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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
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BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
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ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ 'It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	1850
„ <i>Ruth</i>	1853
„ <i>Cranford</i>	1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door, 'handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

' Where's the missus ? ' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute ; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself ' reverend \ and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. Nay," says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ?'

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. 'They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ?'

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ?' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. 'But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ?'

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ?'

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ 'It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	.1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	.1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	.1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	.1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	.1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	.1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	.1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	.1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	.1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	.1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	.1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	.1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	.1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	.1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	.1850
„ <i>Ruth</i> .	.1853
„ <i>Cranford</i> .	.1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	.1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	.1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	.1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	.1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	.1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	.1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	.1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	.1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	.1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

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COUSIN PHILLIS

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COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door, 'handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, 'Now, I will give out the psalm, "Come all harmonious tongues,"⁷ to be sung to "Mount Ephraim" tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

'I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; 'but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. 'Nay,' says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ? '

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. ' They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ? '

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ? ' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. ' But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ? '

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ? '

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ? '

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdrew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open casements of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidging-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like ; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss ; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity ; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him ; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were ; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him ; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man ; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Hold-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours, " E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	1850
„ <i>Ruth</i>	1853
„ <i>Cranford</i>	1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
November 12		1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door, 'handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. Nay," says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ?'

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. 'They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ?'

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ?' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. 'But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ?'

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ?'

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ?'

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdrew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open casements of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like ; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss ; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity ; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him ; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were ; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him ; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man ; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of? her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours, " E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words employed. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clomp of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's a the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

'Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

'Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

'I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

'Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

'And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

'Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well!' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ?' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour !' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too!' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ?' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?’

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

‘I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open casement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

ⁱ"Od rot 'em !" said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she wakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '
' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"——There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

' " She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

' I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one ; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

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BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



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ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	.1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	.1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	.1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	.1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	.1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	.1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	.1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	.1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	.1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	.1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	.1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	.1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	.1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	.1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	.1850
„ <i>Ruth</i> .	.1853
„ <i>Cranford</i> .	.1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	.1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	.1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	.1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	.1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	.1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	.1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	.1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	.1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	.1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane ; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door ; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door,' handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was ! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. 'Nay," says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ? '

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. ' They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ? '

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ? ' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. ' But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ? '

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ? '

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ? '

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdi'ew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open case-ments of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like ; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss ; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity ; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him ; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were ; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him ; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man ; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of? her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours,
" E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words employed. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clomp of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's a the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

'Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

'Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

'I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

'Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

'And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

'Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten ; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course ; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby ; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting ; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well!' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ?' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour !' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too!' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ?' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?'

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

'I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open oasement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

ⁱ"Od rot 'em !" said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she wakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '
' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"——There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

' " She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

' I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

CHAPTER IV

* BY and by the inhabitants of Duncombe began to have parties in my honour. Mr. Morgan told me it was on my account, or I don't think I should have found it out. But he was pleased at every fresh invitation, and rubbed his hands, and chuckled, as if it was a compliment to himself, as in truth it was.

' Meanwhile, the arrangement with Mrs. Rose had been brought to a conclusion. She was to bring her furniture, and place it in a house, of which I was to pay the rent. She was to be the mistress, and, in return, she was not to pay anything for her board. Mr. Morgan took the house, and delighted in advising and settling all my affairs. I was partly indolent, and partly amused, and was altogether passive. The house he took for me was near his own : it had two sitting-rooms downstairs, opening into each other by folding-doors, which were, however, kept shut in general. The back room was my consulting room (" the library," he advised me to call it), and he gave me a skull to put on the top of my bookcase, in which the medical books were all ranged on the conspicuous shelves; while Miss Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray were, by Mr. Morgan himself, skilfully placed in a careless way, upside down or with their backs turned to the wall. The front parlour was to be the dining-room, and the room above was furnished with Mrs. Rose's drawing-room chairs and table, though I found she preferred sitting downstairs in the dining-room close to the window, where, between every stitch, she could look up and see what was going on in the street. I felt rather queer to be the master of this house, filled with another person's furniture, before I had even seen the lady whose property it was.

' Presently she arrived. Mr. Morgan met her at the inn where the coach stopped, and accompanied her to my house. I could see them out of the drawing-room

window, the little gentleman stepping daintily along, flourishing his cane, and evidently talking away. She was a little taller than he was, and in deep widow's mourning; such veils and falls, and capes and cloaks, that she looked like a black crape haycock. When we were introduced, she put up her thick veil, and looked around and sighed.

' " Your appearance and circumstances, Mr. Harrison, remind me forcibly of the time when I was married to my dear husband, now at rest. He was then, like you, commencing practice as a surgeon. For twenty years I sympathized with him, and assisted him by every means in my power, even to making up pills when the young man was out. May we live together in like harmony for an equal length of time ! May the regard between us be equally sincere, although, instead of being conjugal, it is to be maternal and filial ! "

' I am sure she had been concocting this speech in the coach, for she afterwards told me she was the only passenger. When she had ended, I felt as if I ought to have had a glass of wine in my hand, to drink, after the manner of toasts. And yet I doubt if I should have done it heartily, for I did not hope to live with her for twenty years ; it had rather a dreary sound. However, I only bowed and kept my thoughts to myself. I asked Mr. Morgan, while Mr. Rose was upstairs taking off her things, to stay to tea; to which he agreed, and kept rubbing his hands with satisfaction, saying—

" Very fine woman, sir; very fine woman ! And what a manner ! How she will receive patients, who may wish to leave a message during your absence. Such a flow of words to be sure ! "

' Mr. Morgan could not stay long after tea, as there were one or two cases to be seen. I would willingly have gone, and had my hat on, indeed, for the purpose, when he said it would not be respectful, " not the thing," to leave Mrs. Rose the first evening of her arrival,

" Tender deference to the sex—to a widow in the first months of her loneliness—requires a little consideration, my dear sir. I will leave that case at

Miss Tomkinson's for you; you will perhaps call early to-morrow morning. Miss Tomkinson is rather particular, and is apt to speak plainly if she does not think herself properly attended to."

' I had often noticed that he shuffled off the visits to Miss Tomkinson's on me, and I suspect he was a little afraid of the lady.

' It was rather a long evening with Mrs. Rose. She had nothing to do, thinking it civil, I suppose, to stop in the parlour, and not go upstairs and unpack. I begged I might be no restraint upon her if she wished to do so; but (rather to my disappointment) she smiled in a measured, subdued way, and said it would be a pleasure to her to become better acquainted with me. She went upstairs once, and my heart misgave me when I saw her come down with a clean folded pocket-handkerchief. Oh, my prophetic soul!—she was no sooner seated, than she began to give me an account of her late husband's illness, and symptoms, and death. It was a very common case, but she evidently seemed to think it had been peculiar. She had just a smattering of medical knowledge, and used the technical terms so very malapropos that I could hardly keep from smiling; but I would not have done it for the world, she was evidently in such deep and sincere distress. At last she said—

' " I have the ' dognoses' of my dear husband's complaint in my desk, Mr. Harrison, if you would like to draw up the case for the *Lancet*. I think he would have felt gratified, poor fellow, if he had been told such a compliment would be paid to his remains, and that his case should appear in those distinguished columns."

' It was rather awkward; for the case was of the very commonest, as I said before. However, I had not been even this short time in practice without having learnt a few of those noises which do not compromise one, and yet may bear a very significant construction if the listener chooses to exert a little imagination.

' Before the end of the evening, we were such Mends that she brought me down the late Mr. Rose's picture to look at. She told me she could not bear herself to

gaze upon the beloved features; but that if I would look upon the miniature, she would avert her face. I offered to take it into my own hands, but she seemed wounded at the proposal, and said she never, never could trust such a treasure out of her own possession; so she turned her head very much over her left shoulder, while I examined the likeness held by her extended right arm.

' The late Mr. Rose must have been rather a good-looking, jolly man; and the artist had given him such a broad smile, and such a twinkle about the eyes, that it really was hard to help smiling back at him. However, I restrained myself.

' At first Mrs. Rose objected to accepting any of the invitations which were sent her to accompany me to the tea-parties in the town. She was so good and simple, that I was sure she had no other reason than the one which she alleged—the short time that had elapsed since her husband's death ; or else, now that I had had some experience of the entertainments which she declined so pertinaciously, I might have suspected that she was glad of the excuse. I used sometimes to wish that I was a widow. I came home tired from a hard day's riding, and if I had but felt sure that Mr. Morgan would not come in, I should certainly have put on my slippers and my loose morning coat, and have indulged in a cigar in the garden. It seemed a cruel sacrifice to society to dress myself in tight boots, and a stiff coat, and go to a five-o'clock tea. But Mr. Morgan read me such lectures upon the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of the people among whom I was settled, and seemed so sorry, and almost hurt, when I once complained of the dullness of these parties, that I felt I could not be so selfish as to decline more than one out of three. Mr. Morgan, if he found that I had an invitation for the evening, would often take the longer round, and the more distant visits. I suspected him at first of the design, which I confess I often entertained, of shirking the parties ; but I soon found out he was really making a sacrifice of his inclinations for what he considered to be my advantage.

CHAPTER V

' THERE was one invitation which seemed to promise a good deal of pleasure. Mr. Bullock (who is the attorney of Duncombe) was married a second time to a lady from a large provincial town; she wished to lead the fashion—a thing very easy to do, for every one was willing to follow her. So instead of giving a tea-party in my honour, she proposed a picnic to some old hall in the neighbourhood; and really the arrangements sounded tempting enough. Every patient who had seemed full of the subject; both those who were invited and those who were not. There was a moat round the house, with a boat on it; and there was a gallery in the hall, from which music sounded delightfully. The family to whom the place belonged were abroad, and lived at a newer and grander mansion when they were at home; there were only a farmer and his wife in the old hall, and they were to have the charge of the preparations. The little, kind-hearted town was delighted when the sun shone bright on the October morning of our picnic; the shopkeepers and cottagers all looked pleased as they saw the cavalcade gathering at Mr. Bullock's door. We were somewhere about twenty in number; a "silent few", she called us; but I thought we were quite enough. There were the Miss Tomkinsons, and two of their young ladies—one of them belonged to a "county family", Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper; then came Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bullock, and a tribe of little children, the offspring of the present wife. Miss Bullock was only a step-daughter. Mrs. Munton had accepted the invitation to join our party, which was rather unexpected by the host and hostess, I imagine, from little remarks that I overheard; but they made her very welcome. Miss Horsman (a maiden lady who had been on a visit from home till last week) was another. And last, there were the Vicar and his children. These, with Mr.

Morgan and myself, made up the party. I was very much pleased to see something more of the Vicar's family. He had come in occasionally to the evening parties, it is true ; and spoken kindly to us all ; but it was not his habit to stay very long at thorn. And his daughter was, he said, too young to visit. She had had the charge of her little sisters and brother since her mother's death, which took up a good deal of her time, and she was glad of the evenings to pursue her own studies. But to-day the case was different ; and Sophy, and Helen, and Lizzie, and even little Walter, were all there, standing at Mrs. Bullock's door ; for we none of us could be patient enough to sit still in the parlour with Mrs. Munton and the elder ones, quietly waiting for the two chaises and the spring-cart, which were to have been there by two o'clock, and now it was nearly a quarter past. " Shameful ! the brightness of the day would be gone." The sympathetic shopkeepers, standing at their respective doors with their hands in their pockets, had, one and all, their heads turned in the direction from which the carriages (as Mrs. Bullock called them) were to come. There was a rumble along the paved street ; and the shopkeepers turned and smiled, and bowed their heads congratulatingly to us ; all the mothers and all the little children of the place stood clustering round the door to see us set off. I had my horse waiting ; and, meanwhile, I assisted people into their vehicles. One sees a good deal of management on such occasions. Mrs. Munton was handed first into one of the chaises ; then there was a little hanging back, for most of the young people wished to go in the cart—I don't know why. My horseman, however, came forward, and as she was known to be the intimate friend of Mrs. Munton, so far was satisfactory. But who was to be third—bodkin with two old ladies, who liked the windows shut ? I saw Sophy speaking to Helen ; and then she came forward and offered to be the third. The two old ladies looked pleased and glad (as every one did near Sophy) ; so that chaise-full was arranged. Just as it was going off,

however, the servant from the vicarage came running with a note for her master. When he had read it, he went to the chaise door, and I suppose told Sophy, what I afterwards heard him say to Mrs. Bullock, that the clergyman of a neighbouring parish was ill, and unable to read the funeral service for one of his parishioners, who was to be buried that afternoon. The Vicar was, of course, obliged to go, and said he should not return home that night. It seemed a relief to some, I perceived, to be without the little restraint of his dignified presence. Mr. Morgan came up just at the moment, having ridden hard all the morning to be in time to join our party; so we were resigned, on the whole, to the Vicar's absence. His own family regretted him the most, I noticed, and I liked them all the better for it. I believe that I came next in being sorry for his departure; but I respected and admired him, and felt always the better for having been in his company. Miss Tomkinson, Mrs. Bullock, and the "county" young lady, were in the next chaise. I think the last would rather have been in the cart with the younger and merrier set, but I imagine that was considered *infra dig*. The remainder of the party were to ride and tie; and a most riotous, laughing set they were. Mr. Morgan and I were on horseback; at least I led my horse, with little Walter riding on him; his fat, sturdy legs standing stiff out on each side of my cob's broad back. He was a little darling, and chattered all the way, his sister Sophy being the heroine of all his stories. I found he owed this day's excursion entirely to her begging papa to let him come; nurse was strongly against it—"cross old nurse!" he called her once, and then said, "No, not cross; kind nurse; Sophy tells Walter not to say cross nurse." I never saw so young a child so brave. The horse shied at a log of wood. Walter looked very red, and grasped the mane, but sat upright like a little man, and never spoke all the time the horse was dancing. When it was over he looked at me, and smiled—

"You would not let me be hurt, Mr. Harrison,

would you ? " He was the most winning little fellow I ever saw.

' There were frequent cries to me from the cart, " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! do get us that branch of blackberries ; you can reach it with your whip handle." " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! there were such splendid nuts on the other side of that hedge ; would you just turn back for them ? " Miss Caroline Tomkinson was once or twice rather faint with the motion of the cart, and asked me for my smelling bottle, as she had forgotten hers. I was amused at the idea of my carrying such articles about with me. Then she thought she should like to walk, and got out, and came on my side of the road ; but I found little Walter the pleasanter companion, and soon set the horse off into a trot, with which pace her tender constitution could not keep up.

' The road to the old hall was along a sandy lane, with high hedge-banks ; the wych-elms almost met overhead. " Shocking farming ! " Mr. Bullock called out ; and so it might be, but it was very pleasant and picturesque-looking. The trees were gorgeous, in their orange and crimson hues, varied by great, dark-green holly-bushes, glistening in the autumn sun. I should have thought the colours too vivid, if I had seen them in a picture, especially when we wound up the brow, after crossing the little bridge over the brook (what laughing and screaming there was as the cart splashed through the sparkling water !)—and I caught the purple hills beyond. We could see the old hall, too, from that point, with its warm rich woods billowing up behind, and the blue waters of the moat lying still under the sunlight,

' Laughing and talking is very hungry work, and there was a universal petition for dinner when we arrived at the lawn before the hall, where it had been arranged that we were to dine. I saw Miss Carry take Miss Tomkinson aside, and whisper to her ; and presently the elder sister came up to me, where I was busy, rather apart, making a seat of hay, which I had fetched

from the farmer's loft for my little friend Walter, who, I had noticed, was rather hoarse, and for whom I was afraid of a seat on the glass, dry as it appeared to be.

' " Mr. Harrison, Caroline tells me she has been feeling very faint, and she is afraid of a return of one of her attacks. She says she has more confidence in your medical powers than in Mr. Morgan's. I should not be sincere if I did not say that I differ from her; but as it is so, may I beg you to keep an eye upon her ? I tell her she had better not have come if she did not feel well; but, poor girl, she had set her heart upon this day's pleasure. I have offered to go home with her; but she says, if she can only feel sure you are at hand, she would rather stay."

' Of course I bowed, and promised all due attendance on Miss Caroline; and in the meantime, until she did require my services, I thought I might as well go and help the Vicar's daughter, who looked so fresh and pretty in her white muslin dress, here, there, and everywhere, now in the sunshine, now in the green shade, helping every one to be comfortable, and thinking of every one but herself.

' Presently, Mr. Morgan came up.

' " Miss Caroline does not feel quite well. I have promised your services to her sister."

' " So have I, sir. But Miss Sophy cannot carry this heavy basket."

' I did not mean her to have heard this excuse; but she caught it up and said—

' " Oh, yes, I can ! I can take the things out one by one. Go to poor Miss Caroline, pray, Mr. Harrison.

' I went; but very unwillingly, I must say. When I had once seated myself by her, I think she must have felt better. It was, probably, only a nervous fear, which was relieved when she knew she had assistance near at hand; for she made a capital dinner. I thought she would never end her modest requests for " just a little more pigeon-pie, or a merry-thought of chicken ". Such a hearty meal would, I hope, effectually revive

her; and so it did; for she told me she thought she could manage to walk round the garden, and see the old peacock yews, if I would kindly give her my arm. It was very provoking; I had so set my heart upon being with the Vicar's children. I advised Miss Caroline strongly to lie down a little, and rest before tea, on the sofa in the farmer's kitchen; you cannot think how persuasively I begged her to take care of herself. At last she consented, thanking me for my tender interest; she should never forget my kind attention to her. She little knew what was in my mind at the time. However, she was safely consigned to the farmer's wife, and I was rushing out in search of a white gown and a waving figure, when I encountered Mrs. Bullock at the door of the hall. She was a fine, fierce-looking woman. I thought she had appeared a little displeased at my (unwilling) attentions to Miss Caroline at dinner-time; but now, seeing me alone, she was all smiles.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison, all alone ! How is that ? What are the young ladies about to allow such churlishness ? And, by the way, I have left a young lady who will be very glad of your assistance, I am sure—my daughter, Jemima' (her step-daughter, she meant). * Mr. Bullock is so particular, and so tender a father, that he would be frightened to death at the idea of her going into the boat on the moat unless she was with some one who could swim. He is gone to discuss the new wheel-plough with the farmer (you know agriculture is his hobby, although law, horrid law, is his business). But the poor girl is pining on the bank, longing for my permission to join the others, which I dare not give unless you will kindly accompany her, and promise, if any accident happens, to preserve her safe."

Oh, Sophy, why was no one anxious about you ?

CHAPTER VI

'Miss BULLOCK was standing by the waterside, looking wistfully, as I thought, at the water party ; the sound of whose merry laughter came pleasantly enough from the boat, which lay off (for, indeed, no one knew how to row, and she was of a clumsy, fiat-bottomed build) about a hundred yards, " weatherbound," as they shouted out, among the long stalks of the water-lilies.

' Miss Bullock did not look up till I came close to her ; and then, when I told her my errand, she lifted up her great, heavy, sad eyes, and looked at me for a moment. It struck me, at the time, that she expected to find some expression on my face which was not there, and that its absence was a relief to her. She was a very pale, unhappy-looking girl, but very quiet, and, if not agreeable in manner, at any rate not forward or offensive. I called to the party in the boat, and they came slowly enough through the large, cool, green lily-leaves towards us. When they got near, we saw there was no room for us, and Miss Bullock said she would rather stay in the meadow and saunter about, if I would go into the boat; and I am certain from the look on her countenance that she spoke the truth; but Miss Horsman called out, in a sharp voice, while she smiled in a very disagreeable, knowing way—

' " Oh, mamma will be displeased if you don't come in, Miss Bullock, after all her trouble in making such a nice arrangement."

* At this speech the poor girl hesitated, and at last, in an undecided way, as if she was not sure whether she was doing right, she took Sophy's place in the boat. Helen and Lizzie landed with their sister, so that there was plenty of room for Miss Tomkinson, Miss Horsman, and all the little Bullocks ; and the three vicarage girls went off strolling along the meadow side, and playing with Walter, who was in a high state of excitement.

The sun was getting low, but the declining light was beautiful upon the water; and, to add to the charm of the time, Sophy and her sisters, standing on the green lawn in front of the hall, struck up the little German canon, which I had never heard before—

Oh wie wohl ist mir am abend, &c.

At last we were summoned to tug the boat to the landing-steps on the lawn, tea and a blazing wood fire being ready for us in the hall. I was offering my arm to Miss Horsman, as she was a little lame, when she said again, in her peculiar disagreeable way, '* Had you not better take Miss Bullock, Mr. Harrison ? It will be more satisfactory."

'I helped Miss Horsman up the steps, however, and then she repeated her advice; so, remembering that Miss Bullock was in fact the daughter of my entertainers, I went to her; but though she accepted my arm, I could perceive she was sorry that I had offered it.

'The hall was lighted by the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate; the daylight was dying away in the west; and the large windows admitted but little of what was left, through their small leaded frames, with coats of arms emblazoned upon them. The farmer's wife had set out a great long table, which was piled with good things; and a huge black kettle sang on the glowing fire, which sent a cheerful warmth through the room as it crackled and blazed. Mr. Morgan (who I found had been taking a little round in the neighbourhood among his patients) was there, smiling and rubbing his hands as usual. Mr. Bullock was holding a conversation with the farmer at the garden-door on the nature of different manures, in which it struck me that if Mr. Bullock had the fine names and the theories on his side, the farmer had all the practical knowledge and the experience, and I know which I would have trusted. I think Mr. Bullock rather liked to talk about Liebig in my hearing; it sounded well, and was knowing. Mrs. Bullock was not particularly placid in her mood. In the first place, I wanted to sit by the Vicar's daughter,

and Miss Caroline as decidedly wanted to sit on my other side, being afraid of her fainting fits, I imagine. But Mrs. Bullock called me to a place near her daughter. Now I thought I had done enough civility to a girl who was evidently annoyed rather than pleased by my attentions, and I pretended to be busy stooping under the table for Miss Caroline's gloves, which were missing ; but it was of no avail; Mrs. Bullock's fine, severe eyea were awaiting my reappearance, and she summoned me again.

' " I am keeping this place on my right hand for you, Mr. Harrison. Jemima, sit still! "

* I went up to the post of honour and tried to busy myself with pouring out coffee to hide my chagrin; but after forgetting to empty the water put in ("to warm the cups ", Mrs. Bullock said), and omitting to add any sugar, the lady told me she would dispense with my services, and turn me over to my neiglibour on the other side.

' " Talking to the younger lady was, no doubt, more Mr. Harrison's vocation than assisting the elder one." I dare say it was only the manner that made the words seem offensive. Miss Horsman sat opposite to mo, smiling away. Miss Bullock did not speak, but seemed more depressed than ever. At length, Miss Horsman and Mrs. Bullock got to a war of innuendoes, which were completely unintelligible to me, and I was very much displeased with my situation ; while, at the bottom of the table, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bullock were making the young ones laugh most heartily. Part of the joke was Mr. Morgan insisting upon making tea at that end ; and Sophy and Helen were busy contriving every possible mistake for him. I thought honour was a very good thing, but merriment a better. Here was I in the place of distinction, hearing nothing but cross words. At last the time came for us to go home. As the evening was damp, the seats in the chaises were the best and most to be desired. And now Sophy offered to go in the cart; only she seemed anxious, and so was I, that Walter should be secured from the effects of the

white wreaths of fog rolling up from the valley; but the little violent affectionate fellow would not be separated from Sophy. She made a nest for him on her knee in one corner of the cart, and covered him with her own shawl; and I hoped that he would take no harm. Miss Tomkinson, Mr. Bullock, and some of the young ones walked; but I seemed chained to the windows of the chaise, for Miss Caroline begged me not to leave her, as she was dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Mrs. Bullock implored me to see that the man did not overturn them in the bad roads, as he had certainly had too much to drink.

' I became so irritable before I reached home, that I thought it was the most disagreeable day of pleasure I had ever had, and could hardly bear to answer Mrs. Rose's never-ending questions. She told me, however, that from my account the day was so charming that she thought she should relax in the rigour of her seclusion, and mingle a little more in the society of which I gave so tempting a description. She really thought her dear Mr. Rose would have wished it; and his will should be law to her after his death, as it had ever been during his life. In compliance, therefore, with his wishes, she would even do a little violence to her own feelings.

' She was very good and kind; not merely attentive to everything which she thought could conduce to my comfort, but willing to take any trouble in providing the broths and nourishing food which I often found it convenient to order, under the name of kitchen-physic, for my poorer patients; and I really did not see the use of her shutting herself up, in mere compliance with an etiquette, when she began to wish to mix in the little quiet society of Duncombe. Accordingly I urged her to begin to visit, and even when applied to as to what I imagined the late Mr. Rose's wishes on that subject would have been, answered for that worthy gentleman, and assured his widow that I was convinced he would have regretted deeply her giving way to immoderate grief, and would have been rather grateful than other-

wise at seeing her endeavour to divert her thoughts by a few quiet visits. She cheered up, and said, "As I really thought so, she would sacrifice her own inclinations, and accept the very next invitation that came."

CHAPTER VII

' I WAS roused from my sleep in the middle of the night by a messenger from the vicarage. Little Walter had got the croup, and Mr. Morgan had been sent for into the country. I dressed myself hastily, and went through the quiet little street. There was a light burning upstairs at the vicarage. It was in the nursery. The servant, who opened the door the instant I knocked, was crying sadly, and could hardly answer my inquiries as I went upstairs, two steps at a time, to see my little favourite.

* The nursery was a great large room. At the farther end it was lighted by a common candle, which left the other end, where the door was, in shade, so I suppose the nurse did not see me come in, for she was speaking very crossly.

' " Miss Sophy !" said she, " I told you over and over again it was not fit for him to go, with the hoarseness that he had, and you would take him. It will break your papa's heart, I know ; but it's none of my doing."

' Whatever Sophy felt, she did not speak in answer to this. She was on her knees by the warm bath, in which the little fellow was struggling to get his breath, with a look of terror on his face that I have often noticed in young children when smitten by a sudden and violent illness. It seems as if they recognized something infinite and invisible, at whose bidding the pain and the anguish come, from which no love can shield them. It is a very heart-rending look to observe, because it comes on the faces of those who are too young to receive comfort from the words of faith, or the

romises of religion. Walter had his arms tight round Sophy's neck, as if she, hitherto his paradise-angel, could save him from the dread shadow of Death. Yes ! of Death ! I knelt down by him on the other side, and examined him. The very robustness of his little frame gave violence to the disease, which is always one of the most fearful by which children of his age can be attacked.

' " Don't tremble, Watty," said Sophy, in a soothing tone ; " it's Mr. Harrison, darling, who let you ride on his horse." I could detect the quivering in the voice, which she tried to make so calm and soft to quiet the little fellow's fears. We took him out of the bath, and I went for leeches. While I was away, Mr. Morgan came. He loved the vicarage children as if he were their uncle ; but he stood still and aghast at the sight of Walter—so lately bright and strong—and now hurrying alone to the awful change—to the silent mysterious land, where, tended and cared for as he had been on earth, he must go—alone. The little fellow ! the darling !

* We applied the leeches to his throat. He resisted at first; but Sophy, God bless her! put the agony of her grief on one side, and thought only of him, and began to sing the little songs he loved. We were all still. The gardener had gone to fetch the Vicar ; but he was twelve miles off, and we doubted if he would come in time. I don't know if they had any hope; but the first moment Mr. Morgan's eyes met mine, I saw that he, like me, had none. The ticking of the house-clock sounded through the dark, quiet house. Walter was sleeping now, with the black leeches yet hanging to his fair, white throat. Still Sophy went on singing little lullabies, which she had sung under far different and happier circumstances. I remember one verse, because it struck me at the time as strangely applicable.

" Sleep, baby, sleep !
Thy rest shall angels keep;
While on the grass the lamb shall feed,
And never suffer want or need.
Sleep, baby, sleep."

The tears were in Mr. Morgan's eyes. I do not think either he or I could have spoken in our natural tones ; but the brave girl went on, clear though low. She stopped at last, and looked up.

' " He is better, is he not, Mr. Morgan ? "

' " No, my dear. He is—ahem—he could not speak all at once. Then he said—'* My dear ! he will be better soon. Think of your mamma, my dear Miss Sophy. She will be very thankful to have one of her darlings safe with her, where she is."

' Still she did not cry. But she bent her head down on the little face, and kissed it long and tenderly.

' " I will go for Helen and Lizzie. They will be sorry not to see him again." She rose up and went for them. Poor girls, they came in, in their dressing-gowns, with eyes dilated with sudden emotion, pale with terror, stealing softly along, as if sound could disturb him. Sophy comforted them by gentle caresses. It was over soon.

' Mr. Morgan was fairly crying like a child. But he thought it necessary to apologize to me, for what I honoured him for. '* I am a little overdone by yesterday's work, sir. I have had one or two bad nights, and they rather upset me. When I was your age I was as strong and manly as any one, and would have scorned to shed tears."

' Sophy came up to where we stood.

' " Mr. Morgan ! I am so sorry for papa. How shall I tell him ? " She was struggling against her own grief for her father's sake. Mr. Morgan offered to await his coming home ; and she seemed thankful for the proposal. I, new friend, almost stranger, might stay no longer. The street was as quiet as ever ; not a shadow was changed ; for it was not yet four o'clock. But during the night a soul had departed.

' From all I could see, and all I could learn, the Vicar and his daughter strove which should comfort the other the most. Each thought of the other's grief—each prayed for the other rather than for themselves. We **saw** them walking out, countrywards ; and we

hoard of them in the cottages of the poor. But it was some time before I happened to meet either of them again. And then I felt, from something indescribable in their manner towards me, that I was one of the

" Peculiar people, whom Death had made dear."

That one day at the old hall had done this. I was, perhaps, the last person who had given the little fellow any unusual pleasure. Poor Walter ! I wish I could have done more to make his short life happy !

CHAPTER VIII

' THERE was a little lull, out of respect to the Vicar's grief, in the visiting. It gave time to Mrs. Rose to soften down the anguish of her weeds.

' At Christmas, Miss Tomkinson sent out invitations for a party. Miss Caroline had once or twice apologized to me because such an event had not taken place before ; but, as she said, "the avocations of their daily life prevented their having such little *reunions* except in the vacations." And, sure enough, as soon as the holidays began, came the civil little note—

" The Misses Tomkinson request the pleasure of Mrs. Rose's and Mr. Harrison's company at tea, on the evening of Monday, the 23rd inst. Tea at five o'clock."

' Mrs. Rose's spirit roused, like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, at this. She was not of a repining disposition, but I do think she believed the party-giving population of Duncombe had given up inviting her, as soon as she had determined to relent, and accept the invitations, in compliance with the late Mr. Rose's wishes.

' Such snippings of white love-ribbon us I found everywhere, making the carpet untidy ! One day, too, unluckily, a small box was brought to me by mistake. I did not look at the direction, for I never doubted it was some hyoscyamus which I was expecting from London; so I tore it open, and **saw** inside a piece of

paper, with "No more grey hair*", in large letters, upon it. I folded it up in a hurry, and sealed it afresh, and gave it to Mrs. Rose ; but I could not refrain from asking her, soon after, if she could recommend me anything to keep my hair from turning grey, adding that I thought prevention was better than cure. I think she made out the impression of my seal on the paper after that; for I learned that she had been crying, and that she talked about there being no sympathy left in the world for her since Mr. Rose's death ; and that she counted the days until she could rejoin him in the better world. I think she counted the days to Miss Tomkinson's party, too ; she talked so much about it.

* The covers were taken off Miss Tomkinson's chairs, and curtains, and sofas; and a great jar full of artificial flowers was placed in the centre of the table, which, as Miss Caroline told me, was all her doing, as she doted on the beautiful and artistic in life. Miss Tomkinson stood, erect as a grenadier, close to the door, receiving her friends, and heartily shaking them by the hands as they entered: she said she was truly glad to see them. And so she really was.

'We had just finished tea, and Miss Caroline had brought out a little pack of conversation cards—sheaves of slips of cardboard, with intellectual or sentimental questions on one set, and equally intellectual and sentimental answers on the other; and as the answers were fit to any and all the questions, you may think they were a characterless and "wersh" set of things. I had just been asked by Miss Caroline—

' *Can you tell what those dearest to you think of you at this present time f* " and had answered—

' "*How can you expect me to reveal such a secret to the present company /* " when the servant announced that a gentleman, a friend of mine, wished to speak to me downstairs.

' "Oh, show him up, Martha ; show him up !" said Miss Tomkinson, in her hospitality.

"Any friend of our friend's is welcome," said Miss Caroline, in an insinuating tone.

* I jumped up, however, thinking it might be some one on business; but I was so penned in by the spider-legged tables, stuck out on every side, that I could not make the haste I wished; and before I could prevent it, Martha had shown up Jack Marshland, who was on his road home for a day or two at Christmas.

' He came up in a hearty way, bowing to Miss Tomkinson, and explaining that he had found himself in my neighbourhood, and had come over to pass a night with me, and that my servant had directed him where I was.

' His voice, loud at all times, sounded like Stentor's in that little room, where we all spoke in a kind of purring way. He had no swell in his tones; they were *forte* from the beginning. At first it seemed like the days of my youth come back again, to hear full, manly speaking; I felt proud of my friend, as he thanked Miss Tomkinson for her kindness in asking him to stay the evening. By and by he came up to me, and I dare say he thought he had lowered his voice, for he looked as if speaking confidentially, while in fact the whole room might have heard him.

' " Frank, my boy, when shall we have dinner at this good old lady's ? I'm deuced hungry."

' Dinner! Why, we had had tea an hour ago. While he yet spoke, Martha came in with a little tray, on which was a single cup of coffee and three slices of wafer bread-and-butter. His dismay, and his evident submission to the decrees of Fate, tickled me so much, that I thought he should have a further taste of the life I led from month's end to month's end, and I gave up my plan of taking him home at once, and enjoyed the anticipation of the hearty laugh we should have together at the end of the evening. I was famously punished for my determination.

" Shall we continue our game ?" asked Miss Caroline, who had never relinquished her sheaf of questions.

' We went on questioning and answering, with little gain of information to either party.

" No such thing as heavy betting in this game, eh,

Frank I " asked Jack, who had been watching us. " You don't lose ten pounds at a sitting, I guess, as you used to do at Short's. Playing for love, I suppose you call it ? "

* Miss Caroline simpered, and looked down. Jack was not thinking of her. He was thinking of the days we had had at the " Mermaid ". Suddenly he said, " Where were you this day last year, Frank ? "

' " I don't remember ! " said I.

' " Then I'll tell you. It's the 23rd—the day you were taken up for knocking down the fellow in Long Acre, and that I had to bail you out ready for Christmas Day. You are in more agreeable quarters to-night."

* He did not intend this reminiscence to be heard, but was not in the least put out when Miss Tomkinson, with a face of dire surprise, asked—

' " Mr. Harrison taken up, sir ? "

' " Oh, yes, ma'am ; and you see it was so common an affair with him to be locked up that he can't remember the dates of his different imprisonments."

' He laughed heartily ; and so should I, but that I saw the impression it made. The thing was, in fact, simple enough, and capable of easy explanation. I had been made angry by seeing a great hulking fellow, out of mere wantonness, break the crutch from under a cripple ; and I struck the man more violently than I intended, and down he went, yelling out for the police, and I had to go before the magistrate to be released. I disdained giving this explanation at the time. It was no business of theirs what I had been doing a year ago ; but still Jack might have held his tongue. However, that unruly member of his was set a-going, and he told me afterwards he was resolved to let the old ladies into a little of life ; and accordingly he remembered every practical joke we had ever had, and talked and laughed, and roared again. I tried to converse with Miss Caroline—Mrs. Munton—any one ; but Jack was the hero of the evening, and every one was listening to him.

' " Then he has never sent any hoaxing letters since

he came here, has he ? Good boy ! He has turned over a new leaf. He was the deepest dog at that I ever met with. Such anonymous letters as he used to send ! Do you remember that to Mrs. Walbrook, eh, Frank ? That was too bad I " (the wretch was laughing all the time). " No ; I won't tell about it—don't be afraid. Such a shameful hoax " (laughing again).

' " Pray do tell," I called out; for he made it seem far worse than it was.

' " Oh no, no ; you've established a better character—I would not for the world nip your budding efforts. We'll bury the past in oblivion."

' I tried to tell my neighbours the story to which he alluded ; but they were attracted by the merriment of Jack's manner, and did not care to hear the plain matter of fact.

' Then came a pause; Jack was talking almost quietly to Miss Horsman. Suddenly he called across the room—" How many times have you been out with the hounds ? The hedges were blind very late this year, but you must have had some good mild days since."

' " I have never been out," said I shortly.

' " Never !—whew !——Why, I thought that was the great attraction to Duncombe."

' Now was not he provoking ? He would condole with me, and fixed the subject in the minds of every one present.

' The supper trays were brought in, and there was a shuffling of situations. He and I were close together again.

' " I say, Frank, what will you lay me that I don't clear that tray before people are ready for their second helping ? I'm as hungry as a hound."

' " You shall have a round of beef and a raw leg of mutton when you get home. Only do behave yourself here."

' " Well, for your sake ; but keep me away from those trays, or I'll not answer for myself. ' Hould me, or I'll fight,' as the Irishman said I'll go and talk to that little old lady in blue, and sit with my back to those ghosts of eatables."

' He sat down by Miss Caroline, who would not have liked his description of her; and began an earnest, tolerably quiet conversation. I tried to be as agreeable as I could, to do away with the impression he had given of me; but I found that every one drew up a little stiffly at my approach, and did not encourage me to make any remarks.

* In the middle of my attempts, I heard Miss Caroline beg Jack to take a glass of wine, and I saw him help himself to what appeared to be port; but in an instant he set it down from his lips, exclaiming, " Vinegar, by Jove! " He made the most horribly wry face: and Miss Tomkinson came up in a severe hurry to investigate the affair. It turned out it was some black-currant wine, on which she particularly piqued herself; I drank two glasses of it to ingratiate myself with her, and can testify to its sourness. I don't think she noticed my exertions, she was so much engrossed in listening to Jack's excuses for his malapropos observation. He told her, with the gravest face, that he had been a teetotalter so long that he had but a confused recollection of the distinction between wine and vinegar, particularly eschewing the latter, because it had been twice fermented; and that he had imagined Miss Caroline had asked him to take toast-and-water, or he should never have touched the decanter.

CHAPTER IX

' As we were walking home, Jack said, " Lord, Frank ! I've had such fun with the little lady in blue. I told her you wrote to me every Saturday, telling me the events of the week. She took all in." He stopped to laugh; for he bubbled and chuckled so that he could not laugh and walk. " And I told her you were deeply in love " (another laugh); " and that I could not get yon to tell me the name of the lady, but that she had light brown hair—in short, I drew from life, and gave

her an exact description of herself; and that I was most anxious to see her, and implore her to be merciful to you, for that you were a most timid, faint-hearted fellow with women." He laughed till I thought he would have fallen down. "I begged her, if she could guess who it was from my description—I'll answer for it she did—I took care of that; for I said you described a mole on the left cheek in the most poetical way, saying Venus had pinched it out of envy at seeing any one more lovely—oh, hold me up, or I shall fall—laughing and hunger make me so weak;—well, I say, I begged her, if she knew who your fair one could be, to implore her to save you. I said I knew one of your lungs had gone after a former unfortunate love-affair, and that I could not answer for the other if the lady here were cruel. She spoke of a respirator; but I told her that might do very well for the odd lung; but would it minister to a heart diseased? I really did talk fine. I have found out the secret of eloquence—it's believing what you've got to say; and I worked myself well up with fancying you married to the little lady in blue."

' I got to laughing at last, angry as I had been; his impudence was irresistible. Mrs. Rose had come home in the sedan, and gone to bed; and he and I sat up over the round of beef and brandy-and-water till two o'clock in the morning.

' He told me I had got quite into the professional way of mousing about a room, and mewing and purring according as my patients were ill or well. He mimicked me, and made me laugh at myself. He left early the next morning.

' Mr. Morgan came at his usual hour; he and Marshland would never have agreed, and I should have been uncomfortable to see two friends of mine disliking and despising each other.

' Mr. Morgan was ruffled; but with his deferential manner to women, he smoothed himself down before Mrs. Rose—regretted that he had not been able to come to Miss Tomkinson's the evening before, and consequently had not seen her in the society she was so well

calculated to adorn. But when we were by ourselves, he said—

' " I was sent for to Mrs. Munton's this morning—the old spasms. May I ask what is this story she tells me about—about prison, in fact ? I trust, sir, she has made some little mistake, and that you never were;——that it is an unfounded report." He could not get it out—" that you were in Newgate for three months ! " I burst out laughing; the story had grown like a mushroom indeed. Mr. Morgan looked grave. I told him the truth. Still he looked grave. " I've no doubt, sir, that you acted rightly ; but it has an awkward sound. I imagined from your hilarity just now that there was no foundation whatever for the story. Unfortunately, there is."

' " I was only a night at the police-station. I would go there again for the same cause, sir."

' " Very fine spirit, sir—quite like Don Quixote ; but don't you see you might as well have been to the hulks at once ? "

' " No, sir ; I don't."

' " Take my word, before long the story will have grown to that. However, we won't anticipate evil. *Mens conscia recti*, you remember, is the great thing. The part I regret is, that it may require some short time to overcome a little prejudice which the story may excite against you. However, we won't dwell on it. *Mens conscia recti* / Don't think about it, sir."

* It was clear he was thinking a good deal about it.

CHAPTER X

' Two or three days before this time, I had had an invitation from the Bullocks to dine with them on Christmas Day. Mrs. Rose was going to spend the week with friends in the town where she formerly lived ; and I had been pleased at the notion of being received into a family, and of being a little with Mr. Bullock, who struck me as a bluff, good-hearted fellow.

' But this Tuesday before Christmas Day, there came an invitation from the Vicar to dine there ; there were to be only their own family and Mr. Morgan. " Only their own family." It was getting to be all the world to me. I was in a passion with myself for having been BO ready to accept Mr. Bullock's invitation—coarse and ungentlemanly as he was; with his wife's airs of pretension and Miss Bullock's stupidity. I turned it over in my mind. No ! I could not have a bad headache, which should prevent me going to the place I did not care for, and yet leave me at liberty to go where I wished. All I could do was to join the vicarage girls after church, and walk by their side in a long country ramble. They were quiet; not sad, exactly; but it was evident that the thought of Walter was in their minds on this day. We went through a copse where there were a good number of evergreens planted as covers for game. The snow was on the ground; but the sky was clear and bright, and the sun glittered on the smooth holly-leaves. Lizzie asked me to gather her some of the very bright red berries, and she was beginning a sentence with—

' " Do you remember,"——when Helen said "*Hush*", and looked towards Sophy, who was walking a little apart, and crying softly to herself. There was evidently some connexion between Walter and the holly-berries, for Lizzie threw them away at once when she saw Sophy's tears. Soon we came to a stile which led to an open, breezy common, half covered with gorse. I helped the little girls over it, and set them to run down the slope; but I took Sophy's arm in mine, and though I could not speak, I think she knew how I was feeling for her. I could hardly bear to bid her good-bye at the vicarage gate ; it seemed as if I ought to go in and spend the day with her.

CHAPTER XI

' I VENTED my ill humour in being late for the Bullocks' dinner. There were one or two clerks, towards whom Mr. Bullock was patronizing and pressing. Mrs. Bullock was decked out in extraordinary finery. Miss Bullock looked plainer than ever; but she had on some old gown or other, I think, for I heard Mrs. Bullock tell her she was always making a figure of herself. I began to-day to suspect that the mother would not be sorry if I took a fancy to the step-daughter. I was again placed near her at dinner, and when the little ones came in to dessert I was made to notice how fond of children she was, and indeed when one of them nestled to her, her face did brighten; but the moment she caught this loud-whispered remark the gloom came back again, with something even of anger in her look; and she was quite sullen and obstinate when urged to sing in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bullock turned to me—

" Some young ladies won't sing unless they are asked by gentlemen." She spoke very crossly. " If you ask Jemima, she will probably sing. To oblige me, it is evident she will not."

' I thought the singing, when we got it, would probably be a great bore; however, I did as I was bid, and went with my request to the young lady, who was sitting a little apart. She looked up at me with eyes full of tears, and said, in a decided tone (which, if I had not seen her eyes, I should have said was as cross as her mamma's), " No, sir, I will not." She got up, and left the room. I expected to hear Mrs. Bullock abuse her for her obstinacy. Instead of that, she began to tell me of the money that had been spent on her education; of what each separate accomplishment had cost. " She was timid," she said, " but very musical. Wherever her future home might be, there would be no want of music." She went on praising her till I hated her. If they thought I was going to marry that great lubberly

girl, they were mistaken. Mr. Bullock and the clerks came up. He brought out Liebig, and called me to him.

"I can understand a good deal of this agricultural chemistry," said he, "and have put it in practice—without much success, hitherto, I confess. But these unconnected letters puzzle me a little. I suppose they have some meaning, or else I should say it was mere book-making to put them in."

"I think they give the page a very ragged appearance," said Mrs. Bullock, who had joined us. "I inherit a little of my late father's taste for books, and must say I like to see a good type, a broad margin, and an elegant binding. My father despised variety; how lie would have held up his hands aghast at the cheap literature of these times! He did not require many books, but he would have twenty editions of those that he had; and he paid more for binding than he did for the books themselves. But elegance was everything with him. He would not have admitted your Liebig, Mr. Bullock; neither the nature of the subject, nor the common type, nor the common way in which your book is got up, would have suited him."

"Go and make tea, my dear, and leave Mr. Harrison and me to talk over a few of these manures."

"We settled to it; I explained the meaning of the symbols, and the doctrine of chemical equivalents. At last he said, "Doctor! you're giving me too strong a dose of it at one time. Let's have a small quantity taken 'hodie'; that's professional, as Mr. Morgan would call it. Come in and call when you have leisure, and give me a lesson in my alphabet. Of all you've been telling me I can only remember that C means carbon and O oxygen; and I see one must know the meaning of all these confounded letters before one can do much good with Liebig."

"We dine at three," said Mrs. Bullock. "There will always be a knife and fork for Mr. Harrison. Bullock! don't confine your invitation to the evening!"

"Why, you see, I've a nap always after dinner, so I could not be learning chemistry then."

' " Don't be so selfish, Mr. B. Think of the pleasure Jemima and I shall have in Mr. Harrison's society."

* I put a stop to the discussion by saying I would come in in the evenings occasionally, and give Mr. Bullock a lesson, but that my professional duties occupied me invariably until that time.

' I liked Mr. Bullock. He was simple, and shrewd; and to be with a man was a relief, after all the feminine society I went through every day.

CHAPTER XII

' T H E next morning I met Miss Horsman.

' " So you dined at Mr. Bullock's yesterday, Mr. Harrison ? Quite a family party, I hear. They are quite charmed with you, and your knowledgo of chemistry. Mr. Bullock told me so, in Hodgson's shop, just now. Miss Bullock is a nice girl, eh, Mr. Harrison ? " She looked sharply at me. Of course, whatever I thought, I could do nothing but assent. " A nice little fortune, too—three thousand pounds, Consols, from her own mother."

' What did I care ? She might have three millions for me. I had begun to think a good deal about money, though, but not in connexion with her. I had been doing up our books ready to send out our Christmas bills, and had been wondering how far the Vicar would consider three hundred a year, with a prospect of increase, would justify me in thinking of Sophy. Think of her I could not help ; and the more I thought of how good, and sweet, and pretty she was, the more I felt that she ought to have far more than I could offer. Besides, my father was a shopkeeper, and I saw the Vicar had a sort of respect for family. I determined to try and be very attentive to my profession. I was as civil as could be to every one; and wore the nap off the brim of my hat by taking it off so often.

' I had my eyes open to every glimpse of Sophy. I am

overstocked with gloves now that I bought at that time, by way of making errands into the shops where I saw her black gown. I bought pounds upon pounds of arrowroot, till I was tired of the eternal arrowroot puddings Mrs. Rose gave me. I asked her if she could not make bread of it, but she seemed to think that would be expensive; so I took to soap as a safe purchase. I believe soap improves by keeping.

CHAPTER XIII

' THE more I knew of Mrs. Rose, the better I liked her. She was sweet, and kind, and motherly, and we never had any rubs. I hurt her once or twice, I think, by cutting her short in her long stories about Mr. Rose. But I found out that when she had plenty to do she did not think of him quite so much; so I expressed a wish for Corazza shirts, and in the puzzle of devising how they were to be cut out she forgot Mr. Rose for some time. I was still more pleased by her way about some legacy her elder brother left her. I don't know the amount, but it was something handsome, and she might have set up housekeeping for herself: but, instead, she told Mr. Morgan (who repeated it to me), that she should continue with me, as she had quite an elder sister's interest in me.

' The " county young lady ", Miss Tyrrell, returned to Miss Tomkinson's after the holidays. She had an enlargement of the tonsils, which required to be frequently touched with caustic, so I often called to see her. Miss Caroline always received me, and kept me talking in her washed-out style, after I had seen my patient. One day she told me she thought she had a weakness about the heart, and would be glad if I would bring my stethoscope the next time, which I accordingly did; and while I was on my knees listening to the pulsations, one of the young ladies came in. She said—

' " Oh, dear ! I never ! I beg your pardon, ma'am," and scuttled out. There was not much the matter with Miss Caroline's heart: a little feeble in action or so, a mere matter of weakness and general languor. When I went down I saw two or three of the girls peeping out of the half-closed schoolroom door, but they shut it immediately, and I heard them laughing. The next time I called, Miss Tomkinson was sitting in state to receive me.

' " Miss Tyrrell's throat does not seem to make much progress. Do you understand the case, Mr. Harrison, or should we have further advice ? I think Mr. Morgan would probably know more about it."

' I assured her it was the simplest thing in the world ; that it always implied a little torpor in the constitution, and that we preferred working through the system, which of course was a slow process, and that the medicine the young lady was taking (iodide of iron) was sure to be successful, although the progress would not be rapid. She bent her head and said, " It might be so ; but she confessed she had more confidence in medicines which had some effect."

' She seemed to expect me to tell her something; but I had nothing to say, and accordingly I bade good-bye. Somehow, Miss Tomkinson always managed to make me feel very small, by a succession of snubbings ; and whenever I left her I had always to comfort myself under her contradictions by saying to myself, " Her saying it is so, does not make it so." Or I invented good retorts which I might have made to her brusque speeches if I had but thought of them at the right time. But it was provoking that I had not had the presence of mind to recollect them just when they were wanted*

CHAPTER XIV

' ON the whole, things went on smoothly. Mr. Holden's legacy came in just about this time; and I felt quite rich. Five hundred pounds would furnish the house, I thought, when Mrs. Rose left and Sophy came. I was delighted, too, to imagine that Sophy perceived the difference of my manner to her from what it was to any one else, and that she was embarrassed and shy in consequence, but not displeased with me for it. All was so flourishing that I went about on wings instead of feet. We were very busy, without having anxious cares. My legacy was paid into Mr. Bullock's hands, who united a little banking business to his profession of law. In return for his advice about investments (which I never meant to take, having a more charming, if less profitable, mode in my head), I went pretty frequently to teach him his agricultural chemistry. I was so happy in Sophy's blushes that I was universally benevolent, and desirous of giving pleasure to every one. I went, at Mrs. Bullock's general invitation, to dinner there one day unexpectedly : but there was such a fuss of ill-concealed preparation consequent upon my coming, that I never went again. Her little boy came in, with an audibly given message from the cook, to ask—

' " If this was the gentleman as she was to send in the best dinner-service and dessert for ? "

' I looked deaf, but determined never to go again.

' Miss Bullock and I, meanwhile, became rather friendly. We found out that we mutually disliked each other; and were contented with the discovery. If people are worth anything, this sort of non-liking is a very good beginning of friendship. Every good quality is revealed naturally and slowly, and is a pleasant surprise. I found out that Miss Bullock was sensible, and even sweet-tempered, when not irritated by her stepmother's endeavours to show her off. But she would sulk for hours after Mrs. Bullock's offensive

praise of her good points. And I never saw such a black passion as she went into when she suddenly came into the room when Mrs. Bullock was telling me of all the offers she had had.

'My legacy made me feel up to extravagance. I scoured the country for a glorious nosegay of camellias, which I sent to Sophy on Valentine's Day. I durst not add a line, but I wished the flowers could speak, and tell her how I loved her.

'I called on Miss Tyrrell that day. Miss Caroline was more simpering and affected than ever; and full of allusions to the day.

' "Do you affix much sincerity of meaning to the little gallantries of this day, Mr. Harrison?" asked she, in a languishing tone. I thought of my camellias, and how my heart had gone with them into Sophy's keeping; and I told her I thought one might often take advantage of such a time to hint at feelings one dared not fully express.

'I remembered afterwards the forced display she made, after Miss Tyrrell left the room, of a valentine. But I took no notice at the time; my head was full of Sophy.

'It was on that very day that John Brouncker, the gardener to all of us who had small gardens to keep in order, fell down and injured his wrist severely (I don't give you the details of the case, because they would not interest you, being too technical; if you've any curiosity, you will find them in the *Lancet* of August in that year). We all liked John, and this accident was felt like a town's misfortune. The gardens, too, just wanted doing up. Both Mr. Morgan and I went directly to him. It was a very awkward case, and his wife and children were crying sadly. He himself was in great distress at being thrown out of work. He begged us to do something that would cure him Speedily, as he could not afford to be laid up, with six children depending on him for bread. We did not say much before him, but we both thought the arm would have to come off, and it was his right arm. We talked it over when we

came out of the cottage. Mr. Morgan had no doubt of the necessity. I went back at dinner-time to see the poor fellow. He was feverish and anxious. He had caught up some expression of Mr. Morgan's in the morning, **and** had guessed the measure we had in contemplation. He bade his wife leave the room, and spoke to me by myself.

' " If you please, sir, I'd rather be done for at once than have my arm taken off, and be a burden to my family. I'm not afraid of dying, but I could not stand being a cripple for life, eating bread, and not able to earn it. "

* The tears were in his eyes with earnestness. I had all along been more doubtful about the necessity of the amputation than Mr. Morgan. I knew the improved treatment in such cases. In his days there was much more of the rough and ready in surgical practice; so I gave the poor fellow some hope.

' In the afternoon I met Mr. Bullock.

' " So you're to try your hand at an amputation to-morrow, I hear. Poor John Brouncker ! I used to tell him he was not careful enough about his ladders. Mr. Morgan is quite excited about it. He asked me to be present, and see how well a man from Guy's could operate; he says he is sure you'll do it beautifully. Pah ! no such sights for me, thank you. "

* Ruddy Mr. Bullock went a shade or two paler at the thought.

* " Curious ! how professionally a man views these things. Here's Mr. Morgan, who has been all along as proud of you as if you were his own son, absolutely rubbing his hands at the idea of this crowning glory, this feather in your cap ! He told me just now he knew **he** had always been too nervous to be a good operator ; **and** had therefore preferred sending for White from Chesterton. But now any one might have a serious accident who liked, for you would be always at hand. "

* I told Mr. Bullock, I really thought we might avoid **the** amputation; but his mind was preoccupied with the idea of it, and he did not care to listen to me.

The whole town was full of it. That is a charm in a little town, everybody is so sympathetically full of the same events. Even Miss Horsman stopped me to ask after John Brouncker with interest; but she threw cold water upon my intention of saving the arm.

' "As for the wife and family, we'll take care of them. Think what a fine opportunity you have of showing off, Mr. Harrison !"

' That was just like her. Always ready with her suggestions of ill-natured or interested motives.

' Mr. Morgan heard my proposal of a mode of treatment by which I thought it possible that the arm might be saved.

' "I differ from you, Mr. Harrison," said he. "I regret it, but I differ *in toto* from you. Your kind heart deceives you in this instance. There is no doubt that amputation must take place—not later than to-morrow morning, I should say. I have made myself at liberty to attend upon you, sir; I shall be happy to officiate as your assistant. Time was when I should have been proud to be principal, but a little trembling in my arm incapacitates me."

' I urged my reasons upon him again ; but he was obstinate. He had, in fact, boasted so much of my acquirements as an operator, that he was unwilling I should lose this opportunity of displaying my skill. He could not see that there would be greater skill evinced in saving the arm ; nor did I think of this at the time. I grew angry at his old-fashioned narrow-mindedness, as I thought it ; and I became dogged in my resolution to adhere to my own course. We parted very coolly ; and I went straight off to John Brouncker to tell him I believed that I could save the arm, if he would refuse to have it amputated. When I calmed myself a little, before going in and speaking to him, I could not help acknowledging that we should run some risk of locked jaw; but, on the whole, and after giving most earnest, conscientious thought to the case, I was sure that my mode of treatment would be best.

' He **was** a sensible man. I told him **the** difference of opinion that existed between Mr. Morgan and myself.

I said that there might be some little risk attending the non-amputation; but that I should guard against it, and I trusted that I should be able to preserve his arm.

' "Under God's blessing," said he reverently. I bowed my head. I don't like to talk too frequently of the dependence which I always felt on that holy blessing, as to the result of my efforts; but I was glad to hear that speech of John's, because it showed a calm and faithful heart; and I had almost certain hopes of him from that time.

' We agreed that he should tell Mr. Morgan the reason of his objections to the amputation, and his reliance on my opinion. I determined to recur to every book I had relating to such cases, and to convince Mr. Morgan, if I could, of my wisdom. Unluckily, I found out afterwards that he had met Miss Horsman in the time that intervened before I saw him again at his own house that evening; and she had more than hinted that I shrank from performing the operation, "for very good reasons, no doubt. She had heard that the medical students in London were a bad set, and were not remarkable for regular attendance in the hospitals. She might be mistaken; but she thought it was, perhaps, quite as well poor John Brouncker had not his arm cut off by———Was there not such a thing as mortification coming on after a clumsy operation? It was, perhaps, only a choice of deaths!"

' Mr. Morgan had been stung at all this. Perhaps I did not speak quite respectfully enough; I was a good deal excited. We only got more and more angry with each other; though he, to do him justice, was as civil as could be all the time, thinking that thereby he concealed his vexation and disappointment. He did not try to conceal his anxiety about poor John. I went home weary and dispirited. I made up and took the necessary applications to John; and, promising to return with the dawn of day (I would fain have stayed, but I did not wish him to be alarmed about himself), I went home, and resolved to sit up and study the treatment of similar cases.

' Mrs. Rose knocked at the door.

' " Come in ! " said I sharply.

' She said she had seen I had something on my mind all day, and she could not go to bed without asking if there was nothing she could do. She was good and kind; and I could not help telling her a little of the truth. She listened pleasantly ; and I shook her warmly by the hand, thinking that though she might not be very wise, her good heart made her worth a dozen keen, sharp, hard people, like Miss Horsman.

' When I went at daybreak, I saw John's wife for a few minutes outside of the door. She seemed to wish her husband had been in Mr. Morgan's hands rather than mine; but she gave me as good an account as I dared to hope for of the manner in which her husband had passed the night. This was confirmed by my own examination.

' When Mr. Morgan and I visited him together later on in the day, John said what we had agreed upon the day before ; and I told Mr. Morgan openly that it was by my advice that amputation was declined. He did not speak to me till we had left the house. Then he said—" Now, sir, from this time, I consider this case entirely in your hands. Only remember the poor fellow has a wife and six children. In case you come round to my opinion, remember that Mr. White could come over, as he has done before, for the operation."

' So! Mr. Morgan believed I declined operating because I felt myself incapable. Very well! I was much mortified.

' An hour after we parted, I received a note to this effect—

' " DEAR SIR,—I will take the long round to-day, to leave you at liberty to attend to Brouncker's case, which I feel to be a very responsible one.

" ' J. MORGAN."

' This was kindly done. I went back, as soon as I could, to John's cottage. While I was in the inner room with him, I heard the Miss Tomkinsons' voices

outside. They had called to inquire. Miss Tomkinson came in, and evidently was poking and snuffing about. (Mrs. Brouncker told her that I was within; and within I resolved to be till they had gone.)

' "What is this close smell?" asked she. "I am afraid you are not cleanly. Cheese!—cheese in this cupboard I. No wonder there is an unpleasant smell. Don't you know how particular you should be about being clean when there is illness about?"

* Mrs. Brouncker was exquisitely clean in general, and was piqued at these remarks.

' "If you please, ma'am, I could not leave John yasterday to do any house-work, and Jenny put the dinner-things away. She is but eight years old."

' But this did not satisfy Miss Tomkinson, who was evidently pursuing the course of her observations.

' "Fresh butter, I declare! Well now, Mrs. Brouncker, do you know I don't allow myself fresh butter at this time of the year? How can you save, indeed, with such extravagance!"

' "Please, ma'am," answered Mrs. Brouncker, "you'd think it strange, if I was to take such liberties in your house as you're taking here."

* I expected to hear a sharp answer. No! Miss Tomkinson liked true plain-speaking. The only person in whom she would tolerate round-about ways of talking was her sister.

' "Well, that's true," she said. "Still, you must not be above taking advice. Fresh butter is extravagant at this time of the year. However, you're a good kind of woman, and I've a great respect for John. Send Jenny for some broth as soon as he can take it. Come, Caroline, we have got to go on to Williams's."

' But Miss Caroline said that she was tired, and would rest where she was till Miss Tomkinson came back. I was a prisoner for some time, I found. When she was alone with Mrs. Brouncker, she said—

' "You must not be hurt by my sister's abrupt manner. She means well. She has not much imagination or sympathy, and cannot understand the distrao-

tion of mind produced by the illness of a worshipped husband." I could hear the loud sigh of commiseration which followed this speech. Mrs. Brouncker said—

" Please, ma'am, I don't worship my husband. I would not be so wicked."

" Goodness ! You don't think it wicked, do you ? For my part, if . . . I should worship, I should adore him." I thought she need not imagine such improbable cases. But sturdy Mrs. Brouncker said again—

" I hope I know my duty better. I've not learned my Commandments for nothing. I know whom I ought to worship."

' Just then the children came in, dirty and unwashed, I have no doubt. And now Miss Caroline's real nature peeped out. She spoke sharply to them, and asked them if they had no manners, little pigs as they were, to come brushing against her silk gown in that way ? She sweetened herself again, and was as sugary as love when Miss Tomkinson returned for her, accompanied by one whose voice, " like winds in summer sighing," I knew to be my dear Sophy's.

