not indeed with that reverence which becomes a man about to enter upon a duty so holy, but with a worldly spirit of acquiescence in the prudence of adopting that profession for his calling. But his reasoning was that he owed all to the family of Castlewood, and loved better to be near them than anywhere else in the world; that he might be useful to his benefactors, who had the utmost confidence in him and affection for him in return; that he might aid in bringing up the young heir of the house and acting as his governor; that he might continue to be his dear patron's and mistress' friend and adviser, who both were pleased to say that they should ever look upon him as such; and so, by making himself useful to those he loved best, he proposed to console himself for giving up of any schemes of ambition which he might have had in his

own bosom. Indeed, his mistress had told him that she would not have him leave her ; and whatever she commanded was will to him.

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 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 would go to London and consult his physician. It was agreed that his Lordship and Harry Esmond should make the journey as far as London together ; and of a Monday morning, the 11th of October, in the year 1700, they set out 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 (after adieux from the family as tender as on the night previous), lay that night on the road, and entered London at nightfall

An hour after my Lord's arrival (which showed that his visit had been arranged beforehand), 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; and 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 to my Lord Mohun, who 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 Heaven! 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.'

'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 to me. Here it is in their comedy jargon. "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 beside. 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: and Frank has better teaching than his father. 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 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 I should have beaten 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 a better Lord Castlewood than a lazy sot like me,' he added, drawing his hand across his eyes, and surveying his kinsman with very kind and 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. Then we shall go to the theatre, 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 Castlewood'—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 fire, ; in a fury. 'Are you, you little serpent, warmed by my Lord 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.

'Harry is number three,' says my Lord. And then he 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 Play-house, as agreed. The play was one of Mr. Wycherley's—*Love in a Wood*.

Harry Esmond has thought of that play ever since with a kind of terror, and of Mrs. Bracegirdle, the actress who performed the girl's part in the comedy. She was disguised as a page, and came and stood before the gentlemen as they sat on the stage, and looked over her shoulder with a pair of arch black eyes, and laughed at my Lord, and asked what ailed the gentleman from the country, and had he had bad news from Bullock fair?

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 my 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 afterward.

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. 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 call 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 Jesuite*, 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 !'

'Damned awkward is a damned awkward expression, my Lord,' says the other. '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 my 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 words?' asks the Earl of Warwick.

'My Lord Castlewood will be——first,' says Colonel Westbury.

'Then we have nothing for it Take notice, gentlemen, there have been outrageous words—reparation asked 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 deeply regret, there is no time so good as now,' says my Lord 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 *congée*, '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.

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. It was midnight, and the town was abed 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 has 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 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 his 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 ground.

'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 Westbury bade the chairmen come into the field; and so my Lord was carried to a surgeon in Long Acre.

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 was of his dear patron; on which the surgeon carried him to the room where the Lord Castlewood lay; who 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.

This gentleman was godson to my Lord, who had been pupil to his father; had paid a visit to Castlewood more

than once ; and it was by his advice, I think, that Harry Esmond was sent to Cambridge.

Our messenger found the good priest already at his books at five o'clock in the morning, and he followed the man eagerly to the house where my poor Lord Viscount lay—Esmond watching him, and taking his dying words from his mouth.

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. You may be sure that his own prayers and grief accompanied that dying benefactor. 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 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. 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 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 broken, which showed my Lord's pale face and wild appealing eyes, that wore that awful fatal look of coming dissolution. My Lord Viscount turned his sick eyes towards Esmond.

'My Lord Viscount,' says Mr. Atterbury, 'Mr. Esmond wants no witness, 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 the 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.

CHAPTER I

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

Those may imagine, who have seen death untimely strike down persons revered and beloved, and know how unavailing consolation is, what was Harry Esmond's anguish after being an actor in that ghastly midnight scene of blood and homicide. He could not, he felt, have faced his dear mistress, and told her that story. He was thankful that kind Atterbury consented to break the sad news to her : but besides his grief which he took into prison with him, he had that in his heart which secretly cheered and consoled him.

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.

'When I was denied by my own blood,' thought he, 'these dearest friends received and cherished me. When I

was a nameless orphan myself, and needed a protector, I found one in yonder kind soul, who has gone to his account repenting of the innocent wrong he has done.'

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), with those thoughts and resolutions that have been just spoken of, to depress, and yet to console him, 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 Castlewood went back from him, putting back her hood, and leaning against the great stanchioned door which the gaoler 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—yes, 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 lost him—the husband of my youth, I say. 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 know 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—my wicked jealous 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, rang in Esmond's ear; and 'tis said that he repeated many of them in the fever into which he now fell from his wound, and perhaps from the emotion which such passionate, undeserved upbraidings caused him. It seemed as if his very sacrifices and love for this lady and her family were to turn to evil and reproach: as if his presence amongst them was indeed a cause of grief, and the continuance of his life but woe and bitterness to theirs. As the Lady Castlewood spoke bitterly, rapidly, without a tear, he never offered a word of appeal or remonstrance: but sat at the foot of his prison-bed, stricken only with the more pain at thinking it was that soft and beloved hand which should stab him so cruelly, and powerless against her fatal sorrow. Her words as she spoke struck the chords of all his memory, and the whole of his boyhood and youth passed within him; whilst his lady, so fond and gentle but yesterday —this good angel whom he had loved and worshipped—stood before him, pursuing him with keen words and aspect malign.

'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

ronger than all of us, and willed what has come to pass. It ıd been better for me to have died when I had the illness.'

'Yes, Henry,' said she—and as she spoke she looked at m with a glance that was at once so fond and so sad, that ıe young man, tossing up his arms, wildly fell back, hiding s head in the coverlet of the bed. As he turned, he struck gainst the wall with his wounded hand, displacing the gature; and he felt the blood rushing again from the wound. e remembered feeling a secret pleasure at the accident—and inking, 'Suppose I were to end now, who would grieve for e?'

This hemorrhage, or the grief and despair in which the ckless young man was at the time of the accident, must ıve brought on a deliquium presently; for he had scarce any collection afterwards, save of some one, his mistress probably, izing his hand—and then of the buzzing noise in his ears as ə awoke, with two or three persons of the prison around his ıd, whereon he lay in a pool of blood from his arm.

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

'Tis needless to relate here, as the reports of the lawyers ready have chronicled them, the particulars or issue of that ial which ensued upon my Lord Castlewood's melancholy ɔmicide. My Lord the Earl of Warwick and Holland was ınd not guilty by his peers, before whom he was tried; and ɔrd Mohun, being found guilty of the manslaughter (which, deed, was forced upon him, and of which he repented most ncerely), 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.

The lords being tried then before their peers at Westminster, 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 Doctor 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 : how they never should part ; how he should educate her boy ; and so on, with a hundred pretty prospects told by fireside evenings, in fond prattle, as the children played about the hall. All these plans were overthrown now. 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, 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! The grief for his patron's loss: the pains of his own present position, and doubts as to the future: all these were forgotten under the sense of the consummate outrage which he had to endure, and overpowered by the superior pang of that torture.

He wrote 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. 'And if we meet no more, or only as strangers in this world,' Mr. Esmond concluded, 'a sentence against the cruelty and injustice of which I disdain to appeal; hereafter she will know who was faithful to her, and whether she had any cause to suspect the love and devotion of her kinsman and servant.'

CHAPTER II

I COME TO THE END OF MY CAPTIVITY, AND TAKE THE QUEEN'S PAY.

Among the company which came to visit the two officers was an old acquaintance of Harry Esmond; that gentleman of the Guards, namely, who had been so kind to Harry when Captain Westbury's troop had been quartered at Castlewood 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.

Dick came up and kissed Esmond on both cheeks.

'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 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.

From Mr. Steele, then, who brought the public rumour, as well as his own private intelligence, Esmond learned the movements of his unfortunate mistress. Steele's heart was of very inflammable composition ; and the gentleman-usher spoke in terms of boundless admiration both of the widow (that most beautiful woman, as he said) and of her daughter, who, in the Captain's eyes, was a still greater paragon. If the pale widow was an object the most lovely and pathetic which his eyes had ever beheld, or for which his heart had melted, even her ripened perfections and beauty were as nothing compared to the promise of that extreme loveliness which the good Captain saw in her daughter. Steele composed sonnets whilst he was on duty in his Prince's antechamber, to the maternal and filial charms. He would speak for hours about them to Harry Esmond ; and, indeed he could have chosen few subejcts more likely to interest the unhappy young man, whose heart was now as always devoted to these ladies ; and who was thankful to all who loved them, or praised them, or wished them well.

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 from the lady Dowager at Chelsey guineas, and a note saying that a counsel had been appointed 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.

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 down to the Thames, where a pair of oars was called, and they went up the river to Chelsey. 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, 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 Chelsey, 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 a proper interval of waiting, his elderly kinswoman deigned to appear to the young man. 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. '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 thought, 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

At least, ever since he had learned that secret from his poor patron on his dying bed, he had felt an independency which he had never known before. So he called his old aunt Marchioness, but with an air as if he was the Marquis of Esmond who so addressed her

Did she read in the young gentleman's eyes 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. But 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. My mother 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 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.'

Mr. Esmond was quite astounded with the old Dowager's altered behaviour, contrasting it with her former haughtiness to him But she 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. 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; and perhaps had cast about how he should distinguish himself, and make himself a name. A discontent with his former bookish life and quietude,—a bitter feeling of revolt at that slavery in

which he had chosen to confine himself for the sake of those whose hardness towards him made his heart bleed—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.

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 whom 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. Young as Esmond was, he was wise enough (and generous enough too, let it be said) to scorn that indecency of gratulation which broke out amongst the followers of King James in London, upon the death of this illustrious prince, this invincible warrior, this wise and moderate statesman.

Loyalty to the exiled king's family was traditional, as has been said, in that house to which Mr. Esmond belonged, and almost the whole of the clergy of the country and more than a half of the nation were on this side. But when the Princess Anne succeeded, the wearied nation was glad enough to cry a truce from wars, controversies, and conspiracies, and to accept in the person of a Princess of the blood-royal a compromise between the parties into which the country was divided. The Tories could serve under her with easy consciences; though a Toryherself, she represented the triumph of the Whig opinion.

The King dead then, the Princess Anne 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. This appointment roused the Dowager's rage, or, as she thought it, her fidelity to her rightful sovereign. 'The Princess is but a puppet in the hands of that fury of a woman, who comes into my drawing-room and insults me to my face? What can come to a country that is given over to such a woman?' says the Dowager. 'As for that double-faced traitor, my Lord Marlborough, he has betrayed every man and every woman with whom he has had to deal, except his horrid wife, who makes him tremble. 'Tis all over with the country when it has got into the clutches of such wretches as these.'

Esmond's old kinswoman saluted the new powers in this way; but 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, he heard that a pension had been got for his late beloved mistress, and that the young Mistress Beatrix was also to be taken into Court. So much good, at least, had come of the poor widow's visit to London, not revenge upon her husband's enemies, but reconcilement to old friends, who pitied, and seemed inclined to serve her. As for the comrades in prison and the late misfortune, Colonel Westbury was with the Captain-General gone to Holland; Captain Macartney was now at Portsmouth, with his regiment of Fusileers and the force under command of his Grace the Duke of Ormond, bound for Spain it was said; my Lord Warwick was returned home; and Lord Mohun, so far from being punished for the homicide which had brought so much grief and change into the Esmond family, was gone in company of my Lord Macclesfield's splendid embassy to the Elector of Hanover, carrying the Garter to his Highness, and a complimentary letter from the Queen.

CHAPTER III

RECAPITULATIONS

From such fitful lights as could be cast upon his dark history by the broken narrative of his poor patron, Mr. Esmond had been made to understand so far, that his mother was long since dead. 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: conspiracies which they called levying war, but which were, in truth, no better than instigating murder.

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.

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 other's 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 up his estate and his title to their proper owner, and to 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 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 which 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 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 the title.

The appointment to his ensigncy, and the preparations necessary for the campaign, presently gave the young gentleman other matte s 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

Since the day he was born, poor Harry had never looked such a fine gentleman : his liberal stepmother filled his purse with guineas too, some of which Captain Steele and a few choice spirits helped Harry to spend in an entertainment which Dick ordered at the 'Garter,' over against the gate of the Palace, in Pall Mall.

The old Viscountess, indeed, if she had done Esmond any wrong formerly, seemed inclined to repair it by the present kindness of her behaviour : she embraced him copiously at parting, wept plentifully, bade him write by every packet, and gave him an inestimable relic, which she besought him to wear round his neck—a medal, blessed by I know not what pope, and worn by his late sacred Majesty King James So Esmond arrived at his regiment with a better equipage than most young officers could afford. He was older than most of his seniors, and had a further advantage which belonged but to very few of the army gentlemen in his day—many of whom could do little more than write their names—that he had read much, both at home and at the University, was master of two or three languages, and had that further education which neither books nor years will give, but which some men get from the silent teaching of Adversity. She is a great schoolmistress, as many a poor fellow knows, that hath held his hand out to her ferule, and whimpered over his lesson before her awful chair.

CHAPTER IV

I GO ON THE VIGO BAY EXPEDITION, TASTE SALT-WATER, AND SMELL POWDER.

On the 1st day of July, 1702, a great fleet, of a hundred and fifty sail, set sail from Spithead, under the command of Admiral Shovell, having on board 12,000 troops, with his grace the Duke of Ormond as the Captain-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. We were off Finisterre on the 31st of July: 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 had 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.

But the campaign, if not very glorious, was very pleasant. New sights of nature by sea and land—a life of action, beginning now for the first time—occupied and excited the young man The routine of shipboard—the military duty—the new acquaintances, both of his comrades in arms and of the officers of the fleet—served to cheer and occupy his mind, and waken it out of that selfish depression into which his late unhappy fortunes had plunged him.

He felt as if the ocean separated him from his past care, and welcomed the new era of life which was dawning for him. Wounds heal rapidly in a heart of two-and-twenty ; hopes revive daily ; and courage rallies in spite of a man. Perhaps, as Esmond thought of his late despondency and melancholy, and how irremediable it had seemed to him, as he lay in his prison a few months back, he was almost mortified in his secret mind at finding himself so cheerful.

To see with one's own eyes men and countries, is better than reading all the books of travel in the world : and it was with extreme delight and exultation that the young man found himself actually on his grand tour, and in the view of people and cities which he had read about as a boy He beheld war for the first time—the pride, pomp, and circumstance of it, at least, if not much of the danger. He saw actually, and with his own eyes, those Spanish cavaliers and ladies whom he had beheld in imagination in that immortal story of Cervantes, which had been the delight of his youthful leisure. A cloud, as of grief, that had wrapped the last years of his life in gloom, seemed to clear away from Esmond during this fortunate voyage and campaign. His energies seemed to awaken and to expand under a cheerful sense of freedom. Was his heart secretly glad to have escaped from that fond but ignoble bondage at home ? At any rate, young Esmond of the army was quite a different being to the sad little dependant of the kind Castlewood household, and the melancholy student of Trinity Walks ; discontented with his fate, and with the vocation into which that drove him, and thinking, with a secret indignation, that the cassock and bands, and the very sacred office with which he had once proposed to invest himself, were, in fact, but marks of a servitude which was to continue all his life long. For, disguise it as he might to himself, he had all along felt that to be Castlewood's chaplain was to be Castlewood's inferior still, and that

his life was but to be a long, hopeless servitude. So, indeed, he was far from grudging his old friend Tom Tusher's good fortune (as Tom, no doubt, thought it). Had it been a mitre and Lambeth which his friends offered him, and not a small living and a country parsonage, he would have felt as much a slave in one case as in the other, and was quite happy and thankful to be free.

When our fleet came within view of Cadiz, our commander sent a boat with a white flag and a couple of officers to the Governor, with a letter from his Grace, in which he hoped that his Excellency would now declare himself against the French King, and for the Austrian, in the war between King Philip and King Charles. But his Excellency, Don Scipio, prepared a reply, in which he announced that, having served his former king with honour and fidelity, he hoped to exhibit the same loyalty and devotion towards his present sovereign, King Philip V; and by the time this letter was ready, the two officers had been taken to see the town, and the Alameda, and the theatre, where bull-fights are fought, and the convents, where the admirable works of Don Bartholomew Murillo inspired one of them with a great wonder and delight—such as he had never felt before—concerning this divine art of painting: and these sights over, and a handsome refection and chocolate being served to the English gentlemen, they were accompanied back to their ship strip with every courtesy, and were the only two officers of the English army that saw at that time that famous city.

After the pillage and plunder of St. Mary's, and an assault upon a fort or two, the troops all took shipping, and finished their expedition, at any rate, more brilliantly than it had begun. Hearing that the French fleet with a great treasure was in Vigo Bay, our Admirals, Rooke and Hopson, pursued the enemy thither; the troops landed and carried the forts that protected the bay: twenty ships were burned or taken, and a vast deal more plunder than was ever accounted for.