' She did not say much ; but what she did say, and the manner in which she spoke, was tender and compassionate in the highest degree ; and she came to take the four little ones back with her to the Vicarage, in order that they might be out of their mother's way ; the older two might help at home. She offered to wash their hands and faces; and when I emerged from my inner chamber, after the Miss Tomkinsons had left, I found her with a chubby child on her knees, bubbling and spluttering against her white wet hand, with a face bright, rosy, and merry under the operation. Just as I came in, she said to him, " There, Jemmy, now I can kiss you with this nice clean face."

' She coloured when she saw me. I liked her speaking, and I liked her silence. She was silent now, and I ' ' lo'ed a' the better ". I gave my directions to Mrs. Brouncker, and hastened to overtake Sophy and the children; but they had gone round by the lanes, I suppose, for I saw nothing of them.

* I was very anxious about the case. At night I went again. Miss Horsman had been there ; I believe she was really kind among the poor, but she could not help leaving a sting behind her everywhere. She had been frightening Mrs. Brouncker about her husband; and been, I have no doubt, expressing her doubts of my skill; for Mrs. Brouncker began—

' " Oh, please, sir, if you'll only let Mr. Morgan take off his arm, I will never think the worse of you for not being able to do it. '

' I told her it was from no doubt of my own competency to perform the operation that I wished to save the arm; but that he himself was anxious to have it spared.

' " Aye, bless him ! he frets about not earning enough to keep us, if he's crippled ; but, sir, I don't care about that. I would work my fingers to the bone, and so would the children ; I'm sure we'd be proud to do for him, and keep him; God bless him ! it would be far better to have him only with one arm, than to have him in the churchyard, Miss Horsman says "——

' " Confound Miss Horsman ! " said I.

' " Thank you, Mr. Harrison," said her well-known voice behind me. She had come out, dark as it was, to bring some old linen to Mrs. Brouncker ; for, as I said before, she was very kind to all the poor people of Duncombe.

' " I beg your pardon ; " for I really was sorry for my speech, or rather, that she had heard it.

' " There is no occasion for any apology," she replied, drawing herself up, and pinching her lips into a very venomous shape.

' John was doing pretty well; but of course the danger of locked jaw was not over. Before I left, his wife entreated me to take off the arm ; she wrung her hands in her passionate entreaty. " Spare him to me, Mr. Harrison," she implored. Miss Horsman stood by. It was mortifying enough ; but I thought of the power which was in my hands, as I firmly believed, of saving the limb; and I was inflexible.

* You cannot think how pleasantly Mrs. Rose's sympathy came in on my return. To be sure, she did not understand one word of the case, which I detailed to her ; but she listened with interest, and as long as she held her tongue I thought she was really taking it in ; but her first remark was as malapropos as could be.

' " You are anxious to save the tibia—I see completely how difficult that will be. My late husband had a case exactly similar, and I remember his anxiety ; but you must not distress yourself too much, my dear Mr. Harrison ; I have no doubt it will end well."

* I knew she had no grounds for this assurance, and yet it comforted me.

' However, as it happened, John did fully as well as I could hope ; of course, he was long in rallying his strength : and, indeed, sea-air was evidently so necessary for his complete restoration, that I accepted with gratitude Mrs. Rose's proposal of sending him to Highport for a fortnight or three weeks. Her kind generosity in this matter made me more desirous than ever of paying her every mark of respect and attention.

CHAPTER XV

' ABOUT this time there was a sale at Ashmeadow, a pretty house in the neighbourhood of Duncombe. It was likewise an easy walk, and the spring days tempted many people thither who had no intention of buying anything, but who liked the idea of rambling through the woods, gay with early primroses and wild daffodils, and of seeing the gardens and house, which till now had been shut up from the ingress of the townspeople. Mrs. Rose had planned to go, but an unlucky cold prevented her. She begged me to bring her a very particular account, saying she delighted in details, and always questioned the late Mr. Rose as to the side dishes of the dinners to which he went. The late Mr. Rose's conduct was always held up as a model to me, by the way. I walked to Ashmeadow, pausing or loitering

with different parties of townspeople, all bound in the same direction. At last I found the Vicar and Sophy, and with them I stayed. I sat by Sophy and talked and listened. A sale is a very pleasant gathering after all. The auctioneer, in a country place, is privileged to joke from his rostrum ; and having a personal knowledge of most of the people, can sometimes make a very keen hit at their circumstances, and turn the laugh against them. For instance, on the present occasion, there was a farmer present, with his wife, who was notoriously the grey mare. The auctioneer was selling some horse-cloths, and called out to recommend the article to her, telling her, with a knowing look at the company, that they would make her a dashing pair of trousers, if she was in want of such an article. She drew herself up with dignity, and said, "Come, John, we've had enough of these." Whereupon there was a burst of laughter, and in the midst of it John meekly followed his wife out of the place. The furniture in the sitting-rooms was, I believe, very beautiful, but I did not notice it much. Suddenly I heard the auctioneer speaking to me, "Mr. Harrison, won't you give me a bid for this table ? "

' It was a very pretty little table of walnut-wood. I thought it would go into my study very well, so I gave him a bid. I saw Miss Horsman bidding against me, so I went off with full force, and at last it was knocked down to me. The auctioneer smiled, and congratulated me.

' "A most useful present for Mrs. Harrison, when that lady comes."

'Everybody laughed. They like a joke about marriage; it is so easy of comprehension. But the table which I had thought was for writing, turned out to be a work-table, scissors and thimble complete. No wonder I looked foolish. Sophy was not looking at me, that was one comfort. She was busy arranging a nosegay of wood-anemone and wild sorrel.

' Miss Horsman came up, with her curious eyes.

' "I had no idea things were far enough advanced for you to be purchasing a work-table, Mr. Harrison."

' I laughed off my awkwardness.

' " Did not you, Miss Horsman ? You are very much behindhand. You have not heard of my piano, then ? "

' " No, indeed," she said, half uncertain whether I was serious or not. " Then it seems there is nothing wanting but the lady."

' " Perhaps she may not be wanting either," said I, for I wished to perplex her keen curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

' WHEN I got home from my round, I found Mrs. Rose in some sorrow.

' " Miss Horsman called after you left," said she. " Have you heard how John Brouncker is at Highport ? "

' " Very well," replied I. " I called on his wife just now, and she had just got a letter from him. She had been anxious about him, for she had not heard for a week. However, all's right now ; and she has pretty well of work, at Mrs. Munton's, as her servant is ill. Oh, they'll do, never fear."

* " At Mrs. Munton's ? Oh, that accounts for it, then. She is so deaf, and makes such blunders."

' " Accounts for what ? " asked I.

' " Oh, perhaps I had better not tell you," hesitated Mrs. Rose.

* " Yes, tell me at once. I beg your pardon, but I hate mysteries."

* " You are so like my poor dear Mr. Rose. He used to speak to me just in that sharp, cross way. It is only that Miss Horsman called. She had been making a collection for John Brouncker's widow and "——

' " But the man's alive ! " said I.

' " So it seems. But Mrs. Munton had told her that he was dead. And she has got Mr. Morgan's name down at the head of the list, and Mr. Bullock's."

' Mr. Morgan and I had got into a short, cool way of speaking to each other ever since we had differed so

much about the treatment of Brouncker's arm ; and I had heard once or twice of his shakes of the head over John's case. He would not have spoken against my method for the world, and fancied that he concealed his fears.

' "Miss Horsman is very ill-natured, I think," sighed forth Mrs. Rose.

* I saw that something had been said of which I had not heard, for the mere fact of collectmg money for the widow was good-natured, whoever did it; so I asked, quietly, what she had said.

' " Oh, I don't know if I should tell you. I only know she made me cry ; for I'm not well, and I can't bear to hear any one that I live with abused."

' Come ! this was pretty plain.

' " What did Miss Horsman say of me ? " asked I, half laughing, for I knew there was no love lost between us.

' " Oh, she only said she wondered you could go to sales, and spend your money there, when your ignorance had made Jane Brouncker a widow, and her children fatherless."

' " Pooh ! pooh ! John's alive, and likely to live as long as you or I, thanks to you, Mrs. Rose."

' When my work-table came home, Mrs. Rose was so struck with its beauty and completeness, and I was so much obliged to her for her identification of my interests with hers, and the kindness of her whole conduct about John, that I begged her to accept of it. She seemed very much pleased; and, after a few apologies, she consented to take it, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the front parlour, where she usually sat. There was a good deal of morning calling in Buncombe after the sale, and during this time the fact of John's being alive was established to the conviction of all except Miss Horsman, who, I believe, still doubted. I myself told Mr. Morgan, who immediately went to reclaim his money; saying to me, that he was thankful of the information ; he was truly glad to hear it ; and he shook me warmly by the hand for the first time for a month.

CHAPTER XVII

' A FEW days after the sale, I was in the consulting-room. The servant must have left the folding-doors a little ajar, I think. Mrs. Munton came to call on Mrs. Rose ; and the former being deaf, I heard all the speeches of the latter lady, as she was obliged to speak very loud in order to be heard. She began—

' " This is a great pleasure, Mrs. Munton, so seldom as you are well enough to go out."

* Mumble, mumble, mumble, through the door.

' " Oh, very well, thank you. Take this seat, and then you can admire my new work-table, ma'am; a present from Mr. Harrison."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Who could have told you, ma'am ? Miss Horsman ? Oh, yes, I showed it Miss Horsman."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I don't quite understand you, ma'am."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm not blushing, I believe. I really am quite in the dark as to what you mean."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Oh, yes, Mr. Harrison and I are most comfortable together. He reminds me so of my dear Mr. Rose—just as fidgety and anxious in his profession."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm sure you are joking now, ma'am." Then I heard a pretty loud—

' " Oh, no "; mumble, mumble, mumble, for a long time.

' " Did he really? Well, I'm sure I don't know. I should be sorry to think he was doomed to be unfortunate in so serious an affair; but you know my undying regard for the late Mr. Rose."

' Another long mumble.

' " You're very kind, I'm sure. Mr. Rose always thought more of my happiness than his own"—a little crying—"but the turtle-dove has always been my ideal, ma'am."

'Mumble, mumble.

' " No one could have been happier than L As you say, it is a compliment to matrimony."

' Mumble.

"" Oh, but you must not repeat such a thing. Mr. Harrison would not like it. He can't bear to have his affairs spoken about."

' Then there was a change of subject; an inquiry after some poor person, I imagine. I heard Mrs. Rose say—

' " She has got a mucous membrane, I'm afraid, ma'am."

' A commiserating mumble.

' " Not always fatal. I believe Mr. Rose knew some cases that lived for years after it was discovered that they had a mucous membrane." A pause. Then Mrs. Rose spoke in a different tone.

' " Are you sure, ma'am, there is no mistake about what he said ? "

* Mumble.

' " Pray don't be so observant, Mrs. Munton ; you find out too much. One can have no little secrets."

' The call broke up ; and I heard Mrs. Munton say in the passage, " I wish you joy, ma'am, with all my heart. There 's no use denying it ; for I've seen all along what would happen."

' When I went in to dinner, I said to Mrs. Rose—

' " You've had Mrs. Munton here, I think. Did she bring any news ? " To my surprise, she bridled and Bimpered, and replied, " Oh, you must not ask, Mr. Harrison: such foolish reports."

' I did not ask, as she seemed to wish me not, and I knew there were silly reports always about. Then I think she was vexed that I did not ask. Altogether she went on so strangely that I could not help looking at her ; and then she took up a hand-screen, and held it between me and her. I really felt rather anxious.

' " Are you not feeling well ? " said I innocently.

' " Oh, thank you, I believe Fra quite well; only the room is rather warm, is it not ? "

' " Let me put the blinds down for you ? the sun begins to have a good deal of power." I drew down the blinds.

' " You are so attentive, Mr. Harrison. Mr. Rose himself never did more for my little wishes than you do."

' " I wish I could do more—I wish I could show you how much I feel "——her kindness to John Brouncker, I was going on to say ; but I was just then called out to a patient. Before I went I turned back, and said——

' " Take care of yourself, my dear Mrs. Rose ; you had better rest a little."

' " For your sake, I will," said she tenderly.

' I did not care for whose sake she did it. Only I really thought she was not quite well, and required rest. I thought she was more affected than usual at tea-time; and could have been angry with her nonsensical ways once or twice, but that I knew the real goodness of her heart. She said she wished she had the power to sweeten my life as she could my tea. I told her what a comfort she had been all during my Jate time of anxiety, and then I stole out to try if I could hear the evening singing at the Vicarage, by standing close to the garden-wall.

CHAPTER XVIII

' THE next morning I met Mr. Bullock by appointment, to talk a little about the legacy which was paid into his hands. As I was leaving his office, feeling full of my riches, I met Miss Horsman. She smiled rather grimly, and said——

' " Oh ! Mr. Harrison, I must congratulate I believe. I don't know whether I ought to have known, but as I do, I must wish you joy. A very nice little sum, too. I always said you would have money."

* So she had found out my legacy, had she ? Well, it was no secret, and one likes the reputation of being a person of property. Accordingly I smiled, and said

I was much obliged to her, and if I could alter the figures to my liking, she might congratulate me still more.

' She said, " Oh, Mr. Harrison, you can't have everything. It would be better the other way, certainly. Money is the great thing, as you've found out. The relation died most opportunely, I must say."

' " He was no relative," said I; " only an intimate friend."

' " Dear-ah-me ! I thought it had been a brother ! Well, at any rate, the legacy is safe."

' I wished her good morning, and passed on. Before long I was sent for to Miss Tomkinson's.

' Miss Tomkinson sat in severe state to receive me. I went in with an air of ease, because I always felt so uncomfortable.

' " Is this true that I hear ? " asked she, in an inquisitorial manner.

' I thought she alluded to my five hundred pounds ; so I smiled, and said that I believed it was.

' " Can money be so great an object with you, Mr. Harrison ? " she asked again.

' I said I had never cared much for money, except as an assistance to any plan of settling in life ; and then, as I did not like her severe way of treating the subject, I said that I hoped every one was well ; though of course I expected some one was ill, or I should not have been sent for.

' Miss Tomkinson looked very grave and sad. Then she answered : " Caroline is very poorly—the old palpitations at the heart; but of course that is nothing to you."

' I said I was very sorry. She had a weakness there, I knew. Could I see her ? I might be able to order something for her.

' I thought I heard Miss Tomkinson say something in a low voice about my being a heartless deceiver. Then she spoke up. " I was always distrustful of you, Mr. Harrison. I never liked your looks. I begged Caroline again and again not to confide in you. I foresaw how it would end. And now I fear her precious life will be a sacrifice."

' I begged her not to distress herself, for in all probability there was very little the matter with her sister. Might I see her ?

' " No ! " she said shortly, standing up as if to dismiss me. " There has been too much of this seeing and calling. By my consent, you shall never see her again."¹

' I bowed. I was annoyed, of course. Such a dismissal might injure my practice just when I was most anxious to increase it.

' " Have you no apology, no excuse to offer ? "

' I said I had done my best; I did not feel that there was any reason to offer an apology. I wished her good morning. Suddenly she came forwards.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison," said she, ' if you have really loved Caroline, do not let a little paltry money make you desert her for another."

' I was struck dumb. Loved Miss Caroline ! I loved Miss Tomkinson a great deal better, and yet I disliked her. She went on—

' " I have saved nearly three thousand pounds. If you think you are too poor to marry without money, I will give it all to Caroline. I am strong, and can go on working ; but she is weak, and this disappointment will kill her." She sat down suddenly, and covered her face with her hands. Then she looked up.

' " You are unwilling, I see. Don't suppose I would have urged you if it had been for myself ; but she has had so much sorrow." And now she fairly cried aloud. I tried to explain ; but she would not listen, but kept saying, " Leave the house, sir I leave the house ! " But I would be heard.

' " I have never had any feeling warmer than respect for Miss Caroline, and I have never Bhown any different feeling. I never for an instant thought of making her my wife, and she has had no cause in my behaviour to imagine I entertained any such intention."

' " This is adding insult to injury," said she. " Leave the house, sir, this instant !"

CHAPTER XIX

' I WENT, and sadly enough. In a small town such an occurrence is sure to be talked about, and to make a great deal of mischief. When I went home to dinner I was so full of it, and foresaw so clearly that I should need some advocate soon to set the case in its right light, that I determined on making a confidante of good Mrs. Rose. I could not eat. She watched me tenderly, and sighed when she saw my want of appetite.

' " I am sure you have something on your mind, Mr. Harrison. Would it be—would it not be—a relief to impart it to some sympathizing friend ? "

' It was just what I wanted to do.

' " My dear kind Mrs. Rose," said I, " I must tell you, if you will listen."

' She took up the fire-screen, and held it, as yesterday, between me and her.

' " The most unfortunate misunderstanding has taken place. Miss Tomkinson thinks that I have been paying attentions to Miss Caroline ; when, in fact—may I tell you, Mrs. Rose ?—my affections are placed elsewhere. Perhaps you have found it out already ? " for indeed I thought I had been too much in love to conceal my attachment to Sophy from any one who knew my movements as well as Mrs. Rose.

* She hung down her head, and said she believed she had found out my secret.

' " Then only think how miserably I am situated. If I have any hope—oh, Mrs. Rose, do you think I have any hope "——

' She put the hand-screen still more before her face, and after some hesitation she said she thought " if I persevered—in time—I might have hope ". And then she suddenly got up and left the room.

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Author :

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	.1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	.1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	.1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	.1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	.1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	.1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	.1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	.1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	.1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	.1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	.1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	.1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	.1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	.1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	.1850
„ <i>Ruth</i> .	.1853
„ <i>Cranford</i> .	.1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	.1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	.1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	.1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	.1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	.1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	.1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	.1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	.1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	.1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane ; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door ; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door,' handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was ! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, 'Now, I will give out the psalm, "Come all harmonious tongues,"⁷ to be sung to "Mount Ephraim" tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

'I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; 'but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. 'Nay,' says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ? '

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. ' They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ? '

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ? ' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. ' But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ? '

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ? '

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ?'

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ?'

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* I am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

'It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know—I thought, perhaps, you really liked it. I ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been ill!' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdrew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open casements of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

'Don't you think him handsome?' asked I.

'Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner?'

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like ; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss ; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity ; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him ; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were ; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him ; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man ; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of? her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours,
" E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words employed. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clump of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

' Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

' Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

' I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

' Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

' And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

' Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well!' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ?' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour !' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too!' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ?' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?'

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

'I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open casement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

ⁱ"Od rot 'em !" said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she wakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '

' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"—There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

" She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

" I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one ; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

CHAPTER IV

* BY and by the inhabitants of Duncombe began to have parties in my honour. Mr. Morgan told me it was on my account, or I don't think I should have found it out. But he was pleased at every fresh invitation, and rubbed his hands, and chuckled, as if it was a compliment to himself, as in truth it was.

' Meanwhile, the arrangement with Mrs. Rose had been brought to a conclusion. She was to bring her furniture, and place it in a house, of which I was to pay the rent. She was to be the mistress, and, in return, she was not to pay anything for her board. Mr. Morgan took the house, and delighted in advising and settling all my affairs. I was partly indolent, and partly amused, and was altogether passive. The house he took for me was near his own : it had two sitting-rooms downstairs, opening into each other by folding-doors, which were, however, kept shut in general. The back room was my consulting room (" the library," he advised me to call it), and he gave me a skull to put on the top of my bookcase, in which the medical books were all ranged on the conspicuous shelves; while Miss Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray were, by Mr. Morgan himself, skilfully placed in a careless way, upside down or with their backs turned to the wall. The front parlour was to be the dining-room, and the room above was furnished with Mrs. Rose's drawing-room chairs and table, though I found she preferred sitting downstairs in the dining-room close to the window, where, between every stitch, she could look up and see what was going on in the street. I felt rather queer to be the master of this house, filled with another person's furniture, before I had even seen the lady whose property it was.

' Presently she arrived. Mr. Morgan met her at the inn where the coach stopped, and accompanied her to my house. I could see them out of the drawing-room

window, the little gentleman stepping daintily along, flourishing his cane, and evidently talking away. She was a little taller than he was, and in deep widow's mourning; such veils and falls, and capes and cloaks, that she looked like a black crape haycock. When we were introduced, she put up her thick veil, and looked around and sighed.

' " Your appearance and circumstances, Mr. Harrison, remind me forcibly of the time when I was married to my dear husband, now at rest. He was then, like you, commencing practice as a surgeon. For twenty years I sympathized with him, and assisted him by every means in my power, even to making up pills when the young man was out. May we live together in like harmony for an equal length of time ! May the regard between us be equally sincere, although, instead of being conjugal, it is to be maternal and filial ! "

' I am sure she had been concocting this speech in the coach, for she afterwards told me she was the only passenger. When she had ended, I felt as if I ought to have had a glass of wine in my hand, to drink, after the manner of toasts. And yet I doubt if I should have done it heartily, for I did not hope to live with her for twenty years ; it had rather a dreary sound. However, I only bowed and kept my thoughts to myself. I asked Mr. Morgan, while Mr. Rose was upstairs taking off her things, to stay to tea; to which he agreed, and kept rubbing his hands with satisfaction, saying—

" Very fine woman, sir; very fine woman ! And what a manner ! How she will receive patients, who may wish to leave a message during your absence. Such a flow of words to be sure ! "

' Mr. Morgan could not stay long after tea, as there were one or two cases to be seen. I would willingly have gone, and had my hat on, indeed, for the purpose, when he said it would not be respectful, " not the thing," to leave Mrs. Rose the first evening of her arrival,

" Tender deference to the sex—to a widow in the first months of her loneliness—requires a little consideration, my dear sir. I will leave that case at

Miss Tomkinson's for you; you will perhaps call early to-morrow morning. Miss Tomkinson is rather particular, and is apt to speak plainly if she does not think herself properly attended to."

' I had often noticed that he shuffled off the visits to Miss Tomkinson's on me, and I suspect he was a little afraid of the lady.

' It was rather a long evening with Mrs. Rose. She had nothing to do, thinking it civil, I suppose, to stop in the parlour, and not go upstairs and unpack. I begged I might be no restraint upon her if she wished to do so; but (rather to my disappointment) she smiled in a measured, subdued way, and said it would be a pleasure to her to become better acquainted with me. She went upstairs once, and my heart misgave me when I saw her come down with a clean folded pocket-handkerchief. Oh, my prophetic soul!—she was no sooner seated, than she began to give me an account of her late husband's illness, and symptoms, and death. It was a very common case, but she evidently seemed to think it had been peculiar. She had just a smattering of medical knowledge, and used the technical terms so very malapropos that I could hardly keep from smiling; but I would not have done it for the world, she was evidently in such deep and sincere distress. At last she said—

' " I have the ' dognoses' of my dear husband's complaint in my desk, Mr. Harrison, if you would like to draw up the case for the *Lancet*. I think he would have felt gratified, poor fellow, if he had been told such a compliment would be paid to his remains, and that his case should appear in those distinguished columns."

' It was rather awkward; for the case was of the very commonest, as I said before. However, I had not been even this short time in practice without having learnt a few of those noises which do not compromise one, and yet may bear a very significant construction if the listener chooses to exert a little imagination.

' Before the end of the evening, we were such Mends that she brought me down the late Mr. Rose's picture to look at. She told me she could not bear herself to

gaze upon the beloved features; but that if I would look upon the miniature, she would avert her face. I offered to take it into my own hands, but she seemed wounded at the proposal, and said she never, never could trust such a treasure out of her own possession; so she turned her head very much over her left shoulder, while I examined the likeness held by her extended right arm.

' The late Mr. Rose must have been rather a good-looking, jolly man; and the artist had given him such a broad smile, and such a twinkle about the eyes, that it really was hard to help smiling back at him. However, I restrained myself.

' At first Mrs. Rose objected to accepting any of the invitations which were sent her to accompany me to the tea-parties in the town. She was so good and simple, that I was sure she had no other reason than the one which she alleged—the short time that had elapsed since her husband's death ; or else, now that I had had some experience of the entertainments which she declined so pertinaciously, I might have suspected that she was glad of the excuse. I used sometimes to wish that I was a widow. I came home tired from a hard day's riding, and if I had but felt sure that Mr. Morgan would not come in, I should certainly have put on my slippers and my loose morning coat, and have indulged in a cigar in the garden. It seemed a cruel sacrifice to society to dress myself in tight boots, and a stiff coat, and go to a five-o'clock tea. But Mr. Morgan read me such lectures upon the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of the people among whom I was settled, and seemed so sorry, and almost hurt, when I once complained of the dullness of these parties, that I felt I could not be so selfish as to decline more than one out of three. Mr. Morgan, if he found that I had an invitation for the evening, would often take the longer round, and the more distant visits. I suspected him at first of the design, which I confess I often entertained, of shirking the parties ; but I soon found out he was really making a sacrifice of his inclinations for what he considered to be my advantage.

CHAPTER V

' THERE was one invitation which seemed to promise a good deal of pleasure. Mr. Bullock (who is the attorney of Duncombe) was married a second time to a lady from a large provincial town; she wished to lead the fashion—a thing very easy to do, for every one was willing to follow her. So instead of giving a tea-party in my honour, she proposed a picnic to some old hall in the neighbourhood; and really the arrangements sounded tempting enough. Every patient who had seemed full of the subject; both those who were invited and those who were not. There was a moat round the house, with a boat on it; and there was a gallery in the hall, from which music sounded delightfully. The family to whom the place belonged were abroad, and lived at a newer and grander mansion when they were at home; there were only a farmer and his wife in the old hall, and they were to have the charge of the preparations. The little, kind-hearted town was delighted when the sun shone bright on the October morning of our picnic; the shopkeepers and cottagers all looked pleased as they saw the cavalcade gathering at Mr. Bullock's door. We were somewhere about twenty in number; a "silent few", she called us; but I thought we were quite enough. There were the Miss Tomkinsons, and two of their young ladies—one of them belonged to a "county family", Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper; then came Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bullock, and a tribe of little children, the offspring of the present wife. Miss Bullock was only a step-daughter. Mrs. Munton had accepted the invitation to join our party, which was rather unexpected by the host and hostess, I imagine, from little remarks that I overheard; but they made her very welcome. Miss Horsman (a maiden lady who had been on a visit from home till last week) was another. And last, there were the Vicar and his children. These, with Mr.

Morgan and myself, made up the party. I was very much pleased to see something more of the Vicar's family. He had come in occasionally to the evening parties, it is true ; and spoken kindly to us all ; but it was not his habit to stay very long at thorn. And his daughter was, he said, too young to visit. She had had the charge of her little sisters and brother since her mother's death, which took up a good deal of her time, and she was glad of the evenings to pursue her own studies. But to-day the case was different ; and Sophy, and Helen, and Lizzie, and even little Walter, were all there, standing at Mrs. Bullock's door ; for we none of us could be patient enough to sit still in the parlour with Mrs. Munton and the elder ones, quietly waiting for the two chaises and the spring-cart, which were to have been there by two o'clock, and now it was nearly a quarter past. " Shameful ! the brightness of the day would be gone." The sympathetic shopkeepers, standing at their respective doors with their hands in their pockets, had, one and all, their heads turned in the direction from which the carriages (as Mrs. Bullock called them) were to come. There was a rumble along the paved street ; and the shopkeepers turned and smiled, and bowed their heads congratulatingly to us ; all the mothers and all the little children of the place stood clustering round the door to see us set off. I had my horse waiting ; and, meanwhile, I assisted people into their vehicles. One sees a good deal of management on such occasions. Mrs. Munton was handed first into one of the chaises ; then there was a little hanging back, for most of the young people wished to go in the cart—I don't know why. My horseman, however, came forward, and as she was known to be the intimate friend of Mrs. Munton, so far was satisfactory. But who was to be third—bodkin with two old ladies, who liked the windows shut ? I saw Sophy speaking to Helen ; and then she came forward and offered to be the third. The two old ladies looked pleased and glad (as every one did near Sophy) ; so that chaise-full was arranged. Just as it was going off,

however, the servant from the vicarage came running with a note for her master. When he had read it, he went to the chaise door, and I suppose told Sophy, what I afterwards heard him say to Mrs. Bullock, that the clergyman of a neighbouring parish was ill, and unable to read the funeral service for one of his parishioners, who was to be buried that afternoon. The Vicar was, of course, obliged to go, and said he should not return home that night. It seemed a relief to some, I perceived, to be without the little restraint of his dignified presence. Mr. Morgan came up just at the moment, having ridden hard all the morning to be in time to join our party; so we were resigned, on the whole, to the Vicar's absence. His own family regretted him the most, I noticed, and I liked them all the better for it. I believe that I came next in being sorry for his departure; but I respected and admired him, and felt always the better for having been in his company. Miss Tomkinson, Mrs. Bullock, and the "county" young lady, were in the next chaise. I think the last would rather have been in the cart with the younger and merrier set, but I imagine that was considered *infra dig*. The remainder of the party were to ride and tie; and a most riotous, laughing set they were. Mr. Morgan and I were on horseback; at least I led my horse, with little Walter riding on him; his fat, sturdy legs standing stiff out on each side of my cob's broad back. He was a little darling, and chattered all the way, his sister Sophy being the heroine of all his stories. I found he owed this day's excursion entirely to her begging papa to let him come; nurse was strongly against it—"cross old nurse!" he called her once, and then said, "No, not cross; kind nurse; Sophy tells Walter not to say cross nurse." I never saw so young a child so brave. The horse shied at a log of wood. Walter looked very red, and grasped the mane, but sat upright like a little man, and never spoke all the time the horse was dancing. When it was over he looked at me, and smiled—

"You would not let me be hurt, Mr. Harrison,

would you ? " He was the most winning little fellow I ever saw.

' There were frequent cries to me from the cart, " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! do get us that branch of blackberries ; you can reach it with your whip handle." " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! there were such splendid nuts on the other side of that hedge ; would you just turn back for them ? " Miss Caroline Tomkinson was once or twice rather faint with the motion of the cart, and asked me for my smelling bottle, as she had forgotten hers. I was amused at the idea of my carrying such articles about with me. Then she thought she should like to walk, and got out, and came on my side of the road ; but I found little Walter the pleasanter companion, and soon set the horse off into a trot, with which pace her tender constitution could not keep up.

' The road to the old hall was along a sandy lane, with high hedge-banks ; the wych-elms almost met overhead. " Shocking farming ! " Mr. Bullock called out ; and so it might be, but it was very pleasant and picturesque-looking. The trees were gorgeous, in their orange and crimson hues, varied by great, dark-green holly-bushes, glistening in the autumn sun. I should have thought the colours too vivid, if I had seen them in a picture, especially when we wound up the brow, after crossing the little bridge over the brook (what laughing and screaming there was as the cart splashed through the sparkling water !)—and I caught the purple hills beyond. We could see the old hall, too, from that point, with its warm rich woods billowing up behind, and the blue waters of the moat lying still under the sunlight,

' Laughing and talking is very hungry work, and there was a universal petition for dinner when we arrived at the lawn before the hall, where it had been arranged that we were to dine. I saw Miss Carry take Miss Tomkinson aside, and whisper to her ; and presently the elder sister came up to me, where I was busy, rather apart, making a seat of hay, which I had fetched

from the farmer's loft for my little friend Walter, who, I had noticed, was rather hoarse, and for whom I was afraid of a seat on the glass, dry as it appeared to be.

' " Mr. Harrison, Caroline tells me she has been feeling very faint, and she is afraid of a return of one of her attacks. She says she has more confidence in your medical powers than in Mr. Morgan's. I should not be sincere if I did not say that I differ from her; but as it is so, may I beg you to keep an eye upon her ? I tell her she had better not have come if she did not feel well; but, poor girl, she had set her heart upon this day's pleasure. I have offered to go home with her; but she says, if she can only feel sure you are at hand, she would rather stay."

' Of course I bowed, and promised all due attendance on Miss Caroline; and in the meantime, until she did require my services, I thought I might as well go and help the Vicar's daughter, who looked so fresh and pretty in her white muslin dress, here, there, and everywhere, now in the sunshine, now in the green shade, helping every one to be comfortable, and thinking of every one but herself.

' Presently, Mr. Morgan came up.

' " Miss Caroline does not feel quite well. I have promised your services to her sister."

' " So have I, sir. But Miss Sophy cannot carry this heavy basket."

' I did not mean her to have heard this excuse; but she caught it up and said—

' " Oh, yes, I can ! I can take the things out one by one. Go to poor Miss Caroline, pray, Mr. Harrison.

' I went; but very unwillingly, I must say. When I had once seated myself by her, I think she must have felt better. It was, probably, only a nervous fear, which was relieved when she knew she had assistance near at hand; for she made a capital dinner. I thought she would never end her modest requests for " just a little more pigeon-pie, or a merry-thought of chicken ". Such a hearty meal would, I hope, effectually revive

her; and so it did; for she told me she thought she could manage to walk round the garden, and see the old peacock yews, if I would kindly give her my arm. It was very provoking; I had so set my heart upon being with the Vicar's children. I advised Miss Caroline strongly to lie down a little, and rest before tea, on the sofa in the farmer's kitchen; you cannot think how persuasively I begged her to take care of herself. At last she consented, thanking me for my tender interest; she should never forget my kind attention to her. She little knew what was in my mind at the time. However, she was safely consigned to the farmer's wife, and I was rushing out in search of a white gown and a waving figure, when I encountered Mrs. Bullock at the door of the hall. She was a fine, fierce-looking woman. I thought she had appeared a little displeased at my (unwilling) attentions to Miss Caroline at dinner-time; but now, seeing me alone, she was all smiles.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison, all alone ! How is that ? What are the young ladies about to allow such churlishness ? And, by the way, I have left a young lady who will be very glad of your assistance, I am sure—my daughter, Jemima' (her step-daughter, she meant). * Mr. Bullock is so particular, and so tender a father, that he would be frightened to death at the idea of her going into the boat on the moat unless she was with some one who could swim. He is gone to discuss the new wheel-plough with the farmer (you know agriculture is his hobby, although law, horrid law, is his business). But the poor girl is pining on the bank, longing for my permission to join the others, which I dare not give unless you will kindly accompany her, and promise, if any accident happens, to preserve her safe."

Oh, Sophy, why was no one anxious about you ?

CHAPTER VI

'Miss BULLOCK was standing by the waterside, looking wistfully, as I thought, at the water party ; the sound of whose merry laughter came pleasantly enough from the boat, which lay off (for, indeed, no one knew how to row, and she was of a clumsy, fiat-bottomed build) about a hundred yards, " weatherbound," as they shouted out, among the long stalks of the water-lilies.

' Miss Bullock did not look up till I came close to her ; and then, when I told her my errand, she lifted up her great, heavy, sad eyes, and looked at me for a moment. It struck me, at the time, that she expected to find some expression on my face which was not there, and that its absence was a relief to her. She was a very pale, unhappy-looking girl, but very quiet, and, if not agreeable in manner, at any rate not forward or offensive. I called to the party in the boat, and they came slowly enough through the large, cool, green lily-leaves towards us. When they got near, we saw there was no room for us, and Miss Bullock said she would rather stay in the meadow and saunter about, if I would go into the boat; and I am certain from the look on her countenance that she spoke the truth; but Miss Horsman called out, in a sharp voice, while she smiled in a very disagreeable, knowing way—

' " Oh, mamma will be displeased if you don't come in, Miss Bullock, after all her trouble in making such a nice arrangement."

* At this speech the poor girl hesitated, and at last, in an undecided way, as if she was not sure whether she was doing right, she took Sophy's place in the boat. Helen and Lizzie landed with their sister, so that there was plenty of room for Miss Tomkinson, Miss Horsman, and all the little Bullocks ; and the three vicarage girls went off strolling along the meadow side, and playing with Walter, who was in a high state of excitement.

The sun was getting low, but the declining light was beautiful upon the water; and, to add to the charm of the time, Sophy and her sisters, standing on the green lawn in front of the hall, struck up the little German canon, which I had never heard before—

Oh wie wohl ist mir am abend, &c.

At last we were summoned to tug the boat to the landing-steps on the lawn, tea and a blazing wood fire being ready for us in the hall. I was offering my arm to Miss Horsman, as she was a little lame, when she said again, in her peculiar disagreeable way, '* Had you not better take Miss Bullock, Mr. Harrison ? It will be more satisfactory."

'I helped Miss Horsman up the steps, however, and then she repeated her advice; so, remembering that Miss Bullock was in fact the daughter of my entertainers, I went to her; but though she accepted my arm, I could perceive she was sorry that I had offered it.

'The hall was lighted by the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate; the daylight was dying away in the west; and the large windows admitted but little of what was left, through their small leaded frames, with coats of arms emblazoned upon them. The farmer's wife had set out a great long table, which was piled with good things; and a huge black kettle sang on the glowing fire, which sent a cheerful warmth through the room as it crackled and blazed. Mr. Morgan (who I found had been taking a little round in the neighbourhood among his patients) was there, smiling and rubbing his hands as usual. Mr. Bullock was holding a conversation with the farmer at the garden-door on the nature of different manures, in which it struck me that if Mr. Bullock had the fine names and the theories on his side, the farmer had all the practical knowledge and the experience, and I know which I would have trusted. I think Mr. Bullock rather liked to talk about Liebig in my hearing; it sounded well, and was knowing. Mrs. Bullock was not particularly placid in her mood. In the first place, I wanted to sit by the Vicar's daughter,

and Miss Caroline as decidedly wanted to sit on my other side, being afraid of her fainting fits, I imagine. But Mrs. Bullock called me to a place near her daughter. Now I thought I had done enough civility to a girl who was evidently annoyed rather than pleased by my attentions, and I pretended to be busy stooping under the table for Miss Caroline's gloves, which were missing ; but it was of no avail; Mrs. Bullock's fine, severe eyea were awaiting my reappearance, and she summoned me again.

' " I am keeping this place on my right hand for you, Mr. Harrison. Jemima, sit still! "

* I went up to the post of honour and tried to busy myself with pouring out coffee to hide my chagrin; but after forgetting to empty the water put in ("to warm the cups ", Mrs. Bullock said), and omitting to add any sugar, the lady told me she would dispense with my services, and turn me over to my neiglibour on the other side.

' " Talking to the younger lady was, no doubt, more Mr. Harrison's vocation than assisting the elder one." I dare say it was only the manner that made the words seem offensive. Miss Horsman sat opposite to mo, smiling away. Miss Bullock did not speak, but seemed more depressed than ever. At length, Miss Horsman and Mrs. Bullock got to a war of innuendoes, which were completely unintelligible to me, and I was very much displeased with my situation ; while, at the bottom of the table, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bullock were making the young ones laugh most heartily. Part of the joke was Mr. Morgan insisting upon making tea at that end ; and Sophy and Helen were busy contriving every possible mistake for him. I thought honour was a very good thing, but merriment a better. Here was I in the place of distinction, hearing nothing but cross words. At last the time came for us to go home. As the evening was damp, the seats in the chaises were the best and most to be desired. And now Sophy offered to go in the cart; only she seemed anxious, and so was I, that Walter should be secured from the effects of the

white wreaths of fog rolling up from the valley; but the little violent affectionate fellow would not be separated from Sophy. She made a nest for him on her knee in one corner of the cart, and covered him with her own shawl; and I hoped that he would take no harm. Miss Tomkinson, Mr. Bullock, and some of the young ones walked; but I seemed chained to the windows of the chaise, for Miss Caroline begged me not to leave her, as she was dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Mrs. Bullock implored me to see that the man did not overturn them in the bad roads, as he had certainly had too much to drink.

' I became so irritable before I reached home, that I thought it was the most disagreeable day of pleasure I had ever had, and could hardly bear to answer Mrs. Rose's never-ending questions. She told me, however, that from my account the day was so charming that she thought she should relax in the rigour of her seclusion, and mingle a little more in the society of which I gave so tempting a description. She really thought her dear Mr. Rose would have wished it; and his will should be law to her after his death, as it had ever been during his life. In compliance, therefore, with his wishes, she would even do a little violence to her own feelings.

' She was very good and kind; not merely attentive to everything which she thought could conduce to my comfort, but willing to take any trouble in providing the broths and nourishing food which I often found it convenient to order, under the name of kitchen-physic, for my poorer patients; and I really did not see the use of her shutting herself up, in mere compliance with an etiquette, when she began to wish to mix in the little quiet society of Duncombe. Accordingly I urged her to begin to visit, and even when applied to as to what I imagined the late Mr. Rose's wishes on that subject would have been, answered for that worthy gentleman, and assured his widow that I was convinced he would have regretted deeply her giving way to immoderate grief, and would have been rather grateful than other-

wise at seeing her endeavour to divert her thoughts by a few quiet visits. She cheered up, and said, "As I really thought so, she would sacrifice her own inclinations, and accept the very next invitation that came."

CHAPTER VII

' I WAS roused from my sleep in the middle of the night by a messenger from the vicarage. Little Walter had got the croup, and Mr. Morgan had been sent for into the country. I dressed myself hastily, and went through the quiet little street. There was a light burning upstairs at the vicarage. It was in the nursery. The servant, who opened the door the instant I knocked, was crying sadly, and could hardly answer my inquiries as I went upstairs, two steps at a time, to see my little favourite.

* The nursery was a great large room. At the farther end it was lighted by a common candle, which left the other end, where the door was, in shade, so I suppose the nurse did not see me come in, for she was speaking very crossly.

' " Miss Sophy !" said she, " I told you over and over again it was not fit for him to go, with the hoarseness that he had, and you would take him. It will break your papa's heart, I know ; but it's none of my doing."

' Whatever Sophy felt, she did not speak in answer to this. She was on her knees by the warm bath, in which the little fellow was struggling to get his breath, with a look of terror on his face that I have often noticed in young children when smitten by a sudden and violent illness. It seems as if they recognized something infinite and invisible, at whose bidding the pain and the anguish come, from which no love can shield them. It is a very heart-rending look to observe, because it comes on the faces of those who are too young to receive comfort from the words of faith, or the

romises of religion. Walter had his arms tight round Sophy's neck, as if she, hitherto his paradise-angel, could save him from the dread shadow of Death. Yes ! of Death ! I knelt down by him on the other side, and examined him. The very robustness of his little frame gave violence to the disease, which is always one of the most fearful by which children of his age can be attacked.

' " Don't tremble, Watty," said Sophy, in a soothing tone ; " it's Mr. Harrison, darling, who let you ride on his horse." I could detect the quivering in the voice, which she tried to make so calm and soft to quiet the little fellow's fears. We took him out of the bath, and I went for leeches. While I was away, Mr. Morgan came. He loved the vicarage children as if he were their uncle ; but he stood still and aghast at the sight of Walter—so lately bright and strong—and now hurrying alone to the awful change—to the silent mysterious land, where, tended and cared for as he had been on earth, he must go—alone. The little fellow ! the darling !

* We applied the leeches to his throat. He resisted at first; but Sophy, God bless her! put the agony of her grief on one side, and thought only of him, and began to sing the little songs he loved. We were all still. The gardener had gone to fetch the Vicar ; but he was twelve miles off, and we doubted if he would come in time. I don't know if they had any hope; but the first moment Mr. Morgan's eyes met mine, I saw that he, like me, had none. The ticking of the house-clock sounded through the dark, quiet house. Walter was sleeping now, with the black leeches yet hanging to his fair, white throat. Still Sophy went on singing little lullabies, which she had sung under far different and happier circumstances. I remember one verse, because it struck me at the time as strangely applicable.

" Sleep, baby, sleep !
Thy rest shall angels keep;
While on the grass the lamb shall feed,
And never suffer want or need.
Sleep, baby, sleep."

The tears were in Mr. Morgan's eyes. I do not think either he or I could have spoken in our natural tones ; but the brave girl went on, clear though low. She stopped at last, and looked up.

' " He is better, is he not, Mr. Morgan ? "

' " No, my dear. He is—ahem—he could not speak all at once. Then he said—'* My dear ! he will be better soon. Think of your mamma, my dear Miss Sophy. She will be very thankful to have one of her darlings safe with her, where she is."

' Still she did not cry. But she bent her head down on the little face, and kissed it long and tenderly.

' " I will go for Helen and Lizzie. They will be sorry not to see him again." She rose up and went for them. Poor girls, they came in, in their dressing-gowns, with eyes dilated with sudden emotion, pale with terror, stealing softly along, as if sound could disturb him. Sophy comforted them by gentle caresses. It was over soon.

' Mr. Morgan was fairly crying like a child. But he thought it necessary to apologize to me, for what I honoured him for. '* I am a little overdone by yesterday's work, sir. I have had one or two bad nights, and they rather upset me. When I was your age I was as strong and manly as any one, and would have scorned to shed tears."

' Sophy came up to where we stood.

' " Mr. Morgan ! I am so sorry for papa. How shall I tell him ? " She was struggling against her own grief for her father's sake. Mr. Morgan offered to await his coming home ; and she seemed thankful for the proposal. I, new friend, almost stranger, might stay no longer. The street was as quiet as ever ; not a shadow was changed ; for it was not yet four o'clock. But during the night a soul had departed.

' From all I could see, and all I could learn, the Vicar and his daughter strove which should comfort the other the most. Each thought of the other's grief—each prayed for the other rather than for themselves. We **saw** them walking out, countrywards ; and we

hoard of them in the cottages of the poor. But it was some time before I happened to meet either of them again. And then I felt, from something indescribable in their manner towards me, that I was one of the

" Peculiar people, whom Death had made dear."

That one day at the old hall had done this. I was, perhaps, the last person who had given the little fellow any unusual pleasure. Poor Walter ! I wish I could have done more to make his short life happy !

CHAPTER VIII

' THERE was a little lull, out of respect to the Vicar's grief, in the visiting. It gave time to Mrs. Rose to soften down the anguish of her weeds.

' At Christmas, Miss Tomkinson sent out invitations for a party. Miss Caroline had once or twice apologized to me because such an event had not taken place before ; but, as she said, "the avocations of their daily life prevented their having such little *reunions* except in the vacations." And, sure enough, as soon as the holidays began, came the civil little note—

" The Misses Tomkinson request the pleasure of Mrs. Rose's and Mr. Harrison's company at tea, on the evening of Monday, the 23rd inst. Tea at five o'clock."

' Mrs. Rose's spirit roused, like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, at this. She was not of a repining disposition, but I do think she believed the party-giving population of Duncombe had given up inviting her, as soon as she had determined to relent, and accept the invitations, in compliance with the late Mr. Rose's wishes.

' Such snippings of white love-ribbon us I found everywhere, making the carpet untidy ! One day, too, unluckily, a small box was brought to me by mistake. I did not look at the direction, for I never doubted it was some hyoscyamus which I was expecting from London; so I tore it open, and **saw** inside a piece of

paper, with "No more grey hair*", in large letters, upon it. I folded it up in a hurry, and sealed it afresh, and gave it to Mrs. Rose ; but I could not refrain from asking her, soon after, if she could recommend me anything to keep my hair from turning grey, adding that I thought prevention was better than cure. I think she made out the impression of my seal on the paper after that; for I learned that she had been crying, and that she talked about there being no sympathy left in the world for her since Mr. Rose's death ; and that she counted the days until she could rejoin him in the better world. I think she counted the days to Miss Tomkinson's party, too ; she talked so much about it.

* The covers were taken off Miss Tomkinson's chairs, and curtains, and sofas; and a great jar full of artificial flowers was placed in the centre of the table, which, as Miss Caroline told me, was all her doing, as she doted on the beautiful and artistic in life. Miss Tomkinson stood, erect as a grenadier, close to the door, receiving her friends, and heartily shaking them by the hands as they entered: she said she was truly glad to see them. And so she really was.

'We had just finished tea, and Miss Caroline had brought out a little pack of conversation cards—sheaves of slips of cardboard, with intellectual or sentimental questions on one set, and equally intellectual and sentimental answers on the other; and as the answers were fit to any and all the questions, you may think they were a characterless and "wersh" set of things. I had just been asked by Miss Caroline—

' *Can you tell what those dearest to you think of you at this present time f* " and had answered—

' "*How can you expect me to reveal such a secret to the present company /* " when the servant announced that a gentleman, a friend of mine, wished to speak to me downstairs.

' "Oh, show him up, Martha ; show him up !" said Miss Tomkinson, in her hospitality.

"Any friend of our friend's is welcome," said Miss Caroline, in an insinuating tone.

* I jumped up, however, thinking it might be some one on business; but I was so penned in by the spider-legged tables, stuck out on every side, that I could not make the haste I wished; and before I could prevent it, Martha had shown up Jack Marshland, who was on his road home for a day or two at Christmas.

' He came up in a hearty way, bowing to Miss Tomkinson, and explaining that he had found himself in my neighbourhood, and had come over to pass a night with me, and that my servant had directed him where I was.

' His voice, loud at all times, sounded like Stentor's in that little room, where we all spoke in a kind of purring way. He had no swell in his tones; they were *forte* from the beginning. At first it seemed like the days of my youth come back again, to hear full, manly speaking; I felt proud of my friend, as he thanked Miss Tomkinson for her kindness in asking him to stay the evening. By and by he came up to me, and I dare say he thought he had lowered his voice, for he looked as if speaking confidentially, while in fact the whole room might have heard him.

' " Frank, my boy, when shall we have dinner at this good old lady's ? I'm deuced hungry."

' Dinner! Why, we had had tea an hour ago. While he yet spoke, Martha came in with a little tray, on which was a single cup of coffee and three slices of wafer bread-and-butter. His dismay, and his evident submission to the decrees of Fate, tickled me so much, that I thought he should have a further taste of the life I led from month's end to month's end, and I gave up my plan of taking him home at once, and enjoyed the anticipation of the hearty laugh we should have together at the end of the evening. I was famously punished for my determination.

" Shall we continue our game ?" asked Miss Caroline, who had never relinquished her sheaf of questions.

' We went on questioning and answering, with little gain of information to either party.

" No such thing as heavy betting in this game, eh,

Frank I " asked Jack, who had been watching us. " You don't lose ten pounds at a sitting, I guess, as you used to do at Short's. Playing for love, I suppose you call it ? "

* Miss Caroline simpered, and looked down. Jack was not thinking of her. He was thinking of the days we had had at the " Mermaid ". Suddenly he said, " Where were you this day last year, Frank ? "

' " I don't remember ! " said I.

' " Then I'll tell you. It's the 23rd—the day you were taken up for knocking down the fellow in Long Acre, and that I had to bail you out ready for Christmas Day. You are in more agreeable quarters to-night."

* He did not intend this reminiscence to be heard, but was not in the least put out when Miss Tomkinson, with a face of dire surprise, asked—

' " Mr. Harrison taken up, sir ? "

' " Oh, yes, ma'am ; and you see it was so common an affair with him to be locked up that he can't remember the dates of his different imprisonments."

' He laughed heartily ; and so should I, but that I saw the impression it made. The thing was, in fact, simple enough, and capable of easy explanation. I had been made angry by seeing a great hulking fellow, out of mere wantonness, break the crutch from under a cripple ; and I struck the man more violently than I intended, and down he went, yelling out for the police, and I had to go before the magistrate to be released. I disdained giving this explanation at the time. It was no business of theirs what I had been doing a year ago ; but still Jack might have held his tongue. However, that unruly member of his was set a-going, and he told me afterwards he was resolved to let the old ladies into a little of life ; and accordingly he remembered every practical joke we had ever had, and talked and laughed, and roared again. I tried to converse with Miss Caroline—Mrs. Munton—any one ; but Jack was the hero of the evening, and every one was listening to him.

' " Then he has never sent any hoaxing letters since

he came here, has he ? Good boy ! He has turned over a new leaf. He was the deepest dog at that I ever met with. Such anonymous letters as he used to send ! Do you remember that to Mrs. Walbrook, eh, Frank ? That was too bad I " (the wretch was laughing all the time). " No ; I won't tell about it—don't be afraid. Such a shameful hoax " (laughing again).

' " Pray do tell," I called out; for he made it seem far worse than it was.

' " Oh no, no ; you've established a better character—I would not for the world nip your budding efforts. We'll bury the past in oblivion."

' I tried to tell my neighbours the story to which he alluded ; but they were attracted by the merriment of Jack's manner, and did not care to hear the plain matter of fact.

' Then came a pause; Jack was talking almost quietly to Miss Horsman. Suddenly he called across the room—" How many times have you been out with the hounds ? The hedges were blind very late this year, but you must have had some good mild days since."

' " I have never been out," said I shortly.

' " Never !—whew !——Why, I thought that was the great attraction to Duncombe."

' Now was not he provoking ? He would condole with me, and fixed the subject in the minds of every one present.

' The supper trays were brought in, and there was a shuffling of situations. He and I were close together again.

' " I say, Frank, what will you lay me that I don't clear that tray before people are ready for their second helping ? I'm as hungry as a hound."

' " You shall have a round of beef and a raw leg of mutton when you get home. Only do behave yourself here."

' " Well, for your sake ; but keep me away from those trays, or I'll not answer for myself. ' Hould me, or I'll fight,' as the Irishman said I'll go and talk to that little old lady in blue, and sit with my back to those ghosts of eatables."

' He sat down by Miss Caroline, who would not have liked his description of her; and began an earnest, tolerably quiet conversation. I tried to be as agreeable as I could, to do away with the impression he had given of me; but I found that every one drew up a little stiffly at my approach, and did not encourage me to make any remarks.

* In the middle of my attempts, I heard Miss Caroline beg Jack to take a glass of wine, and I saw him help himself to what appeared to be port; but in an instant he set it down from his lips, exclaiming, " Vinegar, by Jove! " He made the most horribly wry face: and Miss Tomkinson came up in a severe hurry to investigate the affair. It turned out it was some black-currant wine, on which she particularly piqued herself; I drank two glasses of it to ingratiate myself with her, and can testify to its sourness. I don't think she noticed my exertions, she was so much engrossed in listening to Jack's excuses for his malapropos observation. He told her, with the gravest face, that he had been a teetotalter so long that he had but a confused recollection of the distinction between wine and vinegar, particularly eschewing the latter, because it had been twice fermented; and that he had imagined Miss Caroline had asked him to take toast-and-water, or he should never have touched the decanter.

CHAPTER IX

' As we were walking home, Jack said, " Lord, Frank ! I've had such fun with the little lady in blue. I told her you wrote to me every Saturday, telling me the events of the week. She took all in." He stopped to laugh; for he bubbled and chuckled so that he could not laugh and walk. " And I told her you were deeply in love " (another laugh); " and that I could not get yon to tell me the name of the lady, but that she had light brown hair—in short, I drew from life, and gave

her an exact description of herself; and that I was most anxious to see her, and implore her to be merciful to you, for that you were a most timid, faint-hearted fellow with women." He laughed till I thought he would have fallen down. "I begged her, if she could guess who it was from my description—I'll answer for it she did—I took care of that; for I said you described a mole on the left cheek in the most poetical way, saying Venus had pinched it out of envy at seeing any one more lovely—oh, hold me up, or I shall fall—laughing and hunger make me so weak;—well, I say, I begged her, if she knew who your fair one could be, to implore her to save you. I said I knew one of your lungs had gone after a former unfortunate love-affair, and that I could not answer for the other if the lady here were cruel. She spoke of a respirator; but I told her that might do very well for the odd lung; but would it minister to a heart diseased? I really did talk fine. I have found out the secret of eloquence—it's believing what you've got to say; and I worked myself well up with fancying you married to the little lady in blue."

' I got to laughing at last, angry as I had been; his impudence was irresistible. Mrs. Rose had come home in the sedan, and gone to bed; and he and I sat up over the round of beef and brandy-and-water till two o'clock in the morning.

' He told me I had got quite into the professional way of mousing about a room, and mewing and purring according as my patients were ill or well. He mimicked me, and made me laugh at myself. He left early the next morning.

' Mr. Morgan came at his usual hour; he and Marshland would never have agreed, and I should have been uncomfortable to see two friends of mine disliking and despising each other.

' Mr. Morgan was ruffled; but with his deferential manner to women, he smoothed himself down before Mrs. Rose—regretted that he had not been able to come to Miss Tomkinson's the evening before, and consequently had not seen her in the society she was so well

calculated to adorn. But when we were by ourselves, he said—

' " I was sent for to Mrs. Munton's this morning—the old spasms. May I ask what is this story she tells me about—about prison, in fact ? I trust, sir, she has made some little mistake, and that you never were;——that it is an unfounded report." He could not get it out—" that you were in Newgate for three months ! " I burst out laughing; the story had grown like a mushroom indeed. Mr. Morgan looked grave. I told him the truth. Still he looked grave. " I've no doubt, sir, that you acted rightly ; but it has an awkward sound. I imagined from your hilarity just now that there was no foundation whatever for the story. Unfortunately, there is."

' " I was only a night at the police-station. I would go there again for the same cause, sir."

' " Very fine spirit, sir—quite like Don Quixote ; but don't you see you might as well have been to the hulks at once ? "

' " No, sir ; I don't."

' " Take my word, before long the story will have grown to that. However, we won't anticipate evil. *Mens conscia recti*, you remember, is the great thing. The part I regret is, that it may require some short time to overcome a little prejudice which the story may excite against you. However, we won't dwell on it. *Mens conscia recti* / Don't think about it, sir."

* It was clear he was thinking a good deal about it.

CHAPTER X

' Two or three days before this time, I had had an invitation from the Bullocks to dine with them on Christmas Day. Mrs. Rose was going to spend the week with friends in the town where she formerly lived ; and I had been pleased at the notion of being received into a family, and of being a little with Mr. Bullock, who struck me as a bluff, good-hearted fellow.

' But this Tuesday before Christmas Day, there came an invitation from the Vicar to dine there ; there were to be only their own family and Mr. Morgan. " Only their own family." It was getting to be all the world to me. I was in a passion with myself for having been BO ready to accept Mr. Bullock's invitation—coarse and ungentlemanly as he was; with his wife's airs of pretension and Miss Bullock's stupidity. I turned it over in my mind. No ! I could not have a bad headache, which should prevent me going to the place I did not care for, and yet leave me at liberty to go where I wished. All I could do was to join the vicarage girls after church, and walk by their side in a long country ramble. They were quiet; not sad, exactly; but it was evident that the thought of Walter was in their minds on this day. We went through a copse where there were a good number of evergreens planted as covers for game. The snow was on the ground; but the sky was clear and bright, and the sun glittered on the smooth holly-leaves. Lizzie asked me to gather her some of the very bright red berries, and she was beginning a sentence with—

' " Do you remember,"——when Helen said "*Hush*", and looked towards Sophy, who was walking a little apart, and crying softly to herself. There was evidently some connexion between Walter and the holly-berries, for Lizzie threw them away at once when she saw Sophy's tears. Soon we came to a stile which led to an open, breezy common, half covered with gorse. I helped the little girls over it, and set them to run down the slope; but I took Sophy's arm in mine, and though I could not speak, I think she knew how I was feeling for her. I could hardly bear to bid her good-bye at the vicarage gate ; it seemed as if I ought to go in and spend the day with her.

CHAPTER XI

' I VENTED my ill humour in being late for the Bullocks' dinner. There were one or two clerks, towards whom Mr. Bullock was patronizing and pressing. Mrs. Bullock was decked out in extraordinary finery. Miss Bullock looked plainer than ever; but she had on some old gown or other, I think, for I heard Mrs. Bullock tell her she was always making a figure of herself. I began to-day to suspect that the mother would not be sorry if I took a fancy to the step-daughter. I was again placed near her at dinner, and when the little ones came in to dessert I was made to notice how fond of children she was, and indeed when one of them nestled to her, her face did brighten; but the moment she caught this loud-whispered remark the gloom came back again, with something even of anger in her look; and she was quite sullen and obstinate when urged to sing in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bullock turned to me—

" Some young ladies won't sing unless they are asked by gentlemen." She spoke very crossly. " If you ask Jemima, she will probably sing. To oblige me, it is evident she will not."

' I thought the singing, when we got it, would probably be a great bore; however, I did as I was bid, and went with my request to the young lady, who was sitting a little apart. She looked up at me with eyes full of tears, and said, in a decided tone (which, if I had not seen her eyes, I should have said was as cross as her mamma's), " No, sir, I will not." She got up, and left the room. I expected to hear Mrs. Bullock abuse her for her obstinacy. Instead of that, she began to tell me of the money that had been spent on her education; of what each separate accomplishment had cost. " She was timid," she said, " but very musical. Wherever her future home might be, there would be no want of music." She went on praising her till I hated her. If they thought I was going to marry that great lubberly

girl, they were mistaken. Mr. Bullock and the clerks came up. He brought out Liebig, and called me to him.

"I can understand a good deal of this agricultural chemistry," said he, "and have put it in practice—without much success, hitherto, I confess. But these unconnected letters puzzle me a little. I suppose they have some meaning, or else I should say it was mere book-making to put them in."

"I think they give the page a very ragged appearance," said Mrs. Bullock, who had joined us. "I inherit a little of my late father's taste for books, and must say I like to see a good type, a broad margin, and an elegant binding. My father despised variety; how lie would have held up his hands aghast at the cheap literature of these times! He did not require many books, but he would have twenty editions of those that he had; and he paid more for binding than he did for the books themselves. But elegance was everything with him. He would not have admitted your Liebig, Mr. Bullock; neither the nature of the subject, nor the common type, nor the common way in which your book is got up, would have suited him."

"Go and make tea, my dear, and leave Mr. Harrison and me to talk over a few of these manures."

"We settled to it; I explained the meaning of the symbols, and the doctrine of chemical equivalents. At last he said, "Doctor! you're giving me too strong a dose of it at one time. Let's have a small quantity taken 'hodie'; that's professional, as Mr. Morgan would call it. Come in and call when you have leisure, and give me a lesson in my alphabet. Of all you've been telling me I can only remember that C means carbon and O oxygen; and I see one must know the meaning of all these confounded letters before one can do much good with Liebig."

"We dine at three," said Mrs. Bullock. "There will always be a knife and fork for Mr. Harrison. Bullock! don't confine your invitation to the evening!"

"Why, you see, I've a nap always after dinner, so I could not be learning chemistry then."

' " Don't be so selfish, Mr. B. Think of the pleasure Jemima and I shall have in Mr. Harrison's society."

* I put a stop to the discussion by saying I would come in in the evenings occasionally, and give Mr. Bullock a lesson, but that my professional duties occupied me invariably until that time.