Though Esmond, for his part, got no share of this booty, one great prize which he had out of the campaign was, that excitement of action and change of scene, which shook off a great deal of his previous melancholy. He learnt at any rate to hear his fate cheerfully. He 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 Esmond 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, had leave to go to London, to see if he could push his fortunes any way further, and found himself once more in his dowager aunt's comfortable quarters at Chelsey, 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. My Lady made feasts for him, introduced him to more company, and pushed his fortunes with such enthusiasm and success, that she got a promise of a company for him through the Lady Marlborough's interest, who was graciously pleased to accept of a diamond worth a couple of hundred guineas, which Mr Esmond was enabled to present to her Ladyship through his aunt's bounty, and who promised that she would take charge of Esmond's fortune He had the honour to make his appearance at the Queen's Drawing-room occasionally, and to frequent my Lord Marlborough's levées. The great man received the young one with very especial favour, so Esmond's comrades said, and deigned to say that he had received the best reports of Mr Esmond, both for courage and ability, whereon you may be sure the young gentleman made a profound bow, and expressed himself eager to serve under the most distinguished captain in the world.

Whilst his business was going on thus prosperously,

Esmond had his share of pleasure too, and made his appearance along with other young gentlemen at the coffee-houses, the theatres, and the Mall. He longed to hear of his dear mistress and her family: many a time, in the midst of the gaieties and pleasures of the town, his heart fondly reverted to them; and often, as the young fellows of his society were making merry at the tavern, and calling toasts (as the fashion of that day was) over their wine, Esmond thought of persons —of two fair women, whom he had been used to adore almost, and emptied his glass with a sigh

By this time the elder Viscountess had grown tired again of the younger, and whenever she spoke of my Lord's widow, 'twas in terms by no means complimentary towards that poor lady Rachel, Viscountess Castlewood, had no more face than a dumpling, and Mistress Beatrix was grown quite coarse, and was losing all her beauty. Little Lord Blandford —(she never would call him Lord Blandford: his father was Lord Churchill—the King, whom he betrayed, had made him Lord Churchill, and he was Lord Churchill still)—might be making eyes at her; but his mother, that vixen of a Sarah Jennings, would never hear of such a folly Lady Marlborough had got her to be a maid of honour at Court to the Princess, but she would repent of it The widow Francis (she was but Mrs Francis Esmond) 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 his 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, 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 chatted on for an hour.

How was it that the old aunt's news, or it might be scandal, about Tom Tusher, caused such a strange and sudden excitement in Tom's old playfellow? Hadn't he sworn a thousand times in his own mind that the Lady of Castlewood, who had treated him with such kindness once, and then had left him so cruelly, was, and was to remain henceforth, indifferent to him? However it be, 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 midnight. My Lord's little house of Walcote 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 rode to the end 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 V.

The 29th December.

There was scarce a score of persons in the Cathedral beside 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. Monsieur Rigaud'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 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 passed They never had been separated. His mistress had never been out of his mind all that time. No, not once. No, not in the prison ; nor in the camp ; nor on shore before the enemy ; nor at sea under

the stars of solemn midnight ; nor as he watched the glorious rising of the dawn : not even at the table, where he sat carousing with friends, or at the theatre yonder, where he tried to fancy that other eyes were brighter than hers. Brighter eyes there might be, and faces more beautiful, but none so dear—no voice so sweet as that of his beloved mistress, who had been sister, mother, goddess to him during his youth—goddess now no more, for he knew of her weaknesses ; and by thought, by suffering, and that experience it brings, was older now than she ; but more fondly cherished as woman perhaps than ever she had been adored as divinity. What is it ? Where lies it ? the secret which makes one little hand the dearest of all ? Whoever can unriddle that mystery ? Here she was, her son by his side, his dear boy. Here she was, weeping and happy. She took his hand in both hers ; he felt her tears. It was a rapture of reconciliation.

'Here comes Squaretoes,' says Frank. 'Here's Tusher.'

Tusher, indeed, now came forward habited in his cassock and great black periwig. How had Esmond ever been for a moment jealous of this fellow ? '

'Give us thy hand, Tom Tusher,' he said. The Chaplain made him a very low and stately bow. 'I am charmed to see Captain Esmond,' says he. 'My Lord and I have read the *Reddas incolumem precor*, and applied it, I am sure, to you You come back with Gaditanian laurels : when I heard you were bound thither, I wished, I am sure, I was another Septimius My Lord Viscount, your Lordship remembers *Septimi, Gades aditure mecum ?* '

'There's an angle of earth that I love better than Gades, Tusher,' says Mr Esmond. 'Tis that one where your reverence hath a parsonage, and where our youth was brought up'

'A house that has so many sacred recollections to me,' says Mr. Tusher (and Harry remembered how Tom's father

used to flog him there)—'a house near to that of my respected patron, my most honoured patroness, must ever be a dear abode to me. But, Madam, the verger waits to close the gates on your Ladyship.'

'And Harry's coming home to supper. Huzzay! huzzay!' cries my Lord. 'Mother, I shall run home and bid Beatrix put her ribbons on. Beatrix is a maid of honour, Harry. Such a fine set-up minx!'

'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 you had no vocation that way; and that '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. 'Twas not to be thought of, or if it once was, it was only by my selfishness, 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 amongst persons very able to serve him too; and told his mistress of the flattering aspect of fortune. They walked as though they had never been 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,' said 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. He—I said I

would not write to you or go to you—and it was better even that, having parted, we should part. 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 brain was in 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 out wildly, 'bringing your sheaves with you—your sheaves with you!'

As he had sometimes felt, gazing up from the deck at midnight into the boundless starlit depths overhead, in a rapture of devout wonder at that endless brightness and beauty—in some such a way now, the depth of this pure devotion (which was, for the first time, revealed to him) quite smote upon him, and filled his heart with thanksgiving. Gracious God, who was he, weak and friendless creature, that such a love should be poured out upon him? Not in vain—not in vain has he lived—hard and thankless should he be to think so—that has such a treasure given him. What is

ambition compared to that, but selfish vanity? To be rich, to be famous? What do these profit a year hence, when other names sound louder than yours, when you lie hidden away under the ground, along with idle titles engraven on your coffin? But only true love lives after you—follows your memory with secret blessing—or precedes you, and intercedes for you.

'If—if 'tis so, dear lady,' Mr. Esmond said, 'why should I ever leave you? If God hath given me this great boon—and near or far from me as I know now, the heart of my dearest mistress follows me, let me have that blessing near me, nor ever part with it till death separate us. Come away—leave this Europe, this place which has so many sad recollections for you. Begin a new life in a new world. My good Lord often talked of visiting that land in Virginia which King Charles gave us—gave his ancestor. Frank will give us that. No man will inquire in the woods what my title is.'

'And my children—and my duty—and my good father, Henry?' she broke out. 'He has none but me now! for soon my sister will leave him, and the old man will be alone. When the children leave me, I will stay with him. I cannot follow them into the great world, where their way lies—it scares me. They will come and visit me; and you will, sometimes, Henry—yes, sometimes, as now, in the Holy Advent season, when I have seen and blessed you once more.'

'I would leave all to follow you,' said Mr. Esmond; 'and can you not be as generous for me, dear lady?'

'Hush, boy!' she said, and it was with a mother's sweet plaintive tone and look that she spoke. 'The world is beginning for you. For me I have been so weak and sinful that I must leave it, and pray out an expiation, dear Henry. Had we houses of religion as there were once, I often think I would retire to one and pass my life

in penance. But I would love you still—yes, there is no sin in such a love as mine now; and my dear lord in heaven may see my heart; and knows the tears that have washed my sin away—and now—now my duty is here, by my children, whilst they need me, and by my poor old father, and——'

'And not by me?' Henry said.

'Hush!' she said again, and raised her hand up to his lip. 'I have been your nurse. You could not see me, Harry, when you were in the small-pox, and I came and sat by you. Ah! I prayed that I might die, but it would have been in sin, Henry Oh, it is horrid to look back to that time! It is over now and past, and it has been forgiven me. When you need me again, I will come ever so far. When your heart is wounded, then come to me, my dear. Be silent! let me say all. You never loved me, dear Henry—no, you do not now, and I thank heaven for it. I used to watch you, and knew by a thousand signs that it was so. Do you remember how glad you were to go away to College? 'Twas I sent you. I told my papa that, and Mr. Atterbury too, when I spoke to him in London. And they both gave me absolution—both—and they are godly men, having authority to bind and to loose. And they forgave me, as my dear lord forgave me before he went to heaven.'

'I think the angels are not all in heaven,' Mr. Esmond said. And as a brother folds a sister to his heart; and as a mother cleaves to her son's breast—so for a few moments Esmond's beloved mistress came to him and blessed him.

CHAPTER VI

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 house-keeper 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. 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, 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. 'Oh 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 curtsey, sweeping down to the ground almost, with the most gracious bend, looking up the while with the brightest eyes and sweetest smile.

'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' clear eyes He had forgotten her, rapt in admiration of the daughter.

'Right foot forward, toe turned out, so; now drop the curtsey, 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' 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, 'Oh, 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.'

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, 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. He woke as if angels had been watching at his bed all night. I dare say one that was as pure and loving as an angel had blessed his sleep with her prayers.

Next morning the Chaplain read prayers to the little household at Walcote, as the custom was.

All the while of the prayers Beatrix knelt a little way before Harry Esmond. All the roses of spring could not vie with the brightness of her complexion; Esmond thought he had never seen anything like the sunny lustre of her eyes. My Lady Viscountess looked fatigued, as if with watching, and her face was pale.

Miss Beatrix remarked those signs of indisposition in her mother and deplored them. 'I am an old woman,' says my Lady, with a kind smile; 'I cannot hope to look as young as you do, my dear.'

'She'll never look as good as you do if she lives till she's a hundred,' says my Lord, taking his mother by the waist, and kissing her hand.

'Do I look very wicked, Cousin?' says Beatrix, turning full round on Esmond, with her pretty face close under his chin.

'I'm like your looking-glass,' says he, 'and that can't flatter you.'

'He means that you are always looking at him, my dear,' says her mother archly. Beatrix ran away from Esmond at this, and flew to her mamma, whom she kissed, stopping my Lady's mouth with her pretty hand.

'And Harry is very good to look at,' says my Lady, with her fond eyes regarding the young man.

'If 'tis good to see a happy face,' says he, 'you see that.'

'Why, Harry, how fine we look in our scarlet and silver, and our black periwig!' cries my Lord. 'Mother, I am tired of my own hair When shall I have a peruke? Where did you get your steenkirk, Harry?'

'It's some of my Lady Dowager's lace,' says Harry; 'she gave me this and a number of other fine things.'

'My Lady Dowager isn't such a bad woman,' my Lord continued.

'She's not so—so red as she's painted,' says Miss Beatrix.

Her brother broke into a laugh. 'I'll tell her you said so; by the Lord, Trix, I will!' he cries out.

'She'll know that you hadn't the wit to say it, my Lord,' says Miss Beatrix.

'We won't quarrel the first day Harry's here, will we, mother?' said the young lord. 'We'll see if we can get on to the new year without a fight. Have some of this Christmas pie. And here comes the tankard; no, it's Pincot with the tea.'

'Will the Captain choose a dish?' asked Mistress Beatrix.

'I say, Harry,' my Lord goes on, 'I'll show thee my horses after breakfast; and on Monday there's a cock-match at Winchester between the gentlemen of Sussex and the gentlemen of Hampshire, at ten pound the battle, and fifty pound the odd battle to show one-and-twenty cocks.'

'And what will you do, Beatrix, to amuse our kinsman?' asks my Lady.

'I'll listen to him,' says Beatrix. 'I'm sure he has a hundred things to tell us. And I'm jealous already of the Spanish ladies Your man says you must be in love for you sat on deck all night, and scribbled verses all day in your table-book.' Harry thought if he had wanted a subject for

verses yesterday, to-day he had found one : and not all the Lindamiras and Ardelias of the poets were half so beautiful as this young creature ; but he did not say so, though some one did for him.

This was his dear lady, who, after the young people were gone, 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 kinswoman 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.

The second day after Esmond's coming to Walcote, Tom Tusher had leave to take a holiday, and went off in his very

best gown and bands to court the young woman whom his Reverence desired to marry, and who was not a viscount's widow, as it turned out, but a brewer's relict at Southampton, with a couple of thousand pounds to her fortune : for honest Tom's heart was under such excellent control, that Venus herself without a portion would never have caused it to flutter. So he rode away on his heavy-paced gelding to pursue his jog-trot loves, leaving Esmond to the society of his dear mistress and her daughter, and with his young lord for a companion, who was charmed, not only to see an old friend, but to have the tutor and his Latin books put out of the way.

The boy talked of things and people, and not a little about himself, in his frank artless way. 'Twas easy to see that he and his sister had the better of their fond mother, for the first place in whose affections, though they fought constantly, and though the kind lady persisted that she loved both equally, 'twas not difficult to understand that Frank was his mother's darling and favourite. He ruled the whole household (always excepting rebellious Beatrix) not less now than when he was a child marshalling the village boys. Indeed it was impossible not to love him, so frank and winning were his manners, his beauty, his gaiety, the ring of his laughter, and the delightful tone of his voice Wherever he went, he charmed and domineered I think his old grandfather the Dean, and the grim old housekeeper, Mrs. Pincot, were as much his slaves as his mother was : and as for Esmond, he found himself presently submitting to a certain fascination the boy had, and slaving it like the rest of the family. His presence brought sunshine into a room, his laugh, his prattle, his noble beauty and brightness of look cheered and charmed indescribably. At the least tale of sorrow, his hands were in his purse, and he was eager with sympathy and bounty. He was no more witty than another man, but what he said, he said and looked as no man else could say or look it. I have seen the women at the comedy at Bruxelles crowd round him in the lobby :

and as he sat on the stage more people looked at him than at the actors, and watched him ; and I remember at Ramillies, when he was hit and fell, a great big red-haired Scotch sergeant flung his halbert down, burst out a-crying like a woman, seizing him up as if he had been an infant, and carrying him out of the fire.

Frank, then, gave his kinsman all the family news, and concluded, " As for Beatrix, why bless you ! whenever she sees a man, she makes eyes at him ; and young Sir Wilmot Crawley of Queen's Crawley, and Anthony Henley of Alresford, were at swords drawn about her, at the Winchester Assembly, a month ago."

CHAPTER VII

Family Talk.

That night Mr. Harry's sleep was by no means so pleasant or sweet as it had been on the first two evenings after his arrival at Walcote. 'So the bright eyes have been already shining on another,' thought he, 'and the pretty lips have begun the work which they were made for. Here's a girl not sixteen, and two country squires are ready to cut each other's throats that they may have the honour of a dance with her. What a fool am I to be dallying about this passion, and singeing my wings in this foolish flame! There is but eight years' difference between us, to be sure; but in life I am thirty years older. How could I ever hope to please such a sweet creature as that, with my rough ways and glum face? Say that I have merit ever so much, and won myself a name, could she ever listen to me? Oh! my master, my master!' (Here he fell to thinking with a passionate grief of the vow which he had made to his poor dying lord.) 'Oh! my mistress, dearest and kindest, will you be contented with the sacrifice which the poor orphan makes for you, whom you love, and who so loves you?'

And then came a fiercer pang of temptation. 'A word from me,' Harry thought, 'a syllable of explanation, and all this might be changed; but no, I swore it over the dying bed of my benefactor. For the sake of him and his; for the sacred love and kindness of old days; I gave my promise to him, and may kind Heaven enable me to keep my vow!'

The next day, although Esmond gave no sign of what was going on in his mind, 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. '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 Chelsey,' Esmond said, as gaily as he could. 'My aunt has taken me into high favour; and my new General is to dine at Chelsey 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—'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 ? 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 ; and whose vanity no words or prayers of mine can cure. 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.'

In after life, did Esmond find the words true which his fond mistress spoke from her sad heart ? Warning he had : but I doubt others had warning before his time, and since : and he benefited by it as most men do.

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, and had flown into a rage soon after she heard he was going away : 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 despatched 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; and near her or far from her, and from that day until now, and from now till death is past, and beyond it, he prays that sacred flame may ever burn.

CHAPTER VIII

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 the Captain General went to England after Bonn, and our army fell back into Holland, where. in April 1704, his Grace again found the troops, embarking from Harwich and landing at Maesland Sluys : thence his Grace came immediately to the Hague, where he received the foreign ministers, general officers, and other people of quality ; and the army heard, with no small elation, that it was the Commander in-Chief's intention to carry the war out of the Low Countries and to march on the Mozelle. Before leaving our camp at Maestricht we heard that the French, under the Marshal Villeroy, were also bound towards the Mozelle.

Towards the end of May, the army reached Coblentz.

And now, having seen a great military march through a friendly country 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? You, gentlemen of England, who live at home at ease, and compliment yourselves in the songs of triumph with which our chieftains are bepraised—you, pretty maidens, that come tumbling down the stairs when the fife and drum call you, and huzzah for the British Grenadiers—do you take account that these items go to make up the amount of the triumph you admire, and form part of the duties of the heroes you fondle? 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.

After the great victory of Blenheim the enthusiasm of the army for the Duke 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 feet 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 mid-day 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 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. 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, and Lockwood was holding his head up and blubbering over his master, whom he found and had thought dead. 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 of these gentry with the club-end of his musket, who had eased Esmond of his purse and fine silver-mounted pistols, 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; for 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 Madame Beatrix, and that he would make her a duchess if she would but say yes. When he could move he made his way homewards 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 Dowager of Chelsey, who vowed, in her jargon

of French and English, that he had the *air noble*, and that his pallor embellished him ; 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 ! Although Mr. Esmond had told Jack Lockwood to get horses and they would ride for Winchester that night, when he heard this news he countermanded the horses at once ; his business lay no longer in Hants ; all his hope and desire lay within a couple of miles of him in Kensington Park wall. Poor Harry had never looked in the glass before so eagerly to see whether he had the *bel air*, and his paleness really did become him. Was the fire of the French lines half so murderous as the killing glances from her Ladyship's eyes ? Oh ! darts and raptures, how beautiful were they !