' I liked Mr. Bullock. He was simple, and shrewd; and to be with a man was a relief, after all the feminine society I went through every day.

CHAPTER XII

' T H E next morning I met Miss Horsman.

' " So you dined at Mr. Bullock's yesterday, Mr. Harrison ? Quite a family party, I hear. They are quite charmed with you, and your knowledgo of chemistry. Mr. Bullock told me so, in Hodgson's shop, just now. Miss Bullock is a nice girl, eh, Mr. Harrison ? " She looked sharply at me. Of course, whatever I thought, I could do nothing but assent. " A nice little fortune, too—three thousand pounds, Consols, from her own mother."

' What did I care ? She might have three millions for me. I had begun to think a good deal about money, though, but not in connexion with her. I had been doing up our books ready to send out our Christmas bills, and had been wondering how far the Vicar would consider three hundred a year, with a prospect of increase, would justify me in thinking of Sophy. Think of her I could not help ; and the more I thought of how good, and sweet, and pretty she was, the more I felt that she ought to have far more than I could offer. Besides, my father was a shopkeeper, and I saw the Vicar had a sort of respect for family. I determined to try and be very attentive to my profession. I was as civil as could be to every one; and wore the nap off the brim of my hat by taking it off so often.

' I had my eyes open to every glimpse of Sophy. I am

overstocked with gloves now that I bought at that time, by way of making errands into the shops where I saw her black gown. I bought pounds upon pounds of arrowroot, till I was tired of the eternal arrowroot puddings Mrs. Rose gave me. I asked her if she could not make bread of it, but she seemed to think that would be expensive; so I took to soap as a safe purchase. I believe soap improves by keeping.

CHAPTER XIII

' THE more I knew of Mrs. Rose, the better I liked her. She was sweet, and kind, and motherly, and we never had any rubs. I hurt her once or twice, I think, by cutting her short in her long stories about Mr. Rose. But I found out that when she had plenty to do she did not think of him quite so much; so I expressed a wish for Corazza shirts, and in the puzzle of devising how they were to be cut out she forgot Mr. Rose for some time. I was still more pleased by her way about some legacy her elder brother left her. I don't know the amount, but it was something handsome, and she might have set up housekeeping for herself: but, instead, she told Mr. Morgan (who repeated it to me), that she should continue with me, as she had quite an elder sister's interest in me.

' The " county young lady ", Miss Tyrrell, returned to Miss Tomkinson's after the holidays. She had an enlargement of the tonsils, which required to be frequently touched with caustic, so I often called to see her. Miss Caroline always received me, and kept me talking in her washed-out style, after I had seen my patient. One day she told me she thought she had a weakness about the heart, and would be glad if I would bring my stethoscope the next time, which I accordingly did; and while I was on my knees listening to the pulsations, one of the young ladies came in. She said—

' " Oh, dear ! I never ! I beg your pardon, ma'am," and scuttled out. There was not much the matter with Miss Caroline's heart: a little feeble in action or so, a mere matter of weakness and general languor. When I went down I saw two or three of the girls peeping out of the half-closed schoolroom door, but they shut it immediately, and I heard them laughing. The next time I called, Miss Tomkinson was sitting in state to receive me.

' " Miss Tyrrell's throat does not seem to make much progress. Do you understand the case, Mr. Harrison, or should we have further advice ? I think Mr. Morgan would probably know more about it."

' I assured her it was the simplest thing in the world ; that it always implied a little torpor in the constitution, and that we preferred working through the system, which of course was a slow process, and that the medicine the young lady was taking (iodide of iron) was sure to be successful, although the progress would not be rapid. She bent her head and said, " It might be so ; but she confessed she had more confidence in medicines which had some effect."

' She seemed to expect me to tell her something; but I had nothing to say, and accordingly I bade good-bye. Somehow, Miss Tomkinson always managed to make me feel very small, by a succession of snubbings ; and whenever I left her I had always to comfort myself under her contradictions by saying to myself, " Her saying it is so, does not make it so." Or I invented good retorts which I might have made to her brusque speeches if I had but thought of them at the right time. But it was provoking that I had not had the presence of mind to recollect them just when they were wanted*

CHAPTER XIV

' ON the whole, things went on smoothly. Mr. Holden's legacy came in just about this time; and I felt quite rich. Five hundred pounds would furnish the house, I thought, when Mrs. Rose left and Sophy came. I was delighted, too, to imagine that Sophy perceived the difference of my manner to her from what it was to any one else, and that she was embarrassed and shy in consequence, but not displeased with me for it. All was so flourishing that I went about on wings instead of feet. We were very busy, without having anxious cares. My legacy was paid into Mr. Bullock's hands, who united a little banking business to his profession of law. In return for his advice about investments (which I never meant to take, having a more charming, if less profitable, mode in my head), I went pretty frequently to teach him his agricultural chemistry. I was so happy in Sophy's blushes that I was universally benevolent, and desirous of giving pleasure to every one. I went, at Mrs. Bullock's general invitation, to dinner there one day unexpectedly : but there was such a fuss of ill-concealed preparation consequent upon my coming, that I never went again. Her little boy came in, with an audibly given message from the cook, to ask—

' " If this was the gentleman as she was to send in the best dinner-service and dessert for ? "

' I looked deaf, but determined never to go again.

' Miss Bullock and I, meanwhile, became rather friendly. We found out that we mutually disliked each other; and were contented with the discovery. If people are worth anything, this sort of non-liking is a very good beginning of friendship. Every good quality is revealed naturally and slowly, and is a pleasant surprise. I found out that Miss Bullock was sensible, and even sweet-tempered, when not irritated by her stepmother's endeavours to show her off. But she would sulk for hours after Mrs. Bullock's offensive

praise of her good points. And I never saw such a black passion as she went into when she suddenly came into the room when Mrs. Bullock was telling me of all the offers she had had.

'My legacy made me feel up to extravagance. I scoured the country for a glorious nosegay of camellias, which I sent to Sophy on Valentine's Day. I durst not add a line, but I wished the flowers could speak, and tell her how I loved her.

'I called on Miss Tyrrell that day. Miss Caroline was more simpering and affected than ever; and full of allusions to the day.

' "Do you affix much sincerity of meaning to the little gallantries of this day, Mr. Harrison?" asked she, in a languishing tone. I thought of my camellias, and how my heart had gone with them into Sophy's keeping; and I told her I thought one might often take advantage of such a time to hint at feelings one dared not fully express.

'I remembered afterwards the forced display she made, after Miss Tyrrell left the room, of a valentine. But I took no notice at the time; my head was full of Sophy.

'It was on that very day that John Brouncker, the gardener to all of us who had small gardens to keep in order, fell down and injured his wrist severely (I don't give you the details of the case, because they would not interest you, being too technical; if you've any curiosity, you will find them in the *Lancet* of August in that year). We all liked John, and this accident was felt like a town's misfortune. The gardens, too, just wanted doing up. Both Mr. Morgan and I went directly to him. It was a very awkward case, and his wife and children were crying sadly. He himself was in great distress at being thrown out of work. He begged us to do something that would cure him Speedily, as he could not afford to be laid up, with six children depending on him for bread. We did not say much before him, but we both thought the arm would have to come off, and it was his right arm. We talked it over when we

came out of the cottage. Mr. Morgan had no doubt of the necessity. I went back at dinner-time to see the poor fellow. He was feverish and anxious. He had caught up some expression of Mr. Morgan's in the morning, **and** had guessed the measure we had in contemplation. He bade his wife leave the room, and spoke to me by myself.

' " If you please, sir, I'd rather be done for at once than have my arm taken off, and be a burden to my family. I'm not afraid of dying, but I could not stand being a cripple for life, eating bread, and not able to earn it. "

* The tears were in his eyes with earnestness. I had all along been more doubtful about the necessity of the amputation than Mr. Morgan. I knew the improved treatment in such cases. In his days there was much more of the rough and ready in surgical practice; so I gave the poor fellow some hope.

' In the afternoon I met Mr. Bullock.

' " So you're to try your hand at an amputation to-morrow, I hear. Poor John Brouncker ! I used to tell him he was not careful enough about his ladders. Mr. Morgan is quite excited about it. He asked me to be present, and see how well a man from Guy's could operate; he says he is sure you'll do it beautifully. Pah ! no such sights for me, thank you. "

* Ruddy Mr. Bullock went a shade or two paler at the thought.

* " Curious ! how professionally a man views these things. Here's Mr. Morgan, who has been all along as proud of you as if you were his own son, absolutely rubbing his hands at the idea of this crowning glory, this feather in your cap ! He told me just now he knew **he** had always been too nervous to be a good operator ; **and** had therefore preferred sending for White from Chesterton. But now any one might have a serious accident who liked, for you would be always at hand. "

* I told Mr. Bullock, I really thought we might avoid **the** amputation; but his mind was preoccupied with the idea of it, and he did not care to listen to me.

The whole town was full of it. That is a charm in a little town, everybody is so sympathetically full of the same events. Even Miss Horsman stopped me to ask after John Brouncker with interest; but she threw cold water upon my intention of saving the arm.

' "As for the wife and family, we'll take care of them. Think what a fine opportunity you have of showing off, Mr. Harrison !"

' That was just like her. Always ready with her suggestions of ill-natured or interested motives.

' Mr. Morgan heard my proposal of a mode of treatment by which I thought it possible that the arm might be saved.

' "I differ from you, Mr. Harrison," said he. "I regret it, but I differ *in toto* from you. Your kind heart deceives you in this instance. There is no doubt that amputation must take place—not later than to-morrow morning, I should say. I have made myself at liberty to attend upon you, sir; I shall be happy to officiate as your assistant. Time was when I should have been proud to be principal, but a little trembling in my arm incapacitates me."

' I urged my reasons upon him again ; but he was obstinate. He had, in fact, boasted so much of my acquirements as an operator, that he was unwilling I should lose this opportunity of displaying my skill. He could not see that there would be greater skill evinced in saving the arm ; nor did I think of this at the time. I grew angry at his old-fashioned narrow-mindedness, as I thought it ; and I became dogged in my resolution to adhere to my own course. We parted very coolly ; and I went straight off to John Brouncker to tell him I believed that I could save the arm, if he would refuse to have it amputated. When I calmed myself a little, before going in and speaking to him, I could not help acknowledging that we should run some risk of locked jaw ; but, on the whole, and after giving most earnest, conscientious thought to the case, I was sure that my mode of treatment would be best.

' He **was** a sensible man. I told him **the** difference of opinion that existed between Mr. Morgan and myself.

I said that there might be some little risk attending the non-amputation; but that I should guard against it, and I trusted that I should be able to preserve his arm.

' "Under God's blessing," said he reverently. I bowed my head. I don't like to talk too frequently of the dependence which I always felt on that holy blessing, as to the result of my efforts; but I was glad to hear that speech of John's, because it showed a calm and faithful heart; and I had almost certain hopes of him from that time.

' We agreed that he should tell Mr. Morgan the reason of his objections to the amputation, and his reliance on my opinion. I determined to recur to every book I had relating to such cases, and to convince Mr. Morgan, if I could, of my wisdom. Unluckily, I found out afterwards that he had met Miss Horsman in the time that intervened before I saw him again at his own house that evening; and she had more than hinted that I shrank from performing the operation, "for very good reasons, no doubt. She had heard that the medical students in London were a bad set, and were not remarkable for regular attendance in the hospitals. She might be mistaken; but she thought it was, perhaps, quite as well poor John Brouncker had not his arm cut off by———Was there not such a thing as mortification coming on after a clumsy operation? It was, perhaps, only a choice of deaths!"

' Mr. Morgan had been stung at all this. Perhaps I did not speak quite respectfully enough; I was a good deal excited. We only got more and more angry with each other; though he, to do him justice, was as civil as could be all the time, thinking that thereby he concealed his vexation and disappointment. He did not try to conceal his anxiety about poor John. I went home weary and dispirited. I made up and took the necessary applications to John; and, promising to return with the dawn of day (I would fain have stayed, but I did not wish him to be alarmed about himself), I went home, and resolved to sit up and study the treatment of similar cases.

' Mrs. Rose knocked at the door.

' " Come in ! " said I sharply.

' She said she had seen I had something on my mind all day, and she could not go to bed without asking if there was nothing she could do. She was good and kind; and I could not help telling her a little of the truth. She listened pleasantly ; and I shook her warmly by the hand, thinking that though she might not be very wise, her good heart made her worth a dozen keen, sharp, hard people, like Miss Horsman.

' When I went at daybreak, I saw John's wife for a few minutes outside of the door. She seemed to wish her husband had been in Mr. Morgan's hands rather than mine; but she gave me as good an account as I dared to hope for of the manner in which her husband had passed the night. This was confirmed by my own examination.

' When Mr. Morgan and I visited him together later on in the day, John said what we had agreed upon the day before ; and I told Mr. Morgan openly that it was by my advice that amputation was declined. He did not speak to me till we had left the house. Then he said—" Now, sir, from this time, I consider this case entirely in your hands. Only remember the poor fellow has a wife and six children. In case you come round to my opinion, remember that Mr. White could come over, as he has done before, for the operation."

' So! Mr. Morgan believed I declined operating because I felt myself incapable. Very well! I was much mortified.

' An hour after we parted, I received a note to this effect—

' " DEAR SIR,—I will take the long round to-day, to leave you at liberty to attend to Brouncker's case, which I feel to be a very responsible one.

" ' J. MORGAN."

' This was kindly done. I went back, as soon as I could, to John's cottage. While I was in the inner room with him, I heard the Miss Tomkinsons' voices

outside. They had called to inquire. Miss Tomkinson came in, and evidently was poking and snuffing about. (Mrs. Brouncker told her that I was within; and within I resolved to be till they had gone.)

' "What is this close smell?" asked she. "I am afraid you are not cleanly. Cheese!—cheese in this cupboard I No wonder there is an unpleasant smell. Don't you know how particular you should be about being clean when there is illness about?"

* Mrs. Brouncker was exquisitely clean in general, and was piqued at these remarks.

' "If you please, ma'am, I could not leave John yasterday to do any house-work, and Jenny put the dinner-things away. She is but eight years old."

' But this did not satisfy Miss Tomkinson, who was evidently pursuing the course of her observations.

' "Fresh butter, I declare! Well now, Mrs. Brouncker, do you know I don't allow myself fresh butter at this time of the year? How can you save, indeed, with such extravagance!"

' "Please, ma'am," answered Mrs. Brouncker, "you'd think it strange, if I was to take such liberties in your house as you're taking here."

* I expected to hear a sharp answer. No! Miss Tomkinson liked true plain-speaking. The only person in whom she would tolerate round-about ways of talking was her sister.

' "Well, that's true," she said. "Still, you must not be above taking advice. Fresh butter is extravagant at this time of the year. However, you're a good kind of woman, and I've a great respect for John. Send Jenny for some broth as soon as he can take it. Come, Caroline, we have got to go on to Williams's."

' But Miss Caroline said that she was tired, and would rest where she was till Miss Tomkinson came back. I was a prisoner for some time, I found. When she was alone with Mrs. Brouncker, she said—

' "You must not be hurt by my sister's abrupt manner. She means well. She has not much imagination or sympathy, and cannot understand the distrao-

tion of mind produced by the illness of a worshipped husband." I could hear the loud sigh of commiseration which followed this speech. Mrs. Brouncker said—

" Please, ma'am, I don't worship my husband. I would not be so wicked."

" Goodness ! You don't think it wicked, do you ? For my part, if . . . I should worship, I should adore him." I thought she need not imagine such improbable cases. But sturdy Mrs. Brouncker said again—

" I hope I know my duty better. I've not learned my Commandments for nothing. I know whom I ought to worship."

' Just then the children came in, dirty and unwashed, I have no doubt. And now Miss Caroline's real nature peeped out. She spoke sharply to them, and asked them if they had no manners, little pigs as they were, to come brushing against her silk gown in that way ? She sweetened herself again, and was as sugary as love when Miss Tomkinson returned for her, accompanied by one whose voice, " like winds in summer sighing," I knew to be my dear Sophy's.

' She did not say much ; but what she did say, and the manner in which she spoke, was tender and compassionate in the highest degree ; and she came to take the four little ones back with her to the Vicarage, in order that they might be out of their mother's way ; the older two might help at home. She offered to wash their hands and faces; and when I emerged from my inner chamber, after the Miss Tomkinsons had left, I found her with a chubby child on her knees, bubbling and spluttering against her white wet hand, with a face bright, rosy, and merry under the operation. Just as I came in, she said to him, " There, Jemmy, now I can kiss you with this nice clean face."

' She coloured when she saw me. I liked her speaking, and I liked her silence. She was silent now, and I ' ' lo'ed a' the better ". I gave my directions to Mrs. Brouncker, and hastened to overtake Sophy and the children; but they had gone round by the lanes, I suppose, for I saw nothing of them.

* I was very anxious about the case. At night I went again. Miss Horsman had been there ; I believe she was really kind among the poor, but she could not help leaving a sting behind her everywhere. She had been frightening Mrs. Brouncker about her husband; and been, I have no doubt, expressing her doubts of my skill; for Mrs. Brouncker began—

' " Oh, please, sir, if you'll only let Mr. Morgan take off his arm, I will never think the worse of you for not being able to do it. '

' I told her it was from no doubt of my own competency to perform the operation that I wished to save the arm; but that he himself was anxious to have it spared.

' " Aye, bless him ! he frets about not earning enough to keep us, if he's crippled ; but, sir, I don't care about that. I would work my fingers to the bone, and so would the children ; I'm sure we'd be proud to do for him, and keep him; God bless him ! it would be far better to have him only with one arm, than to have him in the churchyard, Miss Horsman says "——

' " Confound Miss Horsman ! " said I.

' " Thank you, Mr. Harrison," said her well-known voice behind me. She had come out, dark as it was, to bring some old linen to Mrs. Brouncker ; for, as I said before, she was very kind to all the poor people of Duncombe.

' " I beg your pardon ; " for I really was sorry for my speech, or rather, that she had heard it.

' " There is no occasion for any apology," she replied, drawing herself up, and pinching her lips into a very venomous shape.

' John was doing pretty well; but of course the danger of locked jaw was not over. Before I left, his wife entreated me to take off the arm ; she wrung her hands in her passionate entreaty. " Spare him to me, Mr. Harrison," she implored. Miss Horsman stood by. It was mortifying enough ; but I thought of the power which was in my hands, as I firmly believed, of saving the limb; and I was inflexible.

* You cannot think how pleasantly Mrs. Rose's sympathy came in on my return. To be sure, she did not understand one word of the case, which I detailed to her ; but she listened with interest, and as long as she held her tongue I thought she was really taking it in ; but her first remark was as malapropos as could be.

' " You are anxious to save the tibia—I see completely how difficult that will be. My late husband had a case exactly similar, and I remember his anxiety ; but you must not distress yourself too much, my dear Mr. Harrison ; I have no doubt it will end well."

* I knew she had no grounds for this assurance, and yet it comforted me.

' However, as it happened, John did fully as well as I could hope ; of course, he was long in rallying his strength : and, indeed, sea-air was evidently so necessary for his complete restoration, that I accepted with gratitude Mrs. Rose's proposal of sending him to Highport for a fortnight or three weeks. Her kind generosity in this matter made me more desirous than ever of paying her every mark of respect and attention.

CHAPTER XV

' ABOUT this time there was a sale at Ashmeadow, a pretty house in the neighbourhood of Duncombe. It was likewise an easy walk, and the spring days tempted many people thither who had no intention of buying anything, but who liked the idea of rambling through the woods, gay with early primroses and wild daffodils, and of seeing the gardens and house, which till now had been shut up from the ingress of the townspeople. Mrs. Rose had planned to go, but an unlucky cold prevented her. She begged me to bring her a very particular account, saying she delighted in details, and always questioned the late Mr. Rose as to the side dishes of the dinners to which he went. The late Mr. Rose's conduct was always held up as a model to me, by the way. I walked to Ashmeadow, pausing or loitering

with different parties of townspeople, all bound in the same direction. At last I found the Vicar and Sophy, and with them I stayed. I sat by Sophy and talked and listened. A sale is a very pleasant gathering after all. The auctioneer, in a country place, is privileged to joke from his rostrum ; and having a personal knowledge of most of the people, can sometimes make a very keen hit at their circumstances, and turn the laugh against them. For instance, on the present occasion, there was a farmer present, with his wife, who was notoriously the grey mare. The auctioneer was selling some horse-cloths, and called out to recommend the article to her, telling her, with a knowing look at the company, that they would make her a dashing pair of trousers, if she was in want of such an article. She drew herself up with dignity, and said, "Come, John, we've had enough of these." Whereupon there was a burst of laughter, and in the midst of it John meekly followed his wife out of the place. The furniture in the sitting-rooms was, I believe, very beautiful, but I did not notice it much. Suddenly I heard the auctioneer speaking to me, "Mr. Harrison, won't you give me a bid for this table ? "

' It was a very pretty little table of walnut-wood. I thought it would go into my study very well, so I gave him a bid. I saw Miss Horsman bidding against me, so I went off with full force, and at last it was knocked down to me. The auctioneer smiled, and congratulated me.

' "A most useful present for Mrs. Harrison, when that lady comes."

'Everybody laughed. They like a joke about marriage; it is so easy of comprehension. But the table which I had thought was for writing, turned out to be a work-table, scissors and thimble complete. No wonder I looked foolish. Sophy was not looking at me, that was one comfort. She was busy arranging a nosegay of wood-anemone and wild sorrel.

' Miss Horsman came up, with her curious eyes.

' "I had no idea things were far enough advanced for you to be purchasing a work-table, Mr. Harrison."

' I laughed off my awkwardness.

' " Did not you, Miss Horsman ? You are very much behindhand. You have not heard of my piano, then ? "

' " No, indeed," she said, half uncertain whether I was serious or not. " Then it seems there is nothing wanting but the lady."

' " Perhaps she may not be wanting either," said I, for I wished to perplex her keen curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

' WHEN I got home from my round, I found Mrs. Rose in some sorrow.

' " Miss Horsman called after you left," said she. " Have you heard how John Brouncker is at Highport ? "

' " Very well," replied I. " I called on his wife just now, and she had just got a letter from him. She had been anxious about him, for she had not heard for a week. However, all's right now ; and she has pretty well of work, at Mrs. Munton's, as her servant is ill. Oh, they'll do, never fear."

* " At Mrs. Munton's ? Oh, that accounts for it, then. She is so deaf, and makes such blunders."

' " Accounts for what ? " asked I.

' " Oh, perhaps I had better not tell you," hesitated Mrs. Rose.

* " Yes, tell me at once. I beg your pardon, but I hate mysteries."

* " You are so like my poor dear Mr. Rose. He used to speak to me just in that sharp, cross way. It is only that Miss Horsman called. She had been making a collection for John Brouncker's widow and "——

' " But the man's alive ! " said I.

' " So it seems. But Mrs. Munton had told her that he was dead. And she has got Mr. Morgan's name down at the head of the list, and Mr. Bullock's."

' Mr. Morgan and I had got into a short, cool way of speaking to each other ever since we had differed so

much about the treatment of Brouncker's arm ; and I had heard once or twice of his shakes of the head over John's case. He would not have spoken against my method for the world, and fancied that he concealed his fears.

' "Miss Horsman is very ill-natured, I think," sighed forth Mrs. Rose.

* I saw that something had been said of which I had not heard, for the mere fact of collectmg money for the widow was good-natured, whoever did it; so I asked, quietly, what she had said.

' " Oh, I don't know if I should tell you. I only know she made me cry ; for I'm not well, and I can't bear to hear any one that I live with abused."

' Come ! this was pretty plain.

' " What did Miss Horsman say of me ? " asked I, half laughing, for I knew there was no love lost between us.

' " Oh, she only said she wondered you could go to sales, and spend your money there, when your ignorance had made Jane Brouncker a widow, and her children fatherless."

' " Pooh ! pooh ! John's alive, and likely to live as long as you or I, thanks to you, Mrs. Rose."

' When my work-table came home, Mrs. Rose was so struck with its beauty and completeness, and I was so much obliged to her for her identification of my interests with hers, and the kindness of her whole conduct about John, that I begged her to accept of it. She seemed very much pleased; and, after a few apologies, she consented to take it, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the front parlour, where she usually sat. There was a good deal of morning calling in Buncombe after the sale, and during this time the fact of John's being alive was established to the conviction of all except Miss Horsman, who, I believe, still doubted. I myself told Mr. Morgan, who immediately went to reclaim his money; saying to me, that he was thankful of the information ; he was truly glad to hear it ; and he shook me warmly by the hand for the first time for a month.

CHAPTER XVII

' A FEW days after the sale, I was in the consulting-room. The servant must have left the folding-doors a little ajar, I think. Mrs. Munton came to call on Mrs. Rose ; and the former being deaf, I heard all the speeches of the latter lady, as she was obliged to speak very loud in order to be heard. She began—

' " This is a great pleasure, Mrs. Munton, so seldom as you are well enough to go out."

* Mumble, mumble, mumble, through the door.

' " Oh, very well, thank you. Take this seat, and then you can admire my new work-table, ma'am; a present from Mr. Harrison."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Who could have told you, ma'am ? Miss Horsman ? Oh, yes, I showed it Miss Horsman."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I don't quite understand you, ma'am."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm not blushing, I believe. I really am quite in the dark as to what you mean."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Oh, yes, Mr. Harrison and I are most comfortable together. He reminds me so of my dear Mr. Rose—just as fidgety and anxious in his profession."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm sure you are joking now, ma'am." Then I heard a pretty loud—

' "' Oh, no "; mumble, mumble, mumble, for a long time.

' " Did he really? Well, I'm sure I don't know. I should be sorry to think he was doomed to be unfortunate in so serious an affair; but you know my undying regard for the late Mr. Rose."

' Another long mumble.

' " You're very kind, I'm sure. Mr. Rose always thought more of my happiness than his own"—a little crying—"but the turtle-dove has always been my ideal, ma'am."

'Mumble, mumble.

' " No one could have been happier than L As you say, it is a compliment to matrimony."

' Mumble.

"" Oh, but you must not repeat such a thing. Mr. Harrison would not like it. He can't bear to have his affairs spoken about."

' Then there was a change of subject; an inquiry after some poor person, I imagine. I heard Mrs. Rose eay—

' " She has got a mucous membrane, I'm afraid, ma'am."

' A commiserating mumble.

' " Not always fatal. I believe Mr. Rose knew some cases that lived for years after it was discovered that they had a mucous membrane." A pause. Then Mrs. Rose spoke in a different tone.

' " Are you sure, ma'am, there is no mistake about what he said ? "

* Mumble.

' " Pray don't be so observant, Mrs. Munton ; you find out too much. One can have no little secrets."

' The call broke up ; and I heard Mrs. Munton say in the passage, " I wish you joy, ma'am, with all my heart. There 's no use denying it ; for I've seen all along what would happen."

' When I went in to dinner, I said to Mrs. Rose—

' " You've had Mrs. Munton here, I think. Did she bring any news ? " To my surprise, she bridled and Bimpered, and replied, " Oh, you must not ask, Mr. Harrison: such foolish reports."

' I did not ask, as she seemed to wish me not, and I knew there were silly reports always about. Then I think she was vexed that I did not ask. Altogether she went on so strangely that I could not help looking at her ; and then she took up a hand-screen, and held it between me and her. I really felt rather anxious.

' " Are you not feeling well ? " said I innocently.

' " Oh, thank you, I believe Fra quite well; only the room is rather warm, is it not ? "

' " Let me put the blinds down for you ? the sun begins to have a good deal of power." I drew down the blinds.

' " You are so attentive, Mr. Harrison. Mr. Rose himself never did more for my little wishes than you do."

' " I wish I could do more—I wish I could show you how much I feel "——her kindness to John Brouncker, I was going on to say ; but I was just then called out to a patient. Before I went I turned back, and said——

' " Take care of yourself, my dear Mrs. Rose ; you had better rest a little."

' " For your sake, I will," said she tenderly.

' I did not care for whose sake she did it. Only I really thought she was not quite well, and required rest. I thought she was more affected than usual at tea-time; and could have been angry with her nonsensical ways once or twice, but that I knew the real goodness of her heart. She said she wished she had the power to sweeten my life as she could my tea. I told her what a comfort she had been all during my Jate time of anxiety, and then I stole out to try if I could hear the evening singing at the Vicarage, by standing close to the garden-wall.

CHAPTER XVIII

' THE next morning I met Mr. Bullock by appointment, to talk a little about the legacy which was paid into his hands. As I was leaving his office, feeling full of my riches, I met Miss Horsman. She smiled rather grimly, and said——

' " Oh ! Mr. Harrison, I must congratulate I believe. I don't know whether I ought to have known, but as I do, I must wish you joy. A very nice little sum, too. I always said you would have money."

* So she had found out my legacy, had she ? Well, it was no secret, and one likes the reputation of being a person of property. Accordingly I smiled, and said

I was much obliged to her, and if I could alter the figures to my liking, she might congratulate me still more.

' She said, " Oh, Mr. Harrison, you can't have everything. It would be better the other way, certainly. Money is the great thing, as you've found out. The relation died most opportunely, I must say."

' " He was no relative," said I; " only an intimate friend."

' " Dear-ah-me ! I thought it had been a brother ! Well, at any rate, the legacy is safe."

' I wished her good morning, and passed on. Before long I was sent for to Miss Tomkinson's.

' Miss Tomkinson sat in severe state to receive me. I went in with an air of ease, because I always felt so uncomfortable.

' " Is this true that I hear ? " asked she, in an inquisitorial manner.

' I thought she alluded to my five hundred pounds ; so I smiled, and said that I believed it was.

' " Can money be so great an object with you, Mr. Harrison ? " she asked again.

' I said I had never cared much for money, except as an assistance to any plan of settling in life ; and then, as I did not like her severe way of treating the subject, I said that I hoped every one was well ; though of course I expected some one was ill, or I should not have been sent for.

' Miss Tomkinson looked very grave and sad. Then she answered : " Caroline is very poorly—the old palpitations at the heart; but of course that is nothing to you."

' I said I was very sorry. She had a weakness there, I knew. Could I see her ? I might be able to order something for her.

' I thought I heard Miss Tomkinson say something in a low voice about my being a heartless deceiver. Then she spoke up. " I was always distrustful of you, Mr. Harrison. I never liked your looks. I begged Caroline again and again not to confide in you. I foresaw how it would end. And now I fear her precious life will be a sacrifice."

' I begged her not to distress herself, for in all probability there was very little the matter with her sister. Might I see her ?

' " No ! " she said shortly, standing up as if to dismiss me. " There has been too much of this seeing and calling. By my consent, you shall never see her again."¹

' I bowed. I was annoyed, of course. Such a dismissal might injure my practice just when I was most anxious to increase it.

' " Have you no apology, no excuse to offer ? "

' I said I had done my best; I did not feel that there was any reason to offer an apology. I wished her good morning. Suddenly she came forwards.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison," said she, ' if you have really loved Caroline, do not let a little paltry money make you desert her for another."

' I was struck dumb. Loved Miss Caroline ! I loved Miss Tomkinson a great deal better, and yet I disliked her. She went on—

' " I have saved nearly three thousand pounds. If you think you are too poor to marry without money, I will give it all to Caroline. I am strong, and can go on working ; but she is weak, and this disappointment will kill her." She sat down suddenly, and covered her face with her hands. Then she looked up.

' " You are unwilling, I see. Don't suppose I would have urged you if it had been for myself ; but she has had so much sorrow." And now she fairly cried aloud. I tried to explain ; but she would not listen, but kept saying, " Leave the house, sir I leave the house ! " But I would be heard.

' " I have never had any feeling warmer than respect for Miss Caroline, and I have never Bhown any different feeling. I never for an instant thought of making her my wife, and she has had no cause in my behaviour to imagine I entertained any such intention."

' " This is adding insult to injury," said she. " Leave the house, sir, this instant !"

CHAPTER XIX

' I WENT, and sadly enough. In a small town such an occurrence is sure to be talked about, and to make a great deal of mischief. When I went home to dinner I was so full of it, and foresaw so clearly that I should need some advocate soon to set the case in its right light, that I determined on making a confidante of good Mrs. Rose. I could not eat. She watched me tenderly, and sighed when she saw my want of appetite.

' " I am sure you have something on your mind, Mr. Harrison. Would it be—would it not be—a relief to impart it to some sympathizing friend ? "

' It was just what I wanted to do.

' " My dear kind Mrs. Rose," said I, " I must tell you, if you will listen."

' She took up the fire-screen, and held it, as yesterday, between me and her.

' " The most unfortunate misunderstanding has taken place. Miss Tomkinson thinks that I have been paying attentions to Miss Caroline ; when, in fact—may I tell you, Mrs. Rose ?—my affections are placed elsewhere. Perhaps you have found it out already ? " for indeed I thought I had been too much in love to conceal my attachment to Sophy from any one who knew my movements as well as Mrs. Rose.

* She hung down her head, and said she believed she had found out my secret.

' " Then only think how miserably I am situated. If I have any hope—oh, Mrs. Rose, do you think I have any hope "——

' She put the hand-screen still more before her face, and after some hesitation she said she thought " if I persevered—in time—I might have hope ". And then she suddenly got up and left the room.

CHAPTER XX

' THAT afternoon I met Mr. Bullock in the street. My mind was so full of the affair with Miss Tomkinson that I should have passed him without notice, if he had not stopped me short, and said that he must speak to me ; about my wonderful five hundred pounds, I supposed. But I did not care for that now.

' " What is this I hear," said he severely, " about your engagement with Mrs. Rose ? "

' " With Mrs. Rose ! " said I, almost laughing, although my heart was heavy enough.

' " Yes ! with Mrs. Rose ! " said he sternly.

' " I'm not engaged to Mrs. Rose," I replied. " There is some mistake."

' " I'm glad to hear it, sir," he answered, ^{4<} very glad. It requires some explanation, however. Mrs. Rose has been congratulated, and has acknowledged the truth of the report. It is confirmed by many facts. The work-table you bought, confessing your intention of giving it to your future wife, is given to her. How do you account for these things, sir ? "

* I said I did not pretend to account for them. At present, a good deal was inexplicable ; and when I could give an explanation, I did not think that I should feel myself called upon to give it to him.

' " Very well, sir ; very well," replied he, growing very red. " I shall take care and let Mr. Morgan know the opinion I entertain of you. What do you think that man deserves to be called who enters a family under the plea of friendship, and takes advantage of his intimacy to win the affections of the daughter, and then engages himself to another woman ? "

' I thought he referred to Miss Caroline. I simply said I could only say that I was not engaged ; and that Miss Tomkinson had been quite mistaken in supposing I had been paying any attentions to her sister beyond those dictated by mere civility.

' " Miss Tomkinson ! Miss Caroline ! I don't under-

stand to what you refer. Is there another victim to your perfidy ? What I allude to are the attentions you have paid to my daughter, Miss Bullock."

' Another ! I could but disclaim, as I had done in the case of Miss Caroline; but I began to be in despair. Would Miss Horsman, too, come forward as a victim to my tender affections ? It was all Mr. Morgan's doing, who had lectured me into this tenderly deferential manner. But on the score of Miss Bullock, I was brave in my innocence. I had positively disliked her ; and so I told her father, though in more civil and measured terms, adding that I was sure the feeling was reciprocal.

' He looked as if he would like to horsewhip me. I longed to call him out.

' " I hope my daughter has had sense enough to despise you; I hope she has, that's all. I trust my wife may be mistaken as to her feelings."

* So, he had heard all through the medium of his wife. That explained something, and rather calmed me. I begged he would ask Miss Bullock if she had ever thought I had any ulterior object in my intercourse with her, beyond mere friendliness (and not so much of that, I might have added). I would refer it to her.

' " Girls," said Mr. Bullock, a little more quietly, " do not like to acknowledge that they have been deceived and disappointed. I consider my wife's testimony as likely to be nearer the truth than my daughter's, for that reason. And she tells me she never doubted but that, if not absolutely engaged, you understood each other perfectly. She is sure *Jemima* is deeply wounded by your engagement to Mrs. Rose."

' " Once for all, I am not engaged to anybody. Till you have seen your daughter, and learnt the truth from her, I will wish you farewell."

' I bowed in a stiff, haughty manner, and walked off homewards. But when I got to my own door, I remembered Mrs. Rose, and all that Mr. Bullock had said about her acknowledging the truth of the report of my engage-

ment to her. Where could I go to be safe ? Mrs. Rose, Miss Bullock, Miss Caroline—they lived as it were at the three points of an equilateral triangle; here was I in the centre. I would go to Mr. Morgan's, and drink tea with him. There, at any rate, I was secure from any one wanting to marry me; and I might be as professionally bland as I liked, without being misunderstood. But there, too, a *contretemps* awaited me.

CHAPTER X X I

'MR. MORGAN was looking grave. After a minute or two of humming and hawing, he said—

' "I have been sent for to Miss Caroline Tomkinson, Mr. Harrison. I am sorry to hear of this. I am grieved to find that there seems to have been some trifling with the affections of a very worthy lady. Miss Tomkinson, who is in sad distress, tells me that they had every reason to believe that you were attached to her sister. May I ask if you do not intend to marry her ?'

* I said, nothing was farther from my thoughts.

' "My dear sir," said Mr. Morgan, rather agitated, "do not express yourself so strongly and vehemently. It is derogatory to the sex to speak so. It is more respectful to say, in these cases, that you do not venture to entertain a hope; such a manner is generally understood, and does not sound like such positive objection."

' "I cannot help it, sir; I must talk in my own natural manner. I would not speak disrespectfully of any woman; but nothing should induce me to marry Miss Caroline Tomkinson; not if she were Venus herself, and Queen of England into the bargain. I cannot understand what has given rise to the idea."

' "Indeed, sir; I think that is very plain. You have a trifling case to attend to in the house, and you invariably make it a pretext for seeing **and** conversing **with the lady.**"

' " That was her doing, not mine !" said I vehemently.

' " Allow me to go on. You are discovered on your knees before her—a positive injury to the establishment, as Miss Tomkinson observes; a most passionate valentine is sent; and when questioned, you acknowledge the sincerity of meaning which you affix to such things." Ho stopped, for in his earnestness he had been talking more quickly than usual, and was out of breath. I burst in with my explanations—

' " The valentine I know nothing about."

' " It is in your handwriting," said he coldly. " I should be most deeply grieved to—in fact, I will not think it possible of your father's son. But I must say, it is in your handwriting."

' I tried again, and at last succeeded in convincing him that I had been only unfortunate, not intentionally guilty of winning Miss Caroline's affections. I said that I had been endeavouring, it was true, to practise the manner he had recommended, of universal sympathy, and recalled to his mind some of the advice he had given me. He was a good deal hurried.

' " But, my dear sir, I had no idea that you would carry it out to such consequences. * Philandering,' Miss Tomkinson called it. That is a hard word, sir. My manner has been always tender and sympathetic; but I am not aware that I ever excited any hopes; there never was any report about me. I believe no lady was ever attached to me. You must strive after this happy medium, sir."

' I was still distressed. Mr. Morgan had only heard of one, but there were three ladies (including Miss Bullock) hoping to marry me. He saw my annoyance.

' " Don't be too much distressed about it, my dear sir; I was sure you were too honourable a man, from the first. With a conscience like yours, I would defy the world."

' He became anxious to console me, and I was hesitating whether I would not tell him all my three

dilemmas, when a note was brought in to him. It was from Mrs. Munton. He threw it to me, with a face of dismay.

' " MY DEAR MR. MORGAN,—I most sincerely congratulate you on the happy matrimonial engagement I hear you have formed with Miss Tomkinson. All previous circumstances, as I have just been remarking to Miss Horsman, combine to promise you felicity. And I wish that every blessing may attend your married life.—Most sincerely yours,

' " JANE MUNTON."

* I could not help laughing, he had been so lately congratulating himself that no report of the kind had ever been circulated about himself. He said—

' " Sir ! this is no laughing matter ; I assure you it is not."

' I could not resist asking, if I was to conclude that there was no truth in the report.

' " Truth, sir ! it's a lie from beginning to end. I don't like to speak too decidedly about any lady ; and I've a great respect for Miss Tomkinson ; but I do assure you, sir, I'd as soon marry one of Her Majesty's Life Guards. I would rather ; it would be more suitable. Miss Tomkinson is a very worthy lady ; but she's a perfect grenadier."

' He grew very nervous. He was evidently insecure. He thought it not impossible that Miss Tomkinson might come and marry him, *vi et armis*. I am sure he had some dim idea of abduction in his mind. Still, he was better off than I was ; for he was in his own house, and report had only engaged him to one lady ; while I stood, like Paris, among three contending beauties. Truly, an apple of discord had been thrown into our little town. I suspected at the time, what I know now, that it was Miss Horsman's doing ; not intentionally, I will do her the justice to say. But she had shouted out the story of my behaviour to Miss Caroline up Mrs. Munton's trumpet ; and that lady, possessed with the idea that I was engaged to Mrs. Rose, had imagined

the masculine pronoun to relate to Mr. Morgan, whom she had seen only that afternoon *tete a tete* with Miss Tomkinson, condoling with her in some tender deferential manner, I'll be bound

CHAPTER XXII

' I WAS very cowardly. I positively dared not go home ; but at length I was obliged to. I had done all I could to console Mr. Morgan, but he refused to be comforted. I went at last. I rang at the bell. I don't know who opened the door, but I think it was Mrs. Rose. I kept a handkerchief to my face, and muttering something about having a dreadful toothache, I flew up to my room and bolted the door. I had no candle ; but what did that signify. I was safe. I could not sleep; and when I did fall into a sort of doze, it was ten times worse waking up. I could not remember whether I was engaged or not. If I was engaged, who was the lady ? I had always considered myself as rather plain than otherwise; but surely I had made a mistake. Fascinating I certainly must be; but perhaps I was handsome. As soon as day dawned, I got up to ascertain the fact at the looking-glass. Even with the best disposition to be convinced, I could not see any striking beauty in my round face, with an unshaven beard and a nightcap like a fool's cap at the top. No ! I must be content to be plain, but agreeable. All this I tell you in confidence. I would not have my little bit of vanity known for the world. I fell asleep towards morning. I was awakened by a tap at my door. It was Peggy: she put in a hand with a note. I took it.

' " It is not from Miss Horsman ? " said I, half in joke, half in very earnest fright.

" No, sir ; Air. Morgan's man brought it."

' I opened it. It ran thus—

' " MY DEAR SIR,—It is now nearly twenty years since I have had a little relaxation, and I find that my health

requires it. I have also the utmost confidence in you, and I am sure this feeling is shared by our patients. I have, therefore, no scruple in putting in execution a hastily formed plan, and going to Chesterton to catch the early tram on my way to Paris. If your accounts are good, I shall remain away probably a fortnight. Direct to Meurice's.—Yours, most truly,

" ' J. MORGAN.

" " PS.—Perhaps it may be as well not to name where I am gone, especially to Miss Tomkmson."

' He had deserted me. He—with only one report—had left me to stand my ground with three.

' " Mrs. Rose's kind regards, sir, and it's nearly nine o'clock. Breakfast has been ready this hour, sir."

' " Tell Mrs. Rose I don't want any breakfast. Or stay " (for I was very hungry), " I will take a cup of tea and some toast up here."

' Peggy brought the tray to the door.

' " I hope you're not ill, sir ? " said she kindly.

' " Not very. I shall be better when I get into the air.

' " Mrs. Rose seems sadly put about," said she; " she seems so grieved like."

' I watched my opportunity, and went out by the side door in the garden.

CHAPTER XXIII

' I HAD intended to ask Mr. Morgan to call at the vicarage, and give his parting explanation before they could hear the report. Now, I thought that if I could see Sophy, I would speak to her myself; but I did not wish to encounter the Vicar. I went along the lane at the back of the vicarage, and came suddenly upon Miss Bullock. She coloured, and asked me if I would allow her to speak to me. I could only be resigned; but I thought I could probably set one report at rest by this conversation.

She was almost crying.

" I must tell you, Mr. Harrison, I have watched you here in order to speak to you. I heard with the greatest regret of papa's conversation with you yesterday." She was fairly crying. " I believe Mrs. Bullock finds me in her way, and wants to have me married. It is the only way in which I can account for such a complete misrepresentation as she had told papa. I don't care for you in the least, sir. You never paid me any attentions. You've been almost rude to me ; and I have liked you the better. That's to say, I never have liked you."

' " I am truly glad to hear what you say," answered I. " Don't distress yourself. I was sure there was some mistake."

' But she cried bitterly.

' " It is so hard to feel that my marriage—my absence—is desired so earnestly at home. I dread every new acquaintance we form with any gentleman. It is sure to be the beginning of a series of attacks on him, of which everybody must be aware, and to which they may think I am a willing party. But I should not much mind if it were not for the conviction that she wishes me so earnestly away. Oh, my own dear mamma, you would never "——

' She cried more than ever. I was truly sorry for her, and had just taken her hand, and began—"My dear Miss Bullock "——when the door in the wall of the vicarage garden opened. It was the Vicar letting out Miss Tomkinson, whose face was all swelled with crying. He saw me ; but he did not bow, or make any sign. On the contrary, he looked down as from a severe eminence, and shut the door hastily. I turned to Miss Bullock.

" I am afraid the Vicar has been hearing something to my disadvantage from Miss Tomkinson, and it is very awkward "——She finished my sentence—" To have found us here together. Yes, but as long as we understand that we do not care for each other, it does not signify what people say."

' " Oh, but to me it does," said I. " I may, perhaps, tell you—but do not mention it to a creature—I am attached to Miss Hutton."

' " To Sophy ! Oh, Mr. Harrison, I am so glad; she is such a sweet creature. Oh, I wish you joy."

' " Not yet; I have never spoken about it."

* " Oh, but it is certain to happen." She jumped with a woman's rapidity to a conclusion. And then she began to praise Sophy. Never was a man yet who did not like to hear the praises of his mistress. I walked by her side; we came past the front of the vicarage together. I looked up, and saw Sophy there, and she saw me.

' That afternoon she was sent away ; sent to visit her aunt ostensibly ; in reality, because of the reports of my conduct, which were showered down upon the Vicar, and one of which he saw confirmed by his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV

¹ I HEARD of Sophy's departure as one heard of everything, soon after it had taken place. I did not care for the awkwardness of my situation, which had so perplexed and amused me in the morning. I felt that something was wrong; that Sophy was taken away from me. I sank into despair. If anybody liked to marry me they might. I was willing to be sacrificed. I did not speak to Mrs. Rose. She wondered at me, and grieved over my coldness, I saw; but I had left off feeling anything. Miss Tomkinson cut me in the street; and it did not break my heart. Sophy was gone away ; that was all I cared for. Where had they sent her to ? Who was her aunt, that she should go and visit her ? One day I met Lizzie, who looked as though she had been told not to speak to me, but could not help doing so.

' " Have you heard from your sister ? " said I.

' " Yes."

' " Where is she ? I hope she is well."

' " She is at the Leoms " — I was not much wiser. " Oh yes, she is very well. Fanny says she was at the Assembly last Wednesday, and danced all night with the officers."

' I thought I would enter myself a member of the Peace Society at once. She was a little flirt, and a hard-hearted creature. I don't think I wished Lizzie good-bye.

CHAPTER XXV

' WHAT most people would have considered a more serious evil than Sophy's absence, befell me. I found that my practice was falling off. The prejudice of the town ran strongly against me. Mrs. Munton told me all that was said. She heard it through Miss Horsman. It was said—cruel little town—that my negligence or ignorance had been the cause of Walter's death ; that Miss Tyrrell had become worse under my treatment; and that John Brouncker was all but dead, if he was not quite, from my mismanagement. All Jack Marshland's jokes and revelations, which had, I thought, gone to oblivion, were raked up to my discredit. He himself, formerly, to my astonishment, rather a favourite with the good people of Duncombe, was spoken of as one of my disreputable friends.

' In short, so prejudiced were the good people of Duncombe that I believe a very little would have made them suspect me of a brutal highway robbery, which took place in the neighbourhood about this time. Mrs. Munton told me, apropos of the robbery, that she had never yet understood the cause of my year's imprisonment in Newgate; she had no doubt, from what Mr. Morgan had told her, there was some good reason for it ; but if I would tell her the particulars, she should like to know them.

' Miss Tomkinson sent for Mr. White, from Chesterton, to see Miss Caroline; and, as he was coming over, all

our old patients seemed to take advantage of it, and send for him too.

' But the worst of all was the Vicar's manner to me. If he had cut me, I could have asked him why he did so. But the freezing change in his behaviour was indescribable, though bitterly felt. I heard of Sophy's gaiety from Lizzie. I thought of writing to her. Just then Mr. Morgan's fortnight of absence expired. I was wearied out by Mrs. Rose's tender vagaries, and took no comfort from her sympathy, which indeed I rather avoided. Her tears irritated, instead of grieving me.

wished I could tell her at once that I had no intention of marrying her.

CHAPTER XXVI

' MR. MORGAN had not been at home above two hours before he was sent for to the Vicarage. Sophy had come back, and I had never heard of it. She had come home ill and weary, and longing for rest: and the *rest* seemed approaching with awful strides. Mr. Morgan forgot all his Parisian adventures, and all his terror of Miss Tomkinson, when he was sent for to see her. She was ill of a fever, which made fearful progress. When he told me, I wished to force the Vicarage door, if I might but see her. But I controlled myself; and only cursed my weak indecision, which had prevented my writing to her. It was well I had no patients: they would have had but a poor chance of attention. I hung about Mr. Morgan, who might see her, and did see her. But from what he told me, I perceived that the measures he was adopting were powerless to check so sudden and violent an illness. Oh! if they would but let me see her. But that **was** out of the question. It was not merely **that** the Vicar had heard of my character as a gay Lothario, but that doubts had been thrown out of my medical skill. The accounts grew worse. Suddenly my resolution was taken. Mr. Morgan's very regard for Sophy made him more than usually timid in

his practice. I had my horse saddled, and galloped to Chesterton. I took the express train to town. I went to Dr.——. I told him every particular of the case. He listened ; but shook his head. He wrote down a prescription; and recommended a new preparation, not yet in full use ; a preparation of a poison, in fact.

' " It may save her," said he. " It is a chance, in such a state of things as you describe. It must be given on the fifth day, if the pulse will bear it. Crabbe makes up the preparation most skilfully. Let me hear from you, I beg."

' I went to Crabbe's ; I begged to make it up myself ; but my hands trembled, so that I could not weigh the quantities. I asked the young man to do it for me. I went, without touching food, to the station, with my medicine and my prescription in my pocket. Back we flew through the country. I sprang on Bay Maldon, which my groom had in waiting, and galloped across the country to Duncombe.

' But I drew bridle when I came to the top of the hill—the hill above the old hall, from which we catch the first glimpse of the town, for I thought within myself that she might be dead; and I dreaded to come near certainty. The hawthorns were out in the woods, the young lambs were in the meadows, the song of the thrushes filled the air ; but it only made the thought the more terrible.

' " What, if in this world of hope and life she lies dead ! " I heard the church bells soft and clear. I sickened to listen. Was it the passing bell ? No ! it was ringing eight o'clock. I put spurs to my horse, down hill as it was. We dashed into the town. I turned him, saddle and bridle, into the stable-yard, and went off to Mr. Morgan's.

' " Is she——? " said I. " How is she ? "

' " Very ill. My poor fellow, I see how it is with you. She may live—but I fear. My dear sir, I am very much afraid.

' I told him of my journey **and consultation with Dr.——, and showed him the** prescription. His hands trembled as he put on his spectacles to read it.

' "(This is a very dangerous medicine, sir,)" said he, with his finger under the name of the poison.

' " It is a new preparation," said I. " Dr.——relies much upon it."

' " I dare not administer it," he replied. " I have never tried it. It must be very powerful. I dare not play tricks in this case."

' I believe I stamped with impatience ; but it was all of no use. My journey had been in vain. The more I urged the imminent danger of the case requiring some powerful remedy, the more nervous he became.

' I told him I would throw up the partnership. I threatened him with that, though, in fact, it was only what I felt I ought to do, and had resolved upon before Sophy's illness, as I had lost the confidence of his patients. He only said— i

' " I cannot help it, sir. I shall regret it for your father's sake ; but I must do my duty. I dare not run the risk of giving Miss Sophy this violent medicine—a preparation of a deadly poison."

' I left him without a word. He was quite right in adhering to his own views, as I can see now ; but at the time I thought him brutal and obstinate.

CHAPTER XXVII

' I WENT home. I spoke rudely to Mrs. Rose, who awaited my return at the door. I rushed past, and locked myself in my room. I could not go to bed.

' The morning sun came pouring in, and enraged me, as everything did since Mr. Morgan refused. I pulled the blind down so violently that the string broke. What did it signify ? The light might come in. What was the sun to me ? And then I remembered that that sun might be shining on her—dead.

' I sat down and covered my face. Mrs. Rose knocked at the door. I opened it. She had never been in bed, and had been crying too.

' " Mr. Morgan wants to speak to you, sir."

' I rushed back for my medicine, and went to him. He stood at the door, pale and anxious.

"She's alive, sir," said he, "but that's all. We have sent for Dr. Hamilton. I'm afraid he will not come in time. Do you know, sir, I think we should venture—with Dr.——'s sanction—to give her that medicine. It is but a chance ; but it is the only one, I'm afraid." He fairly cried before he had ended.

' " I've got it here," said I, setting off to walk ; but he could not go so fast.

' " I beg your pardon, sir," said he, " for my abrupt refusal last night."

' " Indeed, sir," said I; " I ought much rather to beg your pardon. I was very violent."

' " Oh ! never mind ! never mind ! Will you repeat what Dr.——said ? "

' I did so; and then I asked, with a meekness that astonished myself, if I might not go in and administer it.

' "No, sir," said he, "I'm afraid not. I am sure your good heart would not wish to give pain. Besides, it might agitate her, if she has any consciousness before death. In her delirium she has often mentioned your name ; and, sir, I'm sure you won't name it again, as it may, in fact, be considered a professional secret; but I did hear our good Vicar speak a little strongly about you ; in fact, sir, I did hear him curse you. You see the mischief it might make in the parish, I'm sure, if this were known."

' I gave him the medicine, and watched him in, and saw the door shut. I hung about the place all day. Poor and rich all came to inquire. The county people drove up in their carriages—the halt and the lame came on their crutches. Their anxiety did my heart good. Mr. Morgan told me that she slept, and I watched Dr. Hamilton into the house. The night came on. She slept. I watched round the house. I saw the light high up, burning still and steady. Then I saw it moved. It was the crisis, in one way or other.

CHAPTER XXVIII

* MR. MORGAN came out. Good old man ! The tears were running down his cheeks: he could not speak; but kept shaking my hands. I did not want words. I understood that she was better.

' " Dr. Hamilton says, it was the only medicine that could have saved her. I was an old fool, sir. I beg your pardon. The Vicar shall know all. I beg your pardon, sir, if I was abrupt."

' Everything went on brilliantly from this time.

' Mr. Bullock called to apologize for his mistake, and consequent upbraiding. John Brouncker came home, brave and well.

' There was still Miss Tomkinson in the ranks of the enemy ; and Mrs. Rose too much, I feared, in the ranks of the friends.

CHAPTER XXIX

' ONE night she had gone to bed, and I was thinking of going. I had been studying in the back room, where I went for refuge from her in the present position of affairs (I read a good number of surgical books about this time, and also *Vanity Fair*)—when I heard a loud, long-continued knocking at the door, enough to waken the whole street. Before I could get to open it, I heard that well-known bass of Jack Marshland's, once heard never to be forgotten, pipe up the negro song—

Who's dat knocking at de door?

* Though it was raining hard at the time, and I stood waiting to let him in, he would finish his melody in the open air; loud and clear along the street it sounded. I saw Miss Tomkinson's night-capped head emerge from a window. She called out " Police ! police ! "

' Now there were no police, only a rheumatic constable in the town ; but it was the custom of the ladies,

when alarmed at night, to call an imaginary police, which had, they thought, an intimidating effect; but as every one knew the real state of the unwatched town, we did not much mind it in general. Just now, however, I wanted to regain my character. So I pulled Jack in, quavering as he entered.

' " You've spoilt a good shake," said he, " that's what you have. I'm nearly up to Jenny Lind; and you see I'm a nightingale, like her."

' We sat up late; and I don't know how it was, but I told him all my matrimonial misadventures.

' " I thought I could imitate your hand pretty well," said he. " My word ! it was a flaming valentine ! No wonder she thought you loved her ! "

' " So that was your doing, was it ? Now I'll tell you what you shall do to make up for it. You shall write me a letter confessing your hoax—a letter that I can show."

' " Give me pen and paper, my boy ! you shall dictate. ' With a deeply penitent heart'——Will that do for a beginning ? "

' I told him what to write ; a simple, straightforward confession of his practical joke. I enclosed it in a few lines of regret that, unknown to me, any of my friends should have so acted.

CHAPTER XXX

' ALL this time I knew that Sophy was slowly recovering. One day I met Miss Bullock, who had seen her.

' " We have been talking about you," said she, with a bright smile; for since she knew I disliked her, she felt quite at her ease, and could smile very pleasantly. I understood that she had been explaining the misunderstanding about herself to Sophy; so that when Jack Marshland's note had been sent to Miss Tomkinson's, I thought myself in a fair way to have my character established in two quarters. But the third was my dilemma. Mrs. Rose had really so much of my true

regard for her good qualities, that I disliked the idea of a formal explanation, in which a good deal must be said on my side to wound her. We had become very much estranged ever since I had heard of this report of my engagement to her. I saw that she grieved over it. While Jack Marshland stayed with us, I felt at my ease in the presence of a third person. But he told me confidentially he durst not stay long, for fear some of the ladies should snap him up, and marry him. Indeed I myself did not think it unlikely that he would snap one of them up if he could. For when we met Miss Bullock one day, and heard her hopeful, joyous account of Sophy's progress (to whom she was a daily visitor), he asked me who that bright-looking girl was? And when I told him she was the Miss Bullock of whom I had spoken to him, he was pleased to observe that he thought I had been a great fool, and asked me if Sophy had anything like such splendid eyes. He made me repeat about Miss Bullock's unhappy circumstances at home, and then became very thoughtful—a most unusual and morbid symptom in his case.

'Soon after he went, by Mr. Morgan's kind offices and explanations, I was permitted to see Sophy. I might not speak much; it was prohibited, for fear of agitating her. We talked of the weather and the flowers; and we were silent. But her little white thin hand lay in mine; and we understood each other without words. I had a long interview with the Vicar afterwards; and came away glad and satisfied.

'Mr. Morgan called in the afternoon, evidently anxious, though he made no direct inquiries (he was too polite for that), to hear the result of my visit at the vicarage. I told him to give me joy. He shook me warmly by the hand; and then rubbed his own together. I thought I would consult him about my dilemma with Mrs. Rose, who, I was afraid, would be deeply affected by my engagement.

' "There is only one awkward circumstance," said I—"about Mrs. Rose." I hesitated how to word the fact of her having received congratulations on her supposed

engagement with me, and her manifest attachment; but, before I could speak, he broke in—

'My dear sir, you need not trouble yourself about that; she will have a home. In fact, sir," said he, reddening a little, "I thought it would, perhaps, put a stop to those reports connecting my name with Miss Tomkinson's, if I married some one else. I hoped it might prove an efficacious contradiction. And I was struck with admiration for Mrs. Rose's undying memory of her late husband. Not to be prolix, I have this morning obtained Mrs. Rose's consent to—to marry her, in fact, sir!" said he, jerking out the climax.

'Here was an event! Then Mr. Morgan had never heard the report about Mrs. Rose and me. (To this day, I think she would have taken me, if I had proposed.) So much the better.

'Marriages were in the fashion that year. Mr. Bullock met me one morning, as I was going to ride with Sophy. He and I had quite got over our misunderstanding, thanks to Jemima, and were as friendly as ever. This morning he was chuckling aloud as he walked.

' "Stop, Mr. Harnson!" he said, as I went quickly past. "Have you heard the news? Miss Horsman has just told me Miss Caroline has eloped with young Hoggins! She is ten years older than he is! How can her gentility like being married to a tallow-chandler? It is a very good thing for her, though," he added, in a more serious manner; "old Hoggins is very rich; and though he's angry just now, he will soon be reconciled."

•Any vanity I might have entertained on the score of the three ladies who were, at one time, said to be captivated by my charms, was being rapidly dispersed. Soon after Mr. Hoggins's marriage, I met Miss Tomkinson face to face, for the first time since our memorable conversation. She stopped me, and said—

' "Don't refuse to receive my congratulations, Mr. Harrison, on your most happy engagement to Miss Hutton. I owe you an apology, too, for my behaviour when I last saw you at our house. I really did think Caroline was attached to you then; and it

irritated me, I confess, in a very wrong and unjustifiable way. But I heard her telling Mr. Hoggins only yesterday that she had been attached to him for years ; ever since he was in pinafores, she dated it from ; and when I asked her afterwards how she could say so, after her distress on hearing that false report about you and Mrs. Rose, she cried, and said I never had understood her ; and that the hysterics which alarmed me so much were simply caused by eating pickled cucumber. I am very sorry for my stupidity, and improper way of speaking ; but I hope we are friends now, Mr. Harrison, for I should wish to be liked by Sophy's husband."

* Good Miss Tomkinson ! to believe the substitution of indigestion for disappointed affection. I shook her warmly by the hand ; and we have been all right ever since. I think I told you she is baby's godmother.

CHAPTER XXXI

'I HAD some difficulty in persuading Jack Marshland to be groomsman ; but when he heard all the arrangements, he came. Miss Bullock was bridesmaid. He liked us all so well, that he came again at Christmas, and was far better behaved than he had been the year before. He won golden opinions indeed. Miss Tomkinson said he was a reformed young man. We dined all together at Mr. Morgan's (the Vicar wanted us to go there ; but, from what Sophy told me, Helen was not confident of the mincemeat, and rather dreaded so large a party). We had a jolly day of it. Mrs. Morgan was as kind and motherly as ever. Miss Horsman certainly did set out a story that the Vicar was thinking of Miss Tomkinson for his second ; or else, I think, we had no other report circulated in consequence of our happy, merry Christmas Day ; and it is a wonder, considering how Jack Marshland went on with Jemima.'

Here Sophy came back from putting baby to bed ; and Charles wakened up.

III

THE SEXTON'S HERO

First published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847 Reprinted with 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' and 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' under the title of 'Life in Manchester by Cotton Mather Mills Esq.' in 1848, and with 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' in 1850. First appeared in book form in 'Lizzie Leigh and Other Stories' 1855 and in 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' in 1865.

THE SEXTON'S HERO

THE afternoon sun shed down his glorious rays on the grassy churchyard, making the shadow, cast by the old yew-tree under which we sat, seem deeper and deeper by contrast. The everlasting hum of myriads of summer insects made luxurious lullaby.

Of the view that lay beneath our gaze, I cannot speak adequately. The foreground was the grey-stone wall of the Vicarage garden; rich in the colouring made by innumerable lichens, ferns, ivy of most tender green and most delicate tracery, and the vivid scarlet of the crane's-bill, which found a home in every nook and crevice—and at the summit of that old wall flaunted some unpruned tendrils of the vine, and long flower-laden branches of the climbing rose-tree, trained against the inner side. Beyond, lay meadow green and mountain grey, and the blue dazzle of Morecambe Bay, as it sparkled between us and the more distant view.

For a while we were silent, living in sight and murmuring sound. Then Jeremy took up our conversation where, suddenly feeling weariness, as we saw that deep green shadowy resting-place, we had ceased speaking a quarter of an hour before.

It is one of the luxuries of holiday-time that thoughts are not rudely shaken from us by outward violence of hurry and busy impatience, but fall maturely from our lips in the sunny leisure of our days. The stock may be bad, but the fruit is ripe.

'How would you then define a hero?' I asked.

There was a long pause, and I had almost forgotten my question in watching a cloud-shadow floating over the far-away hills, when Jeremy made answer—

'My idea of a hero is one who acts up to the highest idea of duty he has been able to form, no matter at

what sacrifice. I think that by this definition we may include all phases of character, even to the heroes of old, whose sole (and to us, low) idea of duty consisted in personal prowess.'

'Then you would even admit the military heroes?' asked I.

'I would; with a certain kind of pity for the circumstances which had given them no higher ideas of duty. Still, if they sacrificed self to do what they sincerely believed to be right, I do not think I could deny them the title of hero.'

'A poor, unchristian heroism, whose manifestation consists in injury to others!' I said.

We were both startled by a third voice.

* If I might make so bold, sir '—and then the speaker stopped.

It was the Sexton, whom, when we first arrived, we had noticed, as an accessory to the scene, but whom we had forgotten, as much as though he were as inanimate as one of the moss-covered headstones.

'If I might be so bold,' said he again, waiting leave to speak. Jeremy bowed in deference to his white, uncovered head. And so encouraged, he went on.

'What that gentleman' (alluding to my last speech) 'has just now said, brings to my mind one who is dead and gone this many a year ago. I, may be, have not rightly understood your meaning, gentlemen, but as far as I could gather it, I think you'd both have given in to thinking poor Gilbert Dawson a hero. At any rate,' said he, heaving a long, quivering sigh, * I have reason to think him so.'

'Will you take a seat, sir, and tell us about him?' said Jeremy, standing up until the old man was seated. I confess I felt impatient at the interruption.

'It will be forty-five year come Martinmas,' said the Sexton, sitting down on a grassy mound at our feet, 'since I finished my 'prenticeship, and settled down at Lindal. You can see Lindal, sir, at evenings and mornings across the bay; a little to the right of Grange; at least, I used to see it, many a time and oft,

afore my sight grew so dark : and I have spent many a quarter of an hour a-gazing at it far away, and thinking of the days I lived there, till the tears came so thick to my eyes, I could gaze no longer. I shall never look upon it again, either far off or near, but you may see it, both ways, and a terrible bonny spot it is. In my young days, when I went to settle there, it was full of as wild a set of young fellows as ever were clapped eyes on; all for fighting, poaching, quarrelling, and suchlike work. I were startled myself when I first found what a set I were among, but soon I began to fall into their ways, and I ended by being as rough a chap as any on 'em. I'd been there a matter of two year, and were reckoned by most the cock of the village, when Gilbert Dawson, as I was speaking of, came to Lindal. He were about as strapping a chap as I was (I used to be six feet high, though now I'm so shrunk and doubled up), and, as we were like in the same trade (both used to prepare osiers and wood for the Liverpool coopers, who get a deal of stuff from the cospes round the bay, sir), we were thrown together, and took mightily to each other. I put my best leg foremost to be equal with Gilbert, for I'd had some schooling, though since I'd been at Lindal I'd lost a good part of what I'd learnt; and I kept my rough ways out of sight for a time, I felt so ashamed of his getting to know them. But that did not last long. I began to think he fancied a girl I dearly loved, but who had always held off from me. Eh ! but she was a pretty one in those days ! There's none like her, now. I think I see her going along the road with her dancing tread, and shaking back her long yellow curls, to give me or any other young fellow a saucy word ; no wonder Gilbert was taken with her, for all he was grave, and she so merry and light. But I began to think she liked him again ; and then my blood was all afire. I got to hate him for everything he did. Aforetime I had stood by, admiring to see him, how he leapt, and what a quoiter and cricketer he was. And now I ground my teeth with hatred whene'er he did a thing which caught Letty's eye. I could read it in

her look that she liked him, for all she held herself just as high with him as with all the rest. Lord God forgive me ! how I hated that man.'

He spoke as if the hatred were a thing of yesterday, so clear within his memory were shown the actions and feelings of his youth. And then he dropped his voice and said—

' Well ! I began to look out to pick a quarrel with him, for my blood was up to fight him. If I beat him (and I were a rare boxer in those days), I thought Letty would cool towards him. So one evening at quoits (I'm sure I don't know how or why, but large doings grow out of small words) I fell out with him, and challenged him to fight. I could see he were very wroth by his colour coming and going—and, as I said before, he were a fine active young fellow. But all at once he drew in, and said he would not fight. Such a yell as the Lindal lads, who were watching us, set up ! I hear it yet. I could na' help but feel sorry for him, to be so scorned, and I thought he'd not rightly taken my meaning, and I'd give him another chance ; so I said it again, and dared him, as plain as words could speak, to fight out the quarrel. He told me then, he had no quarrel against me; that he might have said something to put me up ; he did not know that he had, but that if he had, he asked pardon; but that he would not fight no-how.

* I was so full of scorn at his cowardliness, that I was vexed I'd given him the second chance, and I joined in the yell that was set up, twice as bad as before. He stood it out, his teeth set, and looking very white, and when we were silent for want of breath, he said out loud, but in a hoarse voice, quite different from his own—

' " I cannot fight, because I think it is wrong to quarrel, and use violence."

' Then he turned to go away; I were so beside myself with scorn and hate, that I called out—

' " Tell truth, lad, at least; if thou dare not fight, dunnot go and tell a lie about it. Mother's moppet is

afraid of a black eye, pretty dear, It shannot be hurt, but it munnot tell lies."

' Well, they laughed, but I could not laugh. It seemed such a thing for a stout young chap to be a coward, and afraid !

' Before the sun had set, it was talked of all over Lindal, how I had challenged Gilbert to fight, and how he'd denied me; and the folks stood at their doors, and looked at him going up the hill to his home, as if he'd been a monkey or a foreigner—but no one wished him good e'en. Such a thing as refusing to fight had never been heard of afore at Lindal. Next day, however, they had found voice. The men muttered the woid " coward " in his hearing, and kept aloof ; the women tittered as he passed, and the little impudent lads and lasses shouted out, " How long is it sin' thou turned Quaker ? " " Good-bye, Jonathan Broad-brim," and suchlike jests.

' That evening I met him, with Letty by his side, coming up from the shore. She was almost crying as I came upon them at the turn of the lane ; and looking up in his face, as if begging him something. And so she was, she told me it after. For she did really like him ; and could not abide to hear him scorned by every one for being a coward; and she, coy as she was, all but told him that very night that she loved him, and begged him not to disgrace himself, but fight me as I'd dared him to. When he still stuck to it he could not, for that it was wrong, she was so vexed and mad-like at the way she'd spoken, and the feelings she'd let out to coax him, that she said more stinging things about his being a coward than all the rest put together (according to what she told me, sir, afterwards), and ended by saying she'd never speak to him again, as long as she lived; she did once again, though—her blessing was the last human speech that reached his ear in his wild death-struggle.

' But much happened afore that time. From the day I met them walking, Letty turned towards me; I could see a part of it was to spite Gilbert, for she'd be

twice as kind when he was near, or likely to hear of it % but by and by she got to like me for my own sake, and it was all settled for our marriage. Gilbert kept aloof from every one, and fell into a sad, careless way. His very gait was changed ; his step used to be brisk and sounding, and now his foot lingered heavily on the ground. I used to try and daunt him with my eye, but he would always meet my look in a steady, quiet way, for all so much about him was altered ; the lads would not play with him ; and as soon as he found he was to be slighted by them whenever he came to quoiting or cricket, he just left off coming.

' The old clerk was the only one he kept company with ; or perhaps, rightly to speak, the only one who would keep company with him. They got so thick at last, that old Jonas would say, Gilbert had gospel on las side, and did no more than gospel told him to do ; but we none of us gave much credit to what he said, more by token our vicar had a brother, a colonel in the army ; and as we threeped it many a time to Jonas, would he set himself up to know the gospel better than the vicar ? that would be putting the cart afore th[^] horse, like the French radicals. And if the vicar had thought quarrelling and fighting wicked, and again the Bible, would he have made so much work about all the victories, that were as plenty as blackberries at that time of day, and kept the little bell of Lindal church for ever ringing ; or would he have thought so much of " my brother the colonel ", as he was always talking on?

' After I was married to Letty I left off hating Gilbert, leven kind of pitied him—he was so scorned and slighted ; and for all he d a bold look about him, as if he were not ashamed, he seemed pining and shrunk. It's a wearying thing to be kept at arm's length by one's kind ; and so Gilbert found it, poor fellow. The little children took to him, though ; they'd be round about him like a swarm of bees—them as was too young to know what a coward was, and only felt that he was ever ready to love and to help them, and was never loud or cross, however naughty they might be. After a while we

had our little one, too ; such a blessed darling she was, and dearly did we love her; Letty in especial, who seemed to get all the thought I used to think sometimes she wanted, after she had her baby to care for.

' All my kin lived on this side the bay, up above Kellet. Jane (that's her that lies buried near yon white rose-tree) was to be married, and naught would serve her but that Letty and I must come to the wedding ; for all my sisters loved Letty, she had such winning ways with her. Letty did not like to leave her baby, nor yet did I want her to take it: so, after a talk, we fixed to leave it with Letty's mother for the afternoon. I could see her heart ached a bit, for she'd never left it till then, and she seemed to fear all manner of evil, even to the French coming and taking it away. Well! we borrowed a shandry, and harnessed my old grey mare, as I used in th' cart, and set off as grand as King George across the sands about three o'clock, for you see it were high-water about twelve, and we'd to go and come back same tide, as Letty could not leave her baby for long. It were a merry afternoon, were that; last time I ever saw Letty laugh heartily; and, for that matter, last time I ever laughed downright hearty myself. The latest crossing-time fell about nine o'clock, and we were late at starting. Clocks were wrong ; and we'd a piece of work chasing a pig father had given Letty to take home ; we bagged him at last, and he screeched and screeched in the back part o' th' shandry, and we laughed and they laughed ; and in the midst of all the merriment the sun set, and that sobered us a bit, for then we knew what time it was. I whipped the old mare, but she was a deal beener than she was in the morning, and would neither go quick up nor down the brows, and they're not a few 'twixt Kellet and the shore. On the sands it were worse. They were very heavy, for the fresh had come down after the rains we'd had. Lord ! how I did whip the poor mare, to make the most of the red light as yet lasted. You, maybe, don't know the sands, gentlemen. From Bolton side, where we started from, it is better than six mile to Cart

Lane, and two channels to cross, let alone holes and quicksands. At the second channel from us the guide waits, all during crossing-time from sunrise to sunset; but for the three hours on each side high-water he's not there, in course. He stays after sunset if he's forespoken, not else. So now you know where we were that awful night. For we'd crossed the first channel about two mile, and it were growing darker and darker above and around us, all but one red line of light above the hills, when we came to a hollow (for all the sands look so flat, there's many a hollow in them where you lose all sight of the shore). We were longer than we should ha' been in crossing the hollow, the sand was so quick; and when we came up again, there, again the blackness, was the white line of the rushing tide coming up the bay! It looked not a mile from us; and when the wind blows up the bay it comes swifter than a galloping horse. "Lord help us!" said I; and then I were sorry I'd spoken, to frighten Letty; but the words were crushed out of my heart by the terror. I felt her shiver up by my side, and clutch my coat. And as if the pig (as had screeched himself hoarse some time ago) had found out the danger we were all in, he took to squealing again, enough to bewilder any man. I cursed him between my teeth for his noise; and yet it was God's answer to my prayer, blind sinner as I was. Aye! you may smile, sir, but God can work through many a scornful thing, if need be.

* By this time the mare was all in a lather, and trembling and panting, as if in mortal fright; for though we were on the last bank afore the second channel, the water was gathering up her legs; and she so tired out! When we came close to the channel she stood still, and not all my flogging could get her to stir; she fairly groaned aloud, and shook in a terrible quaking way. Till now Letty had not spoken; only held my coat tightly. I heard her say something, and bent down my head.

"I think, John—I think—I shall never see baby again!"

* And then she sent up such a cry—so loud, and shrill, and pitiful! It fairly maddened me. I pulled out my knife to spur on the old mare, that it might end one way or the other, for the water was stealing sullenly up to the very axle-tree, let alone the white waves that knew no mercy in their steady advance. That one quarter of an hour, sir, seemed as long as all my life since. Thoughts, and fancies, and dreams, and memory ran into each other. The mist, the heavy mist, that was like a ghastly curtain, shutting us in for death, seemed to bring with it the scents of the flowers that grew around our own threshold; it might be, for it was falling on them like blessed dew, though to us it was a shroud. Letty told me at after, she heard her baby crying for her, above the gurgling of the rising waters, as plain as ever she heard anything; but the sea-birds were skirling, and the pig shrieking; I never caught it; it was miles away, at any rate.

' Just as I'd gotten my knife out, another sound was close upon us, blending with the gurgle of the near waters, and the roar of the distant (not so distant though); we could hardly see, but we thought we saw something black against the deep lead colour of wave, and mist, and sky. It neared and neared: with slow, steady motion, it came across the channel right to where we were.

' Oh, God! it was Gilbert Dawson on his strong bay horse.

' Few words did we speak, and little time had we to say them in. I had no knowledge at that moment of past or future—only of one present thought—how to save Letty, and, if I could, myself. I only remembered afterwards that Gilbert said he had been guided by an animal's shriek of terror; I only heard, when all was over, that he had been uneasy about our return, because of the depth of fresh, and had borrowed a pillion, and saddled his horse early in the evening, and ridden down to Cart Lane to watch for us. If all had gone well, we should ne'er have heard of it. As it was, old Jonas told it, the tears down-dropping from his withered cheeks.

' We fastened his horse to the shandry. We lifted Letty to the pillion. The waters rose every instant with sullen sound. They were all but in the shandry. Letty clung to the pillion handles, but drooped her head as if she had yet no hope of life. Swifter than thought (and yet he might have had time for thought and for temptation, sir—if he had ridden off with Letty, he would have been saved, not me), Gilbert was in the shandry by my side.

' " Quick ! " said he, clear and firm. " You must ride before her, and keep her up. The horse can swim. By God's mercy I will follow. I can cut the traces, and if the mare is not hampered with the shandry, she'll carry me safely through. At any rate, you are a husband and a father. No one cares for me."

' Do not hate me, gentlemen. I often wish that night was a dream. It has haunted my sleep ever since like a dream, and yet it was no dream. I took his place on the saddle, and put Letty's arms around me, and felt her head rest on my shoulder. I trust in God I spoke some word of thanks ; but I can't remember. I only recollect Letty raising her head, and calling out—

' " God bless you, Gilbert Dawson, for saving my baby from being an orphan this night." And then she fell against me, as if unconscious.

' I bore her through; or, rather, the strong horse swam bravely through the gathering waves. We were dripping wet when we reached the banks in-shore ; but we could have but one thought—where was Gilbert ? Thick mists and heaving waters compassed us round. Where was he ? We shouted. Letty, faint as she was, raised her voice and shouted clear and shrill. No answer came, the sea boomed on with ceaseless sullen beat. I rode to the guide's house. He was a-bed, and would not get up, though I offered him more than I was worth. Perhaps he knew it, the cursed old villain ! At any rate, I'd have paid it if I'd toiled my life long. He said I might take his horn and welcome. I did, and blew such a blast through the still, black night, the echoes came back upon the heavy air: but no human voice or

sound was heard—that wild blast could not awaken the dead !

'I took Letty home to her baby, over whom she wept the livelong night. I rode back to the shore about Cart Lane ; and to and fro, with weary march, did I pace along the brink of the waters, now and then shouting out into the silence a vain cry for Gilbert. The waters went back and left no trace. Two days afterwards he was washed ashore near Flukeborough. The shandry and poor old mare were found half-buried in a heap of sand by Arnside Knot. As far as we could guess, he had dropped his knife while trying to cut the traces, and so had lost all chance of life. Any rate, the knife was found in a cleft of the shaft.

' His friends came over from Garstang to his funeral. I wanted to go chief mourner, but it was not my right, and I might not; though I've never done mourning him to this day. When his sister packed up his things, I begged hard for something that had been his. She would give me none of his clothes (she was a right-down having woman), as she had boys of her own, who might grow up into them. But she threw me his Bible, as she said they'd gotten one already, and his were but a poor used-up thing. It was his, and so I cared for it. It were a black leather one, with pockets at the sides, old-fashioned-wise ; and in one were a bunch of wild flowers, Letty said she could almost be sure were some she had once given him.

' There were many a text in the Gospel, marked broad with his carpenter's pencil, which more than bore him out in his refusal to fight. Of a surety, sir, there 's call enough for bravery in the service of God, and to show love to man, without quarrelling and fighting.

' Thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me. Your words called up the thoughts of him, and my heart was full to speaking. But I must make up; I've to dig a grave for a little child, who is to be buried to-morrow morning, just when his playmates are trooping off to

' But tell us of Letty; is she yet alive ? ' asked Jeremy.

The old man shook his head, and struggled against a choking sigh. After a minute's pause he said—

' She died in less than two year at after that night. She was never like the same again. She would sit thinking, on Gilbert, I guessed: but I could not blame her. We had a boy, and we named it Gilbert Dawson Knipe ; he that's stoker on the London railway. Our girl was carried off in teething ; and Letty just quietly drooped, and died in less than a six week. They were buried here; so I came to be near them, and away from Lindal, a place I could never abide after Letty was gone.'

He turned to his work, and we, having rested sufficiently, rose up, and came away.

iv

CLOPTON HOUSE

First written as a private letter to William Howitt and then incorporated by him in his chapter on Stratford-on-Avon in 'Visits to Remarkable Places', 1840.

CLOPTON HOUSE

' I WONDER if you know Clopton Hall, about a mile from Stratford-on-Avon. Will you allow me to tell you of a very happy day I once spent there. I was at school in the neighbourhood, and one of my school-fellows was the daughter of a Mr. W——, who then lived at Clopton. Mrs. W——asked a party of the girls to go and spend a long afternoon, and we set off one beautiful autumn day, full of delight and wonder respecting the place we were going to see. We passed through desolate half-cultivated fields, till we came within sight of the house—a large, heavy, compact, square brick building, of that deep, dead red almost approaching to purple. In front was a large formal court, with the massy pillars surmounted with two grim monsters ; but the walls of the court were broken down, and the grass grew as rank and wild within the enclosure as in the raised avenue walk down which we had come. The flowers were tangled with nettles, and it was only as we approached the house that we saw the single yellow rose and the Austrian brier trained into something like order round the deep-set diamond-paned windows. We trooped into the hall, with its tessellated marble floor, hung round with strange portraits of people who had been in their graves two hundred years at least; yet the colours were so fresh, and in some instances they were so life-like, that looking merely at the faces, I almost fancied the originals might be sitting in the parlour beyond. More completely to carry us back, as it were, to the days of the civil wars, there was a sort of military map hung up, well finished with pen and ink, showing the stations of the respective armies, and with old-fashioned writing beneath, the names of the principal towns, setting forth the strength

of the garrison, &c. In this hall we were met by our kind hostess, and told we might ramble where we liked, in the house or out of the house, taking care to be in the "recessed parlour" by tea-time. I preferred to wander up the wide shelving oak staircase, with its massy balustrade all crumbling and worm-eaten. The family then residing at the hall did not occupy one-half,—no, not one-third of the rooms; and the old-fashioned furniture was undisturbed in the greater part of them. In one of the bed-rooms (said to be haunted), and which, with its close pent-up atmosphere and the long shadows of evening creeping on, gave me an "eirie" feeling, hung a portrait so singularly beautiful! a sweet-looking girl, with paly gold hair combed back from her forehead and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew", for there was the glittering of unshed tears before their deep dark blue—and that was the likeness of Charlotte Clopton, about whom there was so fearful a legend told at Stratford church. In the time of some epidemic, the sweating-sickness or the plague, this young girl had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton chapel, attached to Stratford church, but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight, Charlotte Clopton in her grave-clothes leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer, she was indeed dead, but not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder! Of course, she had *walked* ever since. This was "Charlotte's chamber", and beyond Charlotte's chamber was a state-chamber carpeted with the dust of many years, and darkened by the creepers which had covered up the windows, and even forced themselves in luxuriant daring through the broken panes. Beyond, again, there was an old Catholic chapel, with a chaplain's room, which had been walled up and forgotten till within the last few years. I went

in on my hands and knees, for the entrance was very low. I recollect little in the chapel; but in the chaplain's room were old, and I should think rare editions of many books, mostly folios. A large yellow-paper copy of Dryden's *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, date 1686, caught my eye, and is the only one I particularly remember. Every here and there, as I wandered, I came upon a fresh branch of a staircase, and so numerous were the crooked, half-lighted passages, that I wondered if I could find my way back again; There was a curious carved old chest in one of these passages, and with girlish curiosity I tried to open it; but the lid was too heavy, till I persuaded one of my companions to help me, and when it was opened, what do you think we saw—BONES !—but whether human, whether the remains of the lost bride, we did not stay to see, but ran off in partly feigned, and partly real terror.

' The last of these deserted rooms that I remember, the last, the most deserted, and the saddest, was the Nursery,—a nursery without children, without singing voices, without merry chiming footsteps ! A nursery hung round with its once inhabitants, bold, gallant boys, and fair, arch-looking girls, and one or two nurses with round, fat babies in their arms. Who were they all ? What was their lot in life ? Sunshine, or storm ? or had they been "loved by the gods, and died young" ? The very echoes knew not. Behind the house, in a hollow now wild, damp, and overgrown with elder-bushes, was a well called Margaret's Well, for there had a maiden of the house of that name drowned herself.

' I tried to obtain any information I could as to the family of Clopton of Clopton. They had been decaying ever since the civil wars ; had for a generation or two been unable to live in the old house of their fathers, but had toiled in London, or abroad, for a livelihood; and the last of the old family, a bachelor, eccentric, miserly, old, and of most filthy habits, if report said true, had died at Clopton Hall but a few months before, a sort of boarder in Mr. W——'s family. He was

buried in the gorgeous chapel of the doptions in Stratford church, where you see the banners waving, and the armour hung over one or two splendid monuments. Mr. W——had been the old man's solicitor, and completely in his confidence, and to him he left the estate, encumbered and in bad condition. A year or two afterwards, the heir-at-law, a very distant relation living in Ireland, claimed and obtained the estate, on the plea of undue influence, if not of forgery, on Mr. W——'s part; and the last I heard of our kind entertainers on that day, was that they were outlawed, and living at Brussels.'

V

COMPANY MANNERS

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COMPANY MANNERS

VICTOR COUSIN, the French philosopher, has undertaken a new task within the last few years. Whether as a relaxation from, or a continuation of, his study of metaphysics, I do not know, but he has begun to write the biographies of some of the celebrated French women of the seventeenth century. In making out his list, he is careful to distinguish between authoresses and *femmes d'esprit*, ranking the latter infinitely the higher in every point of view. The first of his series is Jacqueline Pascal, the sister of Blaise, known at Port Royal as the Sister Euphemia—a holy, pure, and sainted woman. The second whom the grave philosopher has chosen as a subject for his biography is that beautiful, splendid sinner of the Fronde, the fair-haired Duchess de Longueville. He draws the pure and perfect outlines of Jacqueline Pascal's character with a severe and correct pencil; he paints the lovely Duchess with the fond, admiring exaggeration of a lover. The wits of Paris, in consequence, have written the following epitaph for him: 'Here lies Victor Cousin, the great philosopher, in love with the Duchess de Longueville, who died a century and a half before he was born.'

Even the friends of this Duchess, insignificant in themselves, become dear and illustrious to Cousin for her fair sake. It is not long since he contributed an article on Madame de Sablé to the *Revue des Deux Mowles*, which has since been published separately, and which has suggested the thoughts and fancies that I am now going to lay before the patient public. This Madame de Sablé was, in her prime, an habitual guest at the Hotel Rambouillet, the superb habitation which

was the centre of the witty and learned as well as the pompous and pedantic society of Paris, in the days of Louis the Thirteenth. When these gatherings had come to an end after Madame de Rambouillet's death, and before Moliere had turned the tradition thereof into exquisite ridicule, there were several attempts to form circles that should preserve some of the stately refinement of the Hotel Rambouillet. Mademoiselle Scudery had her Saturdays; but, an authoress herself, and collecting around her merely clever people, without regard to birth or breeding, M. Cousin does not hold the idea of her Saturdays in high esteem. Madame de Sable, a gentlewoman by birth: intelligent enough doubtless from having been an associate of Menage, Voiture, Madame de Sevigne, and others in the grand hotel (whose meetings must have been delightful enough at the time, though that wicked Moliere has stepped between us and them, and we can only see them as he chooses us to do): Madame de Sabli, friend of the resplendent fair-haired Duchess de Longueville, had weekly meetings which M. Cousin ranks far above the more pretentious Saturdays of Mademoiselle Scudery. In short, the last page of his memoir of Madame de Sable—where we matter-of-fact English people are apt to put in praise of the morals and religion of the person whose life we have been writing—is devoted to this acme of praise. Madame de Sabli had all the requisites which enabled her *tenir un salon* with honour to herself and pleasure to her friends.

Apart from this crowning accomplishment, the good French lady seems to have been commonplace enough. She was well-born, well-bred, and the company she kept must have made her tolerably intelligent. She was married to a dull husband, and doubtless had her small flirtations after she early became a widow; M. Cousin hints at them, but they were never scandalous or prominently before the public. Past middle life, she took to the process of *making her salvation', and inclined to the Port Royalists. She was given to liking dainty things to eat, in spite of her Jansenism. She had

a female friend that she quarrelled with, off and on, during her life. And (to wind up something like Lady O'Looney, of famous memory) she knew how *tenir un salon*. M. Cousin tells us that she was remarkable in no one thing or quality, and attributes to that single, simple fact the success of her life.

Now, since I have read these memoirs of Madame de Sable, I have thought much and deeply thereupon. At first, I was inclined to laugh at the extreme importance which was attached to this art of 'receiving company'—no, that translation will not do!—'holding a drawing-room' is even worse, because that implies the state and reserve of royalty;—shall we call it the art of 'Sableing'? But when I thought of my experience in English society—of the evenings dreaded before they came, and sighed over in recollection, because they were so ineffably dull—I saw that, to Sable well, did require, as M. Cousin implied, the union of many excellent qualities and not-to-be-disputed little graces. I asked some French people if they could give me the recipe, for it seemed most likely to be traditional, if not still extant in their nation. I offer to you their ideas, fragmentary though they be; and then I will tell you some of my own; at last, perhaps, with the addition of yours, oh most worthy readers! we may discover the lost art of Sableing.

Said the French lady: 'A woman to be successful in Sableing must be past youth, yet not past the power of attracting. She must do this by her sweet and gracious manners, and quick, ready tact in perceiving those who have not had their share of attention, or leading the conversation away from any subject which may give pain to any one present.' 'Those rules hold good in England,' said I. My friend went on: 'She should never be prominent in anything; she should keep silence as long as any one else will talk; but when conversation flags, she should throw herself into the breach with the same spirit with which I notice that the young ladies of the house, where a ball is given, stand quietly by till the dancers are tired, and then spring into the

arena to carry on the spirit and the music till the others are ready to begin again.'

'But,' said the French gentleman, * even at this time, when subjects for conversation are wanted, she should rather suggest than enlarge—ask questions rather than give her own opinions.'

'To be sure,' said the lady. 'Madame Recamier, whose salons were the most perfect of this century, always withheld her opinions on books, or men, or measures, until all around her had given theirs ; then she, as it were, collected and harmonized them, saying a kind thing here, and a gentle thing there, and speaking ever with her own quiet sense, till people the most opposed learnt to understand each other's point of view, which it is a great thing for opponents to do.'

'Then the number of the people whom you receive is another consideration. I should say not less than twelve, or more than twenty,' continued the gentleman. 'The evenings should be appointed—say weekly—fortnightly at the beginning of January, which is our season. Fix an early hour for opening the room. People are caught then in their freshness, before they become exhausted by other parties.*

The lady spoke, 'For my part, I prefer catching my friends after they have left the grander balls or receptions. One hears then the remarks, the wit, the reason, and the satire which they had been storing up during their evening of imposed silence or of ceremonious speaking.'

'A little good-humoured satire is a very agreeable sauce,' replied the gentleman, 'but it must be good-humoured, and the listeners must be good-humoured ; above all, the conversation must be general, and not the chat, chat, chat up in a corner, by which the English so often distinguish themselves. You do not go into society to exchange secrets with your intimate friends ; you go to render yourselves agreeable to every one present, and to help all to pass a happy evening.'

* Strangers should not be admitted,' said the lady, taking up the strain. 'They would not start fair with

the others; they would be ignorant of the allusions that refer to conversations on the previous evenings; they would not understand the—what shall I call it—slang ? I mean those expressions having relation to past occurrences, or bygone witticisms common to all those who are in the habit of meeting.'

'Madame de Duras and Madame Recamier never made advances to any stranger. Their salons were the best that Paris has known in this generation. All who wished to be admitted, had to wait and prove their litness by being agreeable elsewhere ; to earn their diploma, as it were, among the circle of these ladies' acquaintances ; and, at last, it was a high favour to be received by them.'

'They missed the society of many celebrities by adhering so strictly to this unspoken rule,' said the gentleman.

'Bah !' said the lady. 'Celebrities ! what has one to do with them in society ? As celebrities, they are simply bores. Because a man has discovered a planet, it does not follow that he can converse agreeably, even on his own subjects ; often people are drained dry by one action or expression of their lives—drained dry for all the purposes of a "salon". The writer of books, for instance, cannot afford to talk twenty pages for nothing, so he is either profoundly silent, or else he gives you the mere rinsings of his mind. I am speaking now of him as a mere celebrity, and justifying the wisdom of the ladies we were speaking of, in not seeking after such people ; indeed, in being rather shy of them. Some of their friends were the most celebrated people of their day, but they were received in their old capacity of agreeable men ; a higher character, by far. Then,' said she, turning to me, * I believe that you English spoil the perfection of conversation by having your rooms as brilliantly lighted for an evening the charm of which depends on what one hears, as for an evening when youth and beauty are to display themselves among flowers and festoons, and every kind of pretty ornament. I would never have a room affect people as being dark

on their first entrance into it; but there is a kind of moonlight as compared to sunlight, in which people talk more freely and naturally; where shy people will enter upon a conversation without a dread of every change of colour or involuntary movement being seen—just as we are always more confidential over a fire than anywhere else—as women talk most openly in the dimly-lighted bedroom at curling-time.'

'Away with your shy people,' said the gentleman. 'Persons who are self-conscious, thinking of an involuntary redness or paleness, an unbecoming movement of the countenance, more than the subject of which they are talking, should not go into society at all. But, because women are so much more liable to this nervous weakness than men, the preponderance of people in a salon should always be on the side of the men.'

I do not think I gained more hints as to the lost art from my French friends. Let us see if my own experience in England can furnish any more ideas.

First, let us take the preparations to be made before our house, our room, or our lodgings can be made to receive society. Of course I am not meaning the preparations needed for dancing or musical evenings. I am taking those parties which have pleasant conversation and happy social intercourse for their affirmed intention. They may be dinners, suppers, tea—I don't care what they are called, provided their end is defined. If your friends have not dined, and it suits you to give them a dinner, in the name of Lucullus, let them dine; but take care that there shall be something besides the mere food and wine to make their fattening agreeable at the time and pleasant to remember, otherwise you had better pack up for each his portions of the dainty dish, and send it separately, in hot-water trays, so that he can eat comfortably behind a door, like Sancho Panza, and have done with it. And yet I don't see why we should be like ascetics; I fancy there is a grace of preparation, a sort of festive trumpet-call, that is right and proper to distinguish the day on which we receive our friends from common days, unmarked by such

white stones. The thought and care we take for them to set before them of our best, may imply some self-denial on our less fortunate days. I have been in houses where all, from the scullion-maid upward, worked double tides gladly, because 'Master's friends' were coming; and everything must be nice, and good, and all the rooms must look bright, and clean, and pretty. And, as 'a merry heart goes all the way', preparations made in this welcoming, hospitable spirit never seem to tire anyone half so much as where servants instinctively feel that it has been said in the parlour, 'We must have so-and-so,' or, 'Oh, dear! we have never had the so-and-so's.' Yes, I like a little pomp, and luxury, and stateliness, to mark our happy days of receiving friends as a festival; but I do not think I would throw my power of procuring luxuries solely into the eating and drinking line.

My friends would probably be surprised (some wear caps, and some wigs) if I provided them with garlanda of flowers, after the manner of the ancient Greeks; but, put flowers on the table (none of your shams, wax or otherwise; I prefer an honest wayside root of primroses, in a common vase of white ware, to the grandest bunch of stiff-rustling artificial rarities in a silver epergne). A flower or two by the side of each person's plate would not be out of the way, as to expense, and would be a very agreeable pretty piece of mute welcome. Cooks and scullion-maids, acting in the sympathetic spirit I have described, would do their very best, from boiling the potatoes well, to sending in all the dishes in the best possible order. I think I would have every imaginary dinner sent up on the 'Original' Mr. Walker's plan; each dish separately, hot and hot. I have an idea that when I go to live in Utopia (not before next Christmas), I will have a kind of hot-water side-board, such as I think I have seen in great houses, and that nothing shall appear on the table but what is pleasant to the eye. However simple the food, I would do it and my friends (and may I not add the Giver?) the respect of presenting it at table as well cooked, as

eatable, as wholesome as my poor means allowed ; and to this end, rather than to a variety of dishes, would I direct my care. We have no associations with beef and mutton ; geese may remind us of the Capitol; and peacocks of Juno; a pigeon-pie of * the simplicity of Venus' doves'; but who thinks of the leafy covert which has been her home in life, when he sees a roasted hare ? Now, flowers as an ornament do lead our thoughts away from their present beauty and fragrance. I am almost sure Madame de Sable had flowers in her salon, and, as she was fond of dainties herself, I can fancy her smooth benevolence of character, taking delight in some personal preparations made in the morning for the anticipated friends of the evening. I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan, or dressing salad with her delicate, plump, white hands;—not that I ever saw a silver saucepan. I was formerly ignorant enough to think that they were only used in the Sleeping Beauty's kitchen, or in the preparations for the marriage of Riquet-with-the-Tuft; but I have been assured that there are such things, and that they impart a most delicate flavour, or no flavour, to the victuals cooked therein; so I assert again, Madame de Sable cooked sweetbreads for her friends in a silver saucepan; but never to fatigue herself with those previous labours. She knew the true taste of her friends too well; they cared for her firstly, as an element in their agreeable evening—the silver saucepan in which they were all to meet: the oil in which their several ingredients were to be softened of what was harsh or discordant—very secondary would be their interest in her sweetbreads.

Of sweetbreads they'll get mony an ane,
Of Sable ne'er anither.

But part of my care beforehand should go to the homely article of waiting. I should not mind having none at all; a dumb waiter, pepper, salt, bread, and condiments within the reach or by the side of all. Little kindly attentions from one guest to another tend to take off the selfish character of the mere act of eating;

and, besides, the guests would (or should) be too well educated, too delicate of tact, to interrupt a burst of wit, or feeling, or eloquence, as a mere footman often does with the perpetual 'Sherry, or Madeira?' or with the names of those mysterious entremets that always remind me of a white kid glove that I once ate with bechamel sauce, and found very tender and good, under the name of Oreilles de Veau a-la-something, but which experiment I never wish to repeat. There is something graceful and kindly in the little attention by which one guest silently puts by his neighbour all that he may require. I consider it a better opening to ultimate friendship, if my unknown neighbour mutely passes me the salt, or silently understands that I like sugar to my soup, than if he had been introduced by his full name and title, and labelled with the one distinguishing action or book of his life, after the manner of some who are rather showmen than hosts.

But to return to the subject of waiting. I have always believed that the charm of those little suppers, famous from time immemorial as the delightful PS. to operas, was that there was no formal waiting, or over-careful arrangement of the table; a certain sweet neglect pervaded all, very compatible with true elegance. The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the White Cat, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits at table with the White Cat, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies, I am very far from meaning hands without heads. Some people prefer female waiters; foot-women, as it were. I have weighed both sides of the subject well in my mind, before sitting down to write this paper, and my verdict goes in favour of men; for, all other things being equal, their superior strength gives them the power of doing things without effort, and consequently with less noise than any woman. The quiet ease and solemn soundless movement of some men-servants is wonderful to watch. Last summer I was staying in a house served by such list-shod, soft-spoken, velvet-handed domestics. One

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	.1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	.1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	.1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	.1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	.1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	.1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	.1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	.1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	.1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	.1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	.1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	.1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	.1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	.1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	.1850
„ <i>Ruth</i> .	.1853
„ <i>Cranford</i> .	.1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	.1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	.1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	.1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	.1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	.1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	.1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	.1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	.1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	.1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door, 'handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. 'Nay,' says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ?'

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. 'They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ?'

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ?' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. 'But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ?'

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ?'

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ? '

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdi'ew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open case-ments of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day ; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of? her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours, " E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words emplowd. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clomp of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's a the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

' Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

' Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

' I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

' Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

' And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

' Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten ; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course ; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby ; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting ; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well ! ' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ? ' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour ! ' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too ! ' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ? ' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?'

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

'I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open casement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

ⁱ"Od rot 'em !" said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she awakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '

' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"—There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

' " She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

' I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one ; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

CHAPTER IV

* BY and by the inhabitants of Duncombe began to have parties in my honour. Mr. Morgan told me it was on my account, or I don't think I should have found it out. But he was pleased at every fresh invitation, and rubbed his hands, and chuckled, as if it was a compliment to himself, as in truth it was.

' Meanwhile, the arrangement with Mrs. Rose had been brought to a conclusion. She was to bring her furniture, and place it in a house, of which I was to pay the rent. She was to be the mistress, and, in return, she was not to pay anything for her board. Mr. Morgan took the house, and delighted in advising and settling all my affairs. I was partly indolent, and partly amused, and was altogether passive. The house he took for me was near his own : it had two sitting-rooms downstairs, opening into each other by folding-doors, which were, however, kept shut in general. The back room was my consulting room (" the library," he advised me to call it), and he gave me a skull to put on the top of my bookcase, in which the medical books were all ranged on the conspicuous shelves; while Miss Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray were, by Mr. Morgan himself, skilfully placed in a careless way, upside down or with their backs turned to the wall. The front parlour was to be the dining-room, and the room above was furnished with Mrs. Rose's drawing-room chairs and table, though I found she preferred sitting downstairs in the dining-room close to the window, where, between every stitch, she could look up and see what was going on in the street. I felt rather queer to be the master of this house, filled with another person's furniture, before I had even seen the lady whose property it was.

' Presently she arrived. Mr. Morgan met her at the inn where the coach stopped, and accompanied her to my house. I could see them out of the drawing-room

window, the little gentleman stepping daintily along, flourishing his cane, and evidently talking away. She was a little taller than he was, and in deep widow's mourning; such veils and falls, and capes and cloaks, that she looked like a black crape haycock. When we were introduced, she put up her thick veil, and looked around and sighed.

' " Your appearance and circumstances, Mr. Harrison, remind me forcibly of the time when I was married to my dear husband, now at rest. He was then, like you, commencing practice as a surgeon. For twenty years I sympathized with him, and assisted him by every means in my power, even to making up pills when the young man was out. May we live together in like harmony for an equal length of time ! May the regard between us be equally sincere, although, instead of being conjugal, it is to be maternal and filial ! "

' I am sure she had been concocting this speech in the coach, for she afterwards told me she was the only passenger. When she had ended, I felt as if I ought to have had a glass of wine in my hand, to drink, after the manner of toasts. And yet I doubt if I should have done it heartily, for I did not hope to live with her for twenty years ; it had rather a dreary sound. However, I only bowed and kept my thoughts to myself. I asked Mr. Morgan, while Mr. Rose was upstairs taking off her things, to stay to tea; to which he agreed, and kept rubbing his hands with satisfaction, saying—

" Very fine woman, sir; very fine woman ! And what a manner ! How she will receive patients, who may wish to leave a message during your absence. Such a flow of words to be sure ! "

' Mr. Morgan could not stay long after tea, as there were one or two cases to be seen. I would willingly have gone, and had my hat on, indeed, for the purpose, when he said it would not be respectful, " not the thing," to leave Mrs. Rose the first evening of her arrival,

" Tender deference to the sex—to a widow in the first months of her loneliness—requires a little consideration, my dear sir. I will leave that case at

Miss Tomkinson's for you; you will perhaps call early to-morrow morning. Miss Tomkinson is rather particular, and is apt to speak plainly if she does not think herself properly attended to."

' I had often noticed that he shuffled off the visits to Miss Tomkinson's on me, and I suspect he was a little afraid of the lady.

' It was rather a long evening with Mrs. Rose. She had nothing to do, thinking it civil, I suppose, to stop in the parlour, and not go upstairs and unpack. I begged I might be no restraint upon her if she wished to do so; but (rather to my disappointment) she smiled in a measured, subdued way, and said it would be a pleasure to her to become better acquainted with me. She went upstairs once, and my heart misgave me when I saw her come down with a clean folded pocket-handkerchief. Oh, my prophetic soul!—she was no sooner seated, than she began to give me an account of her late husband's illness, and symptoms, and death. It was a very common case, but she evidently seemed to think it had been peculiar. She had just a smattering of medical knowledge, and used the technical terms so very malapropos that I could hardly keep from smiling; but I would not have done it for the world, she was evidently in such deep and sincere distress. At last she said—

' " I have the ' dognoses' of my dear husband's complaint in my desk, Mr. Harrison, if you would like to draw up the case for the *Lancet*. I think he would have felt gratified, poor fellow, if he had been told such a compliment would be paid to his remains, and that his case should appear in those distinguished columns."

' It was rather awkward; for the case was of the very commonest, as I said before. However, I had not been even this short time in practice without having learnt a few of those noises which do not compromise one, and yet may bear a very significant construction if the listener chooses to exert a little imagination.

' Before the end of the evening, we were such Mends that she brought me down the late Mr. Rose's picture to look at. She told me she could not bear herself to

gaze upon the beloved features; but that if I would look upon the miniature, she would avert her face. I offered to take it into my own hands, but she seemed wounded at the proposal, and said she never, never could trust such a treasure out of her own possession; so she turned her head very much over her left shoulder, while I examined the likeness held by her extended right arm.

' The late Mr. Rose must have been rather a good-looking, jolly man; and the artist had given him such a broad smile, and such a twinkle about the eyes, that it really was hard to help smiling back at him. However, I restrained myself.

' At first Mrs. Rose objected to accepting any of the invitations which were sent her to accompany me to the tea-parties in the town. She was so good and simple, that I was sure she had no other reason than the one which she alleged—the short time that had elapsed since her husband's death ; or else, now that I had had some experience of the entertainments which she declined so pertinaciously, I might have suspected that she was glad of the excuse. I used sometimes to wish that I was a widow. I came home tired from a hard day's riding, and if I had but felt sure that Mr. Morgan would not come in, I should certainly have put on my slippers and my loose morning coat, and have indulged in a cigar in the garden. It seemed a cruel sacrifice to society to dress myself in tight boots, and a stiff coat, and go to a five-o'clock tea. But Mr. Morgan read me such lectures upon the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of the people among whom I was settled, and seemed so sorry, and almost hurt, when I once complained of the dullness of these parties, that I felt I could not be so selfish as to decline more than one out of three. Mr. Morgan, if he found that I had an invitation for the evening, would often take the longer round, and the more distant visits. I suspected him at first of the design, which I confess I often entertained, of shirking the parties ; but I soon found out he was really making a sacrifice of his inclinations for what he considered to be my advantage.

CHAPTER V

' THERE was one invitation which seemed to promise a good deal of pleasure. Mr. Bullock (who is the attorney of Duncombe) was married a second time to a lady from a large provincial town; she wished to lead the fashion—a thing very easy to do, for every one was willing to follow her. So instead of giving a tea-party in my honour, she proposed a picnic to some old hall in the neighbourhood; and really the arrangements sounded tempting enough. Every patient who had seemed full of the subject; both those who were invited and those who were not. There was a moat round the house, with a boat on it; and there was a gallery in the hall, from which music sounded delightfully. The family to whom the place belonged were abroad, and lived at a newer and grander mansion when they were at home; there were only a farmer and his wife in the old hall, and they were to have the charge of the preparations. The little, kind-hearted town was delighted when the sun shone bright on the October morning of our picnic; the shopkeepers and cottagers all looked pleased as they saw the cavalcade gathering at Mr. Bullock's door. We were somewhere about twenty in number; a "silent few", she called us; but I thought we were quite enough. There were the Miss Tomkinsons, and two of their young ladies—one of them belonged to a "county family", Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper; then came Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bullock, and a tribe of little children, the offspring of the present wife. Miss Bullock was only a step-daughter. Mrs. Munton had accepted the invitation to join our party, which was rather unexpected by the host and hostess, I imagine, from little remarks that I overheard; but they made her very welcome. Miss Horsman (a maiden lady who had been on a visit from home till last week) was another. And last, there were the Vicar and his children. These, with Mr.

Morgan and myself, made up the party. I was very much pleased to see something more of the Vicar's family. He had come in occasionally to the evening parties, it is true ; and spoken kindly to us all ; but it was not his habit to stay very long at thorn. And his daughter was, he said, too young to visit. She had had the charge of her little sisters and brother since her mother's death, which took up a good deal of her time, and she was glad of the evenings to pursue her own studies. But to-day the case was different ; and Sophy, and Helen, and Lizzie, and even little Walter, were all there, standing at Mrs. Bullock's door ; for we none of us could be patient enough to sit still in the parlour with Mrs. Munton and the elder ones, quietly waiting for the two chaises and the spring-cart, which were to have been there by two o'clock, and now it was nearly a quarter past. " Shameful ! the brightness of the day would be gone." The sympathetic shopkeepers, standing at their respective doors with their hands in their pockets, had, one and all, their heads turned in the direction from which the carriages (as Mrs. Bullock called them) were to come. There was a rumble along the paved street ; and the shopkeepers turned and smiled, and bowed their heads congratulatingly to us ; all the mothers and all the little children of the place stood clustering round the door to see us set off. I had my horse waiting ; and, meanwhile, I assisted people into their vehicles. One sees a good deal of management on such occasions. Mrs. Munton was handed first into one of the chaises ; then there was a little hanging back, for most of the young people wished to go in the cart—I don't know why. My horseman, however, came forward, and as she was known to be the intimate friend of Mrs. Munton, so far was satisfactory. But who was to be third—bodkin with two old ladies, who liked the windows shut ? I saw Sophy speaking to Helen ; and then she came forward and offered to be the third. The two old ladies looked pleased and glad (as every one did near Sophy) ; so that chaise-full was arranged. Just as it was going off,

however, the servant from the vicarage came running with a note for her master. When he had read it, he went to the chaise door, and I suppose told Sophy, what I afterwards heard him say to Mrs. Bullock, that the clergyman of a neighbouring parish was ill, and unable to read the funeral service for one of his parishioners, who was to be buried that afternoon. The Vicar was, of course, obliged to go, and said he should not return home that night. It seemed a relief to some, I perceived, to be without the little restraint of his dignified presence. Mr. Morgan came up just at the moment, having ridden hard all the morning to be in time to join our party; so we were resigned, on the whole, to the Vicar's absence. His own family regretted him the most, I noticed, and I liked them all the better for it. I believe that I came next in being sorry for his departure; but I respected and admired him, and felt always the better for having been in his company. Miss Tomkinson, Mrs. Bullock, and the "county" young lady, were in the next chaise. I think the last would rather have been in the cart with the younger and merrier set, but I imagine that was considered *infra dig*. The remainder of the party were to ride and tie; and a most riotous, laughing set they were. Mr. Morgan and I were on horseback; at least I led my horse, with little Walter riding on him; his fat, sturdy legs standing stiff out on each side of my cob's broad back. He was a little darling, and chattered all the way, his sister Sophy being the heroine of all his stories. I found he owed this day's excursion entirely to her begging papa to let him come; nurse was strongly against it—"cross old nurse!" he called her once, and then said, "No, not cross; kind nurse; Sophy tells Walter not to say cross nurse." I never saw so young a child so brave. The horse shied at a log of wood. Walter looked very red, and grasped the mane, but sat upright like a little man, and never spoke all the time the horse was dancing. When it was over he looked at me, and smiled—

"You would not let me be hurt, Mr. Harrison,

would you ? " He was the most winning little fellow I ever saw.

' There were frequent cries to me from the cart, " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! do get us that branch of blackberries ; you can reach it with your whip handle." " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! there were such splendid nuts on the other side of that hedge ; would you just turn back for them ? " Miss Caroline Tomkinson was once or twice rather faint with the motion of the cart, and asked me for my smelling bottle, as she had forgotten hers. I was amused at the idea of my carrying such articles about with me. Then she thought she should like to walk, and got out, and came on my side of the road ; but I found little Walter the pleasanter companion, and soon set the horse off into a trot, with which pace her tender constitution could not keep up.

' The road to the old hall was along a sandy lane, with high hedge-banks ; the wych-elms almost met overhead. " Shocking farming ! " Mr. Bullock called out ; and so it might be, but it was very pleasant and picturesque-looking. The trees were gorgeous, in their orange and crimson hues, varied by great, dark-green holly-bushes, glistening in the autumn sun. I should have thought the colours too vivid, if I had seen them in a picture, especially when we wound up the brow, after crossing the little bridge over the brook (what laughing and screaming there was as the cart splashed through the sparkling water !)—and I caught the purple hills beyond. We could see the old hall, too, from that point, with its warm rich woods billowing up behind, and the blue waters of the moat lying still under the sunlight,

' Laughing and talking is very hungry work, and there was a universal petition for dinner when we arrived at the lawn before the hall, where it had been arranged that we were to dine. I saw Miss Carry take Miss Tomkinson aside, and whisper to her ; and presently the elder sister came up to me, where I was busy, rather apart, making a seat of hay, which I had fetched

from the farmer's loft for my little friend Walter, who, I had noticed, was rather hoarse, and for whom I was afraid of a seat on the glass, dry as it appeared to be.

' " Mr. Harrison, Caroline tells me she has been feeling very faint, and she is afraid of a return of one of her attacks. She says she has more confidence in your medical powers than in Mr. Morgan's. I should not be sincere if I did not say that I differ from her; but as it is so, may I beg you to keep an eye upon her ? I tell her she had better not have come if she did not feel well; but, poor girl, she had set her heart upon this day's pleasure. I have offered to go home with her; but she says, if she can only feel sure you are at hand, she would rather stay."

' Of course I bowed, and promised all due attendance on Miss Caroline; and in the meantime, until she did require my services, I thought I might as well go and help the Vicar's daughter, who looked so fresh and pretty in her white muslin dress, here, there, and everywhere, now in the sunshine, now in the green shade, helping every one to be comfortable, and thinking of every one but herself.

' Presently, Mr. Morgan came up.

' " Miss Caroline does not feel quite well. I have promised your services to her sister."

' " So have I, sir. But Miss Sophy cannot carry this heavy basket."

' I did not mean her to have heard this excuse; but she caught it up and said—

' " Oh, yes, I can ! I can take the things out one by one. Go to poor Miss Caroline, pray, Mr. Harrison.

' I went; but very unwillingly, I must say. When I had once seated myself by her, I think she must have felt better. It was, probably, only a nervous fear, which was relieved when she knew she had assistance near at hand; for she made a capital dinner. I thought she would never end her modest requests for " just a little more pigeon-pie, or a merry-thought of chicken ". Such a hearty meal would, I hope, effectually revive

her; and so it did; for she told me she thought she could manage to walk round the garden, and see the old peacock yews, if I would kindly give her my arm. It was very provoking; I had so set my heart upon being with the Vicar's children. I advised Miss Caroline strongly to lie down a little, and rest before tea, on the sofa in the farmer's kitchen; you cannot think how persuasively I begged her to take care of herself. At last she consented, thanking me for my tender interest; she should never forget my kind attention to her. She little knew what was in my mind at the time. However, she was safely consigned to the farmer's wife, and I was rushing out in search of a white gown and a waving figure, when I encountered Mrs. Bullock at the door of the hall. She was a fine, fierce-looking woman. I thought she had appeared a little displeased at my (unwilling) attentions to Miss Caroline at dinner-time; but now, seeing me alone, she was all smiles.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison, all alone ! How is that ? What are the young ladies about to allow such churlishness ? And, by the way, I have left a young lady who will be very glad of your assistance, I am sure—my daughter, Jemima' (her step-daughter, she meant). * Mr. Bullock is so particular, and so tender a father, that he would be frightened to death at the idea of her going into the boat on the moat unless she was with some one who could swim. He is gone to discuss the new wheel-plough with the farmer (you know agriculture is his hobby, although law, horrid law, is his business). But the poor girl is pining on the bank, longing for my permission to join the others, which I dare not give unless you will kindly accompany her, and promise, if any accident happens, to preserve her safe."

Oh, Sophy, why was no one anxious about you ?

CHAPTER VI

'Miss BULLOCK was standing by the waterside, looking wistfully, as I thought, at the water party ; the sound of whose merry laughter came pleasantly enough from the boat, which lay off (for, indeed, no one knew how to row, and she was of a clumsy, fiat-bottomed build) about a hundred yards, " weatherbound," as they shouted out, among the long stalks of the water-lilies.

' Miss Bullock did not look up till I came close to her ; and then, when I told her my errand, she lifted up her great, heavy, sad eyes, and looked at me for a moment. It struck me, at the time, that she expected to find some expression on my face which was not there, and that its absence was a relief to her. She was a very pale, unhappy-looking girl, but very quiet, and, if not agreeable in manner, at any rate not forward or offensive. I called to the party in the boat, and they came slowly enough through the large, cool, green lily-leaves towards us. When they got near, we saw there was no room for us, and Miss Bullock said she would rather stay in the meadow and saunter about, if I would go into the boat; and I am certain from the look on her countenance that she spoke the truth; but Miss Horsman called out, in a sharp voice, while she smiled in a very disagreeable, knowing way—

' " Oh, mamma will be displeased if you don't come in, Miss Bullock, after all her trouble in making such a nice arrangement."

* At this speech the poor girl hesitated, and at last, in an undecided way, as if she was not sure whether she was doing right, she took Sophy's place in the boat. Helen and Lizzie landed with their sister, so that there was plenty of room for Miss Tomkinson, Miss Horsman, and all the little Bullocks ; and the three vicarage girls went off strolling along the meadow side, and playing with Walter, who was in a high state of excitement.

The sun was getting low, but the declining light was beautiful upon the water; and, to add to the charm of the time, Sophy and her sisters, standing on the green lawn in front of the hall, struck up the little German canon, which I had never heard before—

Oh wie wohl ist mir am abend, &c.

At last we were summoned to tug the boat to the landing-steps on the lawn, tea and a blazing wood fire being ready for us in the hall. I was offering my arm to Miss Horsman, as she was a little lame, when she said again, in her peculiar disagreeable way, '* Had you not better take Miss Bullock, Mr. Harrison ? It will be more satisfactory."

'I helped Miss Horsman up the steps, however, and then she repeated her advice; so, remembering that Miss Bullock was in fact the daughter of my entertainers, I went to her; but though she accepted my arm, I could perceive she was sorry that I had offered it.

'The hall was lighted by the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate; the daylight was dying away in the west; and the large windows admitted but little of what was left, through their small leaded frames, with coats of arms emblazoned upon them. The farmer's wife had set out a great long table, which was piled with good things; and a huge black kettle sang on the glowing fire, which sent a cheerful warmth through the room as it crackled and blazed. Mr. Morgan (who I found had been taking a little round in the neighbourhood among his patients) was there, smiling and rubbing his hands as usual. Mr. Bullock was holding a conversation with the farmer at the garden-door on the nature of different manures, in which it struck me that if Mr. Bullock had the fine names and the theories on his side, the farmer had all the practical knowledge and the experience, and I know which I would have trusted. I think Mr. Bullock rather liked to talk about Liebig in my hearing; it sounded well, and was knowing. Mrs. Bullock was not particularly placid in her mood. In the first place, I wanted to sit by the Vicar's daughter,

and Miss Caroline as decidedly wanted to sit on my other side, being afraid of her fainting fits, I imagine. But Mrs. Bullock called me to a place near her daughter. Now I thought I had done enough civility to a girl who was evidently annoyed rather than pleased by my attentions, and I pretended to be busy stooping under the table for Miss Caroline's gloves, which were missing ; but it was of no avail; Mrs. Bullock's fine, severe eyea were awaiting my reappearance, and she summoned me again.

' " I am keeping this place on my right hand for you, Mr. Harrison. Jemima, sit still! "

* I went up to the post of honour and tried to busy myself with pouring out coffee to hide my chagrin; but after forgetting to empty the water put in ("to warm the cups ", Mrs. Bullock said), and omitting to add any sugar, the lady told me she would dispense with my services, and turn me over to my neiglibour on the other side.

' " Talking to the younger lady was, no doubt, more Mr. Harrison's vocation than assisting the elder one." I dare say it was only the manner that made the words seem offensive. Miss Horsman sat opposite to mo, smiling away. Miss Bullock did not speak, but seemed more depressed than ever. At length, Miss Horsman and Mrs. Bullock got to a war of innuendoes, which were completely unintelligible to me, and I was very much displeased with my situation ; while, at the bottom of the table, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bullock were making the young ones laugh most heartily. Part of the joke was Mr. Morgan insisting upon making tea at that end ; and Sophy and Helen were busy contriving every possible mistake for him. I thought honour was a very good thing, but merriment a better. Here was I in the place of distinction, hearing nothing but cross words. At last the time came for us to go home. As the evening was damp, the seats in the chaises were the best and most to be desired. And now Sophy offered to go in the cart; only she seemed anxious, and so was I, that Walter should be secured from the effects of the

white wreaths of fog rolling up from the valley; but the little violent affectionate fellow would not be separated from Sophy. She made a nest for him on her knee in one corner of the cart, and covered him with her own shawl; and I hoped that he would take no harm. Miss Tomkinson, Mr. Bullock, and some of the young ones walked; but I seemed chained to the windows of the chaise, for Miss Caroline begged me not to leave her, as she was dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Mrs. Bullock implored me to see that the man did not overturn them in the bad roads, as he had certainly had too much to drink.

' I became so irritable before I reached home, that I thought it was the most disagreeable day of pleasure I had ever had, and could hardly bear to answer Mrs. Rose's never-ending questions. She told me, however, that from my account the day was so charming that she thought she should relax in the rigour of her seclusion, and mingle a little more in the society of which I gave so tempting a description. She really thought her dear Mr. Rose would have wished it; and his will should be law to her after his death, as it had ever been during his life. In compliance, therefore, with his wishes, she would even do a little violence to her own feelings.

' She was very good and kind; not merely attentive to everything which she thought could conduce to my comfort, but willing to take any trouble in providing the broths and nourishing food which I often found it convenient to order, under the name of kitchen-physic, for my poorer patients; and I really did not see the use of her shutting herself up, in mere compliance with an etiquette, when she began to wish to mix in the little quiet society of Duncombe. Accordingly I urged her to begin to visit, and even when applied to as to what I imagined the late Mr. Rose's wishes on that subject would have been, answered for that worthy gentleman, and assured his widow that I was convinced he would have regretted deeply her giving way to immoderate grief, and would have been rather grateful than other-

wise at seeing her endeavour to divert her thoughts by a few quiet visits. She cheered up, and said, "As I really thought so, she would sacrifice her own inclinations, and accept the very next invitation that came."

CHAPTER VII

' I WAS roused from my sleep in the middle of the night by a messenger from the vicarage. Little Walter had got the croup, and Mr. Morgan had been sent for into the country. I dressed myself hastily, and went through the quiet little street. There was a light burning upstairs at the vicarage. It was in the nursery. The servant, who opened the door the instant I knocked, was crying sadly, and could hardly answer my inquiries as I went upstairs, two steps at a time, to see my little favourite.

* The nursery was a great large room. At the farther end it was lighted by a common candle, which left the other end, where the door was, in shade, so I suppose the nurse did not see me come in, for she was speaking very crossly.

' " Miss Sophy !" said she, " I told you over and over again it was not fit for him to go, with the hoarseness that he had, and you would take him. It will break your papa's heart, I know ; but it's none of my doing."

' Whatever Sophy felt, she did not speak in answer to this. She was on her knees by the warm bath, in which the little fellow was struggling to get his breath, with a look of terror on his face that I have often noticed in young children when smitten by a sudden and violent illness. It seems as if they recognized something infinite and invisible, at whose bidding the pain and the anguish come, from which no love can shield them. It is a very heart-rending look to observe, because it comes on the faces of those who are too young to receive comfort from the words of faith, or the

romises of religion. Walter had his arms tight round Sophy's neck, as if she, hitherto his paradise-angel, could save him from the dread shadow of Death. Yes ! of Death ! I knelt down by him on the other side, and examined him. The very robustness of his little frame gave violence to the disease, which is always one of the most fearful by which children of his age can be attacked.