And as, before the blazing sun of morning, the moon fades away in the sky almost invisible, Esmond thought, with a blush perhaps, of another sweet pale face, sad and faint, and fading out of sight, with its sweet fond gaze of affection ; such a last look it seemed to cast as Eurydice might have given, yearning after her lover, when fate and Pluto summoned her, and she passed away into the shades.

CHAPTER IX

An old Story about a Fool and a Woman

Any taste for pleasure which Esmond had he could now gratify to the utmost extent, and in the best company which the town afforded. When the army went into winter quarters abroad, those of the officers who had interest or money easily got leave of absence, and found it much pleasanter to spend their time in Pall Mall and Hyde Park, than to pass the winter away behind the fortifications of the dreary old Flanders towns, where the English troops were gathered. Yachts and packets passed daily between the Dutch and Flemish ports and Harwich; the roads thence to London and the great inns were crowded with army gentlemen; the taverns and ordinaries of the town swarmed with red-coats; and our great Duke's levees at St James's were as thronged as they had been at Ghent and Brussels, where we treated him, and he us, with the grandeur and ceremony of a sovereign.

During those eighteen months which had passed since Esmond saw his dear mistress, her good father, the old Dean, quitted this life 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 £3000 behind him, which he bequeathed to her.

With this little fortune Lady Castlewood was enabled, when her daughter's turn at Court came, to go 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.

As for the young lord, his University career had ended rather abruptly. He had gone to Trinity with Mr. Tusher as his governor, but the honest Tusher had found my young gentleman quite ungovernable. My Lord broke out, as home-bred lads will, into a hundred youthful extravagances, so that Doctor Bentley, the new Master of Trinity, thought fit to write to my Lord's mother, and beg her to remove the young nobleman from a College where he declined to learn, and where he only did harm by his riotous example. Indeed, I believe he nearly set fire to Nevil's Court, that beautiful new quadrangle of our College, which Sir Christopher Wren had lately built. He gave a dinner-party on the Prince of Wales's birthday, which was within a fortnight of his own, and the twenty young gentlemen then present sallied out after their wine, having toasted King James's health with open windows, and sung cavalier songs, and shouted 'God save the King!' in the great court, so that the Master came out of his lodge at midnight, and dissipated the riotous assembly.

This was my Lord's crowning freak, and the Rev. Thomas Tusher, finding his prayers and sermons of no earthly avail to his Lordship, gave up his duties of governor; went and married his brewer's widow at Southampton, and took her and her money to his parsonage house at Castlewood.

My Lady could not be angry with her son for drinking King James's health, being herself a loyal Tory, as all the Castlewood family were, and acquiesced with a sigh, knowing, perhaps, that her refusal would be of no avail to the young lord's desire for a military life. She would have liked him to be in Mr. Esmond's regiment, hoping that Harry might act as a guardian and adviser to his wayward young kinsman; but my young lord would hear of nothing but the Guards, and a commission was got for him in the Duke of Ormond's regiment; so Esmond found my Lord ensign and lieutenant when he returned from Germany after the Blenheim campaign.

The effect produced by both Lady Castlewood's children when they appeared in public was extraordinary, and the whole town speedily rang with their fame: such a beautiful couple, it was declared, never had been seen: the young maid of honour was toasted at every table and tavern, and as for my young lord, his good looks were even more admired than his sister's.

The old Dowager at Chelsey, though she could never be got to acknowledge that Mistress Beatrix was any beauty at all (in which opinion, as it may be imagined, a vast number of the ladies agreed with her), yet, on the very first sight of young Castlewood, she owned she fell in love with him; and Henry Esmond, on his return to Chelsey, found himself quite superseded in her favour by her younger kinsman. The feat of drinking the King's health at Cambridge would have won her heart, she said, if nothing else did. 'How had the dear young fellow got such beauty?' she asked. 'Not from his father—certainly not from his mother. How had he come by such noble manners, and the perfect *bel air*? That countrified Walcote widow could never have taught him.' Esmond had his own opinion about the countrified Walcote widow, who had a quiet grace and serene kindness, that had always seemed to him the perfection of good breeding, though he did not try to argue this point with his aunt. But he could agree in most of the praises which the enraptured old Dowager bestowed on my Lord Viscount, than whom he never beheld a more fascinating and charming gentleman. Castlewood had not wit so much as enjoyment. 'The lad looks good things,' Mr. Steele used to say; 'and his laugh lights up a conversation as much as ten repartees from Mr. Congreve. I would give anything to carry my wine like this incomparable young man. When he is sober he is delightful; and when tipsy, perfectly irresistible.' And referring to his favourite, Shakespeare, Dick compared Lord Castlewood to Prince Hal, and was pleased to dub Esmond as Ancient Pistol.

The Mistress of the Robes, the greatest lady in England after the Queen, though she never could be got to say a civil word to Beatrix, whom she had promoted to her place as 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 Madame 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. 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 appeared in public places, was in the box near her, or in the pit looking at her; 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.

This passion did not escape—how should it?—the clear eyes of Esmond's mistress: he told her all; what will a man

not do when frantic with love? To what baseness will he not demean himself? What pangs will he not make others suffer, so that he may ease his selfish heart of a part of its own pain? 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. What was a nameless, penniless lieutenant to do, when some of the greatest in the land were in the field? Esmond never so much as thought of asking permission to hope so far above his reach as he knew this prize was—and passed his foolish, useless life in mere abject sighs and impotent longing. What nights of rage, what days of torment, of passionate unfulfilled desire, of sickening jealousy can he recall! Beatrix thought no more of him than of the lacquey that followed her chair. His complaints did not touch her in the least; his raptures rather fatigued her; she did not hate him; she rather despised him, and just suffered him.

One day, after talking to Beatrix's mother, his dear, fond constant mistress—for hours—for all day long—pouring out his flame and his passion, his despair and rage, returning again and again to the theme, pacing the room, tearing up the flowers on the table and performing a hundred mad freaks of passionate folly; seeing his mistress at last quite pale and tired out with sheer weariness of compassion, Esmond seized up his hat and took his leave. As he got into Kensington Square, a sense of remorse came over him for the wearisome pain he had been inflicting upon the dearest and kindest friend ever man had. He went back to the house, where the servant still stood at the open door, ran up the stairs, and found his mistress where he had left her in the embrasure

of the window. She laughed, wiping away at the same time the tears which were in her kind eyes; he flung himself down on his knees, and buried his head in her lap She had in her hand the stalk of one of the flowers, a pink, that he had torn to pieces 'Oh, pardon me, pardon me, my dearest and kindest,' he said; 'I am in hell, and you are the angel that brings me a drop of water.'

'I am your mother, you are my son, and I love you always,' she said, holding her hands over him; and he went away comforted and humbled in mind, as he thought of that amazing and constant love and tenderness with which this sweet lady ever blessed and pursued him.

CHAPTER X

The Famous Mr. Joseph Addison.

The gentlemen-ushers had a table at Kensington and the Guard a very splendid dinner daily at St. James's, at either of which ordinaries Esmond was free to dine Dick Steele liked the Guard table better than his own at the gentlemen-ushers', where there was less wine and more ceremony ; and Esmond had many a jolly afternoon in company of his friend.

Quitting the Guard table one Sunday afternoon, he and Steele were making their way down Germain Street, when Dick all of a sudden left his companion's arm, and ran after a gentleman who was poring over a folio volume at the book-shop near to St. James's Church. He was a fair, tall man, in a snuff-coloured suit, with a plain sword, very sober, and almost shabby in appearance. The Captain rushed up, then, to the student of the book-stall, took him in his arms, hugged him, and would have kissed him—for Dick was always hugging and bussing his friends—but the other stepped back with a flush on his pale face, seeming to decline this public manifestation of Steele's regard.

'My dearest Joe, where hast thou hidden thyself this age ?' cries the Captain, still holding both his friend's hands ; 'I have been languishing for thee this fortnight.'

'A fortnight is not an age, Dick,' says the other, very good-humouredly. (He had light-blue eyes, extraordinary bright, and a face perfectly regular and handsome like a tinted statue.) 'And I have been hiding myself—where do you think ?'

'What ! not across the water, my dear Joe ?' says Steele, with a look of great alarm : 'thou knowest I have always——'

'No,' says his friend interrupting him with a smile: 'we are not come to such straits as that, Dick. I have been hiding, sir, at a place where people never think of finding you—at my own lodgings, whither I am going to smoke a pipe now and drink a glass of sack: will your honour come?'

'Harry Esmond, come hither,' cries out Dick. 'Thou hast heard me talk over and over again of my dearest Joe, my guardian angel?'

'Indeed, it is not from you only that I have learnt to admire Mr Addison. We loved good poetry at Cambridge as well as at Oxford: and I have some of yours by heart though I have put on a red coat,' says Mr Esmond, who, indeed, had read and loved the charming Latin poems of Mr. Addison, as every scholar of that time knew and admired them.

'We were going to the "George" to take a bottle before the play,' says Steele: 'wilt thou be one, Joe?'

Mr. Addison said his own lodgings were hard by, where he was still rich enough to give a good bottle of wine to his friends: and invited the two gentlemen to his apartment in the Haymarket, whither we accordingly went.

'I shall get credit with my landlady,' says he, with a smile, 'when she sees two such fine gentlemen as you come up my stair.' And he politely made his visitors welcome to his apartment, which was indeed but a shabby one, though no grandee of the land could receive his guests with a more perfect and courtly grace than this gentleman. A frugal dinner, consisting of a slice of meat and a penny loaf, was awaiting the owner of the lodgings 'My wine is better than my meat,' says Mr Addison: 'my Lord Halifax sent me the Burgundy.' And he set a bottle and glasses before his friends, and ate his simple dinner in a very few minutes, after which the three fell to and began to drink. 'You see,' says Mr.

Addison, pointing to his writing-table, whereon was a map and several gazettes and pamphlets, 'that I, too, am busy about your affairs, Captain. I am engaged as a poetical gazetteer, to say truth, and am writing a poem on the campaign.'

So Esmond, at the request of his host, told him what he knew about the famous battle, and with the aid of some bits of tobacco-pipe showed the advance of the left wing, where he had been engaged.

A sheet or two of the verses lay already on the table beside our bottles and glasses, and Dick took up the pages of manuscript, written out with scarce a blot or correction, in the author's slim, neat handwriting, and began to read therefrom with great emphasis and volubility. At pauses of the verse, the enthusiastic reader stopped and fired off a great salvo of applause.

Esmond smiled at the enthusiasm of Addison's friend. 'You are like the German Burghers,' says he, 'and the Princes on the Mozelle: when our army came to a halt, they always sent a deputation to compliment the chief, and fired a salute with all their artillery from their walls.'

No matter what the verses were, and, to say truth, Mr. Esmond found some of them more than indifferent, Dick's enthusiasm for his chief never faltered, and in every line from Addison's pen Steele found a masterstroke. By the time Dick had come to that part of the poem wherein the bard describes as blandly as though he were recording a dance at the opera, or a harmless bout of bucolic cudgelling at a village fair, that bloody and ruthless part of our campaign, with the remembrance whereof every soldier who bore a part in it must sicken with shame—when we were ordered to ravage and lay waste the Elector's country; and with fire and murder, slaughter and crime, a great part of his dominions was overrun;—when Dick came to the lines—

In vengeance roused the soldier fills his hand
With sword and fire, and ravages the land,
In crackling flames a thousand harvests burn,
A thousand villages to ashes turn.
To the thick woods the woolly flocks retreat,
And mixed with bellowing herds confusedly bleat.
Their trembling lords the common shade partake,
And cries of infants sound in every brake.
The listening soldier fixed in sorrow stands,
Loth to obey his leader's just commands.
The leader grieves, by generous pity swayed,
To see his just commands so well obeyed ; —

'I admire the licouse of your poets,' says Esmond to Mr. Addison. 'I admire your art : the murder of the campaign is done to military music, like a battle at the opera, and the virgins shriek in harmony as our victorious grenadiers march into their villages Do you know what a scene it was ? what a triumph you are celebrating ? what scenes of shame and horror were enacted, over which the commander's genius presided, as calm as though he didn't belong to our sphere ? You talk of the "listening soldier fixed in sorrow," the "leader's grief swayed by generous pity" : to my belief the leader cared no more for bleating flocks than he did for infants' cries, and many of our ruffians butchered one or the other with equal alacrity. I was ashamed of my trade when I saw those horrors perpetrated which came under every man's eyes You hew out of your polished verses a stately image of smiling victory ! I tell you 'tis an uncouth. distorted, savage idol ; hideous, bloody, and barbarous. The rites performed before it are shocking to think of. You great poets should show it as it is—ugly and horrible, not beautiful and serene. Oh, sir, had you made the campaign, believe me, you never would have sung it so.'

During this little outbreak, Mr. Addison was listening, smoking out of his long pipe, and smiling very placidly. 'What would you have ?' says he. 'In our polished days, and according to the rules of art, 'tis impossible that the Muse should depict tortures or begrime her hands with the

horrors of war. These are indicated rather than described; as in the Greek tragedies, that, I dare say, you have read. When hath there been, since our Henrys' and Edwards' days, such a great feat of arms as that from which you yourself have brought away marks of distinction? If 'tis in my power to sing that song worthily, I will do so, and be thankful to my Muse. If I fail as a poet, as a Briton at least I will show my loyalty, and fling up my cap and huzzah for the conqueror.'

'There were as brave men on that field,' says Mr. Esmond. 'There were men at Blenheim as good as the leader, whom neither knights nor senators applauded, nor voices plebeian or patrician favoured, and who lie there forgotten, under the clods. What poet is there to sing them?'

'To sing the gallant souls of heroes sent to Hades!' says Mr. Addison, with a smile. 'Would you celebrate them all? One of the greatest of a great man's qualities is success; 'tis the result of all the others; 'tis a latent power in him which compels the favour of the gods, and subjugates fortune. Of all his gifts I admire that one in the great Marlborough. To be brave? every man is brave. But in being victorious, as he is, I fancy there is something divine. In presence of the occasion, the great soul of the leader shines out, and the god is confessed. Death itself respects him, and passes by him to lay others low. War and carnage flee before him to ravage other parts of the field, as Hector from before the divine Achilles. You say he hath no pity: no more have the gods, who are above it, and superhuman. The fainting battle gathers strength at his aspect; and, wherever he rides, victory charges with him.'

A couple of days after, when Mr. Esmond revisited his poetic friend, he found this thought, struck out in the fervour of conversation, improved and shaped into those famous lines, which are in truth the noblest in the poem of the 'Campaign.'

And within a month, Mr. Addison's ticket had come up a prodigious prize in the lottery of life. All the town was in an uproar of admiration of his poem, the 'Campaign,' which Dick Steele was spouting at every coffee-house in Whitehall and Covent Garden. The wits on the other side of Temple Bar saluted him at once as the greatest poet the world had seen for ages; the people huzzahed for Marlborough and for Addison, and, more than this, the party in power provided for the meritorious poet, and Mr Addison got the appointment of Commissioner of Excise, which the famous Mr. Locke vacated, and rose from this place to other dignities and honours; his prosperity from henceforth to the end of his life being scarce ever interrupted.

Gay as the town was, 'twas but a dreary place for Mr. Esmond, whether his charmer was in 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. 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 curtsey in reply to his own dismal bow. She deigned to kiss her finger-tips from the window, where she stood laughing with the other ladies. The Dowager at Chelsey was not sorry to part with him this time. The fickle old woman had now found a much more amiable favourite, 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.

CHAPTER XI

I. Get a Company in the Campaign of 1706

On the 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 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 Marechal 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.

I think it was more from conviction than policy, though that policy was surely the most prudent in the world, that the great Duke always spoke of his victories with an extraordinary modesty, and as if it was not so much his own admirable genius and courage which achieved these amazing successes, but as if he was a special and fatal instrument in the hands of Providence that willed irresistibly the enemy's overthrow. And our army got to believe so,

and the enemy learnt to think so too ; for we never entered into a battle without a perfect confidence that it was to end in a victory ; nor did the French, after the issue of Blenheim, and that astonishing triumph of Ramillies, ever meet us without feeling that the game was lost before it was begun to be played, and that our General's fortune was irresistible.

When the action was over Esmond made his way, and not without danger and difficulty, to his Grace's head-quarters, and found for himself very quickly where the aide-de-camps' quarters were, in an outbuilding 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 very popular in the army of that day ; and 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 ; and 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; '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. I called out to him to surrender, and that I'd give him quarter: he 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. *Vive la guerre!* 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.