' " Don't tremble, Watty," said Sophy, in a soothing tone ; " it's Mr. Harrison, darling, who let you ride on his horse." I could detect the quivering in the voice, which she tried to make so calm and soft to quiet the little fellow's fears. We took him out of the bath, and I went for leeches. While I was away, Mr. Morgan came. He loved the vicarage children as if he were their uncle ; but he stood still and aghast at the sight of Walter—so lately bright and strong—and now hurrying alone to the awful change—to the silent mysterious land, where, tended and cared for as he had been on earth, he must go—alone. The little fellow ! the darling !

* We applied the leeches to his throat. He resisted at first; but Sophy, God bless her! put the agony of her grief on one side, and thought only of him, and began to sing the little songs he loved. We were all still. The gardener had gone to fetch the Vicar ; but he was twelve miles off, and we doubted if he would come in time. I don't know if they had any hope; but the first moment Mr. Morgan's eyes met mine, I saw that he, like me, had none. The ticking of the house-clock sounded through the dark, quiet house. Walter was sleeping now, with the black leeches yet hanging to his fair, white throat. Still Sophy went on singing little lullabies, which she had sung under far different and happier circumstances. I remember one verse, because it struck me at the time as strangely applicable.

" Sleep, baby, sleep !
Thy rest shall angels keep;
While on the grass the lamb shall feed,
And never suffer want or need.
Sleep, baby, sleep."

The tears were in Mr. Morgan's eyes. I do not think either he or I could have spoken in our natural tones ; but the brave girl went on, clear though low. She stopped at last, and looked up.

' " He is better, is he not, Mr. Morgan ? "

' " No, my dear. He is—ahem—he could not speak all at once. Then he said—'* My dear ! he will be better soon. Think of your mamma, my dear Miss Sophy. She will be very thankful to have one of her darlings safe with her, where she is."

' Still she did not cry. But she bent her head down on the little face, and kissed it long and tenderly.

' " I will go for Helen and Lizzie. They will be sorry not to see him again." She rose up and went for them. Poor girls, they came in, in their dressing-gowns, with eyes dilated with sudden emotion, pale with terror, stealing softly along, as if sound could disturb him. Sophy comforted them by gentle caresses. It was over soon.

' Mr. Morgan was fairly crying like a child. But he thought it necessary to apologize to me, for what I honoured him for. '* I am a little overdone by yesterday's work, sir. I have had one or two bad nights, and they rather upset me. When I was your age I was as strong and manly as any one, and would have scorned to shed tears."

' Sophy came up to where we stood.

' " Mr. Morgan ! I am so sorry for papa. How shall I tell him ? " She was struggling against her own grief for her father's sake. Mr. Morgan offered to await his coming home ; and she seemed thankful for the proposal. I, new friend, almost stranger, might stay no longer. The street was as quiet as ever ; not a shadow was changed ; for it was not yet four o'clock. But during the night a soul had departed.

' From all I could see, and all I could learn, the Vicar and his daughter strove which should comfort the other the most. Each thought of the other's grief—each prayed for the other rather than for themselves. We **saw** them walking out, countrywards ; and we

hoard of them in the cottages of the poor. But it was some time before I happened to meet either of them again. And then I felt, from something indescribable in their manner towards me, that I was one of the

" Peculiar people, whom Death had made dear."

That one day at the old hall had done this. I was, perhaps, the last person who had given the little fellow any unusual pleasure. Poor Walter ! I wish I could have done more to make his short life happy !

CHAPTER VIII

' THERE was a little lull, out of respect to the Vicar's grief, in the visiting. It gave time to Mrs. Rose to soften down the anguish of her weeds.

' At Christmas, Miss Tomkinson sent out invitations for a party. Miss Caroline had once or twice apologized to me because such an event had not taken place before ; but, as she said, "the avocations of their daily life prevented their having such little *reunions* except in the vacations." And, sure enough, as soon as the holidays began, came the civil little note—

" The Misses Tomkinson request the pleasure of Mrs. Rose's and Mr. Harrison's company at tea, on the evening of Monday, the 23rd inst. Tea at five o'clock."

' Mrs. Rose's spirit roused, like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, at this. She was not of a repining disposition, but I do think she believed the party-giving population of Duncombe had given up inviting her, as soon as she had determined to relent, and accept the invitations, in compliance with the late Mr. Rose's wishes.

' Such snippings of white love-ribbon us I found everywhere, making the carpet untidy ! One day, too, unluckily, a small box was brought to me by mistake. I did not look at the direction, for I never doubted it was some hyoscyamus which I was expecting from London; so I tore it open, and **saw** inside a piece of

paper, with "No more grey hair*", in large letters, upon it. I folded it up in a hurry, and sealed it afresh, and gave it to Mrs. Rose ; but I could not refrain from asking her, soon after, if she could recommend me anything to keep my hair from turning grey, adding that I thought prevention was better than cure. I think she made out the impression of my seal on the paper after that; for I learned that she had been crying, and that she talked about there being no sympathy left in the world for her since Mr. Rose's death ; and that she counted the days until she could rejoin him in the better world. I think she counted the days to Miss Tomkinson's party, too ; she talked so much about it.

* The covers were taken off Miss Tomkinson's chairs, and curtains, and sofas; and a great jar full of artificial flowers was placed in the centre of the table, which, as Miss Caroline told me, was all her doing, as she doted on the beautiful and artistic in life. Miss Tomkinson stood, erect as a grenadier, close to the door, receiving her friends, and heartily shaking them by the hands as they entered: she said she was truly glad to see them. And so she really was.

'We had just finished tea, and Miss Caroline had brought out a little pack of conversation cards—sheaves of slips of cardboard, with intellectual or sentimental questions on one set, and equally intellectual and sentimental answers on the other; and as the answers were fit to any and all the questions, you may think they were a characterless and "wersh" set of things. I had just been asked by Miss Caroline—

' *Can you tell what those dearest to you think of you at this present time f* " and had answered—

' "*How can you expect me to reveal such a secret to the present company /* " when the servant announced that a gentleman, a friend of mine, wished to speak to me downstairs.

' "Oh, show him up, Martha ; show him up !" said Miss Tomkinson, in her hospitality.

"Any friend of our friend's is welcome," said Miss Caroline, in an insinuating tone.

* I jumped up, however, thinking it might be some one on business; but I was so penned in by the spider-legged tables, stuck out on every side, that I could not make the haste I wished; and before I could prevent it, Martha had shown up Jack Marshland, who was on his road home for a day or two at Christmas.

' He came up in a hearty way, bowing to Miss Tomkinson, and explaining that he had found himself in my neighbourhood, and had come over to pass a night with me, and that my servant had directed him where I was.

' His voice, loud at all times, sounded like Stentor's in that little room, where we all spoke in a kind of purring way. He had no swell in his tones; they were *forte* from the beginning. At first it seemed like the days of my youth come back again, to hear full, manly speaking; I felt proud of my friend, as he thanked Miss Tomkinson for her kindness in asking him to stay the evening. By and by he came up to me, and I dare say he thought he had lowered his voice, for he looked as if speaking confidentially, while in fact the whole room might have heard him.

' " Frank, my boy, when shall we have dinner at this good old lady's ? I'm deuced hungry."

' Dinner! Why, we had had tea an hour ago. While he yet spoke, Martha came in with a little tray, on which was a single cup of coffee and three slices of wafer bread-and-butter. His dismay, and his evident submission to the decrees of Fate, tickled me so much, that I thought he should have a further taste of the life I led from month's end to month's end, and I gave up my plan of taking him home at once, and enjoyed the anticipation of the hearty laugh we should have together at the end of the evening. I was famously punished for my determination.

" Shall we continue our game ?" asked Miss Caroline, who had never relinquished her sheaf of questions.

' We went on questioning and answering, with little gain of information to either party.

" No such thing as heavy betting in this game, eh,

Frank I " asked Jack, who had been watching us. " You don't lose ten pounds at a sitting, I guess, as you used to do at Short's. Playing for love, I suppose you call it ? "

* Miss Caroline simpered, and looked down. Jack was not thinking of her. He was thinking of the days we had had at the " Mermaid ". Suddenly he said, " Where were you this day last year, Frank ? "

' " I don't remember ! " said I.

' " Then I'll tell you. It's the 23rd—the day you were taken up for knocking down the fellow in Long Acre, and that I had to bail you out ready for Christmas Day. You are in more agreeable quarters to-night."

* He did not intend this reminiscence to be heard, but was not in the least put out when Miss Tomkinson, with a face of dire surprise, asked—

' " Mr. Harrison taken up, sir ? "

' " Oh, yes, ma'am ; and you see it was so common an affair with him to be locked up that he can't remember the dates of his different imprisonments."

' He laughed heartily ; and so should I, but that I saw the impression it made. The thing was, in fact, simple enough, and capable of easy explanation. I had been made angry by seeing a great hulking fellow, out of mere wantonness, break the crutch from under a cripple ; and I struck the man more violently than I intended, and down he went, yelling out for the police, and I had to go before the magistrate to be released. I disdained giving this explanation at the time. It was no business of theirs what I had been doing a year ago ; but still Jack might have held his tongue. However, that unruly member of his was set a-going, and he told me afterwards he was resolved to let the old ladies into a little of life ; and accordingly he remembered every practical joke we had ever had, and talked and laughed, and roared again. I tried to converse with Miss Caroline—Mrs. Munton—any one ; but Jack was the hero of the evening, and every one was listening to him.

' " Then he has never sent any hoaxing letters since

he came here, has he ? Good boy ! He has turned over a new leaf. He was the deepest dog at that I ever met with. Such anonymous letters as he used to send ! Do you remember that to Mrs. Walbrook, eh, Frank ? That was too bad I " (the wretch was laughing all the time). " No ; I won't tell about it—don't be afraid. Such a shameful hoax " (laughing again).

' " Pray do tell," I called out; for he made it seem far worse than it was.

' " Oh no, no ; you've established a better character—I would not for the world nip your budding efforts. We'll bury the past in oblivion."

' I tried to tell my neighbours the story to which he alluded ; but they were attracted by the merriment of Jack's manner, and did not care to hear the plain matter of fact.

' Then came a pause; Jack was talking almost quietly to Miss Horsman. Suddenly he called across the room—" How many times have you been out with the hounds ? The hedges were blind very late this year, but you must have had some good mild days since."

' " I have never been out," said I shortly.

' " Never !—whew !——Why, I thought that was the great attraction to Duncombe."

' Now was not he provoking ? He would condole with me, and fixed the subject in the minds of every one present.

' The supper trays were brought in, and there was a shuffling of situations. He and I were close together again.

' " I say, Frank, what will you lay me that I don't clear that tray before people are ready for their second helping ? I'm as hungry as a hound."

' " You shall have a round of beef and a raw leg of mutton when you get home. Only do behave yourself here."

' " Well, for your sake ; but keep me away from those trays, or I'll not answer for myself. ' Hould me, or I'll fight,' as the Irishman said I'll go and talk to that little old lady in blue, and sit with my back to those ghosts of eatables."

' He sat down by Miss Caroline, who would not have liked his description of her; and began an earnest, tolerably quiet conversation. I tried to be as agreeable as I could, to do away with the impression he had given of me; but I found that every one drew up a little stiffly at my approach, and did not encourage me to make any remarks.

* In the middle of my attempts, I heard Miss Caroline beg Jack to take a glass of wine, and I saw him help himself to what appeared to be port; but in an instant he set it down from his lips, exclaiming, " Vinegar, by Jove! " He made the most horribly wry face: and Miss Tomkinson came up in a severe hurry to investigate the affair. It turned out it was some black-currant wine, on which she particularly piqued herself; I drank two glasses of it to ingratiate myself with her, and can testify to its sourness. I don't think she noticed my exertions, she was so much engrossed in listening to Jack's excuses for his malapropos observation. He told her, with the gravest face, that he had been a teetotalter so long that he had but a confused recollection of the distinction between wine and vinegar, particularly eschewing the latter, because it had been twice fermented; and that he had imagined Miss Caroline had asked him to take toast-and-water, or he should never have touched the decanter.

CHAPTER IX

' As we were walking home, Jack said, " Lord, Frank ! I've had such fun with the little lady in blue. I told her you wrote to me every Saturday, telling me the events of the week. She took all in." He stopped to laugh; for he bubbled and chuckled so that he could not laugh and walk. " And I told her you were deeply in love " (another laugh); " and that I could not get yon to tell me the name of the lady, but that she had light brown hair—in short, I drew from life, and gave

her an exact description of herself; and that I was most anxious to see her, and implore her to be merciful to you, for that you were a most timid, faint-hearted fellow with women." He laughed till I thought he would have fallen down. "I begged her, if she could guess who it was from my description—I'll answer for it she did—I took care of that; for I said you described a mole on the left cheek in the most poetical way, saying Venus had pinched it out of envy at seeing any one more lovely—oh, hold me up, or I shall fall—laughing and hunger make me so weak;—well, I say, I begged her, if she knew who your fair one could be, to implore her to save you. I said I knew one of your lungs had gone after a former unfortunate love-affair, and that I could not answer for the other if the lady here were cruel. She spoke of a respirator; but I told her that might do very well for the odd lung; but would it minister to a heart diseased? I really did talk fine. I have found out the secret of eloquence—it's believing what you've got to say; and I worked myself well up with fancying you married to the little lady in blue."

'I got to laughing at last, angry as I had been; his impudence was irresistible. Mrs. Rose had come home in the sedan, and gone to bed; and he and I sat up over the round of beef and brandy-and-water till two o'clock in the morning.

'He told me I had got quite into the professional way of mousing about a room, and mewing and purring according as my patients were ill or well. He mimicked me, and made me laugh at myself. He left early the next morning.

'Mr. Morgan came at his usual hour; he and Marshland would never have agreed, and I should have been uncomfortable to see two friends of mine disliking and despising each other.

'Mr. Morgan was ruffled; but with his deferential manner to women, he smoothed himself down before Mrs. Rose—regretted that he had not been able to come to Miss Tomkinson's the evening before, and consequently had not seen her in the society she was so well

calculated to adorn. But when we were by ourselves, he said—

' " I was sent for to Mrs. Munton's this morning—the old spasms. May I ask what is this story she tells me about—about prison, in fact ? I trust, sir, she has made some little mistake, and that you never were;——that it is an unfounded report." He could not get it out—" that you were in Newgate for three months ! " I burst out laughing; the story had grown like a mushroom indeed. Mr. Morgan looked grave. I told him the truth. Still he looked grave. " I've no doubt, sir, that you acted rightly ; but it has an awkward sound. I imagined from your hilarity just now that there was no foundation whatever for the story. Unfortunately, there is."

' " I was only a night at the police-station. I would go there again for the same cause, sir."

' " Very fine spirit, sir—quite like Don Quixote ; but don't you see you might as well have been to the hulks at once ? "

' " No, sir ; I don't."

' " Take my word, before long the story will have grown to that. However, we won't anticipate evil. *Mens conscia recti*, you remember, is the great thing. The part I regret is, that it may require some short time to overcome a little prejudice which the story may excite against you. However, we won't dwell on it. *Mens conscia recti* / Don't think about it, sir."

* It was clear he was thinking a good deal about it.

CHAPTER X

' Two or three days before this time, I had had an invitation from the Bullocks to dine with them on Christmas Day. Mrs. Rose was going to spend the week with friends in the town where she formerly lived ; and I had been pleased at the notion of being received into a family, and of being a little with Mr. Bullock, who struck me as a bluff, good-hearted fellow.

' But this Tuesday before Christmas Day, there came an invitation from the Vicar to dine there ; there were to be only their own family and Mr. Morgan. " Only their own family." It was getting to be all the world to me. I was in a passion with myself for having been BO ready to accept Mr. Bullock's invitation—coarse and ungentlemanly as he was; with his wife's airs of pretension and Miss Bullock's stupidity. I turned it over in my mind. No ! I could not have a bad headache, which should prevent me going to the place I did not care for, and yet leave me at liberty to go where I wished. All I could do was to join the vicarage girls after church, and walk by their side in a long country ramble. They were quiet; not sad, exactly; but it was evident that the thought of Walter was in their minds on this day. We went through a copse where there were a good number of evergreens planted as covers for game. The snow was on the ground; but the sky was clear and bright, and the sun glittered on the smooth holly-leaves. Lizzie asked me to gather her some of the very bright red berries, and she was beginning a sentence with—

' " Do you remember,"——when Helen said "*Hush*", and looked towards Sophy, who was walking a little apart, and crying softly to herself. There was evidently some connexion between Walter and the holly-berries, for Lizzie threw them away at once when she saw Sophy's tears. Soon we came to a stile which led to an open, breezy common, half covered with gorse. I helped the little girls over it, and set them to run down the slope; but I took Sophy's arm in mine, and though I could not speak, I think she knew how I was feeling for her. I could hardly bear to bid her good-bye at the vicarage gate ; it seemed as if I ought to go in and spend the day with her.

CHAPTER XI

' I VENTED my ill humour in being late for the Bullocks' dinner. There were one or two clerks, towards whom Mr. Bullock was patronizing and pressing. Mrs. Bullock was decked out in extraordinary finery. Miss Bullock looked plainer than ever; but she had on some old gown or other, I think, for I heard Mrs. Bullock tell her she was always making a figure of herself. I began to-day to suspect that the mother would not be sorry if I took a fancy to the step-daughter. I was again placed near her at dinner, and when the little ones came in to dessert I was made to notice how fond of children she was, and indeed when one of them nestled to her, her face did brighten; but the moment she caught this loud-whispered remark the gloom came back again, with something even of anger in her look; and she was quite sullen and obstinate when urged to sing in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bullock turned to me—

" Some young ladies won't sing unless they are asked by gentlemen." She spoke very crossly. " If you ask Jemima, she will probably sing. To oblige me, it is evident she will not."

' I thought the singing, when we got it, would probably be a great bore; however, I did as I was bid, and went with my request to the young lady, who was sitting a little apart. She looked up at me with eyes full of tears, and said, in a decided tone (which, if I had not seen her eyes, I should have said was as cross as her mamma's), " No, sir, I will not." She got up, and left the room. I expected to hear Mrs. Bullock abuse her for her obstinacy. Instead of that, she began to tell me of the money that had been spent on her education; of what each separate accomplishment had cost. " She was timid," she said, " but very musical. Wherever her future home might be, there would be no want of music." She went on praising her till I hated her. If they thought I was going to marry that great lubberly

girl, they were mistaken. Mr. Bullock and the clerks came up. He brought out Liebig, and called me to him.

"I can understand a good deal of this agricultural chemistry," said he, "and have put it in practice—without much success, hitherto, I confess. But these unconnected letters puzzle me a little. I suppose they have some meaning, or else I should say it was mere book-making to put them in."

"I think they give the page a very ragged appearance," said Mrs. Bullock, who had joined us. "I inherit a little of my late father's taste for books, and must say I like to see a good type, a broad margin, and an elegant binding. My father despised variety; how lie would have held up his hands aghast at the cheap literature of these times! He did not require many books, but he would have twenty editions of those that he had; and he paid more for binding than he did for the books themselves. But elegance was everything with him. He would not have admitted your Liebig, Mr. Bullock; neither the nature of the subject, nor the common type, nor the common way in which your book is got up, would have suited him."

"Go and make tea, my dear, and leave Mr. Harrison and me to talk over a few of these manures."

"We settled to it; I explained the meaning of the symbols, and the doctrine of chemical equivalents. At last he said, "Doctor! you're giving me too strong a dose of it at one time. Let's have a small quantity taken 'hodie'; that's professional, as Mr. Morgan would call it. Come in and call when you have leisure, and give me a lesson in my alphabet. Of all you've been telling me I can only remember that C means carbon and O oxygen; and I see one must know the meaning of all these confounded letters before one can do much good with Liebig."

"We dine at three," said Mrs. Bullock. "There will always be a knife and fork for Mr. Harrison. Bullock! don't confine your invitation to the evening!"

"Why, you see, I've a nap always after dinner, so I could not be learning chemistry then."

' " Don't be so selfish, Mr. B. Think of the pleasure Jemima and I shall have in Mr. Harrison's society."

* I put a stop to the discussion by saying I would come in in the evenings occasionally, and give Mr. Bullock a lesson, but that my professional duties occupied me invariably until that time.

' I liked Mr. Bullock. He was simple, and shrewd; and to be with a man was a relief, after all the feminine society I went through every day.

CHAPTER XII

' T H E next morning I met Miss Horsman.

' " So you dined at Mr. Bullock's yesterday, Mr. Harrison ? Quite a family party, I hear. They are quite charmed with you, and your knowledgo of chemistry. Mr. Bullock told me so, in Hodgson's shop, just now. Miss Bullock is a nice girl, eh, Mr. Harrison ? " She looked sharply at me. Of course, whatever I thought, I could do nothing but assent. " A nice little fortune, too—three thousand pounds, Consols, from her own mother."

' What did I care ? She might have three millions for me. I had begun to think a good deal about money, though, but not in connexion with her. I had been doing up our books ready to send out our Christmas bills, and had been wondering how far the Vicar would consider three hundred a year, with a prospect of increase, would justify me in thinking of Sophy. Think of her I could not help ; and the more I thought of how good, and sweet, and pretty she was, the more I felt that she ought to have far more than I could offer. Besides, my father was a shopkeeper, and I saw the Vicar had a sort of respect for family. I determined to try and be very attentive to my profession. I was as civil as could be to every one; and wore the nap off the brim of my hat by taking it off so often.

' I had my eyes open to every glimpse of Sophy. I am

overstocked with gloves now that I bought at that time, by way of making errands into the shops where I saw her black gown. I bought pounds upon pounds of arrowroot, till I was tired of the eternal arrowroot puddings Mrs. Rose gave me. I asked her if she could not make bread of it, but she seemed to think that would be expensive; so I took to soap as a safe purchase. I believe soap improves by keeping.

CHAPTER XIII

' THE more I knew of Mrs. Rose, the better I liked her. She was sweet, and kind, and motherly, and we never had any rubs. I hurt her once or twice, I think, by cutting her short in her long stories about Mr. Rose. But I found out that when she had plenty to do she did not think of him quite so much; so I expressed a wish for Corazza shirts, and in the puzzle of devising how they were to be cut out she forgot Mr. Rose for some time. I was still more pleased by her way about some legacy her elder brother left her. I don't know the amount, but it was something handsome, and she might have set up housekeeping for herself: but, instead, she told Mr. Morgan (who repeated it to me), that she should continue with me, as she had quite an elder sister's interest in me.

' The " county young lady ", Miss Tyrrell, returned to Miss Tomkinson's after the holidays. She had an enlargement of the tonsils, which required to be frequently touched with caustic, so I often called to see her. Miss Caroline always received me, and kept me talking in her washed-out style, after I had seen my patient. One day she told me she thought she had a weakness about the heart, and would be glad if I would bring my stethoscope the next time, which I accordingly did; and while I was on my knees listening to the pulsations, one of the young ladies came in. She said—

' " Oh, dear ! I never ! I beg your pardon, ma'am," and scuttled out. There was not much the matter with Miss Caroline's heart: a little feeble in action or so, a mere matter of weakness and general languor. When I went down I saw two or three of the girls peeping out of the half-closed schoolroom door, but they shut it immediately, and I heard them laughing. The next time I called, Miss Tomkinson was sitting in state to receive me.

' " Miss Tyrrell's throat does not seem to make much progress. Do you understand the case, Mr. Harrison, or should we have further advice ? I think Mr. Morgan would probably know more about it."

' I assured her it was the simplest thing in the world ; that it always implied a little torpor in the constitution, and that we preferred working through the system, which of course was a slow process, and that the medicine the young lady was taking (iodide of iron) was sure to be successful, although the progress would not be rapid. She bent her head and said, " It might be so ; but she confessed she had more confidence in medicines which had some effect."

' She seemed to expect me to tell her something; but I had nothing to say, and accordingly I bade good-bye. Somehow, Miss Tomkinson always managed to make me feel very small, by a succession of snubbings ; and whenever I left her I had always to comfort myself under her contradictions by saying to myself, " Her saying it is so, does not make it so." Or I invented good retorts which I might have made to her brusque speeches if I had but thought of them at the right time. But it was provoking that I had not had the presence of mind to recollect them just when they were wanted*

CHAPTER XIV

' ON the whole, things went on smoothly. Mr. Holden's legacy came in just about this time; and I felt quite rich. Five hundred pounds would furnish the house, I thought, when Mrs. Rose left and Sophy came. I was delighted, too, to imagine that Sophy perceived the difference of my manner to her from what it was to any one else, and that she was embarrassed and shy in consequence, but not displeased with me for it. All was so flourishing that I went about on wings instead of feet. We were very busy, without having anxious cares. My legacy was paid into Mr. Bullock's hands, who united a little banking business to his profession of law. In return for his advice about investments (which I never meant to take, having a more charming, if less profitable, mode in my head), I went pretty frequently to teach him his agricultural chemistry. I was so happy in Sophy's blushes that I was universally benevolent, and desirous of giving pleasure to every one. I went, at Mrs. Bullock's general invitation, to dinner there one day unexpectedly : but there was such a fuss of ill-concealed preparation consequent upon my coming, that I never went again. Her little boy came in, with an audibly given message from the cook, to ask—

' " If this was the gentleman as she was to send in the best dinner-service and dessert for ? "

' I looked deaf, but determined never to go again.

' Miss Bullock and I, meanwhile, became rather friendly. We found out that we mutually disliked each other; and were contented with the discovery. If people are worth anything, this sort of non-liking is a very good beginning of friendship. Every good quality is revealed naturally and slowly, and is a pleasant surprise. I found out that Miss Bullock was sensible, and even sweet-tempered, when not irritated by her stepmother's endeavours to show her off. But she would sulk for hours after Mrs. Bullock's offensive

praise of her good points. And I never saw such a black passion as she went into when she suddenly came into the room when Mrs. Bullock was telling me of all the offers she had had.

'My legacy made me feel up to extravagance. I scoured the country for a glorious nosegay of camellias, which I sent to Sophy on Valentine's Day. I durst not add a line, but I wished the flowers could speak, and tell her how I loved her.

'I called on Miss Tyrrell that day. Miss Caroline was more simpering and affected than ever; and full of allusions to the day.

' "Do you affix much sincerity of meaning to the little gallantries of this day, Mr. Harrison?" asked she, in a languishing tone. I thought of my camellias, and how my heart had gone with them into Sophy's keeping; and I told her I thought one might often take advantage of such a time to hint at feelings one dared not fully express.

'I remembered afterwards the forced display she made, after Miss Tyrrell left the room, of a valentine. But I took no notice at the time; my head was full of Sophy.

'It was on that very day that John Brouncker, the gardener to all of us who had small gardens to keep in order, fell down and injured his wrist severely (I don't give you the details of the case, because they would not interest you, being too technical; if you've any curiosity, you will find them in the *Lancet* of August in that year). We all liked John, and this accident was felt like a town's misfortune. The gardens, too, just wanted doing up. Both Mr. Morgan and I went directly to him. It was a very awkward case, and his wife and children were crying sadly. He himself was in great distress at being thrown out of work. He begged us to do something that would cure him Speedily, as he could not afford to be laid up, with six children depending on him for bread. We did not say much before him, but we both thought the arm would have to come off, and it was his right arm. We talked it over when we

came out of the cottage. Mr. Morgan had no doubt of the necessity. I went back at dinner-time to see the poor fellow. He was feverish and anxious. He had caught up some expression of Mr. Morgan's in the morning, **and** had guessed the measure we had in contemplation. He bade his wife leave the room, and spoke to me by myself.

' " If you please, sir, I'd rather be done for at once than have my arm taken off, and be a burden to my family. I'm not afraid of dying, but I could not stand being a cripple for life, eating bread, and not able to earn it. "

* The tears were in his eyes with earnestness. I had all along been more doubtful about the necessity of the amputation than Mr. Morgan. I knew the improved treatment in such cases. In his days there was much more of the rough and ready in surgical practice; so I gave the poor fellow some hope.

' In the afternoon I met Mr. Bullock.

' " So you're to try your hand at an amputation to-morrow, I hear. Poor John Brouncker ! I used to tell him he was not careful enough about his ladders. Mr. Morgan is quite excited about it. He asked me to be present, and see how well a man from Guy's could operate; he says he is sure you'll do it beautifully. Pah ! no such sights for me, thank you. "

* Ruddy Mr. Bullock went a shade or two paler at the thought.

* " Curious ! how professionally a man views these things. Here's Mr. Morgan, who has been all along as proud of you as if you were his own son, absolutely rubbing his hands at the idea of this crowning glory, this feather in your cap ! He told me just now he knew **he** had always been too nervous to be a good operator ; **and** had therefore preferred sending for White from Chesterton. But now any one might have a serious accident who liked, for you would be always at hand. "

* I told Mr. Bullock, I really thought we might avoid **the** amputation; but his mind was preoccupied with the idea of it, and he did not care to listen to me.

The whole town was full of it. That is a charm in a little town, everybody is so sympathetically full of the same events. Even Miss Horsman stopped me to ask after John Brouncker with interest; but she threw cold water upon my intention of saving the arm.

' "As for the wife and family, we'll take care of them. Think what a fine opportunity you have of showing off, Mr. Harrison !"

' That was just like her. Always ready with her suggestions of ill-natured or interested motives.

' Mr. Morgan heard my proposal of a mode of treatment by which I thought it possible that the arm might be saved.

' "I differ from you, Mr. Harrison," said he. "I regret it, but I differ *in toto* from you. Your kind heart deceives you in this instance. There is no doubt that amputation must take place—not later than to-morrow morning, I should say. I have made myself at liberty to attend upon you, sir; I shall be happy to officiate as your assistant. Time was when I should have been proud to be principal, but a little trembling in my arm incapacitates me."

' I urged my reasons upon him again ; but he was obstinate. He had, in fact, boasted so much of my acquirements as an operator, that he was unwilling I should lose this opportunity of displaying my skill. He could not see that there would be greater skill evinced in saving the arm ; nor did I think of this at the time. I grew angry at his old-fashioned narrow-mindedness, as I thought it ; and I became dogged in my resolution to adhere to my own course. We parted very coolly ; and I went straight off to John Brouncker to tell him I believed that I could save the arm, if he would refuse to have it amputated. When I calmed myself a little, before going in and speaking to him, I could not help acknowledging that we should run some risk of locked jaw ; but, on the whole, and after giving most earnest, conscientious thought to the case, I was sure that my mode of treatment would be best.

' He **was** a sensible man. I told him **the** difference of opinion that existed between Mr. Morgan and myself.

I said that there might be some little risk attending the non-amputation; but that I should guard against it, and I trusted that I should be able to preserve his arm.

' "Under God's blessing," said he reverently. I bowed my head. I don't like to talk too frequently of the dependence which I always felt on that holy blessing, as to the result of my efforts; but I was glad to hear that speech of John's, because it showed a calm and faithful heart; and I had almost certain hopes of him from that time.

' We agreed that he should tell Mr. Morgan the reason of his objections to the amputation, and his reliance on my opinion. I determined to recur to every book I had relating to such cases, and to convince Mr. Morgan, if I could, of my wisdom. Unluckily, I found out afterwards that he had met Miss Horsman in the time that intervened before I saw him again at his own house that evening; and she had more than hinted that I shrank from performing the operation, "for very good reasons, no doubt. She had heard that the medical students in London were a bad set, and were not remarkable for regular attendance in the hospitals. She might be mistaken; but she thought it was, perhaps, quite as well poor John Brouncker had not his arm cut off by———Was there not such a thing as mortification coming on after a clumsy operation? It was, perhaps, only a choice of deaths!"

' Mr. Morgan had been stung at all this. Perhaps I did not speak quite respectfully enough; I was a good deal excited. We only got more and more angry with each other; though he, to do him justice, was as civil as could be all the time, thinking that thereby he concealed his vexation and disappointment. He did not try to conceal his anxiety about poor John. I went home weary and dispirited. I made up and took the necessary applications to John; and, promising to return with the dawn of day (I would fain have stayed, but I did not wish him to be alarmed about himself), I went home, and resolved to sit up and study the treatment of similar cases.

' Mrs. Rose knocked at the door.

' " Come in ! " said I sharply.

' She said she had seen I had something on my mind all day, and she could not go to bed without asking if there was nothing she could do. She was good and kind; and I could not help telling her a little of the truth. She listened pleasantly ; and I shook her warmly by the hand, thinking that though she might not be very wise, her good heart made her worth a dozen keen, sharp, hard people, like Miss Horsman.

' When I went at daybreak, I saw John's wife for a few minutes outside of the door. She seemed to wish her husband had been in Mr. Morgan's hands rather than mine; but she gave me as good an account as I dared to hope for of the manner in which her husband had passed the night. This was confirmed by my own examination.

' When Mr. Morgan and I visited him together later on in the day, John said what we had agreed upon the day before ; and I told Mr. Morgan openly that it was by my advice that amputation was declined. He did not speak to me till we had left the house. Then he said—" Now, sir, from this time, I consider this case entirely in your hands. Only remember the poor fellow has a wife and six children. In case you come round to my opinion, remember that Mr. White could come over, as he has done before, for the operation."

' So! Mr. Morgan believed I declined operating because I felt myself incapable. Very well! I was much mortified.

' An hour after we parted, I received a note to this effect—

' " DEAR SIR,—I will take the long round to-day, to leave you at liberty to attend to Brouncker's case, which I feel to be a very responsible one.

" ' J. MORGAN."

' This was kindly done. I went back, as soon as I could, to John's cottage. While I was in the inner room with him, I heard the Miss Tomkinsons' voices

outside. They had called to inquire. Miss Tomkinson came in, and evidently was poking and snuffing about. (Mrs. Brouncker told her that I was within; and within I resolved to be till they had gone.)

' "What is this close smell?" asked she. "I am afraid you are not cleanly. Cheese!—cheese in this cupboard I No wonder there is an unpleasant smell. Don't you know how particular you should be about being clean when there is illness about?"

* Mrs. Brouncker was exquisitely clean in general, and was piqued at these remarks.

' "If you please, ma'am, I could not leave John yasterday to do any house-work, and Jenny put the dinner-things away. She is but eight years old."

' But this did not satisfy Miss Tomkinson, who was evidently pursuing the course of her observations.

' "Fresh butter, I declare! Well now, Mrs. Brouncker, do you know I don't allow myself fresh butter at this time of the year? How can you save, indeed, with such extravagance!"

' "Please, ma'am," answered Mrs. Brouncker, "you'd think it strange, if I was to take such liberties in your house as you're taking here."

* I expected to hear a sharp answer. No! Miss Tomkinson liked true plain-speaking. The only person in whom she would tolerate round-about ways of talking was her sister.

' "Well, that's true," she said. "Still, you must not be above taking advice. Fresh butter is extravagant at this time of the year. However, you're a good kind of woman, and I've a great respect for John. Send Jenny for some broth as soon as he can take it. Come, Caroline, we have got to go on to Williams's."

' But Miss Caroline said that she was tired, and would rest where she was till Miss Tomkinson came back. I was a prisoner for some time, I found. When she was alone with Mrs. Brouncker, she said—

' "You must not be hurt by my sister's abrupt manner. She means well. She has not much imagination or sympathy, and cannot understand the distrao-

tion of mind produced by the illness of a worshipped husband." I could hear the loud sigh of commiseration which followed this speech. Mrs. Brouncker said—

" Please, ma'am, I don't worship my husband. I would not be so wicked."

" Goodness ! You don't think it wicked, do you ? For my part, if . . . I should worship, I should adore him." I thought she need not imagine such improbable cases. But sturdy Mrs. Brouncker said again—

" I hope I know my duty better. I've not learned my Commandments for nothing. I know whom I ought to worship."

' Just then the children came in, dirty and unwashed, I have no doubt. And now Miss Caroline's real nature peeped out. She spoke sharply to them, and asked them if they had no manners, little pigs as they were, to come brushing against her silk gown in that way ? She sweetened herself again, and was as sugary as love when Miss Tomkinson returned for her, accompanied by one whose voice, " like winds in summer sighing," I knew to be my dear Sophy's.

' She did not say much ; but what she did say, and the manner in which she spoke, was tender and compassionate in the highest degree ; and she came to take the four little ones back with her to the Vicarage, in order that they might be out of their mother's way ; the older two might help at home. She offered to wash their hands and faces; and when I emerged from my inner chamber, after the Miss Tomkinsons had left, I found her with a chubby child on her knees, bubbling and spluttering against her white wet hand, with a face bright, rosy, and merry under the operation. Just as I came in, she said to him, " There, Jemmy, now I can kiss you with this nice clean face."

' She coloured when she saw me. I liked her speaking, and I liked her silence. She was silent now, and I ' ' lo'ed a' the better ". I gave my directions to Mrs. Brouncker, and hastened to overtake Sophy and the children; but they had gone round by the lanes, I suppose, for I saw nothing of them.

* I was very anxious about the case. At night I went again. Miss Horsman had been there ; I believe she was really kind among the poor, but she could not help leaving a sting behind her everywhere. She had been frightening Mrs. Brouncker about her husband; and been, I have no doubt, expressing her doubts of my skill; for Mrs. Brouncker began—

' " Oh, please, sir, if you'll only let Mr. Morgan take off his arm, I will never think the worse of you for not being able to do it. '

' I told her it was from no doubt of my own competency to perform the operation that I wished to save the arm; but that he himself was anxious to have it spared.

' " Aye, bless him ! he frets about not earning enough to keep us, if he's crippled ; but, sir, I don't care about that. I would work my fingers to the bone, and so would the children ; I'm sure we'd be proud to do for him, and keep him; God bless him ! it would be far better to have him only with one arm, than to have him in the churchyard, Miss Horsman says "——

' " Confound Miss Horsman ! " said I.

' " Thank you, Mr. Harrison," said her well-known voice behind me. She had come out, dark as it was, to bring some old linen to Mrs. Brouncker ; for, as I said before, she was very kind to all the poor people of Duncombe.

' " I beg your pardon ; " for I really was sorry for my speech, or rather, that she had heard it.

' " There is no occasion for any apology," she replied, drawing herself up, and pinching her lips into a very venomous shape.

' John was doing pretty well; but of course the danger of locked jaw was not over. Before I left, his wife entreated me to take off the arm ; she wrung her hands in her passionate entreaty. " Spare him to me, Mr. Harrison," she implored. Miss Horsman stood by. It was mortifying enough ; but I thought of the power which was in my hands, as I firmly believed, of saving the limb; and I was inflexible.

* You cannot think how pleasantly Mrs. Rose's sympathy came in on my return. To be sure, she did not understand one word of the case, which I detailed to her ; but she listened with interest, and as long as she held her tongue I thought she was really taking it in ; but her first remark was as malapropos as could be.

' " You are anxious to save the tibia—I see completely how difficult that will be. My late husband had a case exactly similar, and I remember his anxiety ; but you must not distress yourself too much, my dear Mr. Harrison ; I have no doubt it will end well."

* I knew she had no grounds for this assurance, and yet it comforted me.

' However, as it happened, John did fully as well as I could hope ; of course, he was long in rallying his strength : and, indeed, sea-air was evidently so necessary for his complete restoration, that I accepted with gratitude Mrs. Rose's proposal of sending him to Highport for a fortnight or three weeks. Her kind generosity in this matter made me more desirous than ever of paying her every mark of respect and attention.

CHAPTER XV

' ABOUT this time there was a sale at Ashmeadow, a pretty house in the neighbourhood of Duncombe. It was likewise an easy walk, and the spring days tempted many people thither who had no intention of buying anything, but who liked the idea of rambling through the woods, gay with early primroses and wild daffodils, and of seeing the gardens and house, which till now had been shut up from the ingress of the townspeople. Mrs. Rose had planned to go, but an unlucky cold prevented her. She begged me to bring her a very particular account, saying she delighted in details, and always questioned the late Mr. Rose as to the side dishes of the dinners to which he went. The late Mr. Rose's conduct was always held up as a model to me, by the way. I walked to Ashmeadow, pausing or loitering

with different parties of townspeople, all bound in the same direction. At last I found the Vicar and Sophy, and with them I stayed. I sat by Sophy and talked and listened. A sale is a very pleasant gathering after all. The auctioneer, in a country place, is privileged to joke from his rostrum ; and having a personal knowledge of most of the people, can sometimes make a very keen hit at their circumstances, and turn the laugh against them. For instance, on the present occasion, there was a farmer present, with his wife, who was notoriously the grey mare. The auctioneer was selling some horse-cloths, and called out to recommend the article to her, telling her, with a knowing look at the company, that they would make her a dashing pair of trousers, if she was in want of such an article. She drew herself up with dignity, and said, "Come, John, we've had enough of these." Whereupon there was a burst of laughter, and in the midst of it John meekly followed his wife out of the place. The furniture in the sitting-rooms was, I believe, very beautiful, but I did not notice it much. Suddenly I heard the auctioneer speaking to me, "Mr. Harrison, won't you give me a bid for this table ? "

' It was a very pretty little table of walnut-wood. I thought it would go into my study very well, so I gave him a bid. I saw Miss Horsman bidding against me, so I went off with full force, and at last it was knocked down to me. The auctioneer smiled, and congratulated me.

' "A most useful present for Mrs. Harrison, when that lady comes."

'Everybody laughed. They like a joke about marriage; it is so easy of comprehension. But the table which I had thought was for writing, turned out to be a work-table, scissors and thimble complete. No wonder I looked foolish. Sophy was not looking at me, that was one comfort. She was busy arranging a nosegay of wood-anemone and wild sorrel.

' Miss Horsman came up, with her curious eyes.

' "I had no idea things were far enough advanced for you to be purchasing a work-table, Mr. Harrison."

' I laughed off my awkwardness.

' " Did not you, Miss Horsman ? You are very much behindhand. You have not heard of my piano, then ? "

' " No, indeed," she said, half uncertain whether I was serious or not. " Then it seems there is nothing wanting but the lady."

' " Perhaps she may not be wanting either," said I, for I wished to perplex her keen curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

' WHEN I got home from my round, I found Mrs. Rose in some sorrow.

' " Miss Horsman called after you left," said she. " Have you heard how John Brouncker is at Highport ? "

' " Very well," replied I. " I called on his wife just now, and she had just got a letter from him. She had been anxious about him, for she had not heard for a week. However, all's right now ; and she has pretty well of work, at Mrs. Munton's, as her servant is ill. Oh, they'll do, never fear."

* " At Mrs. Munton's ? Oh, that accounts for it, then. She is so deaf, and makes such blunders."

' " Accounts for what ? " asked I.

' " Oh, perhaps I had better not tell you," hesitated Mrs. Rose.

* " Yes, tell me at once. I beg your pardon, but I hate mysteries."

* " You are so like my poor dear Mr. Rose. He used to speak to me just in that sharp, cross way. It is only that Miss Horsman called. She had been making a collection for John Brouncker's widow and "——

' " But the man's alive ! " said I.

' " So it seems. But Mrs. Munton had told her that he was dead. And she has got Mr. Morgan's name down at the head of the list, and Mr. Bullock's."

' Mr. Morgan and I had got into a short, cool way of speaking to each other ever since we had differed so

much about the treatment of Brouncker's arm ; and I had heard once or twice of his shakes of the head over John's case. He would not have spoken against my method for the world, and fancied that he concealed his fears.

' "Miss Horsman is very ill-natured, I think," sighed forth Mrs. Rose.

* I saw that something had been said of which I had not heard, for the mere fact of collectmg money for the widow was good-natured, whoever did it; so I asked, quietly, what she had said.

' " Oh, I don't know if I should tell you. I only know she made me cry ; for I'm not well, and I can't bear to hear any one that I live with abused."

' Come ! this was pretty plain.

' " What did Miss Horsman say of me ? " asked I, half laughing, for I knew there was no love lost between us.

' " Oh, she only said she wondered you could go to sales, and spend your money there, when your ignorance had made Jane Brouncker a widow, and her children fatherless."

' " Pooh ! pooh ! John's alive, and likely to live as long as you or I, thanks to you, Mrs. Rose."

' When my work-table came home, Mrs. Rose was so struck with its beauty and completeness, and I was so much obliged to her for her identification of my interests with hers, and the kindness of her whole conduct about John, that I begged her to accept of it. She seemed very much pleased; and, after a few apologies, she consented to take it, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the front parlour, where she usually sat. There was a good deal of morning calling in Buncombe after the sale, and during this time the fact of John's being alive was established to the conviction of all except Miss Horsman, who, I believe, still doubted. I myself told Mr. Morgan, who immediately went to reclaim his money; saying to me, that he was thankful of the information ; he was truly glad to hear it ; and he shook me warmly by the hand for the first time for a month.

CHAPTER XVII

' A FEW days after the sale, I was in the consulting-room. The servant must have left the folding-doors a little ajar, I think. Mrs. Munton came to call on Mrs. Rose ; and the former being deaf, I heard all the speeches of the latter lady, as she was obliged to speak very loud in order to be heard. She began—

' " This is a great pleasure, Mrs. Munton, so seldom as you are well enough to go out."

* Mumble, mumble, mumble, through the door.

' " Oh, very well, thank you. Take this seat, and then you can admire my new work-table, ma'am; a present from Mr. Harrison."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Who could have told you, ma'am ? Miss Horsman ? Oh, yes, I showed it Miss Horsman."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I don't quite understand you, ma'am."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm not blushing, I believe. I really am quite in the dark as to what you mean."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Oh, yes, Mr. Harrison and I are most comfortable together. He reminds me so of my dear Mr. Rose—just as fidgety and anxious in his profession."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm sure you are joking now, ma'am." Then I heard a pretty loud—

' "'Oh, no"; mumble, mumble, mumble, for a long time.

' " Did he really? Well, I'm sure I don't know. I should be sorry to think he was doomed to be unfortunate in so serious an affair; but you know my undying regard for the late Mr. Rose."

' Another long mumble.

' " You're very kind, I'm sure. Mr. Rose always thought more of my happiness than his own"—a little crying—"but the turtle-dove has always been my ideal, ma'am."

'Mumble, mumble.

' " No one could have been happier than L As you say, it is a compliment to matrimony."

' Mumble.

' " Oh, but you must not repeat such a thing. Mr. Harrison would not like it. He can't bear to have his affairs spoken about."

' Then there was a change of subject; an inquiry after some poor person, I imagine. I heard Mrs. Rose say—

' " She has got a mucous membrane, I'm afraid, ma'am."

' A commiserating mumble.

' " Not always fatal. I believe Mr. Rose knew some cases that lived for years after it was discovered that they had a mucous membrane." A pause. Then Mrs. Rose spoke in a different tone.

' " Are you sure, ma'am, there is no mistake about what he said ? "

* Mumble.

' " Pray don't be so observant, Mrs. Munton ; you find out too much. One can have no little secrets."

' The call broke up ; and I heard Mrs. Munton say in the passage, " I wish you joy, ma'am, with all my heart. There 's no use denying it ; for I've seen all along what would happen."

' When I went in to dinner, I said to Mrs. Rose—

' " You've had Mrs. Munton here, I think. Did she bring any news ? " To my surprise, she bridled and Bimpered, and replied, " Oh, you must not ask, Mr. Harrison: such foolish reports."

' I did not ask, as she seemed to wish me not, and I knew there were silly reports always about. Then I think she was vexed that I did not ask. Altogether she went on so strangely that I could not help looking at her ; and then she took up a hand-screen, and held it between me and her. I really felt rather anxious.

' " Are you not feeling well ? " said I innocently.

' " Oh, thank you, I believe Fra quite well; only the room is rather warm, is it not ? "

' " Let me put the blinds down for you ? the sun begins to have a good deal of power." I drew down the blinds.

' " You are so attentive, Mr. Harrison. Mr. Rose himself never did more for my little wishes than you do."

' " I wish I could do more—I wish I could show you how much I feel "——her kindness to John Brouncker, I was going on to say ; but I was just then called out to a patient. Before I went I turned back, and said——

' " Take care of yourself, my dear Mrs. Rose ; you had better rest a little."

' " For your sake, I will," said she tenderly.

' I did not care for whose sake she did it. Only I really thought she was not quite well, and required rest. I thought she was more affected than usual at tea-time; and could have been angry with her nonsensical ways once or twice, but that I knew the real goodness of her heart. She said she wished she had the power to sweeten my life as she could my tea. I told her what a comfort she had been all during my Jate time of anxiety, and then I stole out to try if I could hear the evening singing at the Vicarage, by standing close to the garden-wall.

CHAPTER XVIII

' THE next morning I met Mr. Bullock by appointment, to talk a little about the legacy which was paid into his hands. As I was leaving his office, feeling full of my riches, I met Miss Horsman. She smiled rather grimly, and said——

' " Oh ! Mr. Harrison, I must congratulate I believe. I don't know whether I ought to have known, but as I do, I must wish you joy. A very nice little sum, too. I always said you would have money."

* So she had found out my legacy, had she ? Well, it was no secret, and one likes the reputation of being a person of property. Accordingly I smiled, and said

I was much obliged to her, and if I could alter the figures to my liking, she might congratulate me still more.

' She said, " Oh, Mr. Harrison, you can't have everything. It would be better the other way, certainly. Money is the great thing, as you've found out. The relation died most opportunely, I must say."

' " He was no relative," said I; " only an intimate friend."

' " Dear-ah-me ! I thought it had been a brother ! Well, at any rate, the legacy is safe."

' I wished her good morning, and passed on. Before long I was sent for to Miss Tomkinson's.

' Miss Tomkinson sat in severe state to receive me. I went in with an air of ease, because I always felt so uncomfortable.

' " Is this true that I hear ? " asked she, in an inquisitorial manner.

' I thought she alluded to my five hundred pounds ; so I smiled, and said that I believed it was.

' " Can money be so great an object with you, Mr. Harrison ? " she asked again.

' I said I had never cared much for money, except as an assistance to any plan of settling in life ; and then, as I did not like her severe way of treating the subject, I said that I hoped every one was well ; though of course I expected some one was ill, or I should not have been sent for.

' Miss Tomkinson looked very grave and sad. Then she answered : " Caroline is very poorly—the old palpitations at the heart; but of course that is nothing to you."

' I said I was very sorry. She had a weakness there, I knew. Could I see her ? I might be able to order something for her.

' I thought I heard Miss Tomkinson say something in a low voice about my being a heartless deceiver. Then she spoke up. " I was always distrustful of you, Mr. Harrison. I never liked your looks. I begged Caroline again and again not to confide in you. I foresaw how it would end. And now I fear her precious life will be a sacrifice."

' I begged her not to distress herself, for in all probability there was very little the matter with her sister. Might I see her ?

' " No ! " she said shortly, standing up as if to dismiss me. " There has been too much of this seeing and calling. By my consent, you shall never see her again."¹

' I bowed. I was annoyed, of course. Such a dismissal might injure my practice just when I was most anxious to increase it.

' " Have you no apology, no excuse to offer ? "

' I said I had done my best; I did not feel that there was any reason to offer an apology. I wished her good morning. Suddenly she came forwards.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison," said she, ' if you have really loved Caroline, do not let a little paltry money make you desert her for another."

' I was struck dumb. Loved Miss Caroline ! I loved Miss Tomkinson a great deal better, and yet I disliked her. She went on—

' " I have saved nearly three thousand pounds. If you think you are too poor to marry without money, I will give it all to Caroline. I am strong, and can go on working ; but she is weak, and this disappointment will kill her." She sat down suddenly, and covered her face with her hands. Then she looked up.

' " You are unwilling, I see. Don't suppose I would have urged you if it had been for myself ; but she has had so much sorrow." And now she fairly cried aloud. I tried to explain ; but she would not listen, but kept saying, " Leave the house, sir I leave the house ! " But I would be heard.

' " I have never had any feeling warmer than respect for Miss Caroline, and I have never Bhown any different feeling. I never for an instant thought of making her my wife, and she has had no cause in my behaviour to imagine I entertained any such intention."

' " This is adding insult to injury," said she. " Leave the house, sir, this instant !"

CHAPTER XIX

' I WENT, and sadly enough. In a small town such an occurrence is sure to be talked about, and to make a great deal of mischief. When I went home to dinner I was so full of it, and foresaw so clearly that I should need some advocate soon to set the case in its right light, that I determined on making a confidante of good Mrs. Rose. I could not eat. She watched me tenderly, and sighed when she saw my want of appetite.

' " I am sure you have something on your mind, Mr. Harrison. Would it be—would it not be—a relief to impart it to some sympathizing friend ? "

' It was just what I wanted to do.

' " My dear kind Mrs. Rose," said I, " I must tell you, if you will listen."

' She took up the fire-screen, and held it, as yesterday, between me and her.

' " The most unfortunate misunderstanding has taken place. Miss Tomkinson thinks that I have been paying attentions to Miss Caroline ; when, in fact—may I tell you, Mrs. Rose ?—my affections are placed elsewhere. Perhaps you have found it out already ? " for indeed I thought I had been too much in love to conceal my attachment to Sophy from any one who knew my movements as well as Mrs. Rose.

* She hung down her head, and said she believed she had found out my secret.

' " Then only think how miserably I am situated. If I have any hope—oh, Mrs. Rose, do you think I have any hope "——

' She put the hand-screen still more before her face, and after some hesitation she said she thought " if I persevered—in time—I might have hope ". And then she suddenly got up and left the room.

CHAPTER XX

' THAT afternoon I met Mr. Bullock in the street. My mind was so full of the affair with Miss Tomkinson that I should have passed him without notice, if he had not stopped me short, and said that he must speak to me ; about my wonderful five hundred pounds, I supposed. But I did not care for that now.

' " What is this I hear," said he severely, " about your engagement with Mrs. Rose ? "

' " With Mrs. Rose ! " said I, almost laughing, although my heart was heavy enough.

' " Yes ! with Mrs. Rose ! " said he sternly.

' " I'm not engaged to Mrs. Rose," I replied. " There is some mistake."

' " I'm glad to hear it, sir," he answered, ^{4<} very glad. It requires some explanation, however. Mrs. Rose has been congratulated, and has acknowledged the truth of the report. It is confirmed by many facts. The work-table you bought, confessing your intention of giving it to your future wife, is given to her. How do you account for these things, sir ? "

* I said I did not pretend to account for them. At present, a good deal was inexplicable ; and when I could give an explanation, I did not think that I should feel myself called upon to give it to him.

' " Very well, sir ; very well," replied he, growing very red. " I shall take care and let Mr. Morgan know the opinion I entertain of you. What do you think that man deserves to be called who enters a family under the plea of friendship, and takes advantage of his intimacy to win the affections of the daughter, and then engages himself to another woman ? "

' I thought he referred to Miss Caroline. I simply said I could only say that I was not engaged ; and that Miss Tomkinson had been quite mistaken in supposing I had been paying any attentions to her sister beyond those dictated by mere civility.

' " Miss Tomkinson ! Miss Caroline ! I don't under-

stand to what you refer. Is there another victim to your perfidy ? What I allude to are the attentions you have paid to my daughter, Miss Bullock."

' Another ! I could but disclaim, as I had done in the case of Miss Caroline; but I began to be in despair. Would Miss Horsman, too, come forward as a victim to my tender affections ? It was all Mr. Morgan's doing, who had lectured me into this tenderly deferential manner. But on the score of Miss Bullock, I was brave in my innocence. I had positively disliked her ; and so I told her father, though in more civil and measured terms, adding that I was sure the feeling was reciprocal.

' He looked as if he would like to horsewhip me. I longed to call him out.

' " I hope my daughter has had sense enough to despise you; I hope she has, that's all. I trust my wife may be mistaken as to her feelings."

* So, he had heard all through the medium of his wife. That explained something, and rather calmed me. I begged he would ask Miss Bullock if she had ever thought I had any ulterior object in my intercourse with her, beyond mere friendliness (and not so much of that, I might have added). I would refer it to her.

' " Girls," said Mr. Bullock, a little more quietly, " do not like to acknowledge that they have been deceived and disappointed. I consider my wife's testimony as likely to be nearer the truth than my daughter's, for that reason. And she tells me she never doubted but that, if not absolutely engaged, you understood each other perfectly. She is sure *Jemima* is deeply wounded by your engagement to Mrs. Rose."

' " Once for all, I am not engaged to anybody. Till you have seen your daughter, and learnt the truth from her, I will wish you farewell."

' I bowed in a stiff, haughty manner, and walked off homewards. But when I got to my own door, I remembered Mrs. Rose, and all that Mr. Bullock had said about her acknowledging the truth of the report of my engage-

ment to her. Where could I go to be safe ? Mrs. Rose, Miss Bullock, Miss Caroline—they lived as it were at the three points of an equilateral triangle; here was I in the centre. I would go to Mr. Morgan's, and drink tea with him. There, at any rate, I was secure from any one wanting to marry me; and I might be as professionally bland as I liked, without being misunderstood. But there, too, a *contretemps* awaited me.

CHAPTER XXI

'MR. MORGAN was looking grave. After a minute or two of humming and hawing, he said—

' "I have been sent for to Miss Caroline Tomkinson, Mr. Harrison. I am sorry to hear of this. I am grieved to find that there seems to have been some trifling with the affections of a very worthy lady. Miss Tomkinson, who is in sad distress, tells me that they had every reason to believe that you were attached to her sister. May I ask if you do not intend to marry her ?'

* I said, nothing was farther from my thoughts.

' "My dear sir," said Mr. Morgan, rather agitated, "do not express yourself so strongly and vehemently. It is derogatory to the sex to speak so. It is more respectful to say, in these cases, that you do not venture to entertain a hope; such a manner is generally understood, and does not sound like such positive objection."

' "I cannot help it, sir; I must talk in my own natural manner. I would not speak disrespectfully of any woman; but nothing should induce me to marry Miss Caroline Tomkinson; not if she were Venus herself, and Queen of England into the bargain. I cannot understand what has given rise to the idea."

' "Indeed, sir; I think that is very plain. You have a trifling case to attend to in the house, and you invariably make it a pretext for seeing **and** conversing **with the lady.**"

' " That was her doing, not mine !" said I vehemently.

' " Allow me to go on. You are discovered on your knees before her—a positive injury to the establishment, as Miss Tomkinson observes; a most passionate valentine is sent; and when questioned, you acknowledge the sincerity of meaning which you affix to such things." Ho stopped, for in his earnestness he had been talking more quickly than usual, and was out of breath. I burst in with my explanations—

' " The valentine I know nothing about."

' " It is in your handwriting," said he coldly. " I should be most deeply grieved to—in fact, I will not think it possible of your father's son. But I must say, it is in your handwriting."

' I tried again, and at last succeeded in convincing him that I had been only unfortunate, not intentionally guilty of winning Miss Caroline's affections. I said that I had been endeavouring, it was true, to practise the manner he had recommended, of universal sympathy, and recalled to his mind some of the advice he had given me. He was a good deal hurried.

' " But, my dear sir, I had no idea that you would carry it out to such consequences. * Philandering,' Miss Tomkinson called it. That is a hard word, sir. My manner has been always tender and sympathetic; but I am not aware that I ever excited any hopes; there never was any report about me. I believe no lady was ever attached to me. You must strive after this happy medium, sir."

' I was still distressed. Mr. Morgan had only heard of one, but there were three ladies (including Miss Bullock) hoping to marry me. He saw my annoyance.

' " Don't be too much distressed about it, my dear sir; I was sure you were too honourable a man, from the first. With a conscience like yours, I would defy the world."

' He became anxious to console me, and I was hesitating whether I would not tell him all my three

dilemmas, when a note was brought in to him. It was from Mrs. Munton. He threw it to me, with a face of dismay.

' " MY DEAR MR. MORGAN,—I most sincerely congratulate you on the happy matrimonial engagement I hear you have formed with Miss Tomkinson. All previous circumstances, as I have just been remarking to Miss Horsman, combine to promise you felicity. And I wish that every blessing may attend your married life.—Most sincerely yours,

' " JANE MUNTON."

* I could not help laughing, he had been so lately congratulating himself that no report of the kind had ever been circulated about himself. He said—

' " Sir ! this is no laughing matter ; I assure you it is not."

' I could not resist asking, if I was to conclude that there was no truth in the report.

' " Truth, sir ! it's a lie from beginning to end. I don't like to speak too decidedly about any lady ; and I've a great respect for Miss Tomkinson ; but I do assure you, sir, I'd as soon marry one of Her Majesty's Life Guards. I would rather ; it would be more suitable. Miss Tomkinson is a very worthy lady ; but she's a perfect grenadier."

' He grew very nervous. He was evidently insecure. He thought it not impossible that Miss Tomkinson might come and marry him, *vi et armis*. I am sure he had some dim idea of abduction in his mind. Still, he was better off than I was ; for he was in his own house, and report had only engaged him to one lady ; while I stood, like Paris, among three contending beauties. Truly, an apple of discord had been thrown into our little town. I suspected at the time, what I know now, that it was Miss Horsman's doing ; not intentionally, I will do her the justice to say. But she had shouted out the story of my behaviour to Miss Caroline up Mrs. Munton's trumpet ; and that lady, possessed with the idea that I was engaged to Mrs. Rose, had imagined

the masculine pronoun to relate to Mr. Morgan, whom she had seen only that afternoon *tete a tete* with Miss Tomkinson, condoling with her in some tender deferential manner, I'll be bound

CHAPTER XXII

' I WAS very cowardly. I positively dared not go home ; but at length I was obliged to. I had done all I could to console Mr. Morgan, but he refused to be comforted. I went at last. I rang at the bell. I don't know who opened the door, but I think it was Mrs. Rose. I kept a handkerchief to my face, and muttering something about having a dreadful toothache, I flew up to my room and bolted the door. I had no candle ; but what did that signify. I was safe. I could not sleep ; and when I did fall into a sort of doze, it was ten times worse waking up. I could not remember whether I was engaged or not. If I was engaged, who was the lady ? I had always considered myself as rather plain than otherwise ; but surely I had made a mistake. Fascinating I certainly must be ; but perhaps I was handsome. As soon as day dawned, I got up to ascertain the fact at the looking-glass. Even with the best disposition to be convinced, I could not see any striking beauty in my round face, with an unshaven beard and a nightcap like a fool's cap at the top. No ! I must be content to be plain, but agreeable. All this I tell you in confidence. I would not have my little bit of vanity known for the world. I fell asleep towards morning. I was awakened by a tap at my door. It was Peggy : she put in a hand with a note. I took it.

' " It is not from Miss Horsman ? " said I, half in joke, half in very earnest fright.

" No, sir ; Air. Morgan's man brought it. "

' I opened it. It ran thus—

' " MY DEAR SIR,—It is now nearly twenty years since I have had a little relaxation, and I find that my health

requires it. I have also the utmost confidence in you, and I am sure this feeling is shared by our patients. I have, therefore, no scruple in putting in execution a hastily formed plan, and going to Chesterton to catch the early tram on my way to Paris. If your accounts are good, I shall remain away probably a fortnight. Direct to Meurice's.—Yours, most truly,

" ' J. MORGAN.

" " PS.—Perhaps it may be as well not to name where I am gone, especially to Miss Tomkmson."

' He had deserted me. He—with only one report—had left me to stand my ground with three.

' " Mrs. Rose's kind regards, sir, and it's nearly nine o'clock. Breakfast has been ready this hour, sir."

' " Tell Mrs. Rose I don't want any breakfast. Or stay " (for I was very hungry), " I will take a cup of tea and some toast up here."

' Peggy brought the tray to the door.

' " I hope you're not ill, sir ? " said she kindly.

' " Not very. I shall be better when I get into the air.

' " Mrs. Rose seems sadly put about," said she; " she seems so grieved like."

' I watched my opportunity, and went out by the side door in the garden.

CHAPTER XXIII

' I HAD intended to ask Mr. Morgan to call at the vicarage, and give his parting explanation before they could hear the report. Now, I thought that if I could see Sophy, I would speak to her myself; but I did not wish to encounter the Vicar. I went along the lane at the back of the vicarage, and came suddenly upon Miss Bullock. She coloured, and asked me if I would allow her to speak to me. I could only be resigned; but I thought I could probably set one report at rest by this conversation.

She was almost crying.

" I must tell you, Mr. Harrison, I have watched you here in order to speak to you. I heard with the greatest regret of papa's conversation with you yesterday." She was fairly crying. " I believe Mrs. Bullock finds me in her way, and wants to have me married. It is the only way in which I can account for such a complete misrepresentation as she had told papa. I don't care for you in the least, sir. You never paid me any attentions. You've been almost rude to me ; and I have liked you the better. That's to say, I never have liked you."

' " I am truly glad to hear what you say," answered I. " Don't distress yourself. I was sure there was some mistake."

' But she cried bitterly.

' " It is so hard to feel that my marriage—my absence—is desired so earnestly at home. I dread every new acquaintance we form with any gentleman. It is sure to be the beginning of a series of attacks on him, of which everybody must be aware, and to which they may think I am a willing party. But I should not much mind if it were not for the conviction that she wishes me so earnestly away. Oh, my own dear mamma, you would never "——

' She cried more than ever. I was truly sorry for her, and had just taken her hand, and began—"My dear Miss Bullock "——when the door in the wall of the vicarage garden opened. It was the Vicar letting out Miss Tomkinson, whose face was all swelled with crying. He saw me ; but he did not bow, or make any sign. On the contrary, he looked down as from a severe eminence, and shut the door hastily. I turned to Miss Bullock.

" I am afraid the Vicar has been hearing something to my disadvantage from Miss Tomkinson, and it is very awkward "——She finished my sentence—" To have found us here together. Yes, but as long as we understand that we do not care for each other, it does not signify what people say."

' " Oh, but to me it does," said I. " I may, perhaps, tell you—but do not mention it to a creature—I am attached to Miss Hutton."

' " To Sophy ! Oh, Mr. Harrison, I am so glad; she is such a sweet creature. Oh, I wish you joy."

' " Not yet; I have never spoken about it."

* " Oh, but it is certain to happen." She jumped with a woman's rapidity to a conclusion. And then she began to praise Sophy. Never was a man yet who did not like to hear the praises of his mistress. I walked by her side; we came past the front of the vicarage together. I looked up, and saw Sophy there, and she saw me.

' That afternoon she was sent away ; sent to visit her aunt ostensibly ; in reality, because of the reports of my conduct, which were showered down upon the Vicar, and one of which he saw confirmed by his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV

¹ I HEARD of Sophy's departure as one heard of everything, soon after it had taken place. I did not care for the awkwardness of my situation, which had so perplexed and amused me in the morning. I felt that something was wrong; that Sophy was taken away from me. I sank into despair. If anybody liked to marry me they might. I was willing to be sacrificed. I did not speak to Mrs. Rose. She wondered at me, and grieved over my coldness, I saw; but I had left off feeling anything. Miss Tomkinson cut me in the street; and it did not break my heart. Sophy was gone away ; that was all I cared for. Where had they sent her to ? Who was her aunt, that she should go and visit her ? One day I met Lizzie, who looked as though she had been told not to speak to me, but could not help doing so.

' " Have you heard from your sister ? " said I.

' " Yes."

' " Where is she ? I hope she is well."

' " She is at the Leoms " — I was not much wiser. " Oh yes, she is very well. Fanny says she was at the Assembly last Wednesday, and danced all night with the officers."

' I thought I would enter myself a member of the Peace Society at once. She was a little flirt, and a hard-hearted creature. I don't think I wished Lizzie good-bye.

CHAPTER XXV

' WHAT most people would have considered a more serious evil than Sophy's absence, befell me. I found that my practice was falling off. The prejudice of the town ran strongly against me. Mrs. Munton told me all that was said. She heard it through Miss Horsman. It was said—cruel little town—that my negligence or ignorance had been the cause of Walter's death ; that Miss Tyrrell had become worse under my treatment; and that John Brouncker was all but dead, if he was not quite, from my mismanagement. All Jack Marshland's jokes and revelations, which had, I thought, gone to oblivion, were raked up to my discredit. He himself, formerly, to my astonishment, rather a favourite with the good people of Duncombe, was spoken of as one of my disreputable friends.

' In short, so prejudiced were the good people of Duncombe that I believe a very little would have made them suspect me of a brutal highway robbery, which took place in the neighbourhood about this time. Mrs. Munton told me, apropos of the robbery, that she had never yet understood the cause of my year's imprisonment in Newgate; she had no doubt, from what Mr. Morgan had told her, there was some good reason for it ; but if I would tell her the particulars, she should like to know them.

' Miss Tomkinson sent for Mr. White, from Chesterton, to see Miss Caroline; and, as he was coming over, all

our old patients seemed to take advantage of it, and send for him too.

' But the worst of all was the Vicar's manner to me. If he had cut me, I could have asked him why he did so. But the freezing change in his behaviour was indescribable, though bitterly felt. I heard of Sophy's gaiety from Lizzie. I thought of writing to her. Just then Mr. Morgan's fortnight of absence expired. I was wearied out by Mrs. Rose's tender vagaries, and took no comfort from her sympathy, which indeed I rather avoided. Her tears irritated, instead of grieving me.

wished I could tell her at once that I had no intention of marrying her.

CHAPTER XXVI

' MR. MORGAN had not been at home above two hours before he was sent for to the Vicarage. Sophy had come back, and I had never heard of it. She had come home ill and weary, and longing for rest: and the *rest* seemed approaching with awful strides. Mr. Morgan forgot all his Parisian adventures, and all his terror of Miss Tomkinson, when he was sent for to see her. She was ill of a fever, which made fearful progress. When he told me, I wished to force the Vicarage door, if I might but see her. But I controlled myself; and only cursed my weak indecision, which had prevented my writing to her. It was well I had no patients: they would have had but a poor chance of attention. I hung about Mr. Morgan, who might see her, and did see her. But from what he told me, I perceived that the measures he was adopting were powerless to check so sudden and violent an illness. Oh! if they would but let me see her. But that **was** out of the question. It was not merely **that** the Vicar had heard of my character as a gay Lothario, but that doubts had been thrown out of my medical skill. The accounts grew worse. Suddenly my resolution was taken. Mr. Morgan's very regard for Sophy made him more than usually timid in

his practice. I had my horse saddled, and galloped to Chesterton. I took the express train to town. I went to Dr.——. I told him every particular of the case. He listened ; but shook his head. He wrote down a prescription; and recommended a new preparation, not yet in full use ; a preparation of a poison, in fact.

' " It may save her," said he. " It is a chance, in such a state of things as you describe. It must be given on the fifth day, if the pulse will bear it. Crabbe makes up the preparation most skilfully. Let me hear from you, I beg."

' I went to Crabbe's ; I begged to make it up myself ; but my hands trembled, so that I could not weigh the quantities. I asked the young man to do it for me. I went, without touching food, to the station, with my medicine and my prescription in my pocket. Back we flew through the country. I sprang on Bay Maldon, which my groom had in waiting, and galloped across the country to Duncombe.

' But I drew bridle when I came to the top of the hill—the hill above the old hall, from which we catch the first glimpse of the town, for I thought within myself that she might be dead; and I dreaded to come near certainty. The hawthorns were out in the woods, the young lambs were in the meadows, the song of the thrushes filled the air ; but it only made the thought the more terrible.

' " What, if in this world of hope and life she lies dead ! " I heard the church bells soft and clear. I sickened to listen. Was it the passing bell ? No ! it was ringing eight o'clock. I put spurs to my horse, down hill as it was. We dashed into the town. I turned him, saddle and bridle, into the stable-yard, and went off to Mr. Morgan's.

' " Is she——? " said I. " How is she ? "

' " Very ill. My poor fellow, I see how it is with you. She may live—but I fear. My dear sir, I am very much afraid.

' I told him of my journey **and consultation with Dr.——, and showed him the** prescription. His hands trembled as he put on his spectacles to read it.

' "(This is a very dangerous medicine, sir,)" said he, with his finger under the name of the poison.

' " It is a new preparation," said I. " Dr.——relies much upon it."

' " I dare not administer it," he replied. " I have never tried it. It must be very powerful. I dare not play tricks in this case."

' I believe I stamped with impatience ; but it was all of no use. My journey had been in vain. The more I urged the imminent danger of the case requiring some powerful remedy, the more nervous he became.

' I told him I would throw up the partnership. I threatened him with that, though, in fact, it was only what I felt I ought to do, and had resolved upon before Sophy's illness, as I had lost the confidence of his patients. He only said—

' " I cannot help it, sir. I shall regret it for your father's sake ; but I must do my duty. I dare not run the risk of giving Miss Sophy this violent medicine—a preparation of a deadly poison."

' I left him without a word. He was quite right in adhering to his own views, as I can see now ; but at the time I thought him brutal and obstinate.

CHAPTER XXVII

' I WENT home. I spoke rudely to Mrs. Rose, who awaited my return at the door. I rushed past, and locked myself in my room. I could not go to bed.

' The morning sun came pouring in, and enraged me, as everything did since Mr. Morgan refused. I pulled the blind down so violently that the string broke. What did it signify ? The light might come in. What was the sun to me ? And then I remembered that that sun might be shining on her—dead.

' I sat down and covered my face. Mrs. Rose knocked at the door. I opened it. She had never been in bed, and had been crying too.

' " Mr. Morgan wants to speak to you, sir."

' I rushed back for my medicine, and went to him. He stood at the door, pale and anxious.

"She's alive, sir," said he, "but that's all. We have sent for Dr. Hamilton. I'm afraid he will not come in time. Do you know, sir, I think we should venture—with Dr.——'s sanction—to give her that medicine. It is but a chance ; but it is the only one, I'm afraid." He fairly cried before he had ended.

' " I've got it here," said I, setting off to walk ; but he could not go so fast.

' " I beg your pardon, sir," said he, " for my abrupt refusal last night."

' " Indeed, sir," said I; " I ought much rather to beg your pardon. I was very violent."

' " Oh ! never mind ! never mind ! Will you repeat what Dr.——said ? "

' I did so; and then I asked, with a meekness that astonished myself, if I might not go in and administer it.

' "No, sir," said he, "I'm afraid not. I am sure your good heart would not wish to give pain. Besides, it might agitate her, if she has any consciousness before death. In her delirium she has often mentioned your name ; and, sir, I'm sure you won't name it again, as it may, in fact, be considered a professional secret; but I did hear our good Vicar speak a little strongly about you ; in fact, sir, I did hear him curse you. You see the mischief it might make in the parish, I'm sure, if this were known."

' I gave him the medicine, and watched him in, and saw the door shut. I hung about the place all day. Poor and rich all came to inquire. The county people drove up in their carriages—the halt and the lame came on their crutches. Their anxiety did my heart good. Mr. Morgan told me that she slept, and I watched Dr. Hamilton into the house. The night came on. She slept. I watched round the house. I saw the light high up, burning still and steady. Then I saw it moved. It was the crisis, in one way or other.

CHAPTER XXVIII

* MR. MORGAN came out. Good old man ! The tears were running down his cheeks: he could not speak; but kept shaking my hands. I did not want words. I understood that she was better.

' " Dr. Hamilton says, it was the only medicine that could have saved her. I was an old fool, sir. I beg your pardon. The Vicar shall know all. I beg your pardon, sir, if I was abrupt."

' Everything went on brilliantly from this time.

' Mr. Bullock called to apologize for his mistake, and consequent upbraiding. John Brouncker came home, brave and well.

' There was still Miss Tomkinson in the ranks of the enemy ; and Mrs. Rose too much, I feared, in the ranks of the friends.

CHAPTER XXIX

' ONE night she had gone to bed, and I was thinking of going. I had been studying in the back room, where I went for refuge from her in the present position of affairs (I read a good number of surgical books about this time, and also *Vanity Fair*)—when I heard a loud, long-continued knocking at the door, enough to waken the whole street. Before I could get to open it, I heard that well-known bass of Jack Marshland's, once heard never to be forgotten, pipe up the negro song—

Who's dat knocking at de door?

* Though it was raining hard at the time, and I stood waiting to let him in, he would finish his melody in the open air; loud and clear along the street it sounded. I saw Miss Tomkinson's night-capped head emerge from a window. She called out " Police ! police ! "

' Now there were no police, only a rheumatic constable in the town ; but it was the custom of the ladies,

when alarmed at night, to call an imaginary police, which had, they thought, an intimidating effect; but as every one knew the real state of the unwatched town, we did not much mind it in general. Just now, however, I wanted to regain my character. So I pulled Jack in, quavering as he entered.

' " You've spoilt a good shake," said he, " that's what you have. I'm nearly up to Jenny Lind; and you see I'm a nightingale, like her."

' We sat up late; and I don't know how it was, but I told him all my matrimonial misadventures.

' " I thought I could imitate your hand pretty well," said he. " My word ! it was a flaming valentine ! No wonder she thought you loved her ! "

' " So that was your doing, was it ? Now I'll tell you what you shall do to make up for it. You shall write me a letter confessing your hoax—a letter that I can show."

' " Give me pen and paper, my boy ! you shall dictate. ' With a deeply penitent heart'——Will that do for a beginning ? "

' I told him what to write ; a simple, straightforward confession of his practical joke. I enclosed it in a few lines of regret that, unknown to me, any of my friends should have so acted.

CHAPTER XXX

' ALL this time I knew that Sophy was slowly recovering. One day I met Miss Bullock, who had seen her.

' " We have been talking about you," said she, with a bright smile; for since she knew I disliked her, she felt quite at her ease, and could smile very pleasantly. I understood that she had been explaining the misunderstanding about herself to Sophy; so that when Jack Marshland's note had been sent to Miss Tomkinson's, I thought myself in a fair way to have my character established in two quarters. But the third was my dilemma. Mrs. Rose had really so much of my true

regard for her good qualities, that I disliked the idea of a formal explanation, in which a good deal must be said on my side to wound her. We had become very much estranged ever since I had heard of this report of my engagement to her. I saw that she grieved over it. While Jack Marshland stayed with us, I felt at my ease in the presence of a third person. But he told me confidentially he durst not stay long, for fear some of the ladies should snap him up, and marry him. Indeed I myself did not think it unlikely that he would snap one of them up if he could. For when we met Miss Bullock one day, and heard her hopeful, joyous account of Sophy's progress (to whom she was a daily visitor), he asked me who that bright-looking girl was? And when I told him she was the Miss Bullock of whom I had spoken to him, he was pleased to observe that he thought I had been a great fool, and asked me if Sophy had anything like such splendid eyes. He made me repeat about Miss Bullock's unhappy circumstances at home, and then became very thoughtful—a most unusual and morbid symptom in his case.

'Soon after he went, by Mr. Morgan's kind offices and explanations, I was permitted to see Sophy. I might not speak much; it was prohibited, for fear of agitating her. We talked of the weather and the flowers; and we were silent. But her little white thin hand lay in mine; and we understood each other without words. I had a long interview with the Vicar afterwards; and came away glad and satisfied.

'Mr. Morgan called in the afternoon, evidently anxious, though he made no direct inquiries (he was too polite for that), to hear the result of my visit at the vicarage. I told him to give me joy. He shook me warmly by the hand; and then rubbed his own together. I thought I would consult him about my dilemma with Mrs. Rose, who, I was afraid, would be deeply affected by my engagement.

' "There is only one awkward circumstance," said I—"about Mrs. Rose." I hesitated how to word the fact of her having received congratulations on her supposed

engagement with me, and her manifest attachment; but, before I could speak, he broke in—

'My dear sir, you need not trouble yourself about that; she will have a home. In fact, sir," said he, reddening a little, "I thought it would, perhaps, put a stop to those reports connecting my name with Miss Tomkinson's, if I married some one else. I hoped it might prove an efficacious contradiction. And I was struck with admiration for Mrs. Rose's undying memory of her late husband. Not to be prolix, I have this morning obtained Mrs. Rose's consent to—to marry her, in fact, sir!" said he, jerking out the climax.

'Here was an event! Then Mr. Morgan had never heard the report about Mrs. Rose and me. (To this day, I think she would have taken me, if I had proposed.) So much the better.

'Marriages were in the fashion that year. Mr. Bullock met me one morning, as I was going to ride with Sophy. He and I had quite got over our misunderstanding, thanks to Jemima, and were as friendly as ever. This morning he was chuckling aloud as he walked.

' "Stop, Mr. Harnson!" he said, as I went quickly past. "Have you heard the news? Miss Horsman has just told me Miss Caroline has eloped with young Hoggins! She is ten years older than he is! How can her gentility like being married to a tallow-chandler? It is a very good thing for her, though," he added, in a more serious manner; "old Hoggins is very rich; and though he's angry just now, he will soon be reconciled."

•Any vanity I might have entertained on the score of the three ladies who were, at one time, said to be captivated by my charms, was being rapidly dispersed. Soon after Mr. Hoggins's marriage, I met Miss Tomkinson face to face, for the first time since our memorable conversation. She stopped me, and said—

' "Don't refuse to receive my congratulations, Mr. Harrison, on your most happy engagement to Miss Hutton. I owe you an apology, too, for my behaviour when I last saw you at our house. I really did think Caroline was attached to you then; and it

irritated me, I confess, in a very wrong and unjustifiable way. But I heard her telling Mr. Hoggins only yesterday that she had been attached to him for years ; ever since he was in pinafores, she dated it from ; and when I asked her afterwards how she could say so, after her distress on hearing that false report about you and Mrs. Rose, she cried, and said I never had understood her ; and that the hysterics which alarmed me so much were simply caused by eating pickled cucumber. I am very sorry for my stupidity, and improper way of speaking ; but I hope we are friends now, Mr. Harrison, for I should wish to be liked by Sophy's husband."

* Good Miss Tomkinson ! to believe the substitution of indigestion for disappointed affection. I shook her warmly by the hand ; and we have been all right ever since. I think I told you she is baby's godmother.

CHAPTER XXXI

'I HAD some difficulty in persuading Jack Marshland to be groomsman ; but when he heard all the arrangements, he came. Miss Bullock was bridesmaid. He liked us all so well, that he came again at Christmas, and was far better behaved than he had been the year before. He won golden opinions indeed. Miss Tomkinson said he was a reformed young man. We dined all together at Mr. Morgan's (the Vicar wanted us to go there ; but, from what Sophy told me, Helen was not confident of the mincemeat, and rather dreaded so large a party). We had a jolly day of it. Mrs. Morgan was as kind and motherly as ever. Miss Horsman certainly did set out a story that the Vicar was thinking of Miss Tomkinson for his second ; or else, I think, we had no other report circulated in consequence of our happy, merry Christmas Day ; and it is a wonder, considering how Jack Marshland went on with Jemima.'

Here Sophy came back from putting baby to bed ; and Charles wakened up.

III

THE SEXTON'S HERO

First published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847 Reprinted with 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' and 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' under the title of 'Life in Manchester by Cotton Mather Mills Esq.' in 1848, and with 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' in 1850. First appeared in book form in 'Lizzie Leigh and Other Stories' 1855 and in 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' in 1865.

THE SEXTON'S HERO

THE afternoon sun shed down his glorious rays on the grassy churchyard, making the shadow, cast by the old yew-tree under which we sat, seem deeper and deeper by contrast. The everlasting hum of myriads of summer insects made luxurious lullaby.

Of the view that lay beneath our gaze, I cannot speak adequately. The foreground was the grey-stone wall of the Vicarage garden; rich in the colouring made by innumerable lichens, ferns, ivy of most tender green and most delicate tracery, and the vivid scarlet of the crane's-bill, which found a home in every nook and crevice—and at the summit of that old wall flaunted some unpruned tendrils of the vine, and long flower-laden branches of the climbing rose-tree, trained against the inner side. Beyond, lay meadow green and mountain grey, and the blue dazzle of Morecambe Bay, as it sparkled between us and the more distant view.

For a while we were silent, living in sight and murmuring sound. Then Jeremy took up our conversation where, suddenly feeling weariness, as we saw that deep green shadowy resting-place, we had ceased speaking a quarter of an hour before.

It is one of the luxuries of holiday-time that thoughts are not rudely shaken from us by outward violence of hurry and busy impatience, but fall maturely from our lips in the sunny leisure of our days. The stock may be bad, but the fruit is ripe.

'How would you then define a hero?' I asked.

There was a long pause, and I had almost forgotten my question in watching a cloud-shadow floating over the far-away hills, when Jeremy made answer—

'My idea of a hero is one who acts up to the highest idea of duty he has been able to form, no matter at

what sacrifice. I think that by this definition we may include all phases of character, even to the heroes of old, whose sole (and to us, low) idea of duty consisted in personal prowess.'

'Then you would even admit the military heroes?' asked I.

'I would; with a certain kind of pity for the circumstances which had given them no higher ideas of duty. Still, if they sacrificed self to do what they sincerely believed to be right, I do not think I could deny them the title of hero.'

'A poor, unchristian heroism, whose manifestation consists in injury to others!' I said.

We were both startled by a third voice.

* If I might make so bold, sir '—and then the speaker stopped.

It was the Sexton, whom, when we first arrived, we had noticed, as an accessory to the scene, but whom we had forgotten, as much as though he were as inanimate as one of the moss-covered headstones.

'If I might be so bold,' said he again, waiting leave to speak. Jeremy bowed in deference to his white, uncovered head. And so encouraged, he went on.

'What that gentleman' (alluding to my last speech) 'has just now said, brings to my mind one who is dead and gone this many a year ago. I, may be, have not rightly understood your meaning, gentlemen, but as far as I could gather it, I think you'd both have given in to thinking poor Gilbert Dawson a hero. At any rate,' said he, heaving a long, quivering sigh, * I have reason to think him so.'

'Will you take a seat, sir, and tell us about him?' said Jeremy, standing up until the old man was seated. I confess I felt impatient at the interruption.

'It will be forty-five year come Martinmas,' said the Sexton, sitting down on a grassy mound at our feet, 'since I finished my 'prenticeship, and settled down at Lindal. You can see Lindal, sir, at evenings and mornings across the bay; a little to the right of Grange; at least, I used to see it, many a time and oft,

afore my sight grew so dark : and I have spent many a quarter of an hour a-gazing at it far away, and thinking of the days I lived there, till the tears came so thick to my eyes, I could gaze no longer. I shall never look upon it again, either far off or near, but you may see it, both ways, and a terrible bonny spot it is. In my young days, when I went to settle there, it was full of as wild a set of young fellows as ever were clapped eyes on; all for fighting, poaching, quarrelling, and suchlike work. I were startled myself when I first found what a set I were among, but soon I began to fall into their ways, and I ended by being as rough a chap as any on 'em. I'd been there a matter of two year, and were reckoned by most the cock of the village, when Gilbert Dawson, as I was speaking of, came to Lindal. He were about as strapping a chap as I was (I used to be six feet high, though now I'm so shrunk and doubled up), and, as we were like in the same trade (both used to prepare osiers and wood for the Liverpool coopers, who get a deal of stuff from the cospes round the bay, sir), we were thrown together, and took mightily to each other. I put my best leg foremost to be equal with Gilbert, for I'd had some schooling, though since I'd been at Lindal I'd lost a good part of what I'd learnt; and I kept my rough ways out of sight for a time, I felt so ashamed of his getting to know them. But that did not last long. I began to think he fancied a girl I dearly loved, but who had always held off from me. Eh ! but she was a pretty one in those days ! There's none like her, now. I think I see her going along the road with her dancing tread, and shaking back her long yellow curls, to give me or any other young fellow a saucy word ; no wonder Gilbert was taken with her, for all he was grave, and she so merry and light. But I began to think she liked him again ; and then my blood was all afire. I got to hate him for everything he did. Aforetime I had stood by, admiring to see him, how he leapt, and what a quoiter and cricketer he was. And now I ground my teeth with hatred whene'er he did a thing which caught Letty's eye. I could read it in

her look that she liked him, for all she held herself just as high with him as with all the rest. Lord God forgive me ! how I hated that man.'

He spoke as if the hatred were a thing of yesterday, so clear within his memory were shown the actions and feelings of his youth. And then he dropped his voice and said—

' Well ! I began to look out to pick a quarrel with him, for my blood was up to fight him. If I beat him (and I were a rare boxer in those days), I thought Letty would cool towards him. So one evening at quoits (I'm sure I don't know how or why, but large doings grow out of small words) I fell out with him, and challenged him to fight. I could see he were very wroth by his colour coming and going—and, as I said before, he were a fine active young fellow. But all at once he drew in, and said he would not fight. Such a yell as the Lindal lads, who were watching us, set up ! I hear it yet. I could na' help but feel sorry for him, to be so scorned, and I thought he'd not rightly taken my meaning, and I'd give him another chance ; so I said it again, and dared him, as plain as words could speak, to fight out the quarrel. He told me then, he had no quarrel against me; that he might have said something to put me up ; he did not know that he had, but that if he had, he asked pardon; but that he would not fight no-how.

* I was so full of scorn at his cowardliness, that I was vexed I'd given him the second chance, and I joined in the yell that was set up, twice as bad as before. He stood it out, his teeth set, and looking very white, and when we were silent for want of breath, he said out loud, but in a hoarse voice, quite different from his own—

' " I cannot fight, because I think it is wrong to quarrel, and use violence."

' Then he turned to go away; I were so beside myself with scorn and hate, that I called out—

' " Tell truth, lad, at least; if thou dare not fight, dunnot go and tell a lie about it. Mother's moppet is

afraid of a black eye, pretty dear, It shannot be hurt, but it munnot tell lies."

' Well, they laughed, but I could not laugh. It seemed such a thing for a stout young chap to be a coward, and afraid !

' Before the sun had set, it was talked of all over Lindal, how I had challenged Gilbert to fight, and how he'd denied me; and the folks stood at their doors, and looked at him going up the hill to his home, as if he'd been a monkey or a foreigner—but no one wished him good e'en. Such a thing as refusing to fight had never been heard of afore at Lindal. Next day, however, they had found voice. The men muttered the woid " coward " in his hearing, and kept aloof ; the women tittered as he passed, and the little impudent lads and lasses shouted out, " How long is it sin' thou turned Quaker ? " " Good-bye, Jonathan Broad-brim," and suchlike jests.

' That evening I met him, with Letty by his side, coming up from the shore. She was almost crying as I came upon them at the turn of the lane ; and looking up in his face, as if begging him something. And so she was, she told me it after. For she did really like him ; and could not abide to hear him scorned by every one for being a coward; and she, coy as she was, all but told him that very night that she loved him, and begged him not to disgrace himself, but fight me as I'd dared him to. When he still stuck to it he could not, for that it was wrong, she was so vexed and mad-like at the way she'd spoken, and the feelings she'd let out to coax him, that she said more stinging things about his being a coward than all the rest put together (according to what she told me, sir, afterwards), and ended by saying she'd never speak to him again, as long as she lived; she did once again, though—her blessing was the last human speech that reached his ear in his wild death-struggle.

' But much happened afore that time. From the day I met them walking, Letty turned towards me; I could see a part of it was to spite Gilbert, for she'd be

twice as kind when he was near, or likely to hear of it % but by and by she got to like me for my own sake, and it was all settled for our marriage. Gilbert kept aloof from every one, and fell into a sad, careless way. His very gait was changed ; his step used to be brisk and sounding, and now his foot lingered heavily on the ground. I used to try and daunt him with my eye, but he would always meet my look in a steady, quiet way, for all so much about him was altered ; the lads would not play with him ; and as soon as he found he was to be slighted by them whenever he came to quoiting or cricket, he just left off coming.

' The old clerk was the only one he kept company with ; or perhaps, rightly to speak, the only one who would keep company with him. They got so thick at last, that old Jonas would say, Gilbert had gospel on las side, and did no more than gospel told him to do ; but we none of us gave much credit to what he said, more by token our vicar had a brother, a colonel in the army ; and as we threeped it many a time to Jonas, would he set himself up to know the gospel better than the vicar ? that would be putting the cart afore th[^] horse, like the French radicals. And if the vicar had thought quarrelling and fighting wicked, and again the Bible, would he have made so much work about all the victories, that were as plenty as blackberries at that time of day, and kept the little bell of Lindal church for ever ringing ; or would he have thought so much of " my brother the colonel ", as he was always talking on?

' After I was married to Letty I left off hating Gilbert, leven kind of pitied him—he was so scorned and slighted ; and for all he d a bold look about him, as if he were not ashamed, he seemed pining and shrunk. It's a wearying thing to be kept at arm's length by one's kind ; and so Gilbert found it, poor fellow. The little children took to him, though ; they'd be round about him like a swarm of bees—them as was too young to know what a coward was, and only felt that he was ever ready to love and to help them, and was never loud or cross, however naughty they might be. After a while we

had our little one, too ; such a blessed darling she was, and dearly did we love her; Letty in especial, who seemed to get all the thought I used to think sometimes she wanted, after she had her baby to care for.

' All my kin lived on this side the bay, up above Kellet. Jane (that's her that lies buried near yon white rose-tree) was to be married, and naught would serve her but that Letty and I must come to the wedding ; for all my sisters loved Letty, she had such winning ways with her. Letty did not like to leave her baby, nor yet did I want her to take it: so, after a talk, we fixed to leave it with Letty's mother for the afternoon. I could see her heart ached a bit, for she'd never left it till then, and she seemed to fear all manner of evil, even to the French coming and taking it away. Well! we borrowed a shandry, and harnessed my old grey mare, as I used in th' cart, and set off as grand as King George across the sands about three o'clock, for you see it were high-water about twelve, and we'd to go and come back same tide, as Letty could not leave her baby for long. It were a merry afternoon, were that; last time I ever saw Letty laugh heartily; and, for that matter, last time I ever laughed downright hearty myself. The latest crossing-time fell about nine o'clock, and we were late at starting. Clocks were wrong ; and we'd a piece of work chasing a pig father had given Letty to take home ; we bagged him at last, and he screeched and screeched in the back part o' th' shandry, and we laughed and they laughed ; and in the midst of all the merriment the sun set, and that sobered us a bit, for then we knew what time it was. I whipped the old mare, but she was a deal beener than she was in the morning, and would neither go quick up nor down the brows, and they're not a few 'twixt Kellet and the shore. On the sands it were worse. They were very heavy, for the fresh had come down after the rains we'd had. Lord ! how I did whip the poor mare, to make the most of the red light as yet lasted. You, maybe, don't know the sands, gentlemen. From Bolton side, where we started from, it is better than six mile to Cart

Lane, and two channels to cross, let alone holes and quicksands. At the second channel from us the guide waits, all during crossing-time from sunrise to sunset; but for the three hours on each side high-water he's not there, in course. He stays after sunset if he's forespoken, not else. So now you know where we were that awful night. For we'd crossed the first channel about two mile, and it were growing darker and darker above and around us, all but one red line of light above the hills, when we came to a hollow (for all the sands look so flat, there's many a hollow in them where you lose all sight of the shore). We were longer than we should ha' been in crossing the hollow, the sand was so quick; and when we came up again, there, again the blackness, was the white line of the rushing tide coming up the bay! It looked not a mile from us; and when the wind blows up the bay it comes swifter than a galloping horse. "Lord help us!" said I; and then I were sorry I'd spoken, to frighten Letty; but the words were crushed out of my heart by the terror. I felt her shiver up by my side, and clutch my coat. And as if the pig (as had screeched himself hoarse some time ago) had found out the danger we were all in, he took to squealing again, enough to bewilder any man. I cursed him between my teeth for his noise; and yet it was God's answer to my prayer, blind sinner as I was. Aye! you may smile, sir, but God can work through many a scornful thing, if need be.

* By this time the mare was all in a lather, and trembling and panting, as if in mortal fright; for though we were on the last bank afore the second channel, the water was gathering up her legs; and she so tired out! When we came close to the channel she stood still, and not all my flogging could get her to stir; she fairly groaned aloud, and shook in a terrible quaking way. Till now Letty had not spoken; only held my coat tightly. I heard her say something, and bent down my head.

"I think, John—I think—I shall never see baby again!"

* And then she sent up such a cry—so loud, and shrill, and pitiful! It fairly maddened me. I pulled out my knife to spur on the old mare, that it might end one way or the other, for the water was stealing sullenly up to the very axle-tree, let alone the white waves that knew no mercy in their steady advance. That one quarter of an hour, sir, seemed as long as all my life since. Thoughts, and fancies, and dreams, and memory ran into each other. The mist, the heavy mist, that was like a ghastly curtain, shutting us in for death, seemed to bring with it the scents of the flowers that grew around our own threshold; it might be, for it was falling on them like blessed dew, though to us it was a shroud. Letty told me at after, she heard her baby crying for her, above the gurgling of the rising waters, as plain as ever she heard anything; but the sea-birds were skirling, and the pig shrieking; I never caught it; it was miles away, at any rate.

' Just as I'd gotten my knife out, another sound was close upon us, blending with the gurgle of the near waters, and the roar of the distant (not so distant though); we could hardly see, but we thought we saw something black against the deep lead colour of wave, and mist, and sky. It neared and neared: with slow, steady motion, it came across the channel right to where we were.

' Oh, God! it was Gilbert Dawson on his strong bay horse.

' Few words did we speak, and little time had we to say them in. I had no knowledge at that moment of past or future—only of one present thought—how to save Letty, and, if I could, myself. I only remembered afterwards that Gilbert said he had been guided by an animal's shriek of terror; I only heard, when all was over, that he had been uneasy about our return, because of the depth of fresh, and had borrowed a pillion, and saddled his horse early in the evening, and ridden down to Cart Lane to watch for us. If all had gone well, we should ne'er have heard of it. As it was, old Jonas told it, the tears down-dropping from his withered cheeks.

' We fastened his horse to the shandry. We lifted Letty to the pillion. The waters rose every instant with sullen sound. They were all but in the shandry. Letty clung to the pillion handles, but drooped her head as if she had yet no hope of life. Swifter than thought (and yet he might have had time for thought and for temptation, sir—if he had ridden off with Letty, he would have been saved, not me), Gilbert was in the shandry by my side.

' " Quick ! " said he, clear and firm. " You must ride before her, and keep her up. The horse can swim. By God's mercy I will follow. I can cut the traces, and if the mare is not hampered with the shandry, she'll carry me safely through. At any rate, you are a husband and a father. No one cares for me."

' Do not hate me, gentlemen. I often wish that night was a dream. It has haunted my sleep ever since like a dream, and yet it was no dream. I took his place on the saddle, and put Letty's arms around me, and felt her head rest on my shoulder. I trust in God I spoke some word of thanks ; but I can't remember. I only recollect Letty raising her head, and calling out—

' " God bless you, Gilbert Dawson, for saving my baby from being an orphan this night." And then she fell against me, as if unconscious.

' I bore her through; or, rather, the strong horse swam bravely through the gathering waves. We were dripping wet when we reached the banks in-shore ; but we could have but one thought—where was Gilbert ? Thick mists and heaving waters compassed us round. Where was he ? We shouted. Letty, faint as she was, raised her voice and shouted clear and shrill. No answer came, the sea boomed on with ceaseless sullen beat. I rode to the guide's house. He was a-bed, and would not get up, though I offered him more than I was worth. Perhaps he knew it, the cursed old villain ! At any rate, I'd have paid it if I'd toiled my life long. He said I might take his horn and welcome. I did, and blew such a blast through the still, black night, the echoes came back upon the heavy air: but no human voice or

sound was heard—that wild blast could not awaken the dead !

'I took Letty home to her baby, over whom she wept the livelong night. I rode back to the shore about Cart Lane ; and to and fro, with weary march, did I pace along the brink of the waters, now and then shouting out into the silence a vain cry for Gilbert. The waters went back and left no trace. Two days afterwards he was washed ashore near Flukeborough. The shandry and poor old mare were found half-buried in a heap of sand by Arnside Knot. As far as we could guess, he had dropped his knife while trying to cut the traces, and so had lost all chance of life. Any rate, the knife was found in a cleft of the shaft.

' His friends came over from Garstang to his funeral. I wanted to go chief mourner, but it was not my right, and I might not; though I've never done mourning him to this day. When his sister packed up his things, I begged hard for something that had been his. She would give me none of his clothes (she was a right-down having woman), as she had boys of her own, who might grow up into them. But she threw me his Bible, as she said they'd gotten one already, and his were but a poor used-up thing. It was his, and so I cared for it. It were a black leather one, with pockets at the sides, old-fashioned-wise ; and in one were a bunch of wild flowers, Letty said she could almost be sure were some she had once given him.

' There were many a text in the Gospel, marked broad with his carpenter's pencil, which more than bore him out in his refusal to fight. Of a surety, sir, there 's call enough for bravery in the service of God, and to show love to man, without quarrelling and fighting.

' Thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me. Your words called up the thoughts of him, and my heart was full to speaking. But I must make up; I've to dig a grave for a little child, who is to be buried to-morrow morning, just when his playmates are trooping off to

' But tell us of Letty; is she yet alive ? ' asked Jeremy.

The old man shook his head, and struggled against a choking sigh. After a minute's pause he said—

' She died in less than two year at after that night. She was never like the same again. She would sit thinking, on Gilbert, I guessed: but I could not blame her. We had a boy, and we named it Gilbert Dawson Knipe ; he that's stoker on the London railway. Our girl was carried off in teething ; and Letty just quietly drooped, and died in less than a six week. They were buried here; so I came to be near them, and away from Lindal, a place I could never abide after Letty was gone.'

He turned to his work, and we, having rested sufficiently, rose up, and came away.

iv

CLOPTON HOUSE

First written as a private letter to William Howitt and then incorporated by him in his chapter on Stratford-on-Avon in 'Visits to Remarkable Places', 1840.

CLOPTON HOUSE

' I WONDER if you know Clopton Hall, about a mile from Stratford-on-Avon. Will you allow me to tell you of a very happy day I once spent there. I was at school in the neighbourhood, and one of my school-fellows was the daughter of a Mr. W——, who then lived at Clopton. Mrs. W——asked a party of the girls to go and spend a long afternoon, and we set off one beautiful autumn day, full of delight and wonder respecting the place we were going to see. We passed through desolate half-cultivated fields, till we came within sight of the house—a large, heavy, compact, square brick building, of that deep, dead red almost approaching to purple. In front was a large formal court, with the massy pillars surmounted with two grim monsters ; but the walls of the court were broken down, and the grass grew as rank and wild within the enclosure as in the raised avenue walk down which we had come. The flowers were tangled with nettles, and it was only as we approached the house that we saw the single yellow rose and the Austrian brier trained into something like order round the deep-set diamond-paned windows. We trooped into the hall, with its tessellated marble floor, hung round with strange portraits of people who had been in their graves two hundred years at least; yet the colours were so fresh, and in some instances they were so life-like, that looking merely at the faces, I almost fancied the originals might be sitting in the parlour beyond. More completely to carry us back, as it were, to the days of the civil wars, there was a sort of military map hung up, well finished with pen and ink, showing the stations of the respective armies, and with old-fashioned writing beneath, the names of the principal towns, setting forth the strength

of the garrison, &c. In this hall we were met by our kind hostess, and told we might ramble where we liked, in the house or out of the house, taking care to be in the "recessed parlour" by tea-time. I preferred to wander up the wide shelving oak staircase, with its massy balustrade all crumbling and worm-eaten. The family then residing at the hall did not occupy one-half,—no, not one-third of the rooms; and the old-fashioned furniture was undisturbed in the greater part of them. In one of the bed-rooms (said to be haunted), and which, with its close pent-up atmosphere and the long shadows of evening creeping on, gave me an "eirie" feeling, hung a portrait so singularly beautiful! a sweet-looking girl, with paly gold hair combed back from her forehead and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew", for there was the glittering of unshed tears before their deep dark blue—and that was the likeness of Charlotte Clopton, about whom there was so fearful a legend told at Stratford church. In the time of some epidemic, the sweating-sickness or the plague, this young girl had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton chapel, attached to Stratford church, but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight, Charlotte Clopton in her grave-clothes leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer, she was indeed dead, but not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder! Of course, she had *walked* ever since. This was "Charlotte's chamber", and beyond Charlotte's chamber was a state-chamber carpeted with the dust of many years, and darkened by the creepers which had covered up the windows, and even forced themselves in luxuriant daring through the broken panes. Beyond, again, there was an old Catholic chapel, with a chaplain's room, which had been walled up and forgotten till within the last few years. I went

in on my hands and knees, for the entrance was very low. I recollect little in the chapel; but in the chaplain's room were old, and I should think rare editions of many books, mostly folios. A large yellow-paper copy of Dryden's *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, date 1686, caught my eye, and is the only one I particularly remember. Every here and there, as I wandered, I came upon a fresh branch of a staircase, and so numerous were the crooked, half-lighted passages, that I wondered if I could find my way back again; There was a curious carved old chest in one of these passages, and with girlish curiosity I tried to open it; but the lid was too heavy, till I persuaded one of my companions to help me, and when it was opened, what do you think we saw—BONES !—but whether human, whether the remains of the lost bride, we did not stay to see, but ran off in partly feigned, and partly real terror.

' The last of these deserted rooms that I remember, the last, the most deserted, and the saddest, was the Nursery,—a nursery without children, without singing voices, without merry chiming footsteps ! A nursery hung round with its once inhabitants, bold, gallant boys, and fair, arch-looking girls, and one or two nurses with round, fat babies in their arms. Who were they all ? What was their lot in life ? Sunshine, or storm ? or had they been "loved by the gods, and died young" ? The very echoes knew not. Behind the house, in a hollow now wild, damp, and overgrown with elder-bushes, was a well called Margaret's Well, for there had a maiden of the house of that name drowned herself.

' I tried to obtain any information I could as to the family of Clopton of Clopton. They had been decaying ever since the civil wars ; had for a generation or two been unable to live in the old house of their fathers, but had toiled in London, or abroad, for a livelihood; and the last of the old family, a bachelor, eccentric, miserly, old, and of most filthy habits, if report said true, had died at Clopton Hall but a few months before, a sort of boarder in Mr. W——'s family. He was

buried in the gorgeous chapel of the doptions in Stratford church, where you see the banners waving, and the armour hung over one or two splendid monuments. Mr. W——had been the old man's solicitor, and completely in his confidence, and to him he left the estate, encumbered and in bad condition. A year or two afterwards, the heir-at-law, a very distant relation living in Ireland, claimed and obtained the estate, on the plea of undue influence, if not of forgery, on Mr. W——'s part; and the last I heard of our kind entertainers on that day, was that they were outlawed, and living at Brussels.'

V

COMPANY MANNERS

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COMPANY MANNERS

VICTOR COUSIN, the French philosopher, has undertaken a new task within the last few years. Whether as a relaxation from, or a continuation of, his study of metaphysics, I do not know, but he has begun to write the biographies of some of the celebrated French women of the seventeenth century. In making out his list, he is careful to distinguish between authoresses and *femmes d'esprit*, ranking the latter infinitely the higher in every point of view. The first of his series is Jacqueline Pascal, the sister of Blaise, known at Port Royal as the Sister Euphemia—a holy, pure, and sainted woman. The second whom the grave philosopher has chosen as a subject for his biography is that beautiful, splendid sinner of the Fronde, the fair-haired Duchess de Longueville. He draws the pure and perfect outlines of Jacqueline Pascal's character with a severe and correct pencil; he paints the lovely Duchess with the fond, admiring exaggeration of a lover. The wits of Paris, in consequence, have written the following epitaph for him: 'Here lies Victor Cousin, the great philosopher, in love with the Duchess de Longueville, who died a century and a half before he was born.'

Even the friends of this Duchess, insignificant in themselves, become dear and illustrious to Cousin for her fair sake. It is not long since he contributed an article on Madame de Sablé to the *Revue des Deux Mowles*, which has since been published separately, and which has suggested the thoughts and fancies that I am now going to lay before the patient public. This Madame de Sablé was, in her prime, an habitual guest at the Hotel Rambouillet, the superb habitation which

was the centre of the witty and learned as well as the pompous and pedantic society of Paris, in the days of Louis the Thirteenth. When these gatherings had come to an end after Madame de Rambouillet's death, and before Moliere had turned the tradition thereof into exquisite ridicule, there were several attempts to form circles that should preserve some of the stately refinement of the Hotel Rambouillet. Mademoiselle Scudery had her Saturdays; but, an authoress herself, and collecting around her merely clever people, without regard to birth or breeding, M. Cousin does not hold the idea of her Saturdays in high esteem. Madame de Sable, a gentlewoman by birth: intelligent enough doubtless from having been an associate of Menage, Voiture, Madame de Sevigne, and others in the grand hotel (whose meetings must have been delightful enough at the time, though that wicked Moliere has stepped between us and them, and we can only see them as he chooses us to do): Madame de Sabli, friend of the resplendent fair-haired Duchess de Longueville, had weekly meetings which M. Cousin ranks far above the more pretentious Saturdays of Mademoiselle Scudery. In short, the last page of his memoir of Madame de Sable—where we matter-of-fact English people are apt to put in praise of the morals and religion of the person whose life we have been writing—is devoted to this acme of praise. Madame de Sabli had all the requisites which enabled her *tenir un salon* with honour to herself and pleasure to her friends.

Apart from this crowning accomplishment, the good French lady seems to have been commonplace enough. She was well-born, well-bred, and the company she kept must have made her tolerably intelligent. She was married to a dull husband, and doubtless had her small flirtations after she early became a widow; M. Cousin hints at them, but they were never scandalous or prominently before the public. Past middle life, she took to the process of *making her salvation', and inclined to the Port Royalists. She was given to liking dainty things to eat, in spite of her Jansenism. She had

a female friend that she quarrelled with, off and on, during her life. And (to wind up something like Lady O'Looney, of famous memory) she knew how *tenir un salon*. M. Cousin tells us that she was remarkable in no one thing or quality, and attributes to that single, simple fact the success of her life.

Now, since I have read these memoirs of Madame de Sable, I have thought much and deeply thereupon. At first, I was inclined to laugh at the extreme importance which was attached to this art of 'receiving company'—no, that translation will not do!—'holding a drawing-room' is even worse, because that implies the state and reserve of royalty;—shall we call it the art of 'Sableing'? But when I thought of my experience in English society—of the evenings dreaded before they came, and sighed over in recollection, because they were so ineffably dull—I saw that, to Sable well, did require, as M. Cousin implied, the union of many excellent qualities and not-to-be-disputed little graces. I asked some French people if they could give me the recipe, for it seemed most likely to be traditional, if not still extant in their nation. I offer to you their ideas, fragmentary though they be; and then I will tell you some of my own; at last, perhaps, with the addition of yours, oh most worthy readers! we may discover the lost art of Sableing.

Said the French lady: 'A woman to be successful in Sableing must be past youth, yet not past the power of attracting. She must do this by her sweet and gracious manners, and quick, ready tact in perceiving those who have not had their share of attention, or leading the conversation away from any subject which may give pain to any one present.' 'Those rules hold good in England,' said I. My friend went on: 'She should never be prominent in anything; she should keep silence as long as any one else will talk; but when conversation flags, she should throw herself into the breach with the same spirit with which I notice that the young ladies of the house, where a ball is given, stand quietly by till the dancers are tired, and then spring into the

arena to carry on the spirit and the music till the others are ready to begin again.'

'But,' said the French gentleman, * even at this time, when subjects for conversation are wanted, she should rather suggest than enlarge—ask questions rather than give her own opinions.'

'To be sure,' said the lady. 'Madame Recamier, whose salons were the most perfect of this century, always withheld her opinions on books, or men, or measures, until all around her had given theirs ; then she, as it were, collected and harmonized them, saying a kind thing here, and a gentle thing there, and speaking ever with her own quiet sense, till people the most opposed learnt to understand each other's point of view, which it is a great thing for opponents to do.'

'Then the number of the people whom you receive is another consideration. I should say not less than twelve, or more than twenty,' continued the gentleman. 'The evenings should be appointed—say weekly—fortnightly at the beginning of January, which is our season. Fix an early hour for opening the room. People are caught then in their freshness, before they become exhausted by other parties.*

The lady spoke, 'For my part, I prefer catching my friends after they have left the grander balls or receptions. One hears then the remarks, the wit, the reason, and the satire which they had been storing up during their evening of imposed silence or of ceremonious speaking.'

'A little good-humoured satire is a very agreeable sauce,' replied the gentleman, 'but it must be good-humoured, and the listeners must be good-humoured ; above all, the conversation must be general, and not the chat, chat, chat up in a corner, by which the English so often distinguish themselves. You do not go into society to exchange secrets with your intimate friends ; you go to render yourselves agreeable to every one present, and to help all to pass a happy evening.'

* Strangers should not be admitted,' said the lady, taking up the strain. 'They would not start fair with

the others; they would be ignorant of the allusions that refer to conversations on the previous evenings; they would not understand the—what shall I call it—slang ? I mean those expressions having relation to past occurrences, or bygone witticisms common to all those who are in the habit of meeting.'

'Madame de Duras and Madame Recamier never made advances to any stranger. Their salons were the best that Paris has known in this generation. All who wished to be admitted, had to wait and prove their litness by being agreeable elsewhere ; to earn their diploma, as it were, among the circle of these ladies' acquaintances ; and, at last, it was a high favour to be received by them.'

'They missed the society of many celebrities by adhering so strictly to this unspoken rule,' said the gentleman.

'Bah !' said the lady. 'Celebrities ! what has one to do with them in society ? As celebrities, they are simply bores. Because a man has discovered a planet, it does not follow that he can converse agreeably, even on his own subjects ; often people are drained dry by one action or expression of their lives—drained dry for all the purposes of a "salon". The writer of books, for instance, cannot afford to talk twenty pages for nothing, so he is either profoundly silent, or else he gives you the mere rinsings of his mind. I am speaking now of him as a mere celebrity, and justifying the wisdom of the ladies we were speaking of, in not seeking after such people ; indeed, in being rather shy of them. Some of their friends were the most celebrated people of their day, but they were received in their old capacity of agreeable men ; a higher character, by far. Then,' said she, turning to me, * I believe that you English spoil the perfection of conversation by having your rooms as brilliantly lighted for an evening the charm of which depends on what one hears, as for an evening when youth and beauty are to display themselves among flowers and festoons, and every kind of pretty ornament. I would never have a room affect people as being dark

on their first entrance into it; but there is a kind of moonlight as compared to sunlight, in which people talk more freely and naturally; where shy people will enter upon a conversation without a dread of every change of colour or involuntary movement being seen—just as we are always more confidential over a fire than anywhere else—as women talk most openly in the dimly-lighted bedroom at curling-time.'

'Away with your shy people,' said the gentleman. 'Persons who are self-conscious, thinking of an involuntary redness or paleness, an unbecoming movement of the countenance, more than the subject of which they are talking, should not go into society at all. But, because women are so much more liable to this nervous weakness than men, the preponderance of people in a salon should always be on the side of the men.'

I do not think I gained more hints as to the lost art from my French friends. Let us see if my own experience in England can furnish any more ideas.

First, let us take the preparations to be made before our house, our room, or our lodgings can be made to receive society. Of course I am not meaning the preparations needed for dancing or musical evenings. I am taking those parties which have pleasant conversation and happy social intercourse for their affirmed intention. They may be dinners, suppers, tea—I don't care what they are called, provided their end is defined. If your friends have not dined, and it suits you to give them a dinner, in the name of Lucullus, let them dine; but take care that there shall be something besides the mere food and wine to make their fattening agreeable at the time and pleasant to remember, otherwise you had better pack up for each his portions of the dainty dish, and send it separately, in hot-water trays, so that he can eat comfortably behind a door, like Sancho Panza, and have done with it. And yet I don't see why we should be like ascetics; I fancy there is a grace of preparation, a sort of festive trumpet-call, that is right and proper to distinguish the day on which we receive our friends from common days, unmarked by such

white stones. The thought and care we take for them to set before them of our best, may imply some self-denial on our less fortunate days. I have been in houses where all, from the scullion-maid upward, worked double tides gladly, because 'Master's friends' were coming; and everything must be nice, and good, and all the rooms must look bright, and clean, and pretty. And, as 'a merry heart goes all the way', preparations made in this welcoming, hospitable spirit never seem to tire anyone half so much as where servants instinctively feel that it has been said in the parlour, 'We must have so-and-so,' or, 'Oh, dear! we have never had the so-and-so's.' Yes, I like a little pomp, and luxury, and stateliness, to mark our happy days of receiving friends as a festival; but I do not think I would throw my power of procuring luxuries solely into the eating and drinking line.

My friends would probably be surprised (some wear caps, and some wigs) if I provided them with garlanda of flowers, after the manner of the ancient Greeks; but, put flowers on the table (none of your shams, wax or otherwise; I prefer an honest wayside root of primroses, in a common vase of white ware, to the grandest bunch of stiff-rustling artificial rarities in a silver epergne). A flower or two by the side of each person's plate would not be out of the way, as to expense, and would be a very agreeable pretty piece of mute welcome. Cooks and scullion-maids, acting in the sympathetic spirit I have described, would do their very best, from boiling the potatoes well, to sending in all the dishes in the best possible order. I think I would have every imaginary dinner sent up on the 'Original' Mr. Walker's plan; each dish separately, hot and hot. I have an idea that when I go to live in Utopia (not before next Christmas), I will have a kind of hot-water side-board, such as I think I have seen in great houses, and that nothing shall appear on the table but what is pleasant to the eye. However simple the food, I would do it and my friends (and may I not add the Giver?) the respect of presenting it at table as well cooked, as

eatable, as wholesome as my poor means allowed ; and to this end, rather than to a variety of dishes, would I direct my care. We have no associations with beef and mutton ; geese may remind us of the Capitol; and peacocks of Juno; a pigeon-pie of * the simplicity of Venus' doves'; but who thinks of the leafy covert which has been her home in life, when he sees a roasted hare ? Now, flowers as an ornament do lead our thoughts away from their present beauty and fragrance. I am almost sure Madame de Sable had flowers in her salon, and, as she was fond of dainties herself, I can fancy her smooth benevolence of character, taking delight in some personal preparations made in the morning for the anticipated friends of the evening. I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan, or dressing salad with her delicate, plump, white hands;—not that I ever saw a silver saucepan. I was formerly ignorant enough to think that they were only used in the Sleeping Beauty's kitchen, or in the preparations for the marriage of Riquet-with-the-Tuft; but I have been assured that there are such things, and that they impart a most delicate flavour, or no flavour, to the victuals cooked therein; so I assert again, Madame de Sable cooked sweetbreads for her friends in a silver saucepan; but never to fatigue herself with those previous labours. She knew the true taste of her friends too well; they cared for her firstly, as an element in their agreeable evening—the silver saucepan in which they were all to meet: the oil in which their several ingredients were to be softened of what was harsh or discordant—very secondary would be their interest in her sweetbreads.

Of sweetbreads they'll get mony an ane,
Of Sable ne'er anither.

But part of my care beforehand should go to the homely article of waiting. I should not mind having none at all; a dumb waiter, pepper, salt, bread, and condiments within the reach or by the side of all. Little kindly attentions from one guest to another tend to take off the selfish character of the mere act of eating;

and, besides, the guests would (or should) be too well educated, too delicate of tact, to interrupt a burst of wit, or feeling, or eloquence, as a mere footman often does with the perpetual 'Sherry, or Madeira?' or with the names of those mysterious entremets that always remind me of a white kid glove that I once ate with bechamel sauce, and found very tender and good, under the name of Oreilles de Veau a-la-something, but which experiment I never wish to repeat. There is something graceful and kindly in the little attention by which one guest silently puts by his neighbour all that he may require. I consider it a better opening to ultimate friendship, if my unknown neighbour mutely passes me the salt, or silently understands that I like sugar to my soup, than if he had been introduced by his full name and title, and labelled with the one distinguishing action or book of his life, after the manner of some who are rather showmen than hosts.

But to return to the subject of waiting. I have always believed that the charm of those little suppers, famous from time immemorial as the delightful PS. to operas, was that there was no formal waiting, or over-careful arrangement of the table; a certain sweet neglect pervaded all, very compatible with true elegance. The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the White Cat, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits at table with the White Cat, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies, I am very far from meaning hands without heads. Some people prefer female waiters; foot-women, as it were. I have weighed both sides of the subject well in my mind, before sitting down to write this paper, and my verdict goes in favour of men; for, all other things being equal, their superior strength gives them the power of doing things without effort, and consequently with less noise than any woman. The quiet ease and solemn soundless movement of some men-servants is wonderful to watch. Last summer I was staying in a house served by such list-shod, soft-spoken, velvet-handed domestics. One

day, the butler touched a spoon with a fork—the master of the house looked at him as Jupiter may have looked at Hebe, when she made that clumsy step. 'No noise, sir, if you please;' and we, as well as the servant, were hushed into the solemn stillness of the room, and were graced and genteel, if not merry and sociable. Still, bursts and clashes, and clatters at the side-table, do disturb conversation; and I maintain that, for avoiding these, men-servants are better than women. Women have to add an effort to the natural exercise of what strength they possess before they can lift heavy things—sirloins of beef, saddles of mutton, and the like; and they cannot calculate the additional force of such an effort, so down comes the dish and the mutton and all, with a sound and a splash that surprises us even more than the Phillis, who is neat-handed only when she has to do with things that require delicacy and lightness of touch, not struggle of arm.

And, now I think of it, Madame de Sable must have taken the White Cat for her model; there must evidently have been the same noiseless ease and grace about the movements of both; the same purring, happy, inarticulate moments of satisfaction, when surrounded by pleasant circumstances, must have been uttered by both. My own mouth has watered before now at the account of that fricassee of mice prepared especially for the White Cat; and M. Cousin alludes more than once to Madame de Sable's love for 'friandises'. Madame de Sable avoided the society of literary women, and so, I am sure, did the White Cat. Both had an instinctive sense of what was comfortable; both loved home with tenacious affection; and yet I am mistaken if each had not their own little private love of adventure—touches of the gipsy.

The reason why I think Madame de Sable had this touch in her is because she knew how *tenir un salon*. You do not see the connexion between gipsyism and the art of being a good hostess—of receiving pleasantly. I do, but I am not sure if I can explain it. In the first place, gipsies must be people of quick impulse and

ready wit; entering into fresh ideas and new modes of life with joyous ardour and energy, and fertile in expedients for extricating themselves from the various difficulties into which their wandering life leads them. They must have a lofty disregard for *convenances*, and yet a power of graceful adaptation. They evidently have a vivid sense of the picturesque, and a love of adventure, which, if it does not show itself in action, must show itself in sympathy with others' doings. Now, which of these qualities would be out of place in Madame de Sable? From what we read of the life of her contemporary, Madame de Sevigne, we see that impromptu expedients were necessary in those times, when the thought of the morning made the pleasure of the evening, and when people snatched their enjoyments from hand to mouth, as it were, while yet six-weeks-invitations were not. Now, I have noticed that in some parties where we were all precise and sensible, ice-bound under some indefinable stiff restraint, some little domestic contretemps, if frankly acknowledged by the hostess, has suddenly unloosed tongues and hearts in a supernatural manner ;

The upper air bursts into life,

more especially if some unusual expedient had to be resorted to, giving the whole the flavour and zest of a picnic. Toasting bread in a drawing-room, coaxing up a half-extinguished fire by dint of brown sugar, newspapers, and pretty, good-for-nothing bellows, turning a packing-case upside down for a seat, and covering in with a stray piece of velvet; these are, I am afraid, the only things that can call upon us for unexpected exertion, now that all is arranged and re-arranged for every party a month beforehand. But I have lived in other times and other places; I have been in the very heart and depth of Wales, within three miles of the house of the high sheriff of the county, who was giving a state dinner on a certain day, to which the gentleman with whom I was staying was invited. He was on the point of leaving his house in his little

Norwegian carriage, and we were on the point of sitting down to dinner, when a man rode up in hot haste—a servant from the high sheriff's came to beg for our joint off the spit. Fish, game, poultry—they had all the delicacies of their own land; but the butcher from the nearest market-town had failed them, and at the last moment they had to send off a groom a-begging to their neighbours. My relation departed ignorant of our dinnerless state; but he came back in great delight with his party. After the soup and fish had been removed, there had been a long pause (the joint had got cold on its ride, and had to be re-warmed); a message was brought to the host, who had immediately confided his perplexity to his guests, and put it to the vote whether they would wait for the joint, or have the order of the courses changed, and eat the third before the second. Every one had enjoyed the merry dilemma; the ice was broken, and all went on pleasantly and easily in a party where there was rather a heterogeneous mixture of politics and opinions. Dinner-parties in those days and in that part of Wales were somewhat regulated by the arrival of the little sailing-vessels, which, having discharged their cargo at Bristol or Liverpool, brought back commissioned purchases for the different families. A chest of oranges for Mr. Williams or Air. Wynn was a sure signal that, before many days were over, Mr. Williams or Mr. Wynn would give a dinner-party; strike while the iron was hot; eat while the oranges were fresh. A man rode round to all the different houses when any farmer planned such a mighty event as killing a cow, to ask what part each family would take. Visiting acquaintances lived ten or twelve miles from each other, separated by bad and hilly roads; the moon had always to be consulted before issuing invitations; and then the mode of proceeding was usually something like this: The invited friends came to dinner at half-past five or six; these were always those from the greatest distance—the nearer neighbours came later on in the evening. After the gentlemen had left the dining-room, it was cleared

for dancing. The fragments of the dinner, prepared by ready cooks, served for supper; tea was ready some time towards one or two, and the dancers went merrily on till a seven or eight o'clock breakfast, after which they rode or drove home by broad daylight. I was never at one of these meetings, although staying in a house from which many went; I was considered too young; but from what I heard, they were really excessively pleasant, sociable gatherings, although not quite entitled to be classed with Madame de Sable's salons.