My Lord went home in the winter, but Esmond was afraid to follow him. His dear mistress wrote him letters more than once, thanking him, as mothers know how to thank, for his care and protection of her boy, extolling Esmond's own merits with a great deal more praise than they deserved; for he did his duty no better than any other officer; and speaking sometimes, though gently and cautiously, of Beatrix. News came from home of at least half a dozen grand matches that the beautiful maid of honour was about to make. She was engaged to an earl, our gentlemen of St. James's said, and then jilted him for a duke,

who, in his turn, had drawn off. Earl or duke it might be who should win this Helen, Esmond knew she would never bestow herself on a poor captain. Her conduct, it was clear, was little satisfactory to her mother, who scarcely mentioned her, or else the kind lady thought it was best to say nothing, and leave time to work out its cure. At any rate, Harry was best away from the fatal object which always wrought him so much mischief: and so he never asked for leave to go home, but remained with his regiment that was garrisoned in Brussels, which city fell into our hands when the victory of Ramillies drove the French out of Flanders.

Mr. Esmond had the good fortune to be mentioned very advantageously by Major-General Webb in his report after the action; and the major of his regiment and two of the captains having been killed upon the day of Ramillies, Esmond, who was second of the lieutenants, got his company, and had the honour of serving as Captain Esmond in the next campaign.

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. 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 and faced him once more. as the officer, helping himself to holy water, turned mechanically towards the altar, to bow to it ere he quitted the sacred edifice.

'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. '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. But 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.

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.'

'My business,' he continued,—'and I tell you, both because I can trust you and your keen eyes have already discovered it—is between the King of England and his subjects here engaged in fighting the French King. As between you and them, all the Jesuits in the world will not prevent your quarrelling: fight it out, gentlemen. St. George for England, I say—and you know who says so, wherever he may be.'

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 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.

The reason of his increased confidence was this: upon going to London, he paid her Ladyship a visit at Chelsey, and there learnt from her that Captain Esmond was acquainted with the secret of his family, and was determind 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 his abnegation.

'The family at Castlewood 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*

cœur, that he was proud of him, and fond of him as his pupil and friend.

Holt's friendship encouraged Captain Esmond to ask, what he long wished to know, some history of the poor mother 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 she was born. 'In 1676, when your father came hither, in the retinue of the late King, then Duke of York, Captain Thomas Esmond became acquainted with your mother, who 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.

'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 he sent for a priest of the very Church of St. Gudule, where I met you; and on the same day, after his making submission to our Church, was married to your mother. 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. Gudule 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—and to the surprise of the doctors he recovered. But as his health came back he grew tired of the poor girl; 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 talk before your aunt, his wife, that on coming to London he wrote a pretended confession to poor Gertrude Maes—Gertrude Esmond—of his having been married in England previously, said that his name was not Thomas: that he was about to quit Europe for the Virginian plantations; sent her a supply of money, entreated her pardon, and bade her farewell.

'Poor Gertrude never thought that the news in this letter might be untrue. She never held up her head afterwards; 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.

'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. Here your nurse's father, old Pastoureau, with whom you afterwards lived at Ealing, adopted the reformed doctrines and came to London and set up his loom 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, 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 your father. He seized him by the collar, and upbraided him as a villain, who had deserted his wife and son. Mr. Thomas Esmond also recognised Pastoureau at once, besought him 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.

'I must tell you that my Lord Viscount was never at a loss for a story. His tales used to gather verisimilitude as he went on with them. He strung together fact after fact with a wonderful rapidity and coherence and in half an hour's time he had completely succeeded in deceiving poor Pastoureau. He wept for your mother; 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, he expressed the deepest gratitude to the Pastoureau family for the 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; he said, with a sigh, "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 ; owned that the Frenchman was a right fellow, and he, the Lord have mercy upon him, a sad villain.

'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 your mother, whom he had always 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 Sœur Marie Madeleine fondly still.'

Esmond came to this spot in one sunny evening of spring, and saw, amidst a thousand black crosses, that particular one which marked his mother's resting-place. Many more of those poor creatures that lay there had adopted that same name with which sorrow had rebaptized her, and which fondly seemed to hint their individual story of love and grief. 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. 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 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 of 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. Silent receptacle of death; tranquil depth of calm, out of reach of tempest and trouble! I felt as one who had been walking below the sea, and treading amidst the bones of shipwrecks.

CHAPTER XIII

The Campaign of 1707, 1708.

During the whole of the year which succeeded that in which the glorious battle of Ramillies had been fought, our army made no movement of importance, much to the disgust of very many of our officers remaining inactive in Flanders, who said that his Grace the Captain-General had had fighting enough, and was all for money now, and the enjoyment of his five thousand a year and his splendid palace at Woodstock, which was now being built. And his Grace had sufficient occupation fighting his enemies at home this year, where it began to be whispered that his favour was decreasing, and his Duchess losing her hold on the Queen, who was transferring her royal affections to the famous Mrs. Masham, and Mrs. Masham's humble servant, Mr. Harley. Against their intrigues, our Duke passed a great part of his time intriguing. Mr. Harley was got out of office, and his Grace, in so far, had a victory. But Her Majesty, convinced against her will, was of that opinion still, of which the poet says people are when so convinced, and Mr. Harley before long had his revenge.

Meanwhile the business of fighting did not go on any way to the satisfaction of Marlborough's gallant lieutenants. During all 1707, with the French before us, we had never so much as a battle ; and our army in Spain was utterly routed at Almanza by the gallant Duke of Berwick.

Mysterious Mr. Holtz went off on a secret expedition in the early part of 1708, with great elation of spirits and a prophecy to Esmond that a wonderful something was about to take place. This secret came out on my friend's return to the army, whither he brought a most rueful and dejected

countenance, and owned that the great something he had been engaged upon had failed utterly. He had been indeed with that luckless expedition of the Chevalier de St. George, who was sent by the French King with ships and an army from Dunkirk, and was to have invaded and conquered Scotland. But that ill wind which ever opposed all the projects upon which the Prince ever embarked, prevented the Chevalier's invasion of Scotland, as 'tis known, and blew poor Monsieur von Holtz back into our camp again, to scheme and foretell, and to pry about as usual. The Chevalier (the King of England, as some of us held him) went from Dunkirk to the French army to make the campaign against us. Holtz, who knew everything that was passing in Flanders and France (and the Indies for what I know), insisted that there would be no more fighting in 1708 than there had been in the previous year, and that our commander had reasons for keeping him quiet. Indeed, many did not scruple to say that these private reasons came to the Duke in the shape of crown-pieces from the French King, by whom the Generalissimo was bribed to avoid a battle.

And the successes with which the French began the campaign of 1708 served to give strength to these reports of treason, which were in everybody's mouth. Our General allowed the enemy to get between us and Ghent, and declined to attack him though for eight-and-forty hours the armies were in presence of each other. Ghent was taken, and on the same day Monsieur de la Mothe summoned Bruges: and these two great cities fell into the hands of the French without firing a shot. A few days afterwards La Mothe seized upon the fort of Plashendall: and it began to be supposed that all Spanish Flanders, as well as Brabant, would fall into the hands of the French troops; when the Prince Eugene arrived from the Mozelle, and then there was no more shilly-shallying. Within a week the battle of Oudenarde was fought; and the Brigade commanded by

Esmond's General gave and received about as hard knocks as any that were delivered in that action, in which Mr. Esmond had the fortune to serve at the head of his own company in his regiment; and it was his good luck to bring the regiment out of action as commander of it, the four senior officers above him being killed in the prodigious slaughter which happened on that day.

Esmond's dear young Viscount, serving as aide-de-camp to my Lord Duke, received a wound, and won an honourable name for himself in the *Gazette*; and Captain Esmond's name was sent in for promotion by his General, too, whose favourite he was. It made his heart beat to think that certain eyes at home, the brightest in the world, might read the page on which his humble services were recorded; but his mind was made up steadily to keep out of their dangerous influence, and to let time and absence conquer that passion he had still lurking about him. Away from Beatrix, it did not trouble him; but he knew as certain that if he returned home, his fever would break out again.

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, a 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.

'Why do you put yourself in the place of a man who is above you in degree?' says Frank. '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 Heaven,' 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, and Lord Mohun began to tell some stories against Esmond's 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 Chelsey received him as if he had been a conquering hero. Never was an old woman in all England more delighted nor more gracious than she. Esmond had his quarters in her Ladyship's house, where the domestics were instructed to consider him as their master She bade him give entertainments, of which she defrayed the charges. She must have his picture taken; and accordingly he was painted by Mr.

Jervas, in his red coat, and smiling upon a bombshell, which was bursting at the corner of the piece. She vowed that unless he made a great match, she should never die easy, and was for ever bringing young ladies to Chelsey, with pretty faces and pretty fortunes, at the disposal of the Colonel. He smiled to think how times were altered with him, and of the early days in his father's lifetime, when a trembling page he stood before her, with her Ladyship's basin and ewer, or crouched in her coach-step.

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. 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? Think you 'twill matter a few score years hence, what our foolish honours to-day are? I would have had a little fame, that she might wear it in her hat. If I had anything better, I would endow her with it. If she wants my life, I would give it her. If she marries another, I will say God 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, my 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). He kissed and kept her fair hand as they talked together.

'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. I am a country-bred woman, and cannot say but the ambitions of the town seem mean to me. I hear of Court ladies who pine because Her Majesty looks cold on them; and great noblemen who would give a limb that they might wear a garter on the other. This worldliness, which I can't comprehend, was born with Beatrix, who, on the first day of her waiting, was a perfect courtier She tells me I have a mean spirit. I laugh, and say she adores a coach-and-six. I cannot reason her out of her ambition 'Tis natural to her, as to me to love quiet, and be indifferent about rank and riches. What are they, Harry? and for how long do they last? Our home is not here.' She smiled as she spoke, and looked like an angel that was only on earth on a visit. 'Our home is where the just are, and where our sins and sorrows enter not. My father used to rebuke me, and say that I was too hopeful about heaven. But I cannot help my nature, and grow obstinate as I grow to be an old woman; and as I love my children so, sure our Father loves us with a thousand and a thousand times greater love. It must be that we shall meet yonder, and be happy. Yes, you—and my children, and my dear lord. Do you know, Harry, since his death, it has always seemed to me as if his love came back to me, and that we are parted no more. Perhaps he is here now, Harry—I think he is. Forgiven I am sure he is: even Mr. Atterbury absolved him, and he died forgiving. Oh, what a noble heart he had! How generous he was! I was but fifteen and a child when he married me. How good he was to stoop to me! He was always good to the poor and humble' She stopped, then presently, with a peculiar expression, as if her eyes were looking into heaven, and saw my Lord there, she smiled, and gave a little laugh. 'I laugh to see you, sir,' she says; 'when you come, it seems as if you never were away.' One may put her words down, and remember them, but how describe her sweet tones, sweeter than music!

My young lord did not come home at the end of the campaign, and wrote that he was kept at Bruxelles on military duty. Frank did not waste much time or money on pen and ink; and, when Harry came home, only writ two lines to his mother to say his wound in the leg was almost healed, that he would keep his coming of age next year, and that Cousin Harry would tell all the news.

But 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 Chelsey, 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 dress—my Lady of Chelsey in her highest tour, my Lady Viscountess out of black, and looking fair and happy *à ravir*: 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!' Indeed, Esmond's dear mistress, blushing as he looked at her, with her beautiful fair hair, and an elegant dress, according to the *mode*, appeared to have the shape and complexion of a girl of twenty.

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.

Mistress 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. We had a letter from dearest Frank, three days since. He told us 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.

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.

Besides the Captain and his lady there was a great and notable assemblage of company: my Lady of Chelsey having sent her lacqueys and liveries to aid the modest attendance at Kensington. There was Harry's new acquaintance, the Right Honourable Henry St John, Esquire, 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 nobles Lords of the Tory party, my Lord Ashburnham, and another I have forgotten: 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.

Esmond found the dinner dull. For, by some mistake, just as he was going to pop into the vacant place, he 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 Mistress 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 many toasts were called

Finally 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 Mistress 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 But the drawing-room was all dark to poor Harry. 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 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. 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 put up her little hand to her mouth and yawned, lighted a taper, and shrugged her shoulders, and dropping Mr. Esmond a saucy curtsey, 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; his

lady-mother came to visit Esmond's mistress, 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 in all the world: 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. I should like to treat the company to something. 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 of it 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.

CHAPTER I

I COME TO AN END OF MY BATTLES AND BRUISES

That feverish desire to gain a little reputation which Esmond had had, left him now perhaps that he had attained some portion of his wish, and the great motive of his ambition was over. His desire for military honour was that it might raise him in Beatrix's eyes. 'Twas, next to nobility and wealth, the only kind of rank she valued. It was the stake quickest won or lost too; for law is a very long game that requires a life to practise; and to be distinguished in letters or the Church would not have forwarded the poor gentleman's plans in the least. So he had no suit to play but the red one, and he played it; and this, in truth, was the reason of his speedy promotion; for he exposed himself more than most gentlemen do, and risked more to win more.

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 to retire from the regiment.

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. What must have been the continued agonies of fears and apprehensions which racked the gentle breasts of wives and matrons in those dreadful days, when every *Gazette* brought accounts of deaths and battles, and when, the present anxiety over, and the beloved person escaped, the doubt still remained that a battle might be fought, possibly, of which the next Flanders letter would bring the account; so they, the poor tender creatures, had to go on sickening and trembling through the whole campaign. Whatever these terrors were on the part of Esmond's mistress (and that tenderest of women must have felt them most keenly for both her sons, as she called them), she never allowed them outwardly to appear, but hid her apprehension as she did her charities and devotion. 'Twas only by chance that Esmond, wandering in Kensington, found his mistress coming out of a mean cottage there, and heard that she had a score of poor retainers, whom she visited and comforted in their sickness and poverty, and who blessed her daily. She attended the early church daily (though of a Sunday, especially, she encouraged and advanced all sorts of cheerfulness and innocent gaiety in her little household): and by notes entered into a tablebook of hers at this time, and devotional compositions written with a sweet artless fervour, such as the best divines could not surpass, showed how fond her heart was, how humble and pious her spirit, what pangs of apprehension she endured silently, and with what a faithful reliance she committed the care of those she loved to the awful Dispenser of death and life.

As for her Ladyship at Chelsey, Esmond's newly adopted mother, she was now of an age when the danger of any second party does not disturb the rest much. She cared for trumps more than for most things in life; and when her son Esmond announced to her Ladyship that he proposed to make the ensuing campaign, took leave of him with perfect

alacrity, and was down to piquet with her gentlewoman before he had well quitted the room on his last visit. The game of life was pretty nearly over for the good lady, and three months afterwards she took to her bed, where she flickered out without any pain. The Lady Castlewood was with her at her ending, and had written, but her letters must have been taken by a privateer in the packet that brought them; for Esmond knew nothing of their contents until his return to England.

My Lady Castlewood had left everything to Colonel Esmond, 'as a reparation for the wrong done to him'; 'twas written in her will. But her fortune was not much, for it never had been large, and the honest Viscountess had wisely sunk most of the money she had upon an annuity which terminated with her life. However, there was the house and furniture, plate and pictures, and a sum of money lying at her merchant's, which altogether would realise a sum of near three hundred pounds per annum, so that Mr. Esmond found himself, if not rich, at least easy for life. Likewise there were the famous diamonds which had been said to be worth fabulous sums, though the goldsmith pronounced they would fetch no more than four thousand pounds. These diamonds, however, Colonel Esmond reserved, having a special use for them: but the Chelsey house, plate, goods, etc., with the exception of a few articles which he kept back, were sold by his orders; and the sums resulting from the sale invested in the public securities so as to realise the aforesaid annual income of three hundred pounds.

Having now something to leave, he made a will and despatched it home. The army was now in presence of the enemy; and a great battle expected every day. 'Twas known that the General-in-Chief was in disgrace, and the parties at home strong against him, and there was no stroke this great and resolute player would not venture to recall his fortune when it seemed desperate. Frank Castlewood was with

Colonel Esmond; his General having gladly taken the young nobleman on to his staff.

'Tis needless to say that Colonel Esmond had left every penny of his little fortune to this boy. It was the Colonel's firm conviction that the next battle would put an end to him: for he felt aweary of the sun, and quite ready to bid that and the earth farewell. Frank would not listen to his comrade's gloomy forebodings, but swore they would keep his birthday at Castlewood that autumn, after the campaign.

The gazetteers and writers, both of the French and English side, have given accounts sufficient of that bloody battle of Malplaquet, which was the last and the hardest earned of the victories of the great Duke of Marlborough. In that tremendous combat near upon two hundred and fifty thousand men were engaged, more than thirty thousand of whom were slain or wounded (the Allies lost twice as many men as they killed of the French, whom they conquered). The gallantry of the French was as remarkable as the furious bravery of their assailants. We took a few score of their flags, and a few pieces of their artillery: but we left twenty thousand of the bravest soldiers of the world round about the intrenched lines, from which the enemy was driven. We dared not speak to each other, even at table, of Malplaquet, so frightful were the gaps left in our army by the cannon of that bloody action. 'Twas heartrending for an officer who had a heart to look down his line on a parade-day afterwards, and miss hundreds of faces of comrades—humble or of high rank—that had gathered but yesterday full of courage and cheerfulness round the torn and blackened flags.

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. Frank was supposed to be still at his kinsman's bed-side 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. Frank went off, then, to his pleasures at Bruxelles, in which capital many young fellows of our army declared they found infinitely greater diversion even than in London : and Mr. Henry Esmond remained in his sick-room, where he wrote a fine comedy, that his mistress pronounced to be sublime, and that was acted no less than three successive nights in London in the next year.

Though they lost the day at Malplaquet, it was the French who were elated by that action, whilst the conquerors were dispirited by it ; and the enemy gathered together a larger army than ever, and made prodigious efforts for the next campaign. Marshal Berwick was with the French this year ; and we heard that Mareschal Villars was still suffering of his wound, was eager to bring our Duke to action, and vowed he would fight us in his coach. 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. Indeed, he owned that he had a message from the Queen, Beatrix's godmother, who had

given her name to Frank's sister the year before he and his sovereign were born.

However desirous Mareschal Villars might be to fight, my Lord Duke did not seem disposed to indulge him this campaign. Last year his Grace had been all for the Whigs and Hanoverians; but finding, on going to England, his country cold towards himself, and the people in a ferment of High Church loyalty, the Duke comes back to his army cooled towards the Hanoverians, cautious with the Imperialists, and particularly civil and polite towards the Chevalier de St. George. 'Tis certain that messengers and letters were continually passing between his Grace and his brave nephew, the Duke of Berwick, in the opposite camp. A little river divided our picquets from the enemy's. Our sentries talked across the stream, when they could make themselves understood to each other, and when they could not, grinned, and handed each other their brandy-flasks or their pouches of tobacco. And one fine day of June, riding thither with the officer who visited the outposts (Colonel Esmond was taking an airing on horseback, being too weak for military duty), they came to this river, where a number of English and Scots were assembled, talking to the good-natured enemy on the other side.

Esmond was especially amused with the talk of one long fellow, with a great curling red moustache, and blue eyes, that was half a dozen inches taller than his swarthy little comrades on the French side of the stream, and being asked by the Colonel, saluted him, and said that he belonged to the Royal Cravats.

From his way of saying 'Royal Cravat,' Esmond at once knew that the fellow's tongue had first wagged on the banks of the Liffey, and not the Loire; and the poor soldier—a deserter probably—did not like to venture very deep into French conversation, lest his unlucky brogue should peep out. He chose to restrict himself to such few expressions in the

French language as he thought he had mastered easily ; and his attempt at disguise was infinitely amusing.

Whilst this parley was going on, 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, and rode close up to us who were by the stream. 'Look, look ! ' says the Royal Cravat, with great agitation, 'pas lui, that's he ; not him, l'autre,' and pointed to the distant officer on a chestnut horse, with a cuirass shining in the sun, and over it a broad blue ribbon.

'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 were not hostilely disposed, he added, with a smile, 'There's 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. Even the idlers on our side of the river set up a hurrah. As for the Royal Cravat, he ran to the Prince's stirrup, knelt down and kissed his boot, and bawled and looked a hundred ejaculations and blessings. The Prince bade the aide-de-camp give him a piece of money ; and when the party saluting us had ridden away, Cravat spat upon the piece of gold by way of benediction, and swaggered away, pouching his coin and twirling his honest carroty moustache.

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 we 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 recompense 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, 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 bare-headed to where the Prince was, and dismounting and kneeling before him to do him homage. Some said that the Prince had actually knighted him, but my Lord denied that statement, though he acknowledged the rest of the story, and said: 'From having been out of favour with Corporal John,' as he called the Duke, 'before his Grace warned him not to commit those follies, and smiled on him cordially ever after.'

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, 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. They were married at St. Gudule, by Father Holt, 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. 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. To feel that kind little hand near to his heart seemed to give him strength. They were soon 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 never had 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 death-bed 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.'

Lady Castlewood would instantly have written to her son, and conveyed the truth to him, but Mr. Atterbury's advice was that a letter should be written 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 was settled twelve years since, by my dear lord's bedside. Dearest saint, purest soul, 'tis for me to be thankful that I can make you happy. Has my life any other aim? Blessed be God that I can serve you! What pleasure, think you, could all the world give me compared to that?"

As he spoke so to his dearest mistress, the fond creature flung herself down on her knees before him.

'Don't raise me,' she said, in a wild way, to Esmond, who would have lifted her. 'Let me kneel—let me kneel, and—and—worship you.'

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. Lady Castlewood wrote to her new daughter a very pretty, touching letter (as Esmond thought, who had cognisance of it before it went), in which the only hint of reproof was a gentle remonstrance that her son had not written to herself, to ask a fond mother's blessing for that step which he was about taking. There came, however, soon afterwards, 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 exhortation 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 civilised world were members.'

The Lady Castlewood was much cast down by this news. 'Don't be silly, you kind little mamma' said Beatrix, 'and cry about Frank turning Papist. What a figure he must be, with a white sheet and a candle, walking in a procession barefoot!' And she kicked off her little slippers and she put on the drollest little *mone*, and marched up and down the room holding Esmond's cane by way of taper Serious as her mood was, Lady Castlewood could not refrain from laughing: and as for Esmond, he looked on with that delight with which the sight of this fair creature always inspired him: never had he seen any woman so arch, so brilliant, and so beautiful

Having finished her march, she put out her foot for her slipper. The Colonel knelt down! 'If you will be Pope I will turn Papist,' says he; and her Holiness gave him gracious leave to kiss the little stockinged foot before he put the slipper on.

Mamma's feet began to pat on the floor during this operation, and Beatrix, whose bright eyes nothing escaped, saw that little mark of impatience. She ran up and embraced her mother, with her usual cry of, 'Oh, you silly little mamma: your feet are quite as pretty as mine,' says she: 'they are, Cousin, though she hides 'em; but the shoemaker will tell you that he makes for both off the same last.'

'You are taller than I am, dearest,' says her mother, blushing over her whole sweet face—'and—and it is your hand, my dear, and not your foot he wants you to give him'; and she said it with a hysteric laugh, that had more of tears than laughter in it; laying her head on her daughter's fair shoulder, and hiding it there. They made a very pretty picture together, and looked like a pair of sisters—the sweet simple matron seeming younger than her years, and her daughter, if not older, yet somehow, from a commanding

manner and grace which she possessed above most women, her mother's superior and protectress.

'But oh!' cries my mistress, recovering herself after this scene, and returning to her usual sad tone, 'tis a shame that we should laugh and be making merry on a day when we ought to be down on our knees and asking pardon.'

'Asking pardon for what?' says saucy Mistress Beatrix —'because Frank takes it into his head to fast on Fridays and worship images? You know if you had been born a Papist, mother, a Papist you would have remained to the end of your days. 'Tis the religion of the King and of some of the best quality. For my part, I'm no enemy to it, and think Queen Bess was not a penny better than Queen Mary.'

'Hush, Beatrix! Do not jest with sacred things, and remember of what parentage you come,' cries my Lady. Beatrix was ordering her ribbons, and adjusting her tucker, and performing a dozen provokingly pretty ceremonies before the glass. The girl was no hypocrite at least She never at that time could be brought to think but of the world and her beauty; and seemed to have no more sense of devotion than some people have of music, that cannot distinguish one air from another. Esmond saw this fault in her, as he saw many others—a bad wife would Beatrix Esmond make, he thought, for any man under the degree of a prince. She was born to shine in great assemblies, and to adorn palaces, and to command everywhere—to conduct an intrigue of politics, or to glitter in a queen's train. But to sit at a homely table, and mend the stockings of a poor man's children! that was no fitting duty for her, or at least one that she wouldn't have broken her heart in trying to do. She was a princess, though she had scarce a shilling to her fortune; and one of her subjects—the most abject and devoted wretch, sure, that ever drivelled at a woman's knees—was this unlucky gentleman; who bound his good sense, and reason,

and independence, hand and foot, and submitted them to her.

Had Esmond possessed the Great Mogul's crown and all his diamonds, or all the Duke of Marlborough's money, or all the ingots sunk at Vigo, he would have given them all for this woman. A fool he was, if you will; but so is a sovereign a fool, that will give half a principality for a little crystal as big as a pigeon's egg, and called a diamond; so is a wealthy nobleman a fool, that will face danger or death, and spend half his life, and all his tranquillity, caballing for a blue ribband; so is a Dutch merchant a fool, that hath been known to pay ten thousand crowns for a tulip. There's some particular prize we all of us value, and that every man of spirit will venture his life for. With this, it may be to achieve a great reputation for learning; with that, to be a man of fashion, and the admiration of the town; with another, to consummate a great work of art or poetry, and go to immortality that way; and with another, for a certain time of his life, the sole object and aim is a woman.

CHAPTER III

Beatrix's new suitor

When Mr. Esmond came home, his health was still shattered; and he took a lodging near to his mistresses, at Kensington, glad enough to be served by them, and to see them day after day. He was enabled to see a little company —and of the sort he liked best. Mr. Steele and Mr. Addison both did him the honour to visit him; and drank many a glass of good claret at his lodging, whilst their entertainer, through his wound, was kept to diet-drink and gruel.

Mr. Esmond, forced to be quiet, betook himself to literature for a relaxation, and composed his comedy, 'The Faithful Fool, a Comedy, as it was performed by Her Majesty's Servants.' 'Twas a very sentimental piece; and Mr. Steele, who had more of that kind of sentiment than Mr. Addison, admired it, whilst the other rather sneered at the performance; though he owned that, here and there, it contained some pretty strokes. He was bringing out his own play of *Cato* at the time, the blaze of which quite extinguished Esmond's farthing candle; and his name was never put to the piece, which was printed as by a Person of Quality. Only nine copies were sold; and Colonel Esmond had the whole impression burned one day in a rage, by Jack Lockwood, his man.

All this comedy was full of bitter satiric strokes against a certain young lady. The plot of the piece was quite a new one. A young woman was represented with a great number of suitors, selecting a pert fribble of a peer, in place of the hero (but ill-acted, I think, by Mr. Wilks, the Faithful Fool), who persisted in admiring her. In the fifth act, Teraminta was made to discover the merits of Eugenio (the F. F.), and to feel a partiality for him too late; for he

announced that he had bestowed his hand and estate upon Rosaria, a country lass, endowed with every virtue. But it must be owned that the audience yawned through the play ; and that it perished on the third night, with only half-a-dozen persons to behold its agonies. Esmond and his two mistresses came to the first night, and Miss Beatrix fell asleep ; whilst her mother, who had not been to a play since King James the Second's time, thought the piece, though not brilliant, had a very pretty moral.

Mr. Esmond dabbled in letters, and wrote a deal of prose and verse at this time of leisure. When displeased with the conduct of Miss Beatrix, he would compose a satire, in which he relieved his mind. When smarting under the faithlessness of women, he dashed off a copy of verses, in which he held the whole sex up to scorn.

For though enough hath been said about this love-business already—enough, at least, to prove to the writer's heirs what a silly fond fool their old grandfather was, who would like them to consider him as a very wise gentleman ; yet not near all has been told concerning this matter, which, if it were allowed to take in Esmond's journal the space it occupied in his time, would weary his kinsmen and women of a hundred years' time beyond all endurance ; and form such a diary of folly and drivelling, raptures and rage, as no man of ordinary vanity would like to leave behind him.

Beatrix had been engaged once, twice thrice, to be married, Esmond believed When he quitted home 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 fine houses, and 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, so they told me, and as my little conversation would enable me to judge : 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 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. This time his Grace the Duke of Hamilton 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, and though now five-or six-and-forty years of age, 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.'

One morning, Esmond found himself alone with Miss Beatrix, and pleaded his cause again.

How long was it that Jacob served an apprenticeship for Rachel ?' said he.

'For mamma ?' says Beatrix. 'It is mamma your honour wants, and that I should have the happiness of calling you papa ?'

Esmond blushed. '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 ? We were all so, even when together and united, as it seemed, following our separate schemes, each as we sat round the table.'

'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 ; and 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, 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 Castlewood 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 Ambassadress goes with him.'

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. I think Colonel Esmond was relieved when a ducal coach-and-six came and whisked his charmer away out of his reach, and placed her in a higher sphere. And 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 philandering 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 down on your knees, and 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. Eh! Cousin, a goddess in a mob-cap, that has to make her husband's gruel, ceases to be divine—I am sure of it. 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 are so fond of. What's the creature's name?—Desdemona. You would, you little black-dyed 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 to be the first of my company, sir; 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* dismal face, 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 flattered each other; 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; 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 Esmond—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? How frankly we can talk of these things! It seems a thousand years ago: and, though we are here sitting in the same room, there is a great wall between us. My dear, kind, faithful, gloomy old cousin! I can like now, and admire you too, sir, and say that you are brave, and very kind, and very true, and a fine gentleman.

'And now, sir,' says she with a curtsey, '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 jealous as the black man is 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; for I feel as if I was the guardian of all the family, and an old fellow that is fit to be the grandfather of you all; and in this character let me make my Lady Duchess her wedding present. They are the diamonds my father's widow left me. I had thought Beatrix might have had them a year ago; but 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 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 no doubt 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. 'Hm! 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,' cried 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 has 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—sacrificed it to my orphan children; 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 forego 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 curtsey, 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.

'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 when the rest of the company withdrew to cards, Colonel Esmond and he remained behind in the dark.

Bolingbroke always spoke freely when he had drunk freely. 'Your Duke hath the string of the whole matter in his hand,' the Secretary said. '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. Give us more wine: here's a health to the bonne cause.' 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, psha!'

'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 Englishman 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. There are men here that can look at danger in the face and not be frightened at it. 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 !

Esmond made his way sorrowfully to Kensington, and found the ante-chamber 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 her hands, God help us !

'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. O woman, O sister! to that sad field where two corpses are lying—for the murderer died too by the hand of the man he slew—can you bring no mourners but your revenge and your vanity? 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.'

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. Whatever her feelings might have been of anger or of sorrow (and I fear me that the former emotion was that which most tore her heart), she would take no confidant, as people of softer natures would have done under such a calamity ; her mother and her kinsman knew that she would disdain their pity, and that to offer it would be but to infuriate the cruel wound which fortune had inflicted. We knew that her pride was awfully humbled and punished by this sudden and terrible blow ; she wanted no teaching of ours to point out the sad moral of her story. Her fond mother could give but her prayers, and her kinsman his faithful friendship and patience to the unhappy, stricken creature ; and it was only by hints, and a word or two uttered months afterwards, that Beatrix showed she understood their silent commiseration, and on her part was secretly thankful for their forbearance. The people about the Court said there was that in her manner which frightened away scoffing and condolence : she was above their triumph and their pity, and acted her part in that dreadful tragedy greatly and courageously ; so that those who liked her least were yet forced to admire her. We, who watched her after her disaster, could not but respect the indomitable courage and majestic calm with which she bore it. 'I would rather see her tears than her pride,' her mother said, who was accustomed to bear her sorrows in a very different way, and to receive them as the stroke of God, with an awful submission and meekness. But Beatrix's nature was different to that tender parent's ; she seemed to accept her grief, and to defy it ; nor would she allow it (I believe not even in private and in her own chamber) to extort from her the confession of even a tear of humiliation or a cry of pain.

CHAPTER VI

I visit Castlewood once more.

The boldest on our side were for having our Prince into the country. The undoubted inheritor of the right divine; the feelings of more than half the nation, of almost all the clergy, of the gentry of England and Scotland with him; entirely innocent of the crime for which his father suffered—brave, young, handsome, unfortunate—who in England would dare to molest the Prince should he come among us, and fling himself upon British generosity, hospitality, and honour? An invader with an army of Frenchmen behind him, Englishmen of spirit would resist to the death, and drive back to the shores whence he came; but a Prince, alone, armed with his right only, and relying on the loyalty of his people, was sure, many of his friends argued, of welcome, at least of safety, among us. The hand of his sister the Queen, of the people his subjects, never could be raised to do him a wrong. But the Queen was timid by nature, and the successive Ministers she had, had private causes for their irresolution. The bolder and honester men, who had at heart the illustrious young exile's cause, had no scheme of interest of their own to prevent them from seeing the right done, and, provided only he came as an Englishman, were ready to venture their all to welcome and defend him.

St. John and Harley both had kind words in plenty for the Prince's adherents, and gave him endless promises of future support; but hints and promises were all they could be got to give; and some of his friends were for measures much bolder, more efficacious, and more open. With a party of these, some of whom are yet alive, and some whose names Mr. Esmond has no right to mention, he found himself engaged

the year after that miserable death of Duke Hamilton, which deprived the Prince of his most courageous ally in this country. Dean Atterbury was one of the friends whom Esmond may mention, as the brave bishop is now beyond exile and persecution, and to him, and one or two more, the Colonel opened himself of a scheme of his own, that, backed by a little resolution on the Prince's part, could not fail of bringing about the accomplishment of their dearest wishes.

A few months after the horrid catastrophe in Hyde Park, my mistress and her daughter retired to Castlewood, where my Lord, it was expected, would soon join them. 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. In the autumn of the year 1713, Lord Castlewood thought of returning home. But 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. There was the fountain in the court babbling its familiar music, the old hall and its furniture, the carved chair my late lord used, the very flagon he drank from. 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.

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 amongst them a letter from the Duke of Berwick and one from the King at St Germains, 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. This fond lady hath told me that she knew both days when I was wounded abroad Who shall say how far sympathy reaches, and how truly love can prophesy? 'I looked into your room,' was all she said; 'the bed was vacant, the little old bed: I knew I should find you here' And tender and blushing faintly, with a benediction in her eyes, the gentle creature kissed him.