To return to the fact that a slightly gipsy and impromptu character, either in the hostess, or in the arrangements, or in the amusements, adds a piquancy to the charm: let any one remember the agreeable private teas that go on in many houses about five o'clock. I remember those in one house particularly, as remarkably illustrating what I am trying to prove. These teas were held in a large dismantled schoolroom: and a superannuated schoolroom is usually the most doleful chamber imaginable. I never saw this by full daylight; I only know that it was lofty and large, that we went to it through a long gallery library, through which we never passed at any other time, the schoolroom having been accessible to the children in former days by a private staircase—that great branches of trees swept against the windows with a long, plaintive moan, as if tortured by the wind—that below in the stable-yard two Irish staghounds set up their musical bays to mingle with the outlandish Spanish which a parrot in the room continually talked out of the darkness in which its perch was placed—that the walls of the room seemed to recede as in a dream, and, instead of them, the flickering firelight painted tropical forests or Norwegian fiords, according to the will of our talkers. I know this tea was nominally private to the ladies, but that all the gentlemen strayed in most punctually by accident—that the fire was always in that state when somebody had to poke with the hard blows of despair, and somebody else to fetch in logs of wood

from the basket outside, and somebody else to unload his pockets of fir-bobs, which last were always efficacious, and threw beautiful dancing lights far and wide. And then there was a black kettle, long ago too old for kitchen use, that leaked and ran, and sputtered against the blue and sulphur-coloured flames, and did everything that was improper, but the water out of which made the best tea in the world, which we drank out of unmatched cups, the relics of several schoolroom sets. We ate thick bread-and-butter in the darkness with a vigour of appetite which had quite disappeared at the well-lighted eight o'clock dinner. Who ate it I don't know, for we stole from our places round the fireside to the tea-table, in comparative darkness, in the twilight, near the window, and helped ourselves, and came back on tiptoe to hear one of the party tell of wild enchanted spicy islands in the Eastern Archipelago, or buried cities in farthest Mexico; he used to look into the fire and draw and paint with words in a manner perfectly marvellous, and with an art which he had quite lost at the formal dinner-time. Our host was scientific; a name of high repute; he, too, told us of wonderful discoveries, strange surmises, glimpses into something far away and utterly dream-like. His son had been in Norway, fishing; then, when he sat all splashed with hunting, he, too, could tell of adventures in a natural, racy way. The girls, busy with their heavy kettle, and with their tea-making, put in a joyous word now and then. At dinner the host talked of nothing more intelligible than French mathematics; the heir drawled out an infinite deal of nothing about the 'Shakespeare and musical glasses' of the day; the traveller gave us latitudes and longitudes, and rates of population, exports and imports, with the greatest precision; and the girls were as pretty, helpless, inane fine ladies as you would wish to see.

Speaking of wood fires reminds me of Madame de Sabfe's fires. Of course they were of wood, being in Paris; but I believe that even if she had lived in a coal country, she would have burned wood by instinctive

preference, as a lady I once knew always ordered a lump of cannel coal to be brought up if ever her friends seemed silent and dull. A wood fire has a kind of spiritual, dancing, glancing life about it. It is an elfish companion, crackling, hissing, bubbling: throwing out beautiful jets of vivid, many-coloured flame. The best wood fires I know are those at Keswick. Making lead pencils is the business of the place; and the cedar chips for scent, and the thinnings of the larch and fir plantations thereabouts for warm and brilliant light, make such a fire as Madame de Sable would have delighted in.

Depend upon it, too, every seat in her salon was easy and comfortable of its kind. They might not be made of any rare kind of wood, nor covered very magnificently, but the bodies of her friends could rest and repose in them in easy, unconstrained attitudes. No one can be agreeable, perched on a chair which does not afford space for proper support. I defy the most accomplished professional wit to go on uttering *mots* in a chair with a stiff, hard, upright back, or with his legs miserably dangling. No! Madame de Sables seats were commodious, and probably varied to suit all tastes; nor was there anything in the shape of a large and cumbrous article of furniture placed right in the middle of her room, so as to prevent her visitors from changing their places, or drawing near to each other, or to the fire, if they so willed it. I imagine, likewise, that she had that placid, kindly manner which would never show any loss of self-possession. I fancy that there was a welcome ready for all, even though some came a little earlier than they were expected.

I was once very much struck by the perfect breeding of an old Welsh herb-woman, with whom I drank tea—a tea which was not tea, after all—an infusion of balm and black-currant leaves, with a pinch of lime blossom to give it a Pekoe flavour. She had boasted of the delicacy of this beverage to me on the previous day, and I had begged to be allowed to come and drink a cup with her. The only drawback was that she had but one

cup, but she immediately bethought her that she had two saucers, one of which would do just as well, indeed better, than any cup. I was anxious to be in time, and so I was too early. She had not done dusting and rubbing when I arrived, but she made no fuss; she was glad to see me, and quietly bade me welcome, though I had come before all was as she could have wished. She gave me a dusted chair, sat down herself with her kilted petticoats and working apron, and talked to me as if she had not a care or a thought on her mind but the enjoyment of the present time. By and by, in moving about the room, she slipped behind the bed-curtain, still conversing. I heard the splash of water, and a drawer open and shut; and then my hostess emerged spruce, and clean, and graced, but not one whit more agreeable or at her ease than she had been for the previous half-hour in her working dress.

There are a set of people who put on their agreeableness with their gowns. Here, again, I have studied the subject, and the result is, that I find people of this description are more pleasant in society in their second-best than in their very best dresses. These last are new; and the persons I am speaking of never feel thoroughly at home in them, never lose their consciousness of unusual finery until the first stain has been made. With their best gowns they put on an unusual fineness of language; they say 'commence' instead of 'begin'; they inquire if they may 'assist', instead of asking if they may 'help' you to anything. And yet there are some, very far from vain or self-conscious, who are never so agreeable as when they have a dim, half-defined idea that they are looking their best—not in finery, -but in air, arrangement, or complexion. I have a notion that Madame de Sable, with her fine instincts, was aware of this, and that there were one or two secrets about the furniture and disposition of light in her salon which are lost in these degenerate days. I heard, or read, lately, that we make a great mistake in furnishing our reception-rooms with all the light **and** delicate colours, the profusion of ornament, and

flecked and spotted chintzes, if we wish to show off the human face and figure; that our ancestors and the great painters knew better, with their somewhat sombre and heavy-tinted backgrounds, relieving, or throwing out into full relief, the rounded figure and the delicate, peach-like complexion.

I fancy Madame de Sable's salon was furnished with deep warm soberness of tone; lighted up by flowers, and happy animated people, in a brilliancy of dress which would be lost nowadays against our satin walls, and flower-bestrewn carpets, and gilding, gilding everywhere. Then, somehow, conversation must have flowed naturally into sense or nonsense, as the case might be. People must have gone to her house well prepared for either lot. It might be that wit would come uppermost, sparkling, crackling, leaping, calling out echoes all around; or the same people might talk with all their might and wisdom, on some grave and important subject of the day, in that manner which we have got into the way of calling 'earnest', but which term has struck me as being slightly flavoured by cant, ever since I heard of an 'earnest uncle'. At any rate, whether grave or gay, people did not go up to Madame de Sable's salons with a set purpose of being either the one or the other. They were carried away by the subject of the conversation, by the humour of the moment. I have visited a good deal among a set of people who piqued themselves on being rational. We have talked what they called sense, but what I call platitudes, till I have longed, like Southey, in the *Doctor*, to come out with some interminable nonsensical word (Aballibogibouganorribo was his, I think) as a relief for my despair at not being able to think of anything more that was sensible. It would have done me good to have said it, and I could have started afresh on the rational tack. But I never did. I sank into inane silence, which I hope was taken for wisdom. One of this set paid a relation of mine a profound compliment, for so she meant it to be: 'Oh, Miss F.; you are so trite!' But as it is not in every one's power

to be rational, and 'trite,' at all times and in all places, discharging our sense at a given place, like water from a fireman's hose; and as some of us are cisterns rather than fountains, and may have our stores exhausted, why is it not more general to call in other aids to conversation, in order to enable us to pass an agreeable evening?

But I will come back to this presently. Only let me say that there is but one thing more tiresome than an evening when everybody tries to be profound and sensible, and that is an evening when everybody tries to be witty. I have a disagreeable sense of effort and unnaturalness at both times; but the everlasting attempt, even when it succeeds, to be clever and amusing, is the worse of the two. People try to say brilliant rather than true things; they not only catch eager hold of the superficial and ridiculous in other persons and in events generally, but, from constantly looking out for subjects for jokes, and *mots*, and satire, they become possessed of a kind of sore susceptibility themselves, and are afraid of their own working selves, and dare not give way to any expression of feeling, or any noble indignation or enthusiasm. This kind of wearying wit is far different from humour, which wells up and forces its way out irrepressibly, and calls forth smiles and laughter, but not very far apart from tears. Depend upon it, some of Madame de Sable's friends had been moved in a most abundant and genial measure. They knew how to narrate, too. Very simple, say you? I say, no! I believe the art of telling a story is born with some people, and these have it to perfection; but all might acquire some expertness in it, and ought to do so, before launching out into the muddled, complex, hesitating, broken, disjointed, poor, bald accounts of events which have neither unity, nor colour, nor life, nor end in them, that one sometimes hears.

But as to the rational parties that are in truth so irrational, when all talk up to an assumed character, instead of showing themselves what they really are,

and so extending each other's knowledge of the infinite and beautiful capacities of human nature—whenever I see the grave, sedate faces, with their good but anxious expression, I remember how I was once, long ago, at a party like this ; every one had brought out his or her wisdom, and aired it for the good of the company; one or two had, from a sense of duty, and without any special living interest in the matter, improved us by telling us of some new scientific discovery, the details of which were all and each of them wrong, as I learnt afterwards ; if they had been right, we should not have been any the wiser—and just at the pitch when any more useful information might have brought on congestion of the brain, a stranger to the town—a beautiful, audacious, but most feminine romp—proposed a game, and such a game, for us wise men of Gotham ! But she (now long still and quiet after her bright life, so full of pretty pranks) was a creature whom all who looked on loved; and with grave, hesitating astonishment we knelt round a circular table at her word of command. She made one of the circle, and producing a feather out of some sofa pillow, she told us she should blow it up into the air, and whichever of us it floated near, must puff away to keep it from falling on the table. I suspect we all looked like Keeley in the *Camp at Chdbham*, and were surprised at our own obedience to this ridiculous, senseless mandate, given with a graceful imperiousness, as if it were too royal to be disputed. We knelt on, puffing away with the utmost intentness, looking like a set of elderly——

'Fools I' No, my dear sir. I was going to say elderly cherubim. But making fools of ourselves was better than making owls, as we had been doing.

I will mention another party, where a game of some kind would have been a blessing. It was at a very respectable tradesman's house. We went at half-past four, and found a well-warmed, handsome sitting-room, with block upon block of unburnt coal behind the fire; on the table there was a tray with wine and cake, oranges and almonds and raisins, of which we were

urged to partake. In half an hour came tea ; none of your flimsy meals, with wafer bread and butter, and three biscuits and a half. This was a grave and serious proceeding—tea, coffee, bread of all kinds, cold fowl, tongue, ham, potted meats—I don't know what. Tea lasted about an hour, and then the cake and wine-tray was restored to its former place. The stock of subjects of common interest was getting low, and, in spite of our goodwill, long stretches of silence occurred, producing a stillness, which made our host nervously attack the fire, and stir it up to a yet greater glow of intense heat; and the hostess invariably rose at such times, and urged us to ' eat another maccaroon \ The first I revelled in, the second I enjoyed, the third I got through, the fourth I sighed over, the fifth reminded me uncomfortably of that part of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* where he feeds a donkey with macoaroons—and when, at the sight of the sixth, I rose to come away, a burst of imploring, indignant surprise greeted me: ' You are surely never going before supper !' I stopped. I ate that supper. Hot jugged hare, hot roast turkey, hot boiled ham, hot apple-tart, hot toasted cheese. No wonder I am old before my time. Now these good people were really striving, and taking pains, and laying out money, to make the evening pass agreeably, but the only way they could think of to amuse their guests was, giving them plenty to eat. If they had asked one of their children they could doubtless have suggested half a dozen games, which we could all have played at when our subjects of common interest failed, and which would have carried us over the evening quietly and simply, if not brilliantly. But in many a small assemblage of people, where the persons collected are incongruous, where talking cannot go on through so many hours, without becoming flat or laboured, why have we not oftener recourse to games of some kind ?

Wit, Advice, Bouts-rimes, Lights, Spanish Merchant, Twenty Questions—every one knows these, and many more, if they would only not think it beneath them to be called upon by a despairing hostess to play at them.

Of course to play them well requires a little more exertion of intellect than quoting other people's sense and wisdom, or misquoting science. But I do not think it takes as much thought and memory and consideration, as it does to be 'up' in the science of good eating and drinking. A profound knowledge of this branch of learning seems in general to have absorbed all the faculties before it could be brought to anything like perfection. So I do not consider games as entailing so much mental fatigue as a man must undergo before he is qualified to decide upon dishes. I once noticed the worn and anxious look of a famous diner-out, when called upon by his no less anxious host to decide upon the merits of a salad, mixed by no hands, as you may guess, but those of the host in question. The guest, doctor of the art of good living, tasted, paused, tasted again—and then, with gentle solemnity, gave forth his condemnatory opinion. I happened to be his next neighbour, and slowly turning his meditative full-moon face round to me, he gave me the valuable information that to eat a salad in perfection some one should be racing from lettuce to shalot, from shalot to endive, and so on, all the time that soup and fish were being eaten; that the vegetables should be gathered, washed, sliced, blended, eaten, all in a quarter of an hour. I bowed as in the presence of a master; and felt, no wonder his head was bald, and his face heavily wrinkled.

I have said nothing of books. Yet I am sure that if Madame de Sable lived now, they would be seen in her salon as part of its natural indispensable furniture; not brought out, and strewed here and there when 'company was coming', but as habitual presences in her room, wanting which, she would want a sense of warmth and comfort and companionship. Putting out books as a sort of preparation for an evening, as a means for making it pass agreeably, is running a great risk. In the first place, books are by such people, and on such occasions, chosen more for their outside than their inside. And in the next, they are the 'mere material with which wisdom (or wit) builds'; and if

persons don't know how to use the material, they will suggest nothing. I imagine Madame de Sablé would have the volumes she herself was reading, or those which, being new, contained any matter of present interest, left about, as they would naturally be. I could also fancy that her guests would not feel bound to talk continually, whether they had anything to say or not, but that there might be pauses of not unpleasant silence—a quiet darkness out of which they might be certain that the little stars would glimmer soon. I can believe that in such pauses of repose, some one might open a book, and catch on a suggestive sentence, might dash off again into a full flow of conversation. But I cannot fancy any grand preparations for what was to be said among people, each of whom brought the best dish in bringing himself; and whose own store of living, individual thought and feeling, and mother-wit, would be infinitely better than any cut-and-dry determination to devote the evening to mutual improvement. If people are really good and wise, their goodness and their wisdom flow out unconsciously, and benefit like sunlight. So, books for reference, books for impromptu suggestion, but never books to serve for texts to a lecture. Engravings fall under something like the same rules. To some they say everything; to ignorant and unprepared minds, nothing. I remember noticing this in watching how people looked at a very valuable portfolio belonging to an acquaintance of mine, which contained engraved and authentic portraits of almost every possible person; from king and kaiser down to notorious beggars and criminals; including all the celebrated men, women, and actors whose likenesses could be obtained. To some, this portfolio gave food for observation, meditation, and conversation. It brought before them every kind of human tragedy—every variety of scenery and costume and grouping in the background, thronged with figures called up by their imagination. Others took them up and laid them down, simply saying, 'This is a pretty face!' 'Oh, what a pair of eyebrows!' * Look at this queer dress !'

Yet, after all, having something to take up and to look at is a relief and of use to persons who, without being self-conscious, are nervous from not being accustomed to society. O Cassandra ! Remember when you, with your rich gold coins of thought, with your noble power of choice expression, were set down, and were thankful to be set down, to look at some paltry engravings, just because people did not know how to get at your ore, and you did not care a button whether they did or not, and were rather bored by their attempts, the end of which you never found out. While I, with my rattling, tinselly rubbish, was thought 'agreeable and an acquisition !' You would have been valued at Madame de Sable's, where the sympathetic and intellectual stream of conversation would have borne you and your golden fragments away with it, by its soft, resistless, gentle force.

VI
FRENCH LIFE

Being three essays that appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*
April, May, and June, 1864.

FRENCH LIFE

I

Paris, February, 1862.

WE went to-day along the Boulevard Sevastopol, Rive Gauche, to pay a call. I knew the district well about six years ago, when it was a network of narrow tortuous streets; the houses high, irregular, picturesque, historical, dirty, and unhealthy. I used to have much difficulty in winding my way to certain points in the Quartier Latin from the Faubourg St. Germain, where I was staying. Now, the Hotel Cluny is enclosed in a neat garden, the railings of which run alongside of the Boulevard Sevastopol; a little farther on the same side to the left, the Sorbonne Church is well exposed to view; and the broad artery of the new Boulevard runs up to the Luxembourg gardens, making a clear passage for air and light through the densely populated quartier. It is a great gain in all material points; a great loss to memory and to that kind of imagination which loves to repeople places. The street in which our friend lived was old and narrow; the trottoir was barely wide enough for one uncrinolined person to walk on; and it was impossible to help being splashed by the passing carriages, which indeed threw dirt upon the walls of the houses till there was a sort of dado of mud all along the street. In the grander streets of former days this narrowness did not signify; the houses were of the kind called 'entre cour et jardin' (of which there are specimens in Piccadilly), with the porter's lodge, the offices, and stables abutting on the street; the grand court intervening between the noise and bustle and the high dwelling-house of the family, which out-topped the low buildings in front. But in the humbler street to which we were bound there were few houses 'entre cour et jardin'; and I could not help wondering how people

bore to live in the perpetual noise, and heavy closeness of atmosphere. The friend we were going to see, Madame A——, had lived in this street for many years. Her rooms were lofty and tolerably large. The gloomy outlook of the long narrow windows was concealed by the closed muslin curtains, which were of an irreproachable whiteness. I knew the rooms of old. We had to pass through the *salle-a-manger* to the *salon* ; and from thence we, being intimate friends, went on into her bedroom. The *salle-a-manger* had an inlaid floor, very slippery, and without a carpet; the requisite chairs and tables were the only furniture. The pile of clean dinner-plates was placed on the top of a china stove; a fire would be lighted in it, half-an-hour before dinner, which would warm the plates as well as the room. The *salon* was graced with the handsome furniture of thirty or forty years ago ; but it was a room to be looked at rather than used. Indeed, the family only sit in it on Sunday evenings, when they receive. The floor was *parquete* in this room, but here and there it was covered with small brilliantly-coloured Persian carpets : before the sofa, underneath the central table, and before the fire. There were the regular pieces of furniture which were *de rigueur* in a French household of respectability when Madame A——was married: the gilt vases of artificial flowers, each under a glass shade ; the clock, with a figure of a naked hero, supposed to represent Achilles, leaning on his shield (the face of the clock); and the '*gueridon*' (round, marble-topped table), which was so long the one indispensable article in a French drawing-room. But, altogether, Madame A——'s *salon* does not look very habitable, and we pass on into the bedroom, which has little enough of daylight coming through the high narrow windows, but is bright and home-like from the brilliant blaze and flicker of the wood-fire on the hearth. In the far corner is the bed: a grand four-post, with looped-up draperies of some warm colour, which I dare say would prove to be faded if one were to see them close in full country daylight; but which look like a pictorial background to the rest

of the room. On each side of the fire is a great arm-chair ; in front is a really comfortable sofa: not elegant, nor hard, nor gilded like the sofas in the drawing-room, but broad, low, clean, fit to serve, as I dare say it has done before now, for a bed on occasion. Parallel to this, but farther from the fire, is a table with Madame's work-box; her two pots of flowers, looking as fresh as if the plants were growing in a country garden; the miniatures of her children, set up on little wooden easels; and her books of devotion. But Madame reads more than books of devotion. She is up in the best modern literature of more than one country. To-day we were exceedingly struck with her great powers of narration. She seizes the points of a story and reproduces them in the most effective simple language. She is certainly aided in this by her noble expressive face, still bearing traces of remarkable beauty in the severe and classical style. Her gesticulation, too, is unlike what we commonly call French; there is no rapid action of the graceful hands and arms, but a gentle and slow movement from time to time, as if they sympathized with the varying expression of her face. She sat by her fireside, dressed in black, her constant colour; which she wears as appropriate to her age rather than to her condition, for she is not a widow. Every now and then she addressed a few tender words to an invalid of the family; showing that with all her lively interest in the histories she was telling us, her eye and ear were watchful for the slightest signs of discomfort in another. . . . Our conversation drifted along to the old French custom of receiving in bed. It was so highly correct, that the newly-made wife of the Due de St. Simon went to bed, after the early dinner of those days, in order to receive her wedding-visits. The Duchesse de Maine, of the same date, used to have a bed in the ball-room at Sceaux, and to lie (or half-sit) there, watching the dancers. I asked if there was not some difference in dress between the day and the night occupation of the bed. But Madame A——seemed to think there was very little.

The custom was put an end to by the Revolution ; but one or two great ladies preserved the habit until their death. Madame A——had often seen Madame de Villette receiving in bed; she always wore white gloves, which Madame A——imagined was the only difference between the toilette of day and night. Madame de Villette was the adopted daughter of Voltaire, and, as such, all the daring innovators upon the ancient modes of thought and behaviour came to see her, and pay her their respects. She was also the widow of the Marquis de Villette, and as such she received the homage of the ladies and gentlemen of the ancien regime. Altogether her weekly receptions must have been very amusing, from Madame A——'s account. The old Marquise lay in bed; around her sat the company; and, at the crisis of the visit, she would desire her *femme de chambre* to hand round the heart of Voltaire, which he had bequeathed to her, and which she preserved in a little golden case. Then she would begin and tell anecdotes about the great man; great to her, and with some justice. For he had been travelling in the South of France, and had stopped to pass the night in a friend's house, where he was very much struck by the deep sadness on the face of a girl of seventeen, one of his friend's daughters; and, on inquiring the cause he found out that, in order to increase the portions of the others, this young woman was to be sent into a convent—a destination which she extremely disliked. Voltaire saved her from it by adopting her, and promising to give her a * dot ' sufficient to insure her a respectable marriage. She had lived with him for some time at Ferney before she became Marquise de Villette. (You will remember the connexion existing between her husband's family and Madame de Maintenon, as well as with Bolingbroke's second wife.)

Madame de Villette must have been an exceedingly inconsequente person, to judge from Madame A——'s very amusing description of her conversation. Her sentences generally began with an assertion which was

disproved by what followed. Such as, 'It was wonderful with what ease Voltaire uttered witty impromptus. He would shut himself up in his library all the morning, and in the evening he would gracefully lead the conversation to the point he desired, and then bring out the verse or the epigram he had composed for the occasion, in the most unpremeditated and easy manner!' Or, 'He was the most modest of men. When a stranger arrived at Ferney, his first care was to take him round the village, and to show him all the improvements he had made, the good he had done, the church he had built. And he was never easy until he had given the newcomer the opportunity of hearing his most recent compositions.' Then she would show an old grandfather's high-backed, leather arm-chair, in which she said he wrote his *Henriade*, forgetting that he was at that time quite a young man.

Madame A——said that Madame de Villette's receptions were worth attending, because they conveyed an idea of the ways of society before the Revolution. There was one old French marquis, a contemporary of Madame de Villette's, who regularly came with his chapeau-bras under his arm, to pay her his respects, and to talk over the good old times when both were young. Voltaire had called her 'Belle et bonne', and by these epithets her friend the Marquis saluted her to her dying day.

'Belle et bonne Marquise' (and she had long ceased to be 'belle'; even the other adjective was a matter of doubt), 'do you know why I preserve this old hat with so much care,—with reverence I may say?' said this friend to her one day. 'Years ago it had the privilege of saving your lovely cheek from being cut by the glass of your carriage-window, when by some maladroitness you were on the point of being overturned, ma belle et bonne Marquise.'

February.—We are staying with a French family of the middle class; and I cannot help noticing the ways of daily life here, so different from those of England. We are a party of seven; and we live on the fourth

floor, which is extensive enough to comprise the two sitting-rooms, the bedrooms, the kitchen, and the chamber for the two maids. I do not dislike this plan of living on a flat, especially as it is managed in Paris. I have seen the same mode adopted in Edinburgh and Rome, besides other continental towns; but, as in these towns there is no concierge, I have never liked it so much as in Paris. Here it seems to me to save one servant's work, at the least: and besides this, there is the moral advantage of uniting mistresses and maids in a more complete family bond. I remember a very charming young married lady, who had been brought by her husband from the country to share his home in Ashley Buildings, Victoria Street, saying that she had two of her former Sunday scholars as servants; but that, if they had had to live in the depths of a London kitchen, she should not have tried to have brought them out of their primitive country homes; as it was, she could have them under her own eye without any appearance of watching them; and, besides this, she could hear of their joys and sorrows, and, by taking an interest in their interests, induce them to care for hers. French people appear to me to live in this pleasant kind of familiarity with their servants—a familiarity which does not breed contempt, in spite of proverbs. The concierge here receives letters and parcels for the different families in the house, which he generally brings up himself, or sends by one of his family. Sometimes they are kept in the compartments appropriated to each family in the conciergerie; and any one of the inhabitants who may return to the house looks in, and seldom fails to have the complaisance to bring up letters, cards, or parcels for any family living below his etage. The concierge is paid by the landlord for these services, in which is included the carrying up or down of a moderate quantity of luggage. A certain portion of every load of wood or coal belongs to the concierge as payment for carrying it up to the respective apartments for which it is destined. If he cleans the shoes and knives for any family, they pay him separately. He also expects

an etrenne from each of the locataires on New Year's Day; say a napoleon from each family, and half that sum from any bachelors lodging in the house. Very often he knows how to wait at table, and his services are available for a consideration to any one living in the house. But he must always provide a deputy in case of absence from his post. As the concierges are, however, generally married, this does not press very hard upon him. In the house where we are staying the custom is for every one going out at night to lock up their apartment, desiring the servants to go to bed at the usual time; to hide the key in some well-known and customary place (under the door-mat for instance), and to take a bed-candle down to the conciergerie. When we return from our party, or whatever it may be, we ring the bell, and the concierge,—perhaps asleep in bed in his little 'cabinet',—pulls the string, and the latch flies up, as in the days of Little Red Riding-hood; we come in, shut the great porte-cochere, open the ever-unfastened door of the conciergerie, light our own particular bed-candles at the dim little lamp, pick out any letters, &c, belonging to us which may have come in by the late post, and go quietly upstairs. This sounds unsafe to our English ears, as it would seem that any one might come in; but I believe there is a small window of inspection in all conciergeries which may be used in cases of suspicion. The French at any rate esteem it more safe than our self-contained houses: and French servants in a modest household, where no personal attendants are kept, would be very indignant if they had to sit up for their mistresses' gaieties. For, as a rule, French servants are up earlier than English ones.

In this house is a *salle-a-manger* with a fire-place and a parquetted floor without a carpet. The shape is an oblong, with the two corners near the door of entrance cut off to form cupboards. The walls are wainscoted with deal, that is afterwards painted oak. The **window-curtains** and portieres are made of handsome **dark** Algerine stripe. As far as I can see, carpets are

not considered a necessary article of furniture in France, but portieres are. And certainly the rich folds of the latter, and the polished floors, off which every crumb or drop of grease is cleansed immediately, take my fancy very much. A door on one side of the windows opens into Madame's room; on the opposite side, another leads into the drawing-room. If we were French we should have a cup of *café au lait* and piece of bread brought into our bedrooms every morning; but *in* deference to us as strangers, a tray (without a napkin) with sugar, a copper pan containing the boiling milk just taken off the kitchen fire, and the white covered jug of bright strong coffee, is put on the dining-room table. Also, in deference to our English luxury, there is a plate of butter: our French friends never take butter and not always bread at this early breakfast. But where is the bread? I look round, and at last see a basket about a yard high standing on the ground near the fire-place; it is of dimensions just sufficient to hold a roll of bread a yard long and more, and about as thick as a man's wrist. It looks like a veritable staff of life. None of our French friends think of completing their *toilette* for this early breakfast, which, indeed, as I have said, they would have taken in their bedrooms if we had not been here. Nor, indeed, is it any family gathering. I sometimes see the old black skirts of our hostess quickly vanishing into her bedroom at the sound of my approach; and perhaps I find Nanette, the youngest daughter, in a coloured petticoat and white camisole, her thick black hair put neatly away under a cap which is on the full-dress side of a nightcap. She reddens a little as she wishes me 'Bon jour', as she knows that hers is not the finished morning *toilette* of an English young lady. But two hours hence, who so neat as Nanette in her clean print gown of some delicate pattern, her black hair all brushed and plaited, and waved, and creped? for now she has done her household work: perhaps she has helped Julie to make her own bed; she has certainly dusted her room, with all its knick-knacks and ornaments.

Madame, too, has been out to market; half across Paris, it may be, in her old black gown, to some shop she knows of, where she fancies such and such an article can be had better or cheaper. She has gone by the omnibus, taking advantage of the 'correspondance', by which, on payment of thirty centimes, and declaring her wish for a 'correspondance' ticket to the conducteur of that which passes her door, she is conveyed in it to the general omnibus office, close to the Place des Victoires, where she may have to wait for a few minutes for an omnibus going in the direction for which her 'correspondance' ticket is taken. If she has to return by any of the midway stations at which omnibuses stop, she has to purchase a ticket with a number upon it at the 'bureau', and await her turn, at busy times of the day—say at five o'clock, at the Place Palais Royal. Her number may be eighty-seven, while the next grenelle omnibus is filling with twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, and so on, as the conducteur calls the numbers. But in the morning they are not so crowded, and Madame is always at home and dressed with delicate neatness by eleven o'clock, the time of our 'second dejeuner', or what we should call lunch in England. This breakfast consists generally of cold meat, a rechauffe of some entree or dressed vegetables of the day before, an omelette, bread, wine, and a pot of confitures. For us our kind hostess has tea, but I can see that this is not their ordinary custom. It is curious to see how little butter is eaten in a French family; they, however, make up for this by the much greater use of it in cookery; for vegetables form a dish by themselves, always requiring either gravy, butter, or oil, in their preparation. After lunch is over, we all sit down to work; perhaps Nanette practises a little, and perhaps some of us go out for a walk, but always with some object, either of pleasure or business. A Frenchwoman never takes a walk in the English constitutional sense. There are books about in the salon, but not so many as in England. They have nothing equivalent to 'Mudie' in Paris, and the books at their circulating libraries are of so very

mixed a character, that no careful mother likes to have them lying about on the table. Indeed 'novels and romances' are under much the same ban as they were in England seventy or eighty years ago. There is the last *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and a pamphlet or two besides, lying by Madame's work-basket, and there are the standard French authors in the bookcase in the cupboard. Yet somehow my friends always know what is going on in the literary world of Paris. The newspapers here are so doctored that they are deprived of much of the interest which usually attaches to political news; but I generally see *La Presse* lying about.

Once a week Madame 'receives'. Then the covers are taken off the furniture in the salon, a fresh nosegay is put in the vase, Madame and Mademoiselle and Nanette put off their final dressing for the day till after the second breakfast, and then appear in the gowns they wear on *jours de fetes*. Monsieur keeps out of the way, but nevertheless is much disappointed if when we all meet together at dinner we have not accumulated a little stock of news and gossip to amuse him with. Madame's day of reception is well known to all her friends and acquaintances, who make a point of calling on her two or three times a season. But sometimes no one comes at all on the Thursdays, and it is rather flat to sit from two to five or thereabouts in our company dresses, and company faces, all for no use. Then again, on other Thursdays, the room is quite full, and I sit and admire Madame's tact. A new arrival comes up to her, and without appearing to displace any one, the last comer invariably finds an empty chair by the lady of the house. The hostess also accompanies every departing guest to the room-door, and they part with pretty speeches of affection and good-will, sincere enough I do not doubt, but expressive of just those feelings which the English usually keep in the background.

On Thursdays we have generally much the same sort of dinner that in England we associate with the idea of washing-days, for both Julie and Gabrielle have been

busy admitting or letting out visitors ; or at any rate Madame anticipated this probability when she ordered dinner.

The dinner-hour is six o'clock ; real, sharp six. And here I may warn my English friends of the necessity of punctuality to the hour specified in a French dinner invitation. In England, a quarter of an hour beyond the time is considered as nothing, and half an hour's grace is generally acceded. But it is not so in France ; and it is considered very ill-breeding to be behind the time. And this remark applies not merely to the middle-class life I have been describing, but to the highest circles. Indeed, the French have an idea that punctuality is a virtue unknown among the English ; and numerous were the stories of annoyance from English unpunctuality which the French officers brought home from the Crimea. But to return to our day at Madame——'s. We do not dress for dinner, as we should do in England ; that ceremony, as they consider it—refreshment, as we should call it—is reserved for the days when we go into society, and then it takes place after dinner.

We have soup—always good. On Fridays we have fish ; not from any religious feeling, but because that is the day when the best fish is brought into Paris, and it is not very fresh even then. Then we have a made dish, or two or three times a week the bouilli from which the stock for the soup is made—a tender, substantial, little hunch of boiled beef of no known joint. Then come the vegetables, cooked with thick rich gravy, which raises them to the rank they hold in a French dinner, instead of being merely an accessory to the meat, as they are in England. The roti and the salad follow. The mixing of the salad is too important an operation to be trusted to a servant. As we are here, Madame does not like to leave her visitors ; but I see Gabrielle peep from behind the portieres, and make a sign to Mademoiselle, about five minutes before dinner, and Mademoiselle goes into the *salle-a-manger*, and Madame rather loses the thread of her discourse, and

looks wistfully after her daughter; for if Monsieur is particular about anything, it is about his salads. Strictly speaking, Madame tells me, the vegetables ought to be gathered while the soup is on the table, washed and cleansed while we are eating the bouilli, ana sliced and dressed with the proper accompaniments while the roti is being brought in. Madame's mother always mixed it at the table, she says, and I have no doubt Madame follows the hereditary precedent herself when she has no foreign visitors staying with her. After this, a chocolate custard, or a sweet omelette, a puree of apples, perhaps ; and then dessert is put on the table—a bit of gruyere cheese under a glass, and the ' Quatre Mendiants', i. e. nuts, almonds, raisins, figs, called after the four begging orders of friars, because these fruits are so cheap that any beggar can have them.

We have a little cup of black coffee all round when we return to the salon, and if we were not here our friends would have nothing more that night; but out of compliment to us there is tea at nine o'clock, that is to say, there is hot water with a spoonful of tea soaked in it. They look upon this mixture in much the same light as we consider *sal volatile*—not quite a dram, but as something that ought to be used medicinally, and not as a beverage.

March 10th.—Madame and I have had a long talk about prices, expenditure, &c. As far as I can make out, provisions are to the full as dear as in London; house-rent is dearer, servants' wages are much the same. She pays her cook and housemaid four hundred and fifty and four hundred francs respectively. But the household work is differently arranged to what it is in England. The cook takes the entire charge of a certain portion of the apartment, bedrooms included; the housemaid attends to the rest, waits at table, helps one of the daughters of the house to get up the fine linen, and renders them any little services they may require in dressing. The cook is enabled to take part of the household work because it is the custom in Paris to prepare provisions in the shops where they are sold, so

that the cook can buy a sweetbread, or small joint, or poultry, ready larded, the spinach ready boiled and pulped for a puree, vegetables all cut into shapes for her soup, and so on. The milk, which I had remarked upon as so remarkably good, is, it appears, subjected to the supervision of inspectors armed with lactometres, delicately weighted glass tubes marked with degrees : this ought to sink up to a particular number in good unadulterated milk, and all that is brought into Paris is tested in this and other ways at the various barriers. It is very difficult, however, to obtain milk in the afternoons or evenings, even at the cremeries, without ordering it beforehand. The Government regulates the price of bread, which is lower in Paris than in the neighbouring towns; the legal tariff is exposed in every baker's shop, and false weights and measures severely punished. As to dress, from what I can gather, I think that good articles bear the same price as in England ; but in our shops it is difficult to meet with an inferior article in even moderately good taste, while in France those who are obliged to consider expense can find cheap materials of the most elegant design. Then French ladies give up so much more thought and time to dress than the English do ; I mean in such ways as changing a gown repeatedly in the course of a day if occasion requires, taking care never to wear a better dress when an inferior one will do, no, not even for five unnecessary minutes. And when handsome articles are taken off, they are put by with as much care as if they were sleeping babies laid down in a cot. Silver paper is put between every fold of velvet or of silk; cushions of paper are placed so as to keep the right sit of any part; ribbons are rolled up; soiled spots are taken out immediately; and thus the freshness of dress which we so much admire in Frenchwomen is preserved; but, as I said, at a considerable expense of time and thought in the case of people of moderate means. Madame——declares that she knows many a young French couple who have reduced their table to the lowest degree of meagreness, in order

that the wife (especially) might be well dressed. She says that dress is the only expenditure for which a Frenchwoman will go in debt. I remember some years ago hearing a letter from the Prince de la Ligne read at Lord E——'s. He gave an account in it of the then recent coronation at Moscow, and went on to speak of the French Emperor's politics. As one of his engines of influence, the Prince gravely named 'la luxe de la toilette', as an acknowledged political means. At the time, I remember, I wondered in silence, but things have come to my knowledge since then which make me understand what was then meant. Six years ago a friend took me to call on Madame de——. It was a raw, splashy, February day, and as we walked through the slushy streets, half-covered with melting snow, my friend told me something about the lady we were going to see. Madame de——was married to the eldest son of a Frenchman of rank; she herself belonged to an old family. Her husband was a distinguished member of one of the Academies, and held a high position among those who had devoted themselves to his particular branch of recondite knowledge. Madame de——was one of the 'lionnes' of Paris, and as a specimen of her class we were now going to see her. She and her husband had somewhere about seven thousand a year, but for economy's sake they lived in an apartment rather than a house. They had, I think, two or three children. I recollect feeling how out of place my substantial winter dress and my splashed boots were, the moment I entered the little hall or ante-room to her apartment. The floor was covered with delicate Indian matting, and round the walls ran a bordering of snowdrops, crocuses, violets, and primroses, as fresh and flowering as if they were growing in a wood, but all planted by some Paris gardener in boxes of soil, and renewed perpetually. Then we went into the lady's own boudoir. She was about thirty, of a very peculiar style of beauty, which grew upon me every moment I looked. She had black hair, long black curling eyelashes, long soft grey eyes, a smooth olive skin, a dimple, and most beautiful teeth.

She was in mourning ; her thick hair fastened up with great pins of pearls and amethyst, her ear-rings, brooch, bracelets, all the same. Her gown was of black watered silk, lined with violet silk (wherever a lining could be seen), her boots black watered silk, her petticoat of stiff white silk, with a wreath of violet-coloured embroidery just above the hem. Her manners were soft and caressing to the last degree ; and when she was told that I had come to see her as a specimen of her class, she was prettily amused, and took pains to show me all her arrangements and ' coquetteries '. In her boudoir there was not a speck of gilding ; that would have been bad taste, she said. Around the mirrors, framed in white polished wood, creeping plants were trained so that the tropical flowers fell over and were reflected in the glass. There was a fire, fed with cedar-wood chips ; and the crimson velvet curtains on each side of the grate had perfumes quilted within their white silk linings. The window-curtains were trimmed with point lace. We went through a little antechamber to Madame de——'s bedroom—an oblong room, with her bed filling up half the space on one side ; the other all wardrobe, with six or seven doors, covered with looking-glass, and opening into as many closets. After we had admired the rare Palissy ware, the lace draperies of the mirror, the ornaments on the toilette-table, and the pink silk curtains of the bed, she laughed her little soft laugh, and told me that now I should see how she amused herself as she lay in bed of a morning : and pulling something like a bell-rope which hung at the head of her bed, the closet doors flew open, and displayed gowns hung on wire frames (such as you may see at any milliner's) : gowns for the evening, and gowns for the morning, with the appropriate head-dresses, chaussures, and gloves, lying by them.

' I have not many gowns,' said she. ' I do not like having too many, for I never wear them after they are a month old ; I give them to my maid then, for I never wear anything that is old-fashioned.'

I **was** quite satisfied with my ' lionne .' She was

quite as much out of the way of anything I had ever seen before as I had expected. But to go on with the bearing she had upon the Prince de la Ligne's letter, I must not forget to say that Madame de——expressed very strong political opinions, and all distinctly anti-Bonapartean. Among other things she mentioned, was the fact that when her husband went to pay his respects, as a member of the Academy of——, to the Emperor at the Tuileries, she would not allow him to use their carriage (nor indeed was he willing to do it, but went in a hackney coach), saying that the arms of the de——s should never be seen in the courts of a usurper. Two years afterwards I came to Paris, and I inquired after M. and Madame de——. To my infinite surprise, I heard that he had become a senator, one of that body who receive about a thousand pounds a year from Government, and who are admitted to that dignity by the express will of the Emperor. How in the world could it have come about? And Madame, too, at all the balls and receptions at the Tuileries. The arms of the de——were no longer invisible in the courts of a usurper. What was the reason of this change? Madame's extravagance. Their income would not suffice for her 'luxe de la toilette', and the senator's salary was a very acceptable addition.

April 24th.—We were asked to go in some evening, 'pour dire le petit bon soir,' at a neighbour's house. Accordingly we walked thither about eight o'clock. M. E——'s house is one of the most magnificent in this quartier: it is on the newly-built Boulevard de Sevastopol. M. E——himself is a leading man in his particular branch of trade, which, in fact, he has made himself; and he is now a French millionaire, as different from an English one as francs are different from pounds. I remember when I first knew monsieur and madame, they lived in an apartment over the shop, and this was situated in one of the narrow old streets of the Quartier Latin. I was asked there to dinner, and I had to make my way through bales of goods, that were piled as high as walls on each side of the narrow passage

through the shop. I went through madame's bedroom, furnished with purple velvet and amber satin, to the room where we assembled before dinner. It was a weekly dinner, at which all M. E——'s family came, as a matter of course; and any one connected with him in business was also sure of finding a place there. The table was spread with every luxury, and there was almost an ostentatious evidence of wealth, which contrasted oddly and simply with the hard signs of business and trade down below. I fancy their way of living at that time must have been like that of the great old city families of the last century. And there was another resemblance. Two generations ago it was customary for our own London merchants to retain their married children under the paternal roof, for the first year at least; and so it was at M. E——'s. His own child, his wife's children—for they had each been married before—lived in the same house as he did, both in winter and summer, in town and country. Yet the younger generation were all married, and had families. All the grandchildren, little and big, were assembled at these weekly dinners; if there was not room for them at the principal table, there were nurses and servants ready to attend upon them at side-tables. And now, when increasing and well-deserved prosperity has enabled M. E——to remove into the large hotel to which we have been to-night, to 'say our little good evening', I find that his sons and his daughters, his maid-servants and his men-servants, have all migrated with him in truly patriarchal fashion. We did not see them all to-night, for some have already gone into the country, whither the others are going to follow in a day or two. Out of compliment to us, tea was brought in—tea at a guinea the pound, as Madame E——informed us. I saw that the family did not like the drink well enough to wish to join us. There was a little telegraphing as to who was to be the victim, and keep us in company; and the young lady singled out as the tea-drinker for the family took care to put in so much sugar that I doubt if she could recognize the flavour of any-

thing else. The others excused themselves from partaking by saying—one, that she had been so feverish all day; another said that he felt himself a good deal excited, and so on. Sugar is considered by the French as fitted to soothe the nerves, and to induce sleep. I really am becoming a convert to this idea, and can take my glass of eau sucrée as well as any one before going to bed; indeed, we have a little tray in our bedroom, on which is a Bohemian glass carafe of water, a goblet with a gold spoon, and a bowl of powdered sugar. But I think it is a drink for society, not for solitude. Inspired by the example of others, I relish it; but I never tipple at it in private.

Somehow to-night we began to talk upon the custom of different families of relations living together. I said it would never do in England. They asked me, why not? And, after some reflection, I was obliged to confess we all liked our own ways too much to be willing to give them up at the will of others—were too independent, too great lovers of our domestic privacy. I am afraid I gave the impression that we English were too ill-tempered and unaccommodating, for I drew down upon myself a vehement attack upon the difficulties thrown in the way of young people's marrying in England.

'Even when there is a great large house, and a table well-spread enough to fill many additional mouths, they tell me that in England the parents will go on letting their sons and daughters waste the best years of their lives in long engagements,' said Madame E——.

'That does not sound to me amiable.'

'It is not the custom in France,' put in her husband.

* You English are apt to think us bad-tempered, because we talk loud, and use a good deal of gesticulation; but I believe we are one of the most good-tempered nations going, in spite of the noise we make.'

By and by some one began to speak of *Les Misérables*; and M. E——, like a prosperous merchant as he is, objected to the socialist tendency of the book. From that we went on to talking about a greve (or strike)

which had lately taken place among the builders in Paris. They had obtained their point, whatever it was, because it was the supreme aim of the Government to keep the 'blouses'—the Faubourg St. Antoine—in good humour; and 'Government,' in fact, has the regulation of everything in France. Monsieur E—— said that the carpenters were now about to strike, encouraged by the success of the builders, and that he heard from his own carpenter that the object they were going to aim at was that skilled and unskilled labour should be paid at the same rate—viz. five francs a day. He added that the carpenter, his informant, looked upon this project with disfavour, saying it might be all very well as long as there was enough of work for all; but when it grew scarce, none but the best workmen would have any employment, as no one would send for an inferior craftsman when he could have a first-rate one for the same money.

May 4th.—It is becoming intolerably hot in Paris. I almost wish the builders would strike, for my part, for the carnages scarcely cease rumbling past my open windows before two; and at five the men are clapping and hammering at the buildings of the new boulevard opposite. I have had to go into the narrow streets of the older parts of Paris lately; and the smells there are insufferable—a mixture of drains and cookery, which makes one loathe one's food. Yet how interesting these old streets are! and the people inhabiting them are quite different to those of the more fashionable quarters: they have so much more originality of character about them; and yet one sees that they are the descendants of the Dames de la Halle, who went out to Versailles on the memorable fifth of October. I see curious little customs too in these more primitive parts of the town. Every morning a certain number of Sisters of Charity put themselves at the disposition of the Mairie of the Arrondissements. There were formerly only twelve arrondissements; but now, owing to the extension of the city of Paris, there are twenty. In the former days, before the annexation of the suburbs

to the city in 1859, by which the number of the arrondissements was increased to twenty, it was 'slang' to speak of any disreputable person as belonging to the 'treizieme', an arrondissement not recognized by any law. Every such division has a 'mairie' and two 'adjoints', who are responsible for the well-doing and well-being of the district in their charge. I see the 'Sisters' leaving the Mairie on their errands of mercy early every morning. About the same time the chiffonier comes his rounds, eagerly raking out the heaps of dust and rubbish before the doors, then by and by—generally, however, after eleven, that universal meal-hour—I meet an old woman busily trotting along towards the Luxembourg Gardens, surrounded by fifteen or twenty little children, aged from two or three years to seven or eight. Their parents pay the old lady about ten centimes an hour to take their children out, and give them a walk or a game of play in the gardens. It is pretty to see her convoy her little regiment over a crossing: it reminds me of the old puzzle of the fox, the goose, and the bag of corn. The elder children are left in charge on one side while the very little ones are carried over; then one of the oldest is beckoned across and lectured on her care of them while the old woman trots back for the rest; and I notice she is much more despotic during her short reign of power than the old woman herself. At length they are past all dangers, and safe in the gardens, where they may make dirt-pies to their hearts' content, while their chaperone takes out her knitting and seats herself on a bench in their midst. Say she has fifteen children, and keeps them out for two hours, it makes her a little income of half-a-crown a day; and many a busy mother is glad that her child should have happy play and exercise, while she goes a-shopping, or does some other piece of house-keeping work, which would prevent her from attending properly to her child. Each 'mairie' has its *salle d'asile* (or infant school) and its *creche* (or public nursery), under the superintendence of the *sisters'; but perhaps these are for a lower class than my little

Luxembourg friends. Their mothers are, for the most part, tolerably well off, only not rich enough to keep a servant expressly for the children.

Then the shop-placards in these old-fashioned parts of the town are often amusing enough. For instance: the other day I saw a crowd in a by-street, near the Rue l'Ecole de Medecine, all intent upon a great piece of written paper put out of the window of a shop, where almost every article of woman's dress was to be sold. It was headed, in letters almost a quarter of a yard long,

MA FEMME EST FOLLE.

A person, of whom I asked the meaning, laughed a little as he said—

' Oh ! it is only a contrivance for attracting custom. He goes on to state, lower down in the paper, that his wife, being mad, offered certain gown-pieces for sale yesterday at a ruinous price (they are really only about half a franc lower than what you can get them for at any other shop); that he is miserable in the conflict he is undergoing between his honour and the prospect of the sacrifice he will have to make if he sells them at the price his wife offered them for; but, "Honour above all," they shall be sold at that price, and therefore every one had better rush in and buy.'

May 7th.—Seeing an apartment to let in the Place Royale, we went over it yesterday. I have always liked the looks of this stately old place: so full of historical associations too. Then, again, the quietness of it charms me ; it is almost like a cloister, for no carriages can come in; and the sheltered walks under the arcades must be very pleasant to the inhabitants on rainy days. The houses are built of very handsome red bricks with stone facings, and all after the same plan, designed by an architect of the time of Henry IV—about our Queen Elizabeth's reign; but if the Place Royale was in England we should date it, judging from the style of the architecture, a century later at least. It is more like the later additions to Hampton Court. There is

a pleasant square **in** the centre, with a fountain, shady chestnut trees, and gay flower-beds, and a statue of Louis XIII in the midst. Tradition says that it was either on this piece of ground or very near it that the famous mask took place in the old Palace des Tournelles, when, the dresses of the masquer scatching fire, King Charles VI, who was one of them, became mad in consequence of the fright, and to soothe his madness, our present playing-cards were invented. When first the present place was built, all the fashionable world rushed to secure houses in it. This was the old hotel of the De Rohans, that was Cardinal de Richelieu's before his Palais Cardinal—the present Palais Royal—was completed; in this house Madame de Sevigné was born—and so on. Now the ground floor, which was formerly occupied by the offices of the great houses above, is turned into shops, warehouses, and cafes of a modest and substantial kind ; and the upper floors are inhabited by respectable and well-to-do people, who do not make the least pretension to fashion. The apartment we went over consisted of five handsome and very lofty reception-rooms opening out of one another, and lighted by many high narrow windows opening on to a wide balcony at the top of the arcade. One or two of these rooms were panelled with looking-glass, but old-fashioned, in many pieces, not like our modern plates in size. Possibly it was Venetian, and dated from the times of the early proprietors. The great height of the rooms, as compared to their area, struck me much. Only two or three of the rooms had fire-places, and these were vast and cavernous. Besides the doors of communication between the rooms, there was, in each, one papered like the walls, opening into a passage which ran the whole length of the apartment. On the opposite side of this passage there were doors opening into the kitchens, storerooms, servants' bedrooms, &c.—so small, so close, so unhealthy. Yet in those days there were many servants and splendid **dinners**. Perhaps, however, some of the lacqueys slept on the upper floor, to which there is now no access from

the apartments au premier. At the end of the passage was the bedroom of the late proprietress, with a closet opening out of it for her maid. The bedroom was spacious and grand enough; but the closet—well, I suppose she *could* lie full length in it if she was not tall. The only provision for light and air was a window opening on to the passage. We inquired the rent of this apartment: 3,000 francs—£120. But perhaps Monsieur, le propriétaire, might reduce it to 2,500 francs—£100. The front rooms were charming, in their old-fashioned stateliness; but if I lived there, I should be sorely perplexed as to where my servants were to sleep.

May 10th.—Utterly weary of the noise and heat of Paris, we went out to St. Germain yesterday. I had never been there before; and now, once having been, I want to go agam. It is only half an hour from Paris by railroad. We could just see Malmaison as we went along, past pretty villas with small gardens brilliant with flowers, as French gardens always are. All the plants seem to go into flower; the mass of bloom almost over-balances the leaves. I believe this is done by skilful pruning and cutting-in. For instance, they take up their rose-trees at the beginning of February, and cut off the coarse red suckers and the superfluous growth of root. The hedges to these little suburban gardens are principally made of acacia, and pollard trees of the same species border nearly all the roads near Paris. In the far distance, on the left, almost against the horizon, we saw the famous Aqueduct de Marly, formerly used to conduct a part of the water to Versailles. I do not know what it is in the long line of aqueducts and viaducts which charms one. Is it the vanishing perspective which seems to lead the eye, and through it the mind, to some distant invisible country? or is it merely the association with other aqueducts, with the broken arches of the Claudian aqueduct, stretching across the Campagna, with Nismes, Ac. ? By means of some skilfully adjusted atmospherio power, the trains have of late years been conducted up to nearly the level

of **the** terrace at St. Germain's by a pretty steep inclined **plane**. We went up **a** few steps on leaving the station, **and** then we were on the plateau, the castle on our left, **and** a 'Place' at the entrance to the town on the right.

Nothing could be more desolate-looking than the Chateau; the dull red bricks of which it is built are painted dark-lead colour round the many tiers of windows—the glass in which is broken in numerous places, and its place here and there supplied by iron bars. Somehow, the epithet that rose to our lips on first seeing the colouring of the whole place, was *livid \ Nor is the present occupation of the grim old chateau one to suggest cheerful thoughts. After being a palace, it was degraded to a 'caserne' or barracks, and from that it has come down to a penitentiary. All round the building there is a deep dry area, railed round ; and now I have said all I can against St. Germain and recorded a faithful impression at first sight. But two minutes afterwards, there came **a** lovely slant of sunlight ; the sun had been behind a fine thunderous cloud, and emerged just at the right moment, causing all the projections in the chateau to throw deep shadows, brightening the tints in all the other parts, calling out the vivid colours in the flower-beds that surround the railing on the park side of the chateau, and half compelling us with its hot brilliancy, half luring us by the full fresh green it gave to the foliage, to seek the shelter of the woods not two hundred yards beyond the entrance to the park. We did not know where we were going to, we only knew that it was shadowed ground ; while the *English garden ' we passed over was all one blaze of sunlight and scarlet geraniums, and intensely blue lobelias, yellow calceolarias, and other hot-looking flowers. The space below the ancient mighty oaks **and** chestnut-trees was gravelled over, and given up to nursery-maids **and** children, with here and there an **invalid sitting on** the benches. Mary and Irene were **bent** upon sketching, so we wandered on to find the impossible point of view which is to combine **all** the **excellences desired by two** eager sketchers. So we

loitered over another hundred yards in the cool shade of the trees. And suddenly we were on the terrace, looking down over a plain steeped in sunlight, and extending for twenty miles and more. We all exclaimed with delight at its unexpectedness, and yet we had heard of the terrace at St. Germain, and associated it with James II and Maria d'Este all our lives. The terrace is a walk as broad as a street, on the edge of the bluff overhanging the silver tortuous Seine. It is bounded by a wall just the right height for one to lean upon and gaze and muse upon the landscape below. The mellow mist of a lovely day enveloped the more distant objects then, but we came again in the evening, when all the gay world of St. Germain was out and abroad on the terrace listening to the music of the band ; and we could then distinguish the aqueduct of Marly on our right, before us the old woods of Vesinet—that ill-omened relic of the ancient forest that covered the lie de France ; and here in the very centre is the star-shaped space called La Table de la Trahison ; here it was that Ganelan de Hauteville planned to betray Roland the Brave and the twelve peers of France, at Roncevaux ; and on the very spot the traitors were burnt to death by the order of Charlemagne. Beyond Vesinet rise the fortified heights of Mont Valerien and Montmartre ; so we know that the great city of Pans, with its perpetual noise and bustle, must be the cause of that thickening of the golden air just beyond the rising ground in the mid-distance. And some one found out—far away again—as far as eye could see, the spire of the Cathedral of St. Denis, and Irene fell to moralizing and comparing. The palace, she said, was ever present—an every-day fact to the great old kings who had inhabited it—and fertile life and busy pomp were the golden interspace which all but concealed from them the inevitable grave at St. Denis. But sermons always make me hungry ; and Irene's moralizing seemed to have the same effect on herself as well as on us, or else it was the ' nimble ' air—for that epithet of Shakespeare's exactly fits the clear brisk

air of St. Germain. They sat down to sketch, and I was sent in search of provender. I could not find a confectioner's, nor, indeed, would it have been of much use, for French confectioners only sell sugary or creamy nothings, extremely unsatisfactory to hungry people. So I went boldly into the restaurant to the right of the station—the Cafe Galle, I think it was called—and told the Dame du Comptoir my errand. I was in hopes that she would have allowed one of the garçons to accompany me with a basket of provisions, and some plates, and knives and forks ; perhaps some glasses, and a bottle of wine. But it seems that this was against the rules ; and all I could do was, to have the loan of a basket for a short time. Madame split up some oval rolls of delicious bread, buttered them, and placed some shoes of raw ham between the praces; and with these, and some fresh strawberries, I returned to my merry hungry sketchers, who were beginning to find that a seat on the hard gravel was not quite so agreeable as sitting on (comparatively) soft English turf. Yet the benches were too high for their purpose. After eating their lunch they relapsed into silence and hard work. It was rather dull for me, so I rambled about, struck up an acquaintanceship with one of the gardeners, and with a hackney-coachman, who tried to tempt me into engaging him for a 'course' to Versailles by Marly-le-Roi—the Marly, the famous Marly of Louis XIV, of which the faint vestiges alone remain in the marks of the old garden plots. I was tempted. I remembered what St. Simon says; how the king, weary of noise and of grandeur, found out a little narrow valley within a few miles of his magnificent and sumptuous Versailles ; there was a village near this hollow—for it really was nothing more—and this village was called Marly, whence the name of the palace or 'hermitage' which the king chose to have built. He thought that he went there to lead a simple and primitive life, away from the flattery of his courtiers. But it is not so easy for a king to avoid flattery. His architect built one great pavilion, which was to repre-

sent the sun; in it dwelt Louis XIV. There were twelve smaller pavilions surrounding this large one ; in them dwelt the planets, that is to say, the favourite courtiers of the time being. Every morning the king set out to visit his satellites ; there were six on one side of the parterre, six on the other; and their pavilions communicated with each other by means of close avenues of lime-trees. It was etiquette for these courtiers to salute the king, who had taken the sun for his device, by placing their right hand so as to shade their eyes from his brilliancy ; hence, some people say, our own military salute. Each courtier, as he was visited, followed the king in his round. At first, the king only came to Marly two or three times a year, staying from Wednesday to Saturday ; he only brought a comparatively moderate train; but in time he grew weary of his so-called simplicity, and the surrounding hills were scooped out to make gardens, and woods, and waterworks; and statues and courtiers thronged the place. Still, as no one could come here without express invitation from the king, to be of the parties to Marly was an object to be longed for, and asked for, and intrigued for. Indeed, it was the highest favour that could be obtained from royalty. At the last moment of awful suspense as to who was to go, the king's valet de chambre, Bontemps, went round with the invitations. There was no need of preparation, for in each pavilion there was a store of all things needed for masculine and feminine toilettes. Only two could inhabit a pavilion ; and, if a married lady was asked, her husband was included in the invitation, though not in the compliment. But to the end of his reign, the days for Marly were invariable. Sunday the King spent, as became the eldest son of the Church, at his parish of Versailles; Monday and Tuesday he allowed himself to be worshipped by the whole court at Versailles ; on Wednesday he went to Marly with the selected few. The amusements at Marly were high play, or, as it might be called, gambling; and a kind of bazaar, where the ladies dressed themselves up as Syrians, Japanese,

Greeks, what not, and played at keeping shop; the king furnishing the infinite variety of things sold. Louis XV and his unfortunate successor went to Marly occasionally; but the great days of Marly were over when Louis XIV died. After that, the Governor of St. Germain kept the keys of Marly, and occasionally lent the use of the pavilions to his private friends. But the Convention did not approve of this appropriation of national property, and the old statues, the remains of magnificent furniture, the marbles, and the mirrors, were sold for the good of the people. Some one bought the buildings and turned them into a spinning-mill; but it was not a profitable speculation, and by and by the whole place was pulled down; but I believe you may yet trace out the foundations of the Palace of the Sun. So that was why I wanted to see Marly—a place once so famous and so populous gone to ruin, nay, the very ruins themselves covered up by nature with her soft harmony of grass and flowers. How much would it cost, how long would it take, to go by Marly to Versailles in time to catch the last tram thence to Paris? It would take an hour, not including any stopping at Marly, and it would cost fifteen francs, also not including any stoppage at Marly. I was vexed at the man for thinking I could be so grossly imposed upon. Why, two francs an hour, with a decent *pour-boire*, was on the tariff of every carriage; so I turned away in silent indignation, heedless of his cries of * *Dix francs, madame. Tenez! huit, cinq, ce que vous vouiez, madame.* ' And immediately afterwards I was glad I had not planned to leave St. Germain an hour earlier than was necessary—the place looked so bright and cheerful, with all the gaily-dressed people streaming over the Place du Chateau to go to the Terrace and hear the band. I went into the restaurant, and ordered coffee to be ready at six, and had a little more gossip with the Dame du Comptoir. She told me that no one was admitted to see the interior of the castle, although it was no longer a penitentiary; that the air at St. Germain was better and purer than at any other place

within twenty miles of Paris ; and that I ought to come and see the forest of St. Germain at the time of the Fete des Loges—a sort of open-air festival held in the forest on the 30th of August; and all the waiters at liberty came forward to make a chorus in praise of the merry-go-rounds, mountebanks, wine, stoves cooking viands, spits turning joints, and general merriment, which seemed to go on at this fair, which took its rise in the pilgrimages made to a certain hermitage built by a devout seigneur of the time of Louis XIII.

Then I went back to Mary and Irene, and told them my adventures; and we all, attracted by the good music of the military band, went on to the crowded terrace and leant over the wall, and saw the view I have described, and gazed down into the green depths of the far-stretching forest, and wondered if we should not have done wiser to have gone thither and spent our day there. And so to our excellent coffee and bread, and then back to Paris.

II

Chartres, May 10th, 1862.

WE were quite worn out with the ever increasing noise of Paris ; or, perhaps, I should rather say, as the heat became greater, so our necessity for open windows by day and by night increased; and the masons opposite rose to their work with the early morning light. So we determined to go off to Brittany for our few remaining days, having a sort of happy mixture of the ideas of sea, heath, rocks, ferns, and Madame de Sevigne in our heads. The one and first destined point in our plans being to see the cathedral at Chartres.

We left Paris about three o'clock, and went past several stations, the names of which reminded us of Madame de Sevigne's time—Rambouillet, perhaps, the most of all. The station is some distance from the town of Chartres, which, like so many French provincial towns, consists of a ' Place ,' and a few appendent streets. The magnificent cathedral stands a little

aloof; we left it on one side as we came in an omnibus up to our hotel, which looked on to the Place. But, alas for my hopes of a quiet night! The space before the house is filled with booths—dancing booths, acting booths, wild-beast shows, music booths, each and all making their own separate and distinct noises; the 'touter' to one booth sitting in front of it and blowing a trumpet as hard as any angel in the old pictures; the hero of the theatrical booth walking backwards and forwards in front of his stage, and ranting away in King Cambyse's vein; the lions and tigers are raging with hunger, to judge from their roars; and the musicians are in the full burst of the overture to *OuUlaume Tell*. Mary and Irene have gone out, in spite of it all, to have a peep at the cathedral before it is too dark; and I have chosen our bedrooms. If the lion only knew it, he could easily make a spring into our balcony; but I hope, as he is great, he will be stupid. I have rung the bell, and rung the bell, and gone out in the corridor and called; and, at last, I shall have to go downstairs to try and find some one to bring up the meal which I have promised the others they shall find ready on their return, I have been and found Madame, and laid my complaint before her. She says the servants are all gone out to see the shows in the Place, which is very wicked in them; but I suspect, from her breathless way of speaking, she has only just rushed in herself to see that I am not running away with the house. I fancy I am the only person in it. She assures me, with true French volubility, that she will send up some coffee and bread directly, and will scold Jeannette well.

May 11th.—Mary and Irene returned from the cathedral last night before anything was ready, and were too full of the extraordinary architectural magnificence they had seen to care about my Martha-like troubles. But I had not seen the cathedral, and I was hungry if they were not. I went down again, and this time I found Madame in full tilt against an unfortunate woman, who looked as if she had been captured, *vi et armis*, out of the open-air gaiety and the pleasant

company of friends in the Place. She brought us up our meal with sullen speed, giving me occasionally such scowls of anger that I almost grew afraid at the feeling I had provoked. Yet she refused to be soothed by our little expressions of admiration for the fair, and our questions as to what was to be seen. Her only attempt at an apology was a sort of grumbling soliloquy to the effect that ladies who knew what was *comme il faut* would never have gone out so late in the evening of a *jour de fete* to walk about the town; and that, as Mary and Irene had done this improper thing, there was no knowing when, if ever, they would return. I wish she had let us try to comfort her, for I really was very sorry to have dragged a poor creature back from what was, perhaps, the great enjoyment of the year. After our coffee we went to bed; and I am not at all sure if we were not, for some hours, the only occupants of the hotel. But the lion did not take advantage of his opportunity, though we were obliged to leave the windows open for the heat. This morning we went to see the cathedral. It is so wonderfully beautiful that no words can describe it. I am thoroughly glad we came by Chartres.

May 12th.—*Vitre*—We came on here yesterday afternoon. Irene, who is the most wide-awake person I know, sat upright in the railway carriage, looking out of the window with eager intelligent eyes, and noting all she saw. It was a *fete* day; and at all the little cabarets, with their wayside gardens, there were groups of peasants in their holiday dress, drinking what appeared to be cider, from its being in large stone bottles, and eating *galette*—a sort of flat cake of puff-paste, dusted over with powdered sugar, with which we had become well acquainted in Paris. The eating and drinking seemed, however, to be rather an excuse for sitting round well-scoured tables in the open air, than an object in itself. I sank back in my seat in a lazy, unobservant frame of mind, when Irene called out, 'Oh, look! there is a peasant in the goat-skin dress one reads about; we must be in Brittany now, look,

look !' I had to sit up again and be on the alert; all the time thinking how bad for the brain it was to be straining one's attention perpetually after the fast-flitting objects to be seen through a railway carriage window. This is a very good theory; but it did not quite hold water in practice. Irene was as bright as ever when we stopped at Vitro"; I was tired and stupid. Perhaps the secret was, that I did unwillingly what she did with pleasure. The station at Vitre is a little outside the town, and is smart and new and in apple-pie order, as a station on a line that has to make its character ought to be. The town, on the contrary, is ancient, picturesque, and deserted. There have been fortified walls all round it, but these are now broken down in many places, and small hovels have been built of the debris wherever this is the case, giving one the impression of a town stuffed too full, which has burst its confines and run over. Yet inside the walls there are many empty houses, and many grand fortified dwellings, with coats of arms emblazoned over the doorway, which are only half-occupied. All the little world of the town seemed to be at the railway station, and everybody welcomed us with noise and advice. The inn down in our ten-years-old Murray no longer existed ; so we were glad to be told of the Hotel Sevigne, although we suspected it to be a mere trick of a name. Not at all. We are really veritably lodged in the very house she occupied when she left Les Rochers to come and do the honours of Vitre to the Governor of Brittany—the Due de Chaulnes. Our hotel is the Tour de SeVign6 of her letters. On being told this, I asked for the tower itself. It had been pulled down only a year or two before in order to make the great rambling mansion more compact as an hotel. As it was, they had changed the main entrance from back to front; and to arrive at it, we had to go over a great piece of vacant irregular ground, the inequalities of which were caused by the debris of the tower. The place belongs to the Marquis de Nethumieres, a descendant of the de Sevignes, so our host said. At any rate, he lives at Les Rochers, and

owns our hotel. It seems as though our landlord had not had capital enough to furnish the whole of this immense, far-stretching house, which is entered in the middle of the building with long corridors to the right and to the left, both upstairs and downstairs—corridors so wide and well lighted by the numerous windows looking to the back (or town-side), that they are used as store-rooms and sculleries. Here there are great sacks of corn and unpacked boxes of possible groceries ; there a girl sits and sings as she mends the house-linen by a window, apparently diligent enough, but perfectly aware, all the time, that the ostler in the yard below is trying to attract her attention; and there, again, a woman is standing, shoulders square, to an open window, ' topping and tailing ' a basket of gooseberries, and shouting out her part of a conversation with some one unseen in the yard below. Yet the great corridor looks empty and strangely deserted. Somehow, I suppose that as soon as I heard the name of Tour de Seigne, I expected to see a fair, plump lady, in hanging sleeves and long light-brown ringlets, walking before me wherever I went, half-turning her pretty profile over her white shoulder to say something bright and playful; and instead, we follow our rather spruce landlord into the bedrooms at the end of the corridor, and coolly order our dinner for this day of May, 1862. The rooms in this house are not large, but so very lofty, that I suspect that the panelled partition walls are but later wooden divisions of larger rooms, and so, on tapping, we find to be the case. My window looks out on the country outside the town ; Irene's is just on the opposite side, and she sees roofs of deeply furrowed tiles—roofs of every possible angle and shape, but mostly high pitched; they are covered with golden and grey lichens which tone down the old original red. There are broad gutters round the verge of every one, regular cats' Pall Malls. And see, there is an old black grimalkin coming round yonder corner, with meek and sleepy gait, of course entirely unconscious of the flock of pigeons towards which she is advancing with her

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
LONDON, NEW YORK, TORONTO AND MELBOURNE

ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

Born, Chelsea . . . September 29, 1810
Died, Alton, Hants . . . November 12, 1865

** 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' was first published in book form in 1865. In the 'World's Classics' it was first published, with additional pieces, in 1911.*

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindliness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ 'It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	.1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	.1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	.1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	.1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	.1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	.1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	.1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	.1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	.1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	.1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	.1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	.1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	.1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	.1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	.1850
„ <i>Ruth</i> .	.1853
„ <i>Cranford</i> .	.1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	.1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	.1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	.1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	.1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	.1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	.1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	.1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	.1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	.1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door, 'handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

'Where's the missus?' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself 'reverend' and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. Nay," says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ? '

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. ' They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ? '

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ? ' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. ' But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ? '

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ? '

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream ; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he ; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon ; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister ; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ? '

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdi'ew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open case-ments of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like ; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss ; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity ; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him ; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were ; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him ; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man ; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ?'

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ?'

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy !' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours,
" E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words employed. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clomp of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's a the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

' Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

' Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

' I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

' Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

' And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

' Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten ; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course ; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby ; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting ; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well ! ' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ? ' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour ! ' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too ! ' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ? ' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?'

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

'I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open casement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

ⁱ"Od rot 'em !" said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she wakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '
' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"—There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

' " She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

' I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

CHAPTER IV

* BY and by the inhabitants of Duncombe began to have parties in my honour. Mr. Morgan told me it was on my account, or I don't think I should have found it out. But he was pleased at every fresh invitation, and rubbed his hands, and chuckled, as if it was a compliment to himself, as in truth it was.

' Meanwhile, the arrangement with Mrs. Rose had been brought to a conclusion. She was to bring her furniture, and place it in a house, of which I was to pay the rent. She was to be the mistress, and, in return, she was not to pay anything for her board. Mr. Morgan took the house, and delighted in advising and settling all my affairs. I was partly indolent, and partly amused, and was altogether passive. The house he took for me was near his own : it had two sitting-rooms downstairs, opening into each other by folding-doors, which were, however, kept shut in general. The back room was my consulting room (" the library," he advised me to call it), and he gave me a skull to put on the top of my bookcase, in which the medical books were all ranged on the conspicuous shelves; while Miss Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray were, by Mr. Morgan himself, skilfully placed in a careless way, upside down or with their backs turned to the wall. The front parlour was to be the dining-room, and the room above was furnished with Mrs. Rose's drawing-room chairs and table, though I found she preferred sitting downstairs in the dining-room close to the window, where, between every stitch, she could look up and see what was going on in the street. I felt rather queer to be the master of this house, filled with another person's furniture, before I had even seen the lady whose property it was.

' Presently she arrived. Mr. Morgan met her at the inn where the coach stopped, and accompanied her to my house. I could see them out of the drawing-room

window, the little gentleman stepping daintily along, flourishing his cane, and evidently talking away. She was a little taller than he was, and in deep widow's mourning; such veils and falls, and capes and cloaks, that she looked like a black crape haycock. When we were introduced, she put up her thick veil, and looked around and sighed.

' " Your appearance and circumstances, Mr. Harrison, remind me forcibly of the time when I was married to my dear husband, now at rest. He was then, like you, commencing practice as a surgeon. For twenty years I sympathized with him, and assisted him by every means in my power, even to making up pills when the young man was out. May we live together in like harmony for an equal length of time ! May the regard between us be equally sincere, although, instead of being conjugal, it is to be maternal and filial ! "

' I am sure she had been concocting this speech in the coach, for she afterwards told me she was the only passenger. When she had ended, I felt as if I ought to have had a glass of wine in my hand, to drink, after the manner of toasts. And yet I doubt if I should have done it heartily, for I did not hope to live with her for twenty years ; it had rather a dreary sound. However, I only bowed and kept my thoughts to myself. I asked Mr. Morgan, while Mr. Rose was upstairs taking off her things, to stay to tea; to which he agreed, and kept rubbing his hands with satisfaction, saying—

" Very fine woman, sir; very fine woman ! And what a manner ! How she will receive patients, who may wish to leave a message during your absence. Such a flow of words to be sure ! "

' Mr. Morgan could not stay long after tea, as there were one or two cases to be seen. I would willingly have gone, and had my hat on, indeed, for the purpose, when he said it would not be respectful, " not the thing," to leave Mrs. Rose the first evening of her arrival,

" Tender deference to the sex—to a widow in the first months of her loneliness—requires a little consideration, my dear sir. I will leave that case at

Miss Tomkinson's for you; you will perhaps call early to-morrow morning. Miss Tomkinson is rather particular, and is apt to speak plainly if she does not think herself properly attended to."

' I had often noticed that he shuffled off the visits to Miss Tomkinson's on me, and I suspect he was a little afraid of the lady.

' It was rather a long evening with Mrs. Rose. She had nothing to do, thinking it civil, I suppose, to stop in the parlour, and not go upstairs and unpack. I begged I might be no restraint upon her if she wished to do so; but (rather to my disappointment) she smiled in a measured, subdued way, and said it would be a pleasure to her to become better acquainted with me. She went upstairs once, and my heart misgave me when I saw her come down with a clean folded pocket-handkerchief. Oh, my prophetic soul!—she was no sooner seated, than she began to give me an account of her late husband's illness, and symptoms, and death. It was a very common case, but she evidently seemed to think it had been peculiar. She had just a smattering of medical knowledge, and used the technical terms so very malapropos that I could hardly keep from smiling; but I would not have done it for the world, she was evidently in such deep and sincere distress. At last she said—

' " I have the ' dognoses' of my dear husband's complaint in my desk, Mr. Harrison, if you would like to draw up the case for the *Lancet*. I think he would have felt gratified, poor fellow, if he had been told such a compliment would be paid to his remains, and that his case should appear in those distinguished columns."

' It was rather awkward; for the case was of the very commonest, as I said before. However, I had not been even this short time in practice without having learnt a few of those noises which do not compromise one, and yet may bear a very significant construction if the listener chooses to exert a little imagination.

' Before the end of the evening, we were such Mends that she brought me down the late Mr. Rose's picture to look at. She told me she could not bear herself to

gaze upon the beloved features; but that if I would look upon the miniature, she would avert her face. I offered to take it into my own hands, but she seemed wounded at the proposal, and said she never, never could trust such a treasure out of her own possession; so she turned her head very much over her left shoulder, while I examined the likeness held by her extended right arm.

' The late Mr. Rose must have been rather a good-looking, jolly man; and the artist had given him such a broad smile, and such a twinkle about the eyes, that it really was hard to help smiling back at him. However, I restrained myself.

' At first Mrs. Rose objected to accepting any of the invitations which were sent her to accompany me to the tea-parties in the town. She was so good and simple, that I was sure she had no other reason than the one which she alleged—the short time that had elapsed since her husband's death ; or else, now that I had had some experience of the entertainments which she declined so pertinaciously, I might have suspected that she was glad of the excuse. I used sometimes to wish that I was a widow. I came home tired from a hard day's riding, and if I had but felt sure that Mr. Morgan would not come in, I should certainly have put on my slippers and my loose morning coat, and have indulged in a cigar in the garden. It seemed a cruel sacrifice to society to dress myself in tight boots, and a stiff coat, and go to a five-o'clock tea. But Mr. Morgan read me such lectures upon the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of the people among whom I was settled, and seemed so sorry, and almost hurt, when I once complained of the dullness of these parties, that I felt I could not be so selfish as to decline more than one out of three. Mr. Morgan, if he found that I had an invitation for the evening, would often take the longer round, and the more distant visits. I suspected him at first of the design, which I confess I often entertained, of shirking the parties ; but I soon found out he was really making a sacrifice of his inclinations for what he considered to be my advantage.

CHAPTER V

' THERE was one invitation which seemed to promise a good deal of pleasure. Mr. Bullock (who is the attorney of Duncombe) was married a second time to a lady from a large provincial town; she wished to lead the fashion—a thing very easy to do, for every one was willing to follow her. So instead of giving a tea-party in my honour, she proposed a picnic to some old hall in the neighbourhood; and really the arrangements sounded tempting enough. Every patient who had seemed full of the subject; both those who were invited and those who were not. There was a moat round the house, with a boat on it; and there was a gallery in the hall, from which music sounded delightfully. The family to whom the place belonged were abroad, and lived at a newer and grander mansion when they were at home; there were only a farmer and his wife in the old hall, and they were to have the charge of the preparations. The little, kind-hearted town was delighted when the sun shone bright on the October morning of our picnic; the shopkeepers and cottagers all looked pleased as they saw the cavalcade gathering at Mr. Bullock's door. We were somewhere about twenty in number; a "silent few", she called us; but I thought we were quite enough. There were the Miss Tomkinsons, and two of their young ladies—one of them belonged to a "county family", Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper; then came Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bullock, and a tribe of little children, the offspring of the present wife. Miss Bullock was only a step-daughter. Mrs. Munton had accepted the invitation to join our party, which was rather unexpected by the host and hostess, I imagine, from little remarks that I overheard; but they made her very welcome. Miss Horsman (a maiden lady who had been on a visit from home till last week) was another. And last, there were the Vicar and his children. These, with Mr.

Morgan and myself, made up the party. I was very much pleased to see something more of the Vicar's family. He had come in occasionally to the evening parties, it is true ; and spoken kindly to us all ; but it was not his habit to stay very long at thorn. And his daughter was, he said, too young to visit. She had had the charge of her little sisters and brother since her mother's death, which took up a good deal of her time, and she was glad of the evenings to pursue her own studies. But to-day the case was different ; and Sophy, and Helen, and Lizzie, and even little Walter, were all there, standing at Mrs. Bullock's door ; for we none of us could be patient enough to sit still in the parlour with Mrs. Munton and the elder ones, quietly waiting for the two chaises and the spring-cart, which were to have been there by two o'clock, and now it was nearly a quarter past. " Shameful ! the brightness of the day would be gone." The sympathetic shopkeepers, standing at their respective doors with their hands in their pockets, had, one and all, their heads turned in the direction from which the carriages (as Mrs. Bullock called them) were to come. There was a rumble along the paved street ; and the shopkeepers turned and smiled, and bowed their heads congratulatingly to us ; all the mothers and all the little children of the place stood clustering round the door to see us set off. I had my horse waiting ; and, meanwhile, I assisted people into their vehicles. One sees a good deal of management on such occasions. Mrs. Munton was handed first into one of the chaises ; then there was a little hanging back, for most of the young people wished to go in the cart—I don't know why. My horseman, however, came forward, and as she was known to be the intimate friend of Mrs. Munton, so far was satisfactory. But who was to be third—bodkin with two old ladies, who liked the windows shut ? I saw Sophy speaking to Helen ; and then she came forward and offered to be the third. The two old ladies looked pleased and glad (as every one did near Sophy) ; so that chaise-full was arranged. Just as it was going off,

however, the servant from the vicarage came running with a note for her master. When he had read it, he went to the chaise door, and I suppose told Sophy, what I afterwards heard him say to Mrs. Bullock, that the clergyman of a neighbouring parish was ill, and unable to read the funeral service for one of his parishioners, who was to be buried that afternoon. The Vicar was, of course, obliged to go, and said he should not return home that night. It seemed a relief to some, I perceived, to be without the little restraint of his dignified presence. Mr. Morgan came up just at the moment, having ridden hard all the morning to be in time to join our party; so we were resigned, on the whole, to the Vicar's absence. His own family regretted him the most, I noticed, and I liked them all the better for it. I believe that I came next in being sorry for his departure; but I respected and admired him, and felt always the better for having been in his company. Miss Tomkinson, Mrs. Bullock, and the "county" young lady, were in the next chaise. I think the last would rather have been in the cart with the younger and merrier set, but I imagine that was considered *infra dig*. The remainder of the party were to ride and tie; and a most riotous, laughing set they were. Mr. Morgan and I were on horseback; at least I led my horse, with little Walter riding on him; his fat, sturdy legs standing stiff out on each side of my cob's broad back. He was a little darling, and chattered all the way, his sister Sophy being the heroine of all his stories. I found he owed this day's excursion entirely to her begging papa to let him come; nurse was strongly against it—"cross old nurse!" he called her once, and then said, "No, not cross; kind nurse; Sophy tells Walter not to say cross nurse." I never saw so young a child so brave. The horse shied at a log of wood. Walter looked very red, and grasped the mane, but sat upright like a little man, and never spoke all the time the horse was dancing. When it was over he looked at me, and smiled—

"You would not let me be hurt, Mr. Harrison,

would you ? " He was the most winning little fellow I ever saw.

' There were frequent cries to me from the cart, " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! do get us that branch of blackberries ; you can reach it with your whip handle." " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! there were such splendid nuts on the other side of that hedge ; would you just turn back for them ? " Miss Caroline Tomkinson was once or twice rather faint with the motion of the cart, and asked me for my smelling bottle, as she had forgotten hers. I was amused at the idea of my carrying such articles about with me. Then she thought she should like to walk, and got out, and came on my side of the road ; but I found little Walter the pleasanter companion, and soon set the horse off into a trot, with which pace her tender constitution could not keep up.

' The road to the old hall was along a sandy lane, with high hedge-banks ; the wych-elms almost met overhead. " Shocking farming ! " Mr. Bullock called out ; and so it might be, but it was very pleasant and picturesque-looking. The trees were gorgeous, in their orange and crimson hues, varied by great, dark-green holly-bushes, glistening in the autumn sun. I should have thought the colours too vivid, if I had seen them in a picture, especially when we wound up the brow, after crossing the little bridge over the brook (what laughing and screaming there was as the cart splashed through the sparkling water !)—and I caught the purple hills beyond. We could see the old hall, too, from that point, with its warm rich woods billowing up behind, and the blue waters of the moat lying still under the sunlight,

' Laughing and talking is very hungry work, and there was a universal petition for dinner when we arrived at the lawn before the hall, where it had been arranged that we were to dine. I saw Miss Carry take Miss Tomkinson aside, and whisper to her ; and presently the elder sister came up to me, where I was busy, rather apart, making a seat of hay, which I had fetched

from the farmer's loft for my little friend Walter, who, I had noticed, was rather hoarse, and for whom I was afraid of a seat on the glass, dry as it appeared to be.

' " Mr. Harrison, Caroline tells me she has been feeling very faint, and she is afraid of a return of one of her attacks. She says she has more confidence in your medical powers than in Mr. Morgan's. I should not be sincere if I did not say that I differ from her; but as it is so, may I beg you to keep an eye upon her ? I tell her she had better not have come if she did not feel well; but, poor girl, she had set her heart upon this day's pleasure. I have offered to go home with her; but she says, if she can only feel sure you are at hand, she would rather stay."

' Of course I bowed, and promised all due attendance on Miss Caroline; and in the meantime, until she did require my services, I thought I might as well go and help the Vicar's daughter, who looked so fresh and pretty in her white muslin dress, here, there, and everywhere, now in the sunshine, now in the green shade, helping every one to be comfortable, and thinking of every one but herself.

' Presently, Mr. Morgan came up.

' " Miss Caroline does not feel quite well. I have promised your services to her sister."

' " So have I, sir. But Miss Sophy cannot carry this heavy basket."

' I did not mean her to have heard this excuse; but she caught it up and said—

' " Oh, yes, I can ! I can take the things out one by one. Go to poor Miss Caroline, pray, Mr. Harrison.

' I went; but very unwillingly, I must say. When I had once seated myself by her, I think she must have felt better. It was, probably, only a nervous fear, which was relieved when she knew she had assistance near at hand; for she made a capital dinner. I thought she would never end her modest requests for " just a little more pigeon-pie, or a merry-thought of chicken ". Such a hearty meal would, I hope, effectually revive

her; and so it did; for she told me she thought she could manage to walk round the garden, and see the old peacock yews, if I would kindly give her my arm. It was very provoking; I had so set my heart upon being with the Vicar's children. I advised Miss Caroline strongly to lie down a little, and rest before tea, on the sofa in the farmer's kitchen; you cannot think how persuasively I begged her to take care of herself. At last she consented, thanking me for my tender interest; she should never forget my kind attention to her. She little knew what was in my mind at the time. However, she was safely consigned to the farmer's wife, and I was rushing out in search of a white gown and a waving figure, when I encountered Mrs. Bullock at the door of the hall. She was a fine, fierce-looking woman. I thought she had appeared a little displeased at my (unwilling) attentions to Miss Caroline at dinner-time; but now, seeing me alone, she was all smiles.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison, all alone ! How is that ? What are the young ladies about to allow such churlishness ? And, by the way, I have left a young lady who will be very glad of your assistance, I am sure—my daughter, Jemima' (her step-daughter, she meant). * Mr. Bullock is so particular, and so tender a father, that he would be frightened to death at the idea of her going into the boat on the moat unless she was with some one who could swim. He is gone to discuss the new wheel-plough with the farmer (you know agriculture is his hobby, although law, horrid law, is his business). But the poor girl is pining on the bank, longing for my permission to join the others, which I dare not give unless you will kindly accompany her, and promise, if any accident happens, to preserve her safe."

Oh, Sophy, why was no one anxious about you ?

CHAPTER VI

'Miss BULLOCK was standing by the waterside, looking wistfully, as I thought, at the water party ; the sound of whose merry laughter came pleasantly enough from the boat, which lay off (for, indeed, no one knew how to row, and she was of a clumsy, fiat-bottomed build) about a hundred yards, " weatherbound," as they shouted out, among the long stalks of the water-lilies.

' Miss Bullock did not look up till I came close to her ; and then, when I told her my errand, she lifted up her great, heavy, sad eyes, and looked at me for a moment. It struck me, at the time, that she expected to find some expression on my face which was not there, and that its absence was a relief to her. She was a very pale, unhappy-looking girl, but very quiet, and, if not agreeable in manner, at any rate not forward or offensive. I called to the party in the boat, and they came slowly enough through the large, cool, green lily-leaves towards us. When they got near, we saw there was no room for us, and Miss Bullock said she would rather stay in the meadow and saunter about, if I would go into the boat; and I am certain from the look on her countenance that she spoke the truth; but Miss Horsman called out, in a sharp voice, while she smiled in a very disagreeable, knowing way—

' " Oh, mamma will be displeased if you don't come in, Miss Bullock, after all her trouble in making such a nice arrangement."

* At this speech the poor girl hesitated, and at last, in an undecided way, as if she was not sure whether she was doing right, she took Sophy's place in the boat. Helen and Lizzie landed with their sister, so that there was plenty of room for Miss Tomkinson, Miss Horsman, and all the little Bullocks ; and the three vicarage girls went off strolling along the meadow side, and playing with Walter, who was in a high state of excitement.

The sun was getting low, but the declining light was beautiful upon the water; and, to add to the charm of the time, Sophy and her sisters, standing on the green lawn in front of the hall, struck up the little German canon, which I had never heard before—

Oh wie wohl ist mir am abend, &c.

At last we were summoned to tug the boat to the landing-steps on the lawn, tea and a blazing wood fire being ready for us in the hall. I was offering my arm to Miss Horsman, as she was a little lame, when she said again, in her peculiar disagreeable way, '* Had you not better take Miss Bullock, Mr. Harrison ? It will be more satisfactory."

'I helped Miss Horsman up the steps, however, and then she repeated her advice; so, remembering that Miss Bullock was in fact the daughter of my entertainers, I went to her; but though she accepted my arm, I could perceive she was sorry that I had offered it.

'The hall was lighted by the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate; the daylight was dying away in the west; and the large windows admitted but little of what was left, through their small leaded frames, with coats of arms emblazoned upon them. The farmer's wife had set out a great long table, which was piled with good things; and a huge black kettle sang on the glowing fire, which sent a cheerful warmth through the room as it crackled and blazed. Mr. Morgan (who I found had been taking a little round in the neighbourhood among his patients) was there, smiling and rubbing his hands as usual. Mr. Bullock was holding a conversation with the farmer at the garden-door on the nature of different manures, in which it struck me that if Mr. Bullock had the fine names and the theories on his side, the farmer had all the practical knowledge and the experience, and I know which I would have trusted. I think Mr. Bullock rather liked to talk about Liebig in my hearing; it sounded well, and was knowing. Mrs. Bullock was not particularly placid in her mood. In the first place, I wanted to sit by the Vicar's daughter,

and Miss Caroline as decidedly wanted to sit on my other side, being afraid of her fainting fits, I imagine. But Mrs. Bullock called me to a place near her daughter. Now I thought I had done enough civility to a girl who was evidently annoyed rather than pleased by my attentions, and I pretended to be busy stooping under the table for Miss Caroline's gloves, which were missing ; but it was of no avail; Mrs. Bullock's fine, severe eyea were awaiting my reappearance, and she summoned me again.

' " I am keeping this place on my right hand for you, Mr. Harrison. Jemima, sit still! "

* I went up to the post of honour and tried to busy myself with pouring out coffee to hide my chagrin; but after forgetting to empty the water put in ("to warm the cups ", Mrs. Bullock said), and omitting to add any sugar, the lady told me she would dispense with my services, and turn me over to my neiglibour on the other side.

' " Talking to the younger lady was, no doubt, more Mr. Harrison's vocation than assisting the elder one." I dare say it was only the manner that made the words seem offensive. Miss Horsman sat opposite to mo, smiling away. Miss Bullock did not speak, but seemed more depressed than ever. At length, Miss Horsman and Mrs. Bullock got to a war of innuendoes, which were completely unintelligible to me, and I was very much displeased with my situation ; while, at the bottom of the table, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bullock were making the young ones laugh most heartily. Part of the joke was Mr. Morgan insisting upon making tea at that end ; and Sophy and Helen were busy contriving every possible mistake for him. I thought honour was a very good thing, but merriment a better. Here was I in the place of distinction, hearing nothing but cross words. At last the time came for us to go home. As the evening was damp, the seats in the chaises were the best and most to be desired. And now Sophy offered to go in the cart; only she seemed anxious, and so was I, that Walter should be secured from the effects of the

white wreaths of fog rolling up from the valley; but the little violent affectionate fellow would not be separated from Sophy. She made a nest for him on her knee in one corner of the cart, and covered him with her own shawl; and I hoped that he would take no harm. Miss Tomkinson, Mr. Bullock, and some of the young ones walked; but I seemed chained to the windows of the chaise, for Miss Caroline begged me not to leave her, as she was dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Mrs. Bullock implored me to see that the man did not overturn them in the bad roads, as he had certainly had too much to drink.

' I became so irritable before I reached home, that I thought it was the most disagreeable day of pleasure I had ever had, and could hardly bear to answer Mrs. Rose's never-ending questions. She told me, however, that from my account the day was so charming that she thought she should relax in the rigour of her seclusion, and mingle a little more in the society of which I gave so tempting a description. She really thought her dear Mr. Rose would have wished it; and his will should be law to her after his death, as it had ever been during his life. In compliance, therefore, with his wishes, she would even do a little violence to her own feelings.

' She was very good and kind; not merely attentive to everything which she thought could conduce to my comfort, but willing to take any trouble in providing the broths and nourishing food which I often found it convenient to order, under the name of kitchen-physic, for my poorer patients; and I really did not see the use of her shutting herself up, in mere compliance with an etiquette, when she began to wish to mix in the little quiet society of Duncombe. Accordingly I urged her to begin to visit, and even when applied to as to what I imagined the late Mr. Rose's wishes on that subject would have been, answered for that worthy gentleman, and assured his widow that I was convinced he would have regretted deeply her giving way to immoderate grief, and would have been rather grateful than other-

wise at seeing her endeavour to divert her thoughts by a few quiet visits. She cheered up, and said, "As I really thought so, she would sacrifice her own inclinations, and accept the very next invitation that came."

CHAPTER VII

' I WAS roused from my sleep in the middle of the night by a messenger from the vicarage. Little Walter had got the croup, and Mr. Morgan had been sent for into the country. I dressed myself hastily, and went through the quiet little street. There was a light burning upstairs at the vicarage. It was in the nursery. The servant, who opened the door the instant I knocked, was crying sadly, and could hardly answer my inquiries as I went upstairs, two steps at a time, to see my little favourite.

* The nursery was a great large room. At the farther end it was lighted by a common candle, which left the other end, where the door was, in shade, so I suppose the nurse did not see me come in, for she was speaking very crossly.

' " Miss Sophy !" said she, " I told you over and over again it was not fit for him to go, with the hoarseness that he had, and you would take him. It will break your papa's heart, I know ; but it's none of my doing."

' Whatever Sophy felt, she did not speak in answer to this. She was on her knees by the warm bath, in which the little fellow was struggling to get his breath, with a look of terror on his face that I have often noticed in young children when smitten by a sudden and violent illness. It seems as if they recognized something infinite and invisible, at whose bidding the pain and the anguish come, from which no love can shield them. It is a very heart-rending look to observe, because it comes on the faces of those who are too young to receive comfort from the words of faith, or the

romises of religion. Walter had his arms tight round Sophy's neck, as if she, hitherto his paradise-angel, could save him from the dread shadow of Death. Yes ! of Death ! I knelt down by him on the other side, and examined him. The very robustness of his little frame gave violence to the disease, which is always one of the most fearful by which children of his age can be attacked.

' " Don't tremble, Watty," said Sophy, in a soothing tone ; " it's Mr. Harrison, darling, who let you ride on his horse." I could detect the quivering in the voice, which she tried to make so calm and soft to quiet the little fellow's fears. We took him out of the bath, and I went for leeches. While I was away, Mr. Morgan came. He loved the vicarage children as if he were their uncle ; but he stood still and aghast at the sight of Walter—so lately bright and strong—and now hurrying alone to the awful change—to the silent mysterious land, where, tended and cared for as he had been on earth, he must go—alone. The little fellow ! the darling !

* We applied the leeches to his throat. He resisted at first; but Sophy, God bless her! put the agony of her grief on one side, and thought only of him, and began to sing the little songs he loved. We were all still. The gardener had gone to fetch the Vicar ; but he was twelve miles off, and we doubted if he would come in time. I don't know if they had any hope; but the first moment Mr. Morgan's eyes met mine, I saw that he, like me, had none. The ticking of the house-clock sounded through the dark, quiet house. Walter was sleeping now, with the black leeches yet hanging to his fair, white throat. Still Sophy went on singing little lullabies, which she had sung under far different and happier circumstances. I remember one verse, because it struck me at the time as strangely applicable.

" Sleep, baby, sleep !
Thy rest shall angels keep;
While on the grass the lamb shall feed,
And never suffer want or need.
Sleep, baby, sleep."

The tears were in Mr. Morgan's eyes. I do not think either he or I could have spoken in our natural tones ; but the brave girl went on, clear though low. She stopped at last, and looked up.

' " He is better, is he not, Mr. Morgan ? "

' " No, my dear. He is—ahem—he could not speak all at once. Then he said—'* My dear ! he will be better soon. Think of your mamma, my dear Miss Sophy. She will be very thankful to have one of her darlings safe with her, where she is."

' Still she did not cry. But she bent her head down on the little face, and kissed it long and tenderly.

' " I will go for Helen and Lizzie. They will be sorry not to see him again." She rose up and went for them. Poor girls, they came in, in their dressing-gowns, with eyes dilated with sudden emotion, pale with terror, stealing softly along, as if sound could disturb him. Sophy comforted them by gentle caresses. It was over soon.

' Mr. Morgan was fairly crying like a child. But he thought it necessary to apologize to me, for what I honoured him for. '* I am a little overdone by yesterday's work, sir. I have had one or two bad nights, and they rather upset me. When I was your age I was as strong and manly as any one, and would have scorned to shed tears."

' Sophy came up to where we stood.

' " Mr. Morgan ! I am so sorry for papa. How shall I tell him ? " She was struggling against her own grief for her father's sake. Mr. Morgan offered to await his coming home ; and she seemed thankful for the proposal. I, new friend, almost stranger, might stay no longer. The street was as quiet as ever ; not a shadow was changed ; for it was not yet four o'clock. But during the night a soul had departed.

' From all I could see, and all I could learn, the Vicar and his daughter strove which should comfort the other the most. Each thought of the other's grief—each prayed for the other rather than for themselves. We **saw** them walking out, countrywards ; and we

hoard of them in the cottages of the poor. But it was some time before I happened to meet either of them again. And then I felt, from something indescribable in their manner towards me, that I was one of the

" Peculiar people, whom Death had made dear."

That one day at the old hall had done this. I was, perhaps, the last person who had given the little fellow any unusual pleasure. Poor Walter ! I wish I could have done more to make his short life happy !

CHAPTER VIII

' THERE was a little lull, out of respect to the Vicar's grief, in the visiting. It gave time to Mrs. Rose to soften down the anguish of her weeds.

' At Christmas, Miss Tomkinson sent out invitations for a party. Miss Caroline had once or twice apologized to me because such an event had not taken place before ; but, as she said, "the avocations of their daily life prevented their having such little *reunions* except in the vacations." And, sure enough, as soon as the holidays began, came the civil little note—

" The Misses Tomkinson request the pleasure of Mrs. Rose's and Mr. Harrison's company at tea, on the evening of Monday, the 23rd inst. Tea at five o'clock."

' Mrs. Rose's spirit roused, like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, at this. She was not of a repining disposition, but I do think she believed the party-giving population of Duncombe had given up inviting her, as soon as she had determined to relent, and accept the invitations, in compliance with the late Mr. Rose's wishes.

' Such snippings of white love-ribbon us I found everywhere, making the carpet untidy ! One day, too, unluckily, a small box was brought to me by mistake. I did not look at the direction, for I never doubted it was some hyoscyamus which I was expecting from London; so I tore it open, and **saw** inside a piece of

paper, with "No more grey hair*", in large letters, upon it. I folded it up in a hurry, and sealed it afresh, and gave it to Mrs. Rose ; but I could not refrain from asking her, soon after, if she could recommend me anything to keep my hair from turning grey, adding that I thought prevention was better than cure. I think she made out the impression of my seal on the paper after that; for I learned that she had been crying, and that she talked about there being no sympathy left in the world for her since Mr. Rose's death ; and that she counted the days until she could rejoin him in the better world. I think she counted the days to Miss Tomkinson's party, too ; she talked so much about it.

* The covers were taken off Miss Tomkinson's chairs, and curtains, and sofas; and a great jar full of artificial flowers was placed in the centre of the table, which, as Miss Caroline told me, was all her doing, as she doted on the beautiful and artistic in life. Miss Tomkinson stood, erect as a grenadier, close to the door, receiving her friends, and heartily shaking them by the hands as they entered: she said she was truly glad to see them. And so she really was.

'We had just finished tea, and Miss Caroline had brought out a little pack of conversation cards—sheaves of slips of cardboard, with intellectual or sentimental questions on one set, and equally intellectual and sentimental answers on the other; and as the answers were fit to any and all the questions, you may think they were a characterless and "wersh" set of things. I had just been asked by Miss Caroline—

' *Can you tell what those dearest to you think of you at this present time f* " and had answered—

' "*How can you expect me to reveal such a secret to the present company /* " when the servant announced that a gentleman, a friend of mine, wished to speak to me downstairs.

' "Oh, show him up, Martha ; show him up !" said Miss Tomkinson, in her hospitality.

"Any friend of our friend's is welcome," said Miss Caroline, in an insinuating tone.

* I jumped up, however, thinking it might be some one on business; but I was so penned in by the spider-legged tables, stuck out on every side, that I could not make the haste I wished; and before I could prevent it, Martha had shown up Jack Marshland, who was on his road home for a day or two at Christmas.

' He came up in a hearty way, bowing to Miss Tomkinson, and explaining that he had found himself in my neighbourhood, and had come over to pass a night with me, and that my servant had directed him where I was.

' His voice, loud at all times, sounded like Stentor's in that little room, where we all spoke in a kind of purring way. He had no swell in his tones; they were *forte* from the beginning. At first it seemed like the days of my youth come back again, to hear full, manly speaking; I felt proud of my friend, as he thanked Miss Tomkinson for her kindness in asking him to stay the evening. By and by he came up to me, and I dare say he thought he had lowered his voice, for he looked as if speaking confidentially, while in fact the whole room might have heard him.

' " Frank, my boy, when shall we have dinner at this good old lady's ? I'm deuced hungry."

' Dinner! Why, we had had tea an hour ago. While he yet spoke, Martha came in with a little tray, on which was a single cup of coffee and three slices of wafer bread-and-butter. His dismay, and his evident submission to the decrees of Fate, tickled me so much, that I thought he should have a further taste of the life I led from month's end to month's end, and I gave up my plan of taking him home at once, and enjoyed the anticipation of the hearty laugh we should have together at the end of the evening. I was famously punished for my determination.

" Shall we continue our game ?" asked Miss Caroline, who had never relinquished her sheaf of questions.

' We went on questioning and answering, with little gain of information to either party.

" No such thing as heavy betting in this game, eh,

Frank I " asked Jack, who had been watching us. " You don't lose ten pounds at a sitting, I guess, as you used to do at Short's. Playing for love, I suppose you call it ? "

* Miss Caroline simpered, and looked down. Jack was not thinking of her. He was thinking of the days we had had at the " Mermaid ". Suddenly he said, " Where were you this day last year, Frank ? "

' " I don't remember ! " said I.

' " Then I'll tell you. It's the 23rd—the day you were taken up for knocking down the fellow in Long Acre, and that I had to bail you out ready for Christmas Day. You are in more agreeable quarters to-night."

* He did not intend this reminiscence to be heard, but was not in the least put out when Miss Tomkinson, with a face of dire surprise, asked—

' " Mr. Harrison taken up, sir ? "

' " Oh, yes, ma'am ; and you see it was so common an affair with him to be locked up that he can't remember the dates of his different imprisonments."

' He laughed heartily ; and so should I, but that I saw the impression it made. The thing was, in fact, simple enough, and capable of easy explanation. I had been made angry by seeing a great hulking fellow, out of mere wantonness, break the crutch from under a cripple ; and I struck the man more violently than I intended, and down he went, yelling out for the police, and I had to go before the magistrate to be released. I disdained giving this explanation at the time. It was no business of theirs what I had been doing a year ago ; but still Jack might have held his tongue. However, that unruly member of his was set a-going, and he told me afterwards he was resolved to let the old ladies into a little of life ; and accordingly he remembered every practical joke we had ever had, and talked and laughed, and roared again. I tried to converse with Miss Caroline—Mrs. Munton—any one ; but Jack was the hero of the evening, and every one was listening to him.

' " Then he has never sent any hoaxing letters since

he came here, has he ? Good boy ! He has turned over a new leaf. He was the deepest dog at that I ever met with. Such anonymous letters as he used to send ! Do you remember that to Mrs. Walbrook, eh, Frank ? That was too bad I " (the wretch was laughing all the time). " No ; I won't tell about it—don't be afraid. Such a shameful hoax " (laughing again).

' " Pray do tell," I called out; for he made it seem far worse than it was.

' " Oh no, no ; you've established a better character—I would not for the world nip your budding efforts. We'll bury the past in oblivion."

' I tried to tell my neighbours the story to which he alluded ; but they were attracted by the merriment of Jack's manner, and did not care to hear the plain matter of fact.

' Then came a pause; Jack was talking almost quietly to Miss Horsman. Suddenly he called across the room—" How many times have you been out with the hounds ? The hedges were blind very late this year, but you must have had some good mild days since."

' " I have never been out," said I shortly.

' " Never !—whew !——Why, I thought that was the great attraction to Duncombe."

' Now was not he provoking ? He would condole with me, and fixed the subject in the minds of every one present.

' The supper trays were brought in, and there was a shuffling of situations. He and I were close together again.

' " I say, Frank, what will you lay me that I don't clear that tray before people are ready for their second helping ? I'm as hungry as a hound."

' " You shall have a round of beef and a raw leg of mutton when you get home. Only do behave yourself here."

' " Well, for your sake ; but keep me away from those trays, or I'll not answer for myself. ' Hould me, or I'll fight,' as the Irishman said I'll go and talk to that little old lady in blue, and sit with my back to those ghosts of eatables."

' He sat down by Miss Caroline, who would not have liked his description of her; and began an earnest, tolerably quiet conversation. I tried to be as agreeable as I could, to do away with the impression he had given of me; but I found that every one drew up a little stiffly at my approach, and did not encourage me to make any remarks.

* In the middle of my attempts, I heard Miss Caroline beg Jack to take a glass of wine, and I saw him help himself to what appeared to be port; but in an instant he set it down from his lips, exclaiming, " Vinegar, by Jove! " He made the most horribly wry face: and Miss Tomkinson came up in a severe hurry to investigate the affair. It turned out it was some black-currant wine, on which she particularly piqued herself; I drank two glasses of it to ingratiate myself with her, and can testify to its sourness. I don't think she noticed my exertions, she was so much engrossed in listening to Jack's excuses for his malapropos observation. He told her, with the gravest face, that he had been a teetotaler so long that he had but a confused recollection of the distinction between wine and vinegar, particularly eschewing the latter, because it had been twice fermented; and that he had imagined Miss Caroline had asked him to take toast-and-water, or he should never have touched the decanter.

CHAPTER IX

' As we were walking home, Jack said, " Lord, Frank ! I've had such fun with the little lady in blue. I told her you wrote to me every Saturday, telling me the events of the week. She took all in." He stopped to laugh; for he bubbled and chuckled so that he could not laugh and walk. " And I told her you were deeply in love " (another laugh); " and that I could not get yon to tell me the name of the lady, but that she had light brown hair—in short, I drew from life, and gave

her an exact description of herself; and that I was most anxious to see her, and implore her to be merciful to you, for that you were a most timid, faint-hearted fellow with women." He laughed till I thought he would have fallen down. "I begged her, if she could guess who it was from my description—I'll answer for it she did—I took care of that; for I said you described a mole on the left cheek in the most poetical way, saying Venus had pinched it out of envy at seeing any one more lovely—oh, hold me up, or I shall fall—laughing and hunger make me so weak;—well, I say, I begged her, if she knew who your fair one could be, to implore her to save you. I said I knew one of your lungs had gone after a former unfortunate love-affair, and that I could not answer for the other if the lady here were cruel. She spoke of a respirator; but I told her that might do very well for the odd lung; but would it minister to a heart diseased? I really did talk fine. I have found out the secret of eloquence—it's believing what you've got to say; and I worked myself well up with fancying you married to the little lady in blue."

' I got to laughing at last, angry as I had been; his impudence was irresistible. Mrs. Rose had come home in the sedan, and gone to bed; and he and I sat up over the round of beef and brandy-and-water till two o'clock in the morning.

' He told me I had got quite into the professional way of mousing about a room, and mewing and purring according as my patients were ill or well. He mimicked me, and made me laugh at myself. He left early the next morning.

' Mr. Morgan came at his usual hour; he and Marshland would never have agreed, and I should have been uncomfortable to see two friends of mine disliking and despising each other.

' Mr. Morgan was ruffled; but with his deferential manner to women, he smoothed himself down before Mrs. Rose—regretted that he had not been able to come to Miss Tomkinson's the evening before, and consequently had not seen her in the society she was so well

calculated to adorn. But when we were by ourselves, he said—

' " I was sent for to Mrs. Munton's this morning—the old spasms. May I ask what is this story she tells me about—about prison, in fact ? I trust, sir, she has made some little mistake, and that you never were;——that it is an unfounded report." He could not get it out—" that you were in Newgate for three months ! " I burst out laughing; the story had grown like a mushroom indeed. Mr. Morgan looked grave. I told him the truth. Still he looked grave. " I've no doubt, sir, that you acted rightly ; but it has an awkward sound. I imagined from your hilarity just now that there was no foundation whatever for the story. Unfortunately, there is."

' " I was only a night at the police-station. I would go there again for the same cause, sir."

' " Very fine spirit, sir—quite like Don Quixote ; but don't you see you might as well have been to the hulks at once ? "

' " No, sir ; I don't."

' " Take my word, before long the story will have grown to that. However, we won't anticipate evil. *Mens conscia recti*, you remember, is the great thing. The part I regret is, that it may require some short time to overcome a little prejudice which the story may excite against you. However, we won't dwell on it. *Mens conscia recti* / Don't think about it, sir."

* It was clear he was thinking a good deal about it.

CHAPTER X

' Two or three days before this time, I had had an invitation from the Bullocks to dine with them on Christmas Day. Mrs. Rose was going to spend the week with friends in the town where she formerly lived ; and I had been pleased at the notion of being received into a family, and of being a little with Mr. Bullock, who struck me as a bluff, good-hearted fellow.

' But this Tuesday before Christmas Day, there came an invitation from the Vicar to dine there ; there were to be only their own family and Mr. Morgan. " Only their own family." It was getting to be all the world to me. I was in a passion with myself for having been BO ready to accept Mr. Bullock's invitation—coarse and ungentlemanly as he was; with his wife's airs of pretension and Miss Bullock's stupidity. I turned it over in my mind. No ! I could not have a bad headache, which should prevent me going to the place I did not care for, and yet leave me at liberty to go where I wished. All I could do was to join the vicarage girls after church, and walk by their side in a long country ramble. They were quiet; not sad, exactly; but it was evident that the thought of Walter was in their minds on this day. We went through a copse where there were a good number of evergreens planted as covers for game. The snow was on the ground; but the sky was clear and bright, and the sun glittered on the smooth holly-leaves. Lizzie asked me to gather her some of the very bright red berries, and she was beginning a sentence with—

' " Do you remember,"——when Helen said "*Hush* ", and looked towards Sophy, who was walking a little apart, and crying softly to herself. There was evidently some connexion between Walter and the holly-berries, for Lizzie threw them away at once when she saw Sophy's tears. Soon we came to a stile which led to an open, breezy common, half covered with gorse. I helped the little girls over it, and set them to run down the slope; but I took Sophy's arm in mine, and though I could not speak, I think she knew how I was feeling for her. I could hardly bear to bid her good-bye at the vicarage gate ; it seemed as if I ought to go in and spend the day with her.

CHAPTER XI

' I VENTED my ill humour in being late for the Bullocks' dinner. There were one or two clerks, towards whom Mr. Bullock was patronizing and pressing. Mrs. Bullock was decked out in extraordinary finery. Miss Bullock looked plainer than ever; but she had on some old gown or other, I think, for I heard Mrs. Bullock tell her she was always making a figure of herself. I began to-day to suspect that the mother would not be sorry if I took a fancy to the step-daughter. I was again placed near her at dinner, and when the little ones came in to dessert I was made to notice how fond of children she was, and indeed when one of them nestled to her, her face did brighten; but the moment she caught this loud-whispered remark the gloom came back again, with something even of anger in her look; and she was quite sullen and obstinate when urged to sing in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bullock turned to me—

" Some young ladies won't sing unless they are asked by gentlemen." She spoke very crossly. " If you ask Jemima, she will probably sing. To oblige me, it is evident she will not."

' I thought the singing, when we got it, would probably be a great bore; however, I did as I was bid, and went with my request to the young lady, who was sitting a little apart. She looked up at me with eyes full of tears, and said, in a decided tone (which, if I had not seen her eyes, I should have said was as cross as her mamma's), " No, sir, I will not." She got up, and left the room. I expected to hear Mrs. Bullock abuse her for her obstinacy. Instead of that, she began to tell me of the money that had been spent on her education; of what each separate accomplishment had cost. " She was timid," she said, " but very musical. Wherever her future home might be, there would be no want of music." She went on praising her till I hated her. If they thought I was going to marry that great lubberly

girl, they were mistaken. Mr. Bullock and the clerks came up. He brought out Liebig, and called me to him.

"I can understand a good deal of this agricultural chemistry," said he, "and have put it in practice—without much success, hitherto, I confess. But these unconnected letters puzzle me a little. I suppose they have some meaning, or else I should say it was mere book-making to put them in."

"I think they give the page a very ragged appearance," said Mrs. Bullock, who had joined us. "I inherit a little of my late father's taste for books, and must say I like to see a good type, a broad margin, and an elegant binding. My father despised variety; how lie would have held up his hands aghast at the cheap literature of these times! He did not require many books, but he would have twenty editions of those that he had; and he paid more for binding than he did for the books themselves. But elegance was everything with him. He would not have admitted your Liebig, Mr. Bullock; neither the nature of the subject, nor the common type, nor the common way in which your book is got up, would have suited him."

"Go and make tea, my dear, and leave Mr. Harrison and me to talk over a few of these manures."

"We settled to it; I explained the meaning of the symbols, and the doctrine of chemical equivalents. At last he said, "Doctor! you're giving me too strong a dose of it at one time. Let's have a small quantity taken 'hodie'; that's professional, as Mr. Morgan would call it. Come in and call when you have leisure, and give me a lesson in my alphabet. Of all you've been telling me I can only remember that C means carbon and O oxygen; and I see one must know the meaning of all these confounded letters before one can do much good with Liebig."

"We dine at three," said Mrs. Bullock. "There will always be a knife and fork for Mr. Harrison. Bullock! don't confine your invitation to the evening!"

"Why, you see, I've a nap always after dinner, so I could not be learning chemistry then."

' " Don't be so selfish, Mr. B. Think of the pleasure Jemima and I shall have in Mr. Harrison's society."

* I put a stop to the discussion by saying I would come in in the evenings occasionally, and give Mr. Bullock a lesson, but that my professional duties occupied me invariably until that time.

' I liked Mr. Bullock. He was simple, and shrewd; and to be with a man was a relief, after all the feminine society I went through every day.

CHAPTER XII

' T H E next morning I met Miss Horsman.

' " So you dined at Mr. Bullock's yesterday, Mr. Harrison ? Quite a family party, I hear. They are quite charmed with you, and your knowledgo of chemistry. Mr. Bullock told me so, in Hodgson's shop, just now. Miss Bullock is a nice girl, eh, Mr. Harrison ? " She looked sharply at me. Of course, whatever I thought, I could do nothing but assent. " A nice little fortune, too—three thousand pounds, Consols, from her own mother."

' What did I care ? She might have three millions for me. I had begun to think a good deal about money, though, but not in connexion with her. I had been doing up our books ready to send out our Christmas bills, and had been wondering how far the Vicar would consider three hundred a year, with a prospect of increase, would justify me in thinking of Sophy. Think of her I could not help ; and the more I thought of how good, and sweet, and pretty she was, the more I felt that she ought to have far more than I could offer. Besides, my father was a shopkeeper, and I saw the Vicar had a sort of respect for family. I determined to try and be very attentive to my profession. I was as civil as could be to every one; and wore the nap off the brim of my hat by taking it off so often.

' I had my eyes open to every glimpse of Sophy. I am

overstocked with gloves now that I bought at that time, by way of making errands into the shops where I saw her black gown. I bought pounds upon pounds of arrowroot, till I was tired of the eternal arrowroot puddings Mrs. Rose gave me. I asked her if she could not make bread of it, but she seemed to think that would be expensive; so I took to soap as a safe purchase. I believe soap improves by keeping.

CHAPTER XIII

' THE more I knew of Mrs. Rose, the better I liked her. She was sweet, and kind, and motherly, and we never had any rubs. I hurt her once or twice, I think, by cutting her short in her long stories about Mr. Rose. But I found out that when she had plenty to do she did not think of him quite so much; so I expressed a wish for Corazza shirts, and in the puzzle of devising how they were to be cut out she forgot Mr. Rose for some time. I was still more pleased by her way about some legacy her elder brother left her. I don't know the amount, but it was something handsome, and she might have set up housekeeping for herself: but, instead, she told Mr. Morgan (who repeated it to me), that she should continue with me, as she had quite an elder sister's interest in me.

' The " county young lady ", Miss Tyrrell, returned to Miss Tomkinson's after the holidays. She had an enlargement of the tonsils, which required to be frequently touched with caustic, so I often called to see her. Miss Caroline always received me, and kept me talking in her washed-out style, after I had seen my patient. One day she told me she thought she had a weakness about the heart, and would be glad if I would bring my stethoscope the next time, which I accordingly did; and while I was on my knees listening to the pulsations, one of the young ladies came in. She said—

' " Oh, dear ! I never ! I beg your pardon, ma'am," and scuttled out. There was not much the matter with Miss Caroline's heart: a little feeble in action or so, a mere matter of weakness and general languor. When I went down I saw two or three of the girls peeping out of the half-closed schoolroom door, but they shut it immediately, and I heard them laughing. The next time I called, Miss Tomkinson was sitting in state to receive me.

' " Miss Tyrrell's throat does not seem to make much progress. Do you understand the case, Mr. Harrison, or should we have further advice ? I think Mr. Morgan would probably know more about it."

' I assured her it was the simplest thing in the world ; that it always implied a little torpor in the constitution, and that we preferred working through the system, which of course was a slow process, and that the medicine the young lady was taking (iodide of iron) was sure to be successful, although the progress would not be rapid. She bent her head and said, " It might be so ; but she confessed she had more confidence in medicines which had some effect."

' She seemed to expect me to tell her something; but I had nothing to say, and accordingly I bade good-bye. Somehow, Miss Tomkinson always managed to make me feel very small, by a succession of snubbings ; and whenever I left her I had always to comfort myself under her contradictions by saying to myself, " Her saying it is so, does not make it so." Or I invented good retorts which I might have made to her brusque speeches if I had but thought of them at the right time. But it was provoking that I had not had the presence of mind to recollect them just when they were wanted*

CHAPTER XIV

' ON the whole, things went on smoothly. Mr. Holden's legacy came in just about this time; and I felt quite rich. Five hundred pounds would furnish the house, I thought, when Mrs. Rose left and Sophy came. I was delighted, too, to imagine that Sophy perceived the difference of my manner to her from what it was to any one else, and that she was embarrassed and shy in consequence, but not displeased with me for it. All was so flourishing that I went about on wings instead of feet. We were very busy, without having anxious cares. My legacy was paid into Mr. Bullock's hands, who united a little banking business to his profession of law. In return for his advice about investments (which I never meant to take, having a more charming, if less profitable, mode in my head), I went pretty frequently to teach him his agricultural chemistry. I was so happy in Sophy's blushes that I was universally benevolent, and desirous of giving pleasure to every one. I went, at Mrs. Bullock's general invitation, to dinner there one day unexpectedly : but there was such a fuss of ill-concealed preparation consequent upon my coming, that I never went again. Her little boy came in, with an audibly given message from the cook, to ask—

' " If this was the gentleman as she was to send in the best dinner-service and dessert for ? "

' I looked deaf, but determined never to go again.

' Miss Bullock and I, meanwhile, became rather friendly. We found out that we mutually disliked each other; and were contented with the discovery. If people are worth anything, this sort of non-liking is a very good beginning of friendship. Every good quality is revealed naturally and slowly, and is a pleasant surprise. I found out that Miss Bullock was sensible, and even sweet-tempered, when not irritated by her stepmother's endeavours to show her off. But she would sulk for hours after Mrs. Bullock's offensive

praise of her good points. And I never saw such a black passion as she went into when she suddenly came into the room when Mrs. Bullock was telling me of all the offers she had had.

'My legacy made me feel up to extravagance. I scoured the country for a glorious nosegay of camellias, which I sent to Sophy on Valentine's Day. I durst not add a line, but I wished the flowers could speak, and tell her how I loved her.

'I called on Miss Tyrrell that day. Miss Caroline was more simpering and affected than ever; and full of allusions to the day.

' "Do you affix much sincerity of meaning to the little gallantries of this day, Mr. Harrison?" asked she, in a languishing tone. I thought of my camellias, and how my heart had gone with them into Sophy's keeping; and I told her I thought one might often take advantage of such a time to hint at feelings one dared not fully express.

'I remembered afterwards the forced display she made, after Miss Tyrrell left the room, of a valentine. But I took no notice at the time; my head was full of Sophy.

'It was on that very day that John Brouncker, the gardener to all of us who had small gardens to keep in order, fell down and injured his wrist severely (I don't give you the details of the case, because they would not interest you, being too technical; if you've any curiosity, you will find them in the *Lancet* of August in that year). We all liked John, and this accident was felt like a town's misfortune. The gardens, too, just wanted doing up. Both Mr. Morgan and I went directly to him. It was a very awkward case, and his wife and children were crying sadly. He himself was in great distress at being thrown out of work. He begged us to do something that would cure him Speedily, as he could not afford to be laid up, with six children depending on him for bread. We did not say much before him, but we both thought the arm would have to come off, and it was his right arm. We talked it over when we

came out of the cottage. Mr. Morgan had no doubt of the necessity. I went back at dinner-time to see the poor fellow. He was feverish and anxious. He had caught up some expression of Mr. Morgan's in the morning, **and** had guessed the measure we had in contemplation. He bade his wife leave the room, and spoke to me by myself.

' " If you please, sir, I'd rather be done for at once than have my arm taken off, and be a burden to my family. I'm not afraid of dying, but I could not stand being a cripple for life, eating bread, and not able to earn it. "

* The tears were in his eyes with earnestness. I had all along been more doubtful about the necessity of the amputation than Mr. Morgan. I knew the improved treatment in such cases. In his days there was much more of the rough and ready in surgical practice; so I gave the poor fellow some hope.

' In the afternoon I met Mr. Bullock.

' " So you're to try your hand at an amputation to-morrow, I hear. Poor John Brouncker ! I used to tell him he was not careful enough about his ladders. Mr. Morgan is quite excited about it. He asked me to be present, and see how well a man from Guy's could operate; he says he is sure you'll do it beautifully. Pah ! no such sights for me, thank you. "

* Ruddy Mr. Bullock went a shade or two paler at the thought.

* " Curious ! how professionally a man views these things. Here's Mr. Morgan, who has been all along as proud of you as if you were his own son, absolutely rubbing his hands at the idea of this crowning glory, this feather in your cap ! He told me just now he knew **he** had always been too nervous to be a good operator ; **and** had therefore preferred sending for White from Chesterton. But now any one might have a serious accident