They walked out, hand-in-hand, through the old court, and to the terrace-walk, where the grass was glistening with dew, and the birds in the green woods above were singing their delicious choruses under the blushing morning sky. How well all things were remembered! The ancient towers and gables of the Hall darkling against the east, the purple shadows on the green slopes the quaint devices and carvings of the dial, the forest-crowned heights, the fair yellow plain cheerful with crops and corn, the shining river rolling through it towards the pearly hills beyond; all these were before us, along with a thousand beautiful memories of our youth, beautiful and sad, but as real and vivid in our minds as that fair and always-remembered scene our eyes beheld once more.

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. He knew he could confide anything to her, and that the fond soul would die rather than reveal it: and bidding her keep the secret from all, he laid it entirely before his mistress (always as staunch a little loyalist as any in the kingdom), and indeed was quite sure that any plan of his was secure of her applause and sympathy. 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 curtseys 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.

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.

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, that did not shake in the least. Esmond saw 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 foregone!'

'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? Never shake your head, but hear me; say you will hear me a year hence. 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. I say no more now: put aside these words, and lock away yonder box until the day when I shall remind you of both. All I pray of you now is, to wait and to remember.'

'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. I would do anything for such a man, bear anything for him; but I never found one. 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 not be sorry for him. I was frightened to find I was glad of his death: 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: affected gladness when he came: submitted to hear when he was by me, and tried the wife's part I thought I was to play for the rest of my days. But half an hour of that complaisance wearied me, and what would a lifetime be? My thoughts were away when he was speaking: and I was thinking, Oh that this man would drop my hand, and rise up from before my feet! I knew his great and noble qualities, greater and nobler than mine a thousand times, as yours are, Cousin, I tell you, a million and a million times better. But 'twas not for these I took him. I took him to have a great place in the world, and I lost it. I lost it, and do not deplore him—

and I often thought, as I listened to his fond vows and ardent words, Oh, if I yield to this man and meet *the other*, I shall hate him and leave him! 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. I do not care for what the parsons tell me with their droning sermons: I used to see them at Court as mean and as worthless as the meanest woman there. 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 signs 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 rode 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 Castlewood's aid was indispensable for Mr. Esmond's scheme, his first visit was to Bruxelles. Frank was charmed with his kinsman's scheme, when he became acquainted with it; and, in truth, always admired Colonel Esmond with an affectionate fidelity, and thought his cousin the wisest and best of all cousins and men.

Castlewood, I have said, 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 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. The place whither he next travelled was Bar, in Lorraine, where, 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.

Colonel Esmond next journeyed to Paris, and saw that famous town, stealthily and like a spy, as in truth he was; and where, sure, more magnificence and more misery is heaped together, more rags and lace, more filth and gilding, than in any city in this world. Here he was put in communication with the King's best friend, his half-brother, the famous Duke of Berwick: Esmond recognised him as the stranger who had visited Castlewood now near twenty years ago. His Grace was the sword and buckler indeed of the Stuart cause. Had Berwick been his father's heir, James the Third had assuredly sat on the English throne.

As for the splendours of Versailles, Esmond only beheld them as a humble and distant spectator, seeing the old King but once, when he went to feed his carps: and asking for no presentation at His Majesty's Court.

By this time my Lord Viscount Castlewood was got to Paris. Her Ladyship 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

returned to London; her Ladyship occupying her house at Kensington. Mr. Esmond likewise returned to his lodgings at Knightsbridge, nearer the town, and once more made 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 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.

The truth is, that Esmond, waiting upon Lord Castlewood one day at Monsieur Rigaud's, whilst his Lordship was sitting for his picture, affected to be much struck with a piece representing the Chevalier, whereof the head only was finished, and purchased it of the painter for a hundred crowns. Taking this piece home, when my Lord's portrait arrived, Colonel Esmond had copied the uniform and other accessories from my Lord's picture to fill up Rigaud's incomplete canvas: the Colonel all his life having been a practitioner of painting, and especially followed it during his long residence in the cities of Flanders.

At the commencement of the month of June, Miss Beatrix Esmond, and my Lady Viscountess, her mother, arrived from Castlewood; the former to resume her services at Court, which had been interrupted by the fatal catastrophe of Duke Hamilton's death. All the old domestics at the little house of Kensington Square were changed; the old steward that had served the family any time these five-and-twenty years, since the birth of the children of the house, was despatched into the kingdom of Ireland to see my Lord's estate there; the housekeeper, who had been my Lady's woman time out of mind, and the attendant of the young children, was sent away grumbling to Walcote, to see to the new painting and preparing of that house, which my Lady Dowager intended to occupy for the future, giving up Castlewood to her daughter-in-law, that might be expected daily from France. Another servant the Viscountess had was dismissed too—with a gratuity—on the pretext that her Ladyship's train of domestics must be diminished; so, finally, there was not left in the household a single person who had belonged to it during the time my young Lord Castlewood was yet at home.

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 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.

Two days after another letter was despatched by the public post of France, in the same open way, and this, after giving news of the fashion at Court there, ended by certain

sentences which told those that had the key to them, 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 explains sufficiently 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.

On his return from France, Colonel Esmond put himself at the head of the little knot of fond conspirators. No death or torture he knew would frighten them out of their constancy. When he detailed his plan for bringing the King back, his elder mistress thought that that Restoration was to be attributed under Heaven to the Castlewood family and to its chief, and she worshipped and loved Esmond, if that could be, more than ever she had done. She doubted not for one moment of the success of his scheme, to mistrust which would have seemed impious in her eyes. And as for Beatrix, when she became acquainted with the plan, and joined it, as she did with all her heart, she gave Esmond one of her searching bright looks. ' Ah, Harry,' says she, ' why were you not the head of our house ? You are the only one fit to raise it ;

why do you give that silly boy the name and the honour? But 'tis so in the world; those get the prize that don't deserve or care for it. I wish I could give you *your* silly prize, Cousin, but I can't; I have tried, and I can't.' And she went away, shaking her head mournfully, but always, it seemed to Esmond, that her liking and respect for him was greatly increased, since she knew what capability he had both to act and bear; to do and to forego.

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 bedchamber 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 apartments 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 Basilike* 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. 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 curtsey 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 Both ladies were perfect housewives, having the greatest skill in the making of confections, scented waters, etc., and keeping a notable superintendence over the kitchen. Esmond laughed when he came to wait on the ladies, on the day when the guests were to arrive, to find two pairs of the finest and roundest arms to be seen in England covered with flour up above the elbows, and preparing paste, and turning rolling-pins in the housekeeper's closet. 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 Castlewood'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; you make a much taller and handsomer Viscount than ever I could.' But the fond boy, with oaths and protestations, laughter and incoherent outbreaks of passionate emotion, 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 something, to bid Castlewood give his own life 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 serieux," 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 would have stopped at Canterbury to run after a barmaid there, had I not implored him to come on. He hath a house at Chaillot, where he used to go and bury himself for weeks away from the Queen, and 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, and His Majesty came out yawning :—'A pest,' says he, 'upon your English ale, 'tis so strong that it hath turned my head.'

The effect of the ale was like a spur upon our horses, and 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 did so, blushing at the hint Colonel Esmond ventured to give him, and said, 'Tenez, elle est jolie, la petite mére. Foi de Chevalier ! elle est charmante ; mais l'autre, 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 (nor was he very likely) 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.

Again Colonel Esmond 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.

The bedchamber and the two rooms adjoining it, the closet and the apartment which was to be called my Lord's parlour, were already lighted and awaiting their occupier; and the collation laid for my Lord's supper. Lord Castlewood and his mother and sister came up the stair a minute afterwards, and, so soon as the domestics had quitted the apartment, Castlewood and Esmond uncovered, and the two ladies went down on their knees before the Prince, who graciously gave a hand to each. He looked his part of Prince much more naturally than that of servant, which he had just been trying, and raised them both with a great deal of nobility as well as kindness in his air. 'Madam,' says he, 'my mother will thank your Ladyship for your hospitality to her son; for you, madam,' turning to Beatrix, 'I cannot bear to see so much beauty in such a posture. You will betray Monsieur Baptiste if you kneel to him; sure 'tis his place rather to kneel to you.'

A light shone out of her eyes; a gleam bright enough to kindle passion in any breast. There were times when this creature was so handsome, that she seemed, as it were, like Venus revealing herself a goddess in a flash of brightness. She appeared so now; radiant, and with eyes bright with a wonderful lustre. A pang, as of rage and jealousy, shot through Esmond's heart, as he caught the look she gave the Prince; and he clenched his hand involuntarily, and looked across to Castlewood, whose eyes answered his alarm-signal, and were also on the alert. The Prince gave his subjects an audience of a few minutes, and then the two ladies and Colonel Esmond quitted the chamber Lady Castlewood pressed his hand as they descended the stair, and the three went down to the lower rooms, where they waited awhile till the travellers above should be refreshed and ready for their meal.

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.

'Were I the Mogul Emperor,' says the Colonel, 'you should have all that were dug out of Golconda.'

'These are a great deal too good for me,' says Beatrix, dropping her head on her beautiful breast,—'so are you all, all!' And when she looked up again, as she did in a moment, and after a sigh, her eyes, as they gazed at her cousin, wore that melancholy and inscrutable look which 'twas always impossible to sound.

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.

When the time came to take leave, Esmond marched homewards to his lodgings.

'I have done the deed,' thought he, sleepless, and looking out into the night; 'he is here, and I have brought him. Whom did I mean to serve in bringing him? Was it the Prince? was it Henry Esmond?' The eager gaze of the young Prince, watching every movement of Beatrix, haunted Esmond and pursued him. The Prince's figure appeared before him in his feverish dreams many times that night. He wished the deed undone for which he had laboured so. He was not the first that has regretted his own act, or brought about his own undoing. Undoing? Should he write that word in his late years? No, on his knees before Heaven, rather be thankful for what then he deemed his misfortune, and which hath caused the whole subsequent happiness of his life.

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.

The Bishop of Rochester, and other gentlemen engaged in the transaction which had brought the Prince over, waited upon His Royal Highness, constantly asking for my Lord Castlewood on their arrival at Kensington, and being openly conducted to His Royal Highness in that character, who received them either in my Lady's drawing-room below, or above in his own apartment ; and all implored him to quit the house as little as possible, and to wait there till the signal should be given for him to appear. The ladies entertained him at cards, over which amusement he spent many hours in each day and night. He passed many hours more in drinking during which time he would rattle and talk very agreeably, and especially if the Colonel was absent, whose presence always seemed to frighten him ; and the poor Colonel Noir took that hint as a command accordingly, and seldom intruded his black face upon the convivial hours of this august young prisoner.

As 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 word 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 to put in a word of warning. 'I wish—I wish this business were over,' said Frank. 'You are older than I am, and wiser, and better, and I owe you everything, and would die for you—before George I would; but I wish the end of this were come.'

CHAPTER IX

We entertain a very Distinguished Guest at Kensington.

In expectation of the stroke that was now preparing, the Irish regiments in the French service were all brought round about Boulogne in Picardy, to pass over if need were with the Duke of Berwick ; the soldiers of France no longer, but subjects of James the Third of England and Ireland King. The fidelity of the great mass of the Scots (though a most active, resolute, and gallant Whig party, admirably and energetically ordered and disciplined, was known to be in Scotland too) was notoriously unshaken in their King. A very great body of Tory clergy, nobility, and gentry, were public partisans of the exiled Prince ; and the indifferents might be counted on to cry King George or King James, according as either should prevail. The Queen, especially in her latter days, inclined towards her own family. The Prince was lying actually in London, within a stone's-cast of his sister's palace ; the first Minister toppling to his fall, and so tottering that the weakest push of a woman's finger would send him down ; and as for Bolingbroke, his successor, we know on whose side his power and his splendid eloquence would be on the day when the Queen should appear openly before her Council and say :—'This, my Lords, is my brother ; here is my father's heir, and mine after me.'

During the whole of the previous year the Queen had had many and repeated fits of sickness, fever, and lethargy, and her death had been constantly looked for by all her attendants. Just before Viscount Castlewood and his companion came from France, Her Majesty was again taken ill. At the commencement of July that influential lady with whom it

has been mentioned that our party had relations, came frequently to visit her young friend, the Maid of Honour, at Kensington, and my Lord Viscount (the real or suppositious), who was an invalid at Lady Castlewood's house.

On the 27th day of July, the lady in question, 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.

After a scene which Lord Castlewood witnessed and described to his cousin, the three persons who were set by nature as protectors over Beatrix came to the same conclusion, that she ought to be removed from the presence of the Prince. I suppose Esmond's mistress, her son, and the Colonel himself, had been all secretly debating this matter in their minds, for when Frank broke out, in his blunt way, with : ' I think Beatrix had best be anywhere but here,'— Lady Castlewood said : ' I thank you, Frank, I have thought so, too' ; and Mr. Esmond, though he only remarked that it was not for him to speak, showed plainly, by the delight on his countenance, how very agreeable that proposal was to him.

' One sees that you think with us, Henry,' says the Viscountess : ' Beatrix is best out of this house whilst we have our guest in it, and as soon as this morning's business is done, she ought to quit London.'

' What morning's business ? ' asked Colonel Esmond, not knowing what had been arranged, though in fact the stroke next in importance to that of bringing the Prince, and

of having him acknowledged by the Queen, was now being performed at the very moment we three were conversing together.

The Court lady with whom our plan was concerted, and who was a chief agent in it, 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.

On the 27th day of July, therefore, 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. 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 bedchamber, the Doctor came, and by the urgent and startling nature of his news, dissipated instantly that private and minor unpleasantry 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 Castlewood* 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 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.'

'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! God 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 her 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 curtsey.

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.'

'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? I am tired of the psalms.' 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; no, you would not dare!' 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 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; '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.

'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 has 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 you were better in the country than here; that the Prince 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.'

As the Colonel spoke with a perfect calmness and politeness, such as 'tis to be hoped he hath always shown to women, his mistress stood by him on one side of the table, and Frank Castlewood on the other, hemming in poor Beatrix, that was behind it, and, as it were, surrounding her with our approaches.

'Let us go, dearest Beatrix!' said her mother. 'Shall we go to Walcote or to Castlewood? We are best away

from the city ; and when the Prince is acknowledged, and our champions have restored him, and he hath his own house at St. James's or Windsor, we can come back to ours here. Do you not think so, Harry and Frank ? '

Frank and Harry thought with her, you may be sure.

' 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 once '

' 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 gaoler. 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 gaoler-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. We agreed it was best she should go alone, speaking stealthily to one another, and under our breaths, like persons engaged in an act they felt ashamed in doing.

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. 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 ? Farewell, mother ; I think I never can forgive you ; something hath broken between us that no tears nor years can repair. I always said I was alone : you never loved me, never—and were jealous of me from the time I sat on my father's knee. Let me go away, the sooner the better : I can bear to be with you no more.'

' Go, child,' says her mother, still very stern ; ' go and bend your proud knees and ask forgiveness ; go, pray in solitude for humility and repentance. 'Tis not your reproaches that make me unhappy, 'tis your hard heart, my poor Beatrix : may God soften it, and teach you one day to feel for your mother.'

If my mistress was cruel, at least she never could be got to own as much. Her haughtiness quite overtopped Beatrix's ; and, if the girl had a proud spirit, I very much fear it came to her by inheritance.

CHAPTER X

Our Guest quits 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.

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: '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 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.

The Bishop informed us that he 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. 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, drily, that Beatrix was not at home that morning : my Lord Bishop was too busy with great affairs to trouble himself much about the presence or absence of any lady, however beautiful.

Next morning Dr. A——came from the Palace with a look of great alarm : the shocks the Queen had had the day before had acted on her severely ; he had been sent for, and had ordered her to be blooded.

No visit could be paid to the Queen on that day at any rate ; and when our guest above gave his signal that he was awake, the Doctor, the Bishop, and Colonel Esmond waited upon the Prince and brought him their news, cheerful or dubious. The Doctor had to go away presently, but promised to keep the Prince constantly acquainted with what was taking place at the Palace hard by. His counsel was, and the Bishop's, that as soon as ever the Queen's malady took a favourable turn, the Prince should be introduced to her bedside ; the Council summoned ; the guard at Kensington and St. James's, of which two regiments were to be entirely relied on, and one known not to be hostile, would declare for the Prince, as the Queen would before the Lords of her Council, designating him as the heir to her throne.

With locked doors, and Colonel Esmond acting as secretary, the Prince and his Lordship of Rochester passed many hours of this day, composing Proclamations and Addresses to the Country, to the Scots, to the Clergy, to the People of London and England ; announcing the arrival of the exile

descendant of three Sovereigns, and his acknowledgment by his sister as heir to the throne. Every safeguard for their liberties, the Church and People could ask, was promised to them. The Bishop could answer for the adhesion of very many prelates, who besought of their flocks and brother ecclesiastics to recognise the sacred right of the future Sovereign and to purge the country of the sin of rebellion.

During the composition of these papers, more messengers than one came from the Palace regarding the state of the august patient there lying At mid-day she was somewhat better; at evening the torpor again seized her and she wandered in her mind At night Dr. A—was with us again, with a report rather more favourable; no instant danger at any rate was apprehended. In the course of the last two years Her Majesty had had many attacks similar, but more severe.

By this time we had finished a half-dozen of Proclamations (the wording of them so as to offend no parties, and not to give umbrage to Whigs or Dissenters, required very great caution), and the young Prince, who had indeed shown, during a long day's labour, both alacrity at seizing the information given him, and ingenuity and skill in turning the phrases which were to go out signed by his name, here exhibited a good-humour and thoughtfulness that ought to be set down to his credit.

'Were these papers to be mislaid,' says he, 'or our scheme to come to mishap, my Lord Esmond's writing would bring him to a place where I heartily hope never to see him; and so, by your leave, I will copy the papers myself, though I am not very strong in spelling; and if they are found they will implicate none but the person they most concern'; and so, having carefully copied the Proclamations out, the Prince burned those in Colonel Esmond's handwriting: 'And now, and now, gentlemen,' says he, 'let us go to supper, and drink a glass with the ladies. My Lord Esmond, you

will sup with us to-night ; you have given us of late too little of your company.'

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 sulkily ; 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.

The next day, we heard from our informer at Kensington that the Queen was somewhat better, and had been up for an hour, though she was not well enough yet to receive any visitor.

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, 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 Highness 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 ? 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,' 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 gaol, 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 and you send her to a Bastile 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 If I have Garters to give away, 'tis to noblemen who are not so ready to think evil 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 gesticulation 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. 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 '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 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.

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 councillor the wrongs which, according to his version, he had received from the gentlemen of the Esmond family.

They entered the drawing-room presently together, and if the Prince felt any offence against us on the previous night, at present he exhibited none. He offered a hand to each gentleman with great courtesy. 'If all your bishops preach so well as Dr. 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; 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 Balked 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. 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 barrack 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, and 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 broken 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 barrack 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. 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 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, saying he was going to the Bishop of Rochester's house at Chelsey. 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 Chelsey, 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, and went once more 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, 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 another.

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.'

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, the footman, 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 today: 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 over night 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 written 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.'

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 *banale* 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 him, riding towards Castlewood at a rapid pace.

'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. 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.

'There are more ways than one,' says Esmond, 'of entering such a great house as this,' 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, and asked the man (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. After supper 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

On hearing the porter's story 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. 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'

Esmond then 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 the bed, seeing two men in his chamber: 'Qui est la?' 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 Castlewood, and to report of what hath happened in London. Pursuant to the King'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 Castlewood, 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

' We shall take care,' says Esmond, ' not much oftener to offend in that particular If your Majesty will please to enter the next apartment,' he went on, 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. Germains 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, 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 his 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 broken—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 broken 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 signed 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 roused 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 Basilike*. 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' there 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, 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 crest-fallen 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 a 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 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 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 forgotten 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. I saw him in Flanders after this, whence he went to Rome to the headquarters of his Order : and actually reappeared among us in America, very old, and busy, and hopeful. I am not sure that he did not assume the hatchet and mocassins there ; and, attired in a blanket and war-paint, skulk about a missionary amongst the Indians. He lies buried in our neighbouring province of Maryland now, with

a cross over him, and a mound of earth above him ; under which that unquiet spirit is for ever at a pace.

With the sound of King George's trumpets all the vain hopes of the weak and foolish young Pretender were blown away ; and with that music, too, I may say, the drama of my own life was ended. That happiness, which hath subsequently crowned it, cannot be written in words ; 'tis of its nature sacred and secret, and not to be spoken of, though the heart be ever so full of thankfulness, save to Heaven and the One Ear alone—to one fond being, the truest and tenderest and purest wife ever man was blessed with. As I think of the immense happiness which was in store for me, and of the depth and intensity of that love which, for so many years, hath blessed me, I own to a transport of wonder and gratitude for such a boon—nay, am thankful to have been endowed with a heart capable of feeling and knowing the immense beauty and value of the gift which God hath bestowed upon me. Sure, love *vincit omnia* : is immeasurably above all ambition, more precious than wealth, more noble than name. He knows not life who knows not that : he hath not felt the highest faculty of the soul who hath not enjoyed it. In the name of my wife I write the completion of hope, and the summit of happiness. To have such a love is the one blessing, in comparison of which all earthly joy is of no value ; and to think of her, is to praise God.

It was at Bruxelles, whither we retreated after the failure of our plot—our Whig friends advising us 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. We had been so accustomed to an extreme intimacy and confidence, and had lived so long and tenderly together, that we might have gone on to the end without thinking of a closer tie : but circumstances brought about that event which so prodigiously multiplied my happiness and hers (for which I humbly thank Heaven). Her son's house was not a home for my dear

mistress ; my poor Frank was weak, as perhaps all our race hath been, and led by women. Those around him were imperious, and in a terror of his mother's influence over him, lest he should recant, and deny the creed which he had adopted by their persuasion. The difference of their religion separated the son and the mother : my dearest mistress felt that she was severed from her children and alone in the world —alone but for one constant servant on whose fidelity, praised be Heaven, she could count 'Twas after a scene of ignoble quarrel on the part of Frank's wife and mother (for the poor lad had been made to marry the whole of that German family with whom he had connected himself), that I found my mistress one day in tears, and then besought her to confide herself to the care and devotion of one who, by God's help, would never forsake her. And then the tender matron, as beautiful in her autumn, and as pure as virgins in their spring, with blushes of love and 'eyes of meek surrender,' yielded to my respectful importunity, and consented to share my home. Let the last words I write thank her, and bless her who hath blessed it

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 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 Castlewood, 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 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 a 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.

NOTES

BOOK I

CHAPTER I

Page 1. **Lighted upon**—found.

,, 2. **Le pauvre enfant**... ...—the poor child, he has nobody but us.

,, 3. **The Roundheads**...—the nickname given to the soldiers of the Parliament in the Civil War which ended in the establishment of the Commonwealth under Cromwell.

,, 4. **Performance as a trencherman**—*i.e.*, the good appetite he revealed.

A bumper—a large glassful of wine.

'**The King**'—Esmond, who was loyal to the Stuarts, means the exiled Prince of that race, and not King William, the reigning monarch.

CHAPTER II

Page 5. **23 Eliz.**—in the twenty-third year of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

King James the First—the Stuart King James VI of Scotland, who succeeded Queen Elizabeth on the English throne in 1603.

Elector Palatine—*i.e.*, the ruler of a German State called the Palatinate. He was King James's nephew.

King Charles the First—son of King James the First. He was beheaded in 1649.

His two sons—Charles II, who came to the throne after the Restoration, in 1660 ; and James II, who reigned from his brother's death in 1685 until his deposition in 1688.

Page 6. **Virginia**—then an English colony in the southern part of what is now the United States.

The Usurper's—*i.e.*, Oliver Cromwell's

In holy orders.—*i.e.*, a clergyman.

Worcester—the last battle of the Civil War; fought and won by Cromwell in 1651. He called it his 'crowning mercy.'

Queen Henrietta Maria—the Queen of King Charles I.

Breda—in the Netherlands, the town in which the negotiations for the Restoration took place.

,, 7. **Tangier**—on the north coast of Africa. It was ceded to England as part of the dowry of Charles II's queen, Catherine of Braganza, and a garrison was maintained there until 1684.

Winchester—a cathedral city in Hampshire, and King Alfred's ancient capital.

The Emperor—*i.e.*, of Austria.

,, 9. **Jezebel**—a queen whose cruel deeds may be read in the Book of Kings in the Bible.

No-Popery—the popular antagonism to the Roman Catholic religion was increasingly strong in the years that preceded the Revolution of 1688.

CHAPTER III

Page 10. **Ealing**—now a suburb of London.

Huguenots—French Protestants.

,, 11. **C'est bien ca**—it's well as it is.

Booth—a rude structure to serve as a play-house.

Took water on the river—journeyed by boat.

,, 13. **The old woman of Banbury Cross**—an allusion to a well known nursery thyme.

Brat—little urchin.

Page 13. **The Empress of Ealing**—the wicked tragedy-queen already referred to.

,, 15. **A wicket**—a small gate.

The wooded height—the tree-covered rising ground.

A pretty many—Thackeray occasionally employs, as here, archaic expressions, to create the 17th century atmosphere

,, 16. **His order**—*i.e.*, the Jesuits, or Society of Jesus.

CHAPTER IV

Page 18. **Piquet and cribbage**—two card games.

A rubber—the best of three games.

Pretty comfortable together—on good terms with each other.

,, 19. **Tric-trac**—a game like back-gammon.

The Prince of Orange—William III, who became king in 1688

CHAPTER V

Page 20. **Silentium**—the priest naturally uses the Latin word.

,, 21. **We are to be tolerated**—*i.e.*, the Roman Catholics.

Gentlemen of my cloth—*i.e.*, Jesuits.

Brazier—an open pan with glowing coals.

,, 22 **On a buffet**—a small cupboard.

Iron staunchions—window bars.

Orange cockade—King William's badge.

,, 23. **Quinquina**—an older form of *quinine*.

,, 25. **The King was ready**—the deposed James II.

,, 27. **Newbury**—near Reading, where the rising was to take place.

The Ecossais—the Scots regiments at Newbury.

General Ginckel—who commanded King William's Dutch troops.

CHAPTER VI

Page 29. **Like Mary, Queen of Scots**—who was executed by Queen Elizabeth for political reasons.

,, 30. **A non-juring peer**—one who did not swear the oath of allegiance to King William and Queen Mary.

,, 31. **At last came to 'burn'**—came near to finding the hidden papers

Night-rail—night-dress

,, 32. **The children of Adam**—see the Book of Genesis

,, 33. **Dick the Scholar**—Richard Steele (1672—1729), the famous friend of Addison, and author of many delightful essays in the *Tatler* and the *Spectator*.

Construe—translate

Hold thy prate—*i.e.*, cease talking.

Mr. Cudworth—a Cambridge Professor and writer on religious subjects

,, 34. **Mr. Sheepskin**—a lawyer uses sheepskin or parchment for his documents.

,, 35. **In his humanities**—in his knowledge of the classics They still speak of 'the *Humanity* class room' in Glasgow university.

Famous school and famous university—Charter-house and Oxford.

,, 36. **Bristol**—a seaport on the west of England, of greater importance in the 17th century than now.

Battle of the Boyne—where James II received his final defeat at the hands of King William III.

Trim—near Dublin.

,, 37. **Unicum filium suum dilectissimum**—(Latin) his only and well-beloved son. The priest naturally writes in Latin and borrows the phrase from the Vulgate.

CHAPTER VII

Page 40. **He would have subscribed to**—he would have accepted and believed.

,, 42. **Praising his parts**—*Cf.* the phrase 'a lad of parts,' meaning a very intelligent boy, a talented youth.

CHAPTER VIII

,, 45 **Or on mine**—Thackeray makes Esmond write these memoirs in the third person as a rule, with occasional deviations into the first person, as in this case, for verisimilitude.

,, 46. **Reeking**—with infection.

,, 47. **Tambour-frame**—embroidery frame.

,, 48. **Montaigne's essays**—Montaigne (1533—92) a French essayist

CHAPTER IX

,, 49. **Venice glass**—a small mirror.

,, 50. **A bear he was**—figuratively for an uncouth and unpolished person.

,, 51. **The Lord gave**.... —a biblical expression from the Book of Job in the Bible.

As gaunt as a greyhound—the Viscount naturally uses sporting figures of speech

,, 53. **A merchant on Change**—*i.e.*, on the Stock Exchange

Laid out her all upon—centred all her hopes in

Book-man—lover of books and study.

Corderius and Lily—authors of Latin grammars.

,, 54. **Green Sleeves**—a popular ballad of the period

Lillibullero—a political song of the time attacking King James II.

,, 55. **Spinnet**—a musical instrument.

,, 56. **Trumpington**—a small village near Cambridge.

Page 58. **Monsieur Galland**—a French professor who translated the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments* into French early in the 18th century.

Alnaschar—a well-known character in one of the tales in the *Arabian Nights*.

CHAPTER X

,, 59. **Chelsey**—Chelsea is a suburb of London, on the river.

In French—she had been for years in France, following the court of King Charles II in its exile.

,, 60. **A pensioner**—one who pays his own way in college.

The famous Mr. Newton—Sir Isaac Newton, who enunciated the law of Gravitation, was a Fellow of Trinity College in 1667.

,, 61. **Kept his chapels**—put in the compulsory attendances at the College chapel.

,, 62. **Don Dismallo**—the Spanish for 'Sir Dismal.' Elsewhere Esmond is styled Young Killjoy, Le Grand Serieux, Colonel Noir, etc.

Jacobite—the name given to a supporter of the exiled Stuarts. *Jacobus* in Latin for James.

,, 63. **A-gadding after all the Nine Muses**—*i.e.*, reading promiscuously and aimlessly.

,, **The Protestant persecutions**—as the result of the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes by Louis XIV in 1685.

Wars of Turenne and Conde—the Civil Wars in France between Parliament and court during the minority of Louis XIV.

Escrime—Sword play.

,, 64. **Assume the cassock and bands**—*i.e.*, become a clergyman.

CHAPTER XI

Page 65. **Was shooting up**—was rapidly growing tall.

,, 66. **Called a billiard**—this is the French form; more usual *billiards*.

,, 69. **Brought a young friend**—*i.e*, the Duke of Berwick. *Cf.* Book III Chapter VII.

,, 70. **Tyburn**—near Hyde Park, then the scene of public executions.

CHAPTER XII

Page 72. **The bel air**—a distinguished appearance.

Beauties and toasts—beautiful ladies of society.

On the Danube, etc.,—the Turks were repulsed from Vienna in 1683.

,, 73 **Beau langage**—(French), the fine language of compliment.

Alsatia—a district of London to which resorted all the rogues and rascals of the time. Scott describes it in *The Fortunes of Nigel*.

,, 74. **Ranged with**—took the side of.

CHAPTER XIII.

Page 75. **No portion**—no marriage portion.

,, 77. **You are a model**—spoken ironically, of course.

,, 78. **Chaise**—a light carriage.

Over the downs—high-lying and undulating plains along the south coast of England.

,, 79. **Touchy**—easily roused to jealousy.

We read in Shakespeare—*Othello*, Act III, scene 3.

,, 81. **Argus**—fabled to have a hundred eyes.

Botte de Jesuite—a skilful stroke in fencing which Esmond learned from the disguised Jesuit Moreau at Cambridge.

,, 83. **Newmarket**—a well known horse-racing centre near Cambridge.

CHAPTER XIV.

Page 89. **Gray's Inn**—one of the Inns of Court, and the residence of lawyers.

Duke Street—where the Duke's theatre was situated.

Mr Betterton—a very famous actor of the period.

.. 90. **Gloriana**—a title for a lady-love. Queen Elizabeth was so called by the courtiers

.. 91. **When the buttons...** —*i.e.*, when the fight is with bare blades instead of foils.

.. 92. **Jack Westbury**—Dick Steele's captain, who came to Castlewood, as described in Chap VI.

Hal—a short form of Harry

.. 93. **Mr. Wycherley** (1640-1715)—a Restoration dramatist.

Mrs. Bracegirdle—a celebrated actress

Bullock Fair—the name implying that his interests were agricultural.

.. 94. **Will Mountford**—an actor who was murdered in 1692.

.. 95. **Moidores**—a Portuguese coin worth then about twenty rupees.

An Irishman—and therefore possessing a ready wit.

A profound congee—a low bow.

Mons and Namur—he had fought in the wars on the Continent.

.. 96. **Chairs**—a sort of palanquin, carried by four men, and the usual conveyance of the period.

Leicester field—a field in which duels were frequently fought.

.. 98. **Mr. Atterbury**—a celebrated clergyman, who became Dean of Westminster in 1713, and was banished in 1723 for his Jacobite activities.

.. 100. **Jacob... Isaac... Esau**—a well-known story from early Jewish history told in the book of *Genesis*.

„ 101. **Benedicti benedicentes**—(Latin) 'blessed are those who bless.'

BOOK II

CHAPTER I

Page 107. **A deliquium**—unconsciousness

Pleaded his clergy—in the old days ecclesiastics were allowed the privilege of exemption from the ordinary trial on a criminal charge ; the privilege being gradually extended to all who could read and write, and continuing until its abolition in the 19th century.

„ 108. **The vacant living**—the benefice in the patronage of the Lords of Castlewood

„ 109. **Whose gown had descended**—as the mantle of the Prophet Elijah descended upon Elisha (II Kings, Chapter 2.)

CHAPTER II

Page 110. **I protest**—*i e*, I affirm or asseverate.

The Prince's and Princess's Court—*i e*, the Court of Princess Anne (afterwards Queen) and her husband, Prince George of Denmark.

Gentleman-waiter—gentleman-in-waiting.

„ 111. **A pair of oars**—a small row-boat.

Temple Garden—the garden leading down to the Thames from the Middle Temple and Inner Temple where the barristers lived.

„ 112. **Somerset House**—originally a palace belonging to the Duke of Somerset, Protector of England in Henry VI's reign, now Government offices.

Westminster—the houses of Parliament and the Abbey.

Lambeth..... palace—the London residence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Primate of England.

Surrey—the county on the south bank of the Thames at London.

Page 112. Like the towers of Cybele—according to Greek mythology Cybele was the mother of the gods. Tall trees, such as the pine and the oak, and peaks were sacred to her. Thackeray may be thinking of Byron's lines, in *Childe-parold* (IV. l) :—

> "She looks a sea Cybele, fresh from ocean,
> Rising with her tiara of proud towers."

,, **114. Mais vous etes**.....—you are indeed a noble young man.

Noblesse oblige—my noble birth obliges me to do so.

Loud intriguing—harmless plotting.

,, **115. Ensign**—lieutenant.

Gratulation—loud rejoicing.

Ludgate Hill—upon which stands St. Paul's Cathedral.

The Garter—a very high order of Knighthood.

,, **116. That fury of a woman**—the Duchess of Marlborough.

CHAPTER III

Page 120. Pall Mall—a street in London west of Charing Cross, in which St. James's palace stands.

By every packet—by every vessel carrying letters

Ferule—a rod for punishing children.

Whimpered... .. **lesson**—continuing the metaphor of the schoolmistress, Adversity.

CHAPTER IV.

Page 121. Spithead—a roadstead between the Isle of Wight and the south coast of England.

Admiral Shovell—Sir Cloudesley Shovell was in command of the English navy at the time.

Corporal prostration—an account of sea-sickness.

Finisterre—the cape on the north-west coast of Spain.

Lisbon—on the river Tagus, the capital of Portugal.

Page 122. **That immortal story of Cervantes**—*Don Quixote*, written by Cervantes, who was born in 1547, and died in the same year as Shakespeare (1616).

„ 123. **A mitre**—a bishop's insignia.

Cadiz—a Spanish port on the west coast.

Alameda—the fashionable promenade.

Murillo—a great Spanish painter of the 17th century

St Mary's—a port north of Cadiz.

Vigo Bay—in the north of Spain.

„ 124. **Promise of a company**—*i.e.*, promotion to Captain.

Levees—receptions.

„ 125. **The Mall**—the resort in London of people of fashion, a shady promenade in St. James's Park.

A dumpling—a round pudding, plain and solid in appearance.

Sarah Jennings—the Duchess of Marlborough.

Lacquey in black—the menial in dark clothes. As domestic chaplain Tusher was a dependant, as a clergyman he dressed in black.

„ 126. **Farnham**—halfway to Winchester.

The famous college—Winchester college, a well-known public school, founded in 1393 by William of Wykeham.

„ 127. **The Cathedral**—Winchester Cathedral is very famous.

CHAPTER V.

Page 128. **Choristers**—members of the Cathedral choir.

Eagle—the reading-desk in a church.

In the stalls—the ornate Cathedral pews.

Monsieur Rigaud's portrait—referred to again in Chapter VII of Book III. Rigaud was a French artist of the period.

The anthem—a part of the religious service which is sung, with elaborate musical accompaniment.

Page 129. **The blessing given**—the benediction pronounced.

,, 130 **Reddas incolumem... Septimi, etc.,**—Quotations from the Latin poet Horace, which Frank had been reading with his tutor.

Gaditanian—he is referring to the Cadiz expedition.

,, 131 **The verger**—church caretaker.

,, 133. **When the Lord turned, etc.**—from Psalm 126.

The 29th of December—*Cf.* Book I, Chapter XI, page 71.

,, 134 **Holy advent season**—the holy period that precedes the day of Christ's birth (Christmas).

Houses of religion—convents.

,, 135. **To bind and to loose**—*i.e.*, to hear confession, inflict penance, and pronounce absolution.

CHAPTER VI.

Page 136. **Oak-parlour**—lined with oak-wood.

Prodigal—Christ's parable of the Prodigal Son is familiar to all English readers, (*St. Luke XV. 11*).

,, 137. **Ramillies**—the battle described in Chapter XI.

Set your cap at the captain—lure him on, fascinate him.

,, 138. **N'est-ce pas**—Is she not (beautiful) ?

,, 140. **Steenkirk**—a lace neck-cloth.

,, 141. **Lindamiras and Ardelias**—conventional names for ladies of the romances of the time.

,, 142. **A brewer's relict**—a brewer's widow.

Jog-trot loves—urged on, not by passion, but by pecuniary motives.

,, 143. **Red-haired Scotch sergeant**—the Scots are, as a race, fair or red-haired, and impassive or 'dour.'

Assembly—a social meeting of the leading people of the county, generally taking the form of a dance.

CHAPTER VII

Page 144. **Singeing my wings**—the metaphor is that of the moth and the candle.

„ 145. **Aide-de-camp**—the officer through whom the General conveys his orders.

„ 147. **Madonnas**—*i.e.*, Murillo's pictures of Our Lady, the mother of God (*vide* Chapter IV).

CHAPTER VIII

Page 148. **Blenheim**—the first of Marlborough's great victories; in Bavaria.

Harwich—in Essex.

Maesland Sluys—a port in Holland, near the mouth of the Maas **Maestricht** is farther up that river.

The Hague—the capital of Holland.

The Mozelle—a tributary of the Rhine, which it joins at **Coblentz.**

„ 149. **Marshall Tallard**—the leader of the French forces. He was taken prisoner in this battle.

The Prince of Savoy—Prince Eugene, a famous leader of the Austrian armies, and Marlborough's ally.

„ 151. **Waters of Donau**—the Danube.

„ 152. **Hants**—*i.e.*, Hampshire.

Eurydice—the wife of Orpheus, who lost her by looking back as he was leading her out of Hades, the kingdom of Pluto.

CHAPTER IX

Page 153. **Pall Mall and Hyde Park**—fashionable parts of London **Ghent and Brussels**—large Belgian cities.

„ 154 **Dr. Bentley**—a celebrated Greek scholar.

Sir Christopher Wren—whose name is chiefly associated with the rebuilding of St. Paul's Cathedral.

Page 154. The Prince of Wales—who enters the story at Chapter VIII of Book III.

Cavalier songs—songs of the supporters of the Stuarts.

„ **155. Congreve**—(1670-1729) a contemporary dramatist. *The Mourning Bride* and *The Way of the World* are his best known works.

Prince Hal...Ancient Pistol—in *King Henry IV*.

„ **156. Mistress of the Robes**—The Duchess of Marlborough.

Box.....pit—in the theatre.

CHAPTER X

Page 159. Bussing—embracing, kissing.

Across the water—to escape one's debtors.

„ **162. Have sung it so**—have written such verses about it.

„ **163. Henrys' and Edwards'**—Henry V won the battle of Agincourt (1415); Edward III and his son Edward the Black Prince the victories of Cressy (1316) and Poictiers (1356).

Voices plebeian or patrician—*i.e.*, of commoner or nobleman.

Hector...Achilles—famous Trojan and Greek heroes respectively.

„ **164. Spouting**—reciting unceasingly.

Temple Bar—the gateway leading from the west end eastwards to Fleet Street.

Mr. Locke—a philosopher who wrote the *Essay concerning the human understanding*. He died in 1704.

Bois-le-duc—in Holland.

Mechlin—or Malines, a Belgian town noted for its lace industry.

CHAPTER XI

Page 166. **Ramillies**—in Belgium.

Chiari—in the north of Italy. The battle was fought in 1701.

Maison-du-Roy—the French Royal Household cavalry.

,, 168. **Sixty five Louis**—French gold coins.

Vive la guerre !—long live war !

,, 169. **This Helen**—Beatrix is compared to the beautiful Helen of Troy whom Paris carried off.

CHAPTER XII

Page 170. **Breviary**—book of prayers.

Holy water—A basin of consecrated water stands at the entrance to Catholic churches, and worshippers, dipping their fingers into it, make the sign of the cross, on entering and leaving the church.

,, 172. **St. George**—England's patron saint.

Passes—*i.e.*, passports.

A noble cœur—a magnanimous gentleman.

,, 174. **Vocation**—the 'call' to become a nun.

,, 175. **Verisimilitude**—likeness to truth.

,, 176. **Penzance**—in the extreme west of England, the farthest off town that could be chosen.

Demise—death.

Superior—the nun who was head of the convent.

CHAPTER XIII

Page 178. **Woodstock**—near Oxford, the nation's gift to Marlborough after Blenheim.

Mrs. Masham—who exercised a very great influence over Queen Anne towards the end of her life.

Page 178. **Mr. Harley**—who became Earl of Oxford in 1711, rose to be Prime Minister under Queen Anne. He inclined to Toryism in politics.

Almanza—in the south-east of Spain.

Duke of Berwick—see Book I, Chapter XI, Book III, Chapter VII.

,, 179. **The Chevalier de St. George**—the usual title of the exiled Stuart prince.

Dunkirk—a port in the north of France.

Monsieur de la Mothe summoned Bruges—General the Count la Mothe appeared with an army before Bruges and called upon it to surrender. **Bruges** is a large city in Belgium.

Shilly-Shallying—delay and indecision.

Oudenarde—west of Brussels.

,, 180. **Lille**—a large city in the extreme north of France.

,, 186. **Her highest tour**—her head-dress coiled high.

A ravir—to ravishment.

,, 188. **Henry St. John**—the famous Viscount Bolingbroke, Queen Anne's minister.

A Parthian glance—a killing look.

,, 190. **Uncouth**—unnatural.

BOOK III

CHAPTER I

Page 193. **Knocked under**—yielded.

A pretty sum—a considerable amount.

,, 194. **Poor retainers**—poor people whom she helped with alms.

The awful Dispenser—God Almighty.

Cared for trumps—was devoted to card play.

,, 196. **Malplaquet**—on the border of France and Belgium.

Mons—in Belgium, a famous battle-centre.

Page 197. **A fine comedy**—this appears to be *The Faithful Fool* of Chapter III.

„ 198. **Hanoverians**—those who favoured the succession of the Elector's branch of the family to the English throne.

Our picquets—our Guards.

The Liffey—which flows through Dublin, in Ireland.

The Loire—a river in France.

Brogue—his Irish accent.

„ 199. **Pas lui**—not that one.

L'autre—the other one.

On the 11th of September—*i.e.*, at the battle of Malplaquet.

Pouching—putting into his pocket.

„ 200. **By a trumpet**—by a herald.

Corporal John—the Duke of Marlborough, whose Christian name was John. An even greater soldier was similarly nicknamed 'the Little Corporal,' (Napoleon Bonaparte)

CHAPTER II

Page 201. **Ostend**—a Belgian port.

„ 204. **White sheet.. candle...barefoot**—the public symbols of Frank Castlewood's conversion.

Moue—grimace, expression.

„ 205. **Queen Bess**—Elizabeth, the Protestant Queen of England (1558-1603).

Queen Mary—the Catholic Queen of England Elizabeth's sister (1553-1558).

„ 206. **Great Mogul**—ruler of India.

Ingots—masses of precious metal, *i.e.*, bars of gold and silver.

A tulip—a flower of great beauty and variety grown from a bulb; the Dutch are especially skilful in tulip-growing

CHAPTER III

Page 207. **Her Majesty's servants**—*i.e.*, the company of actors maintained by the Queen.

Cato—Addison's tragedy (1713) which ran for thirty-five nights.

„ 208. **Dashed off a copy of verses**—composed some verses in the heat of his emotion.

„ 209. **Scots Parliament**—Although the Union of the Crowns took place in 1603, the Parliaments of Scotland and England were not united until a hundred years later.

„ 210. **Jacob . Rachel**—The story is to be found in the Book of *Genesis*, Chapter 29.

„ 211. **Wigwam**—a tent of wicker and skins used by the North American Indians.

Mohock—the name of a tribe of Red Indians.

Mon ami—my friend.

„ 213. **Philandering**—sentimental behaviour.

A mob-cap—worn during the performance of domestic duties.

„ 214. **Desdemona**—the unfortunate heroine of Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Routs—society gatherings, dances.

Darby and Joan—proverbial of a loving old married couple.

Gawrie—the flying woman, who preserves the life of Peter Wilkins in the Book of that name, published 1750.

„ 215. **Highlands**—the northern part of Scotland.

„ 216. **Your favourite play**—Shakespeare's *Othello*.

„ 217. **The Garter and the Thisle**—the orders of Knighthood of England and Scotland.

„ 220. **James Douglas**—the Duke's own name.

CHAPTER IV

Page 223. **Prior**—(1664-1721) diplomatist and poet. He was at the French Court from 1712 to 1714, and was then imprisoned for treason until 1718.

La bonne cause triomphera—the good cause will triumph.

A la sante de la bonne cause—to the health of the good cause.

His father and uncle—the Kings James II and Charles II.

224. **From Huntingdon**—the birthplace of Oliver Cromwell.

Show him Whitehall—to remind him that the King may not flout the nation; alluding to the execution of Charles I.

Dr. Swift—(1667—1745) the famous author of *Gulliver's* Travels and other satires, was a political writer on the Tory side and intimate with Bolingbroke

Macbeth—Shakespeare's play

CHAPTER V

Page 226 **Chased salver**—an ornamented gold dish, depicting the love of Mars, the god of war, for Venus, the goddess of love, in classical mythology.

Herodias...charger—The story may be read in *St. Mark*, Chapter 6.

,, 228. **The army of Vanity Fair**—*i.e.*, those whose business it is to satisfy society's vain desires.

Almoner—one who advised her in her charitable works, her spiritual adviser.

CHAPTER VI

Page 234. **In sable**—in black, for mourning.

Shagreen—rough untanned leather.

,, 235. **Preux chevalier**—gallant knight.

Page 236. Lorraine—where resided the Chevalier de St. George, the exiled Stuart Prince.

Buccaneers—pirates.

„ 237. **Droning**—monotonous and spiritless.

CHAPTER VII

„ 238. **World of Pall Mall**—*i.e.*, people in society.

Coffee-houses—where in those days gentlemen met as they do now in clubs.

„ 239. **Was the sword and buckler**—was the strong man of the Stuart cause.

The old King—Louis XIV.

„ 240. **Mr. Lesly**—a Jacobite supporter.

Mr. Collier (1650—1736)—a non-juring clergyman and writer.

„ 242. **Caballing**—plotting and intriguing.

CHAPTER VIII

„ 244. **Eikon Basilike**—a book describing the sufferings of Charles I, and supposed at the time to be written by the Royal Martyr himself. The words mean ' royal likeness.'

„ 245. **Rochester**—a town in Kent, on the way to Dover.

„ 247. **The K———**,—the Chevalier de St. George.

Le grand serieux—the great serious (gentleman.)

Canterbury—the cathedral city in Kent.

„ 248. **Over against**—opposite.

Tenez, elle est, etc.,—Stop, she is pretty, the little mother, by my faith as a Chevalier ! She is charming ; but the other one, who is this nymph, this star which glitters, this Diana who is descending upon us ?

„ 249. **Have a care to**—take care of.

„ 251. **Golconda**—in India, noted for its diamonds.

„ 253. **The Bishop of Rochester**—Dr. Atterbury.

Colonel Noir—Colonel Black (French.)

„ 254. **Devotion**– *i.e.*, religious sincerity.

CHAPTER IX

Page 255. **Boulogne in Picardy**—a port on the English Channel, suitable for an invasion of England. Napoleon collected his armies there for that purpose a hundred years later.

The fidelity of...the Scots—the Stuart dynasty was the ancient royal line of Scotland.

The first Minister—my Lord of Oxford and Mortimer.

„ 256. **The Queen's Abigail**—*i.e.*, hand-maid, servant.

"And she (Abigail) arose, and bowed herself on her face to the earth, and said, Behold, let thine hand-maid be a servant to wash the feet of the servants of the Lord." (*1. Samuel*, Chapter XXV).

„ 264. **Hounslow**—west of London, a famous resort of highwaymen.

CHAPTER X

„ 266. **Post-chaise**—travelling coach.

Billet—short note or letter.

Be ready against morning—have your preparations complete for necessary action next morning.

Bacchus—the God of Wine in classical mythology.

„ 267. **Quakers**—a rather extreme Protestant sect, who eschewed worldly vanities.

„ 268. **Umbrage**—offence.

„ 271. **Lache**—dastardly.

Bastille—the great prison in Paris, destroyed at the Revolution.

CHAPTER XI

„ 273. **The two companies**—of soldiers on guard duty at the palace.

Whig—*i.e.*, Hanoverian in politics and opposed to the Jacobites.

„ 275. **The green before Kensington**—a stretch of grass park opposite the palace gate.

Page 276. **Mr. George, nor Mr. Dragon**—referring to the legend of St. George and the Dragon.

Pay the reckoning—settle the bill.

CHAPTER XII

,, 278. **Banale phrases**—platitudes.

,, 280. **Qui est la**—who is there ?

,, 281. **The King.....the Prince of Wales**—refering to the same person He claimed to be King, and he would have been declared heir (*i.e.* Prince of Wales)

,, 282. **Monmouth**—a son of Charles II, who rose in rebellion against his uncle King James II and was executed after Sedgemoor.

,, 283. **Armoire**—cupboard.

Merci—thank you.

Eh bien etc.—now, Viscount, there remains only one thing for us to do.

Embrassons nous—let us embrace.

,, 284. **Hangar**—coach house.

Alton—on the road between Hampshire and London.

Mitred—having on it a bishop's crest.

,, 285. **Boniface**—the name of a landlord of an inn, from the name of the innkeeper in Farquhar's play '*The Beaux Stratagem* (1707).

,, 286. **Hammersmith**—a few miles to the west of London.

Tabards—cloaks.

Hatchet and mocassins—*i.e.*, disguise himself as a Red Indian, whose weapon is a hatchet and whose boots are called mocassins.

Marylard—adjoining Virginia.

,, 287. **Vincit omnia**—conquers all things.

,, 288. **Potomac**—the chief river in Virginia.

Indian summer—a period of genial weather at the end of harvest.

,, 289. **Negroes**—African slaves.

Printed by RAMZAN ALI SHAH, at the National Press, Allahabad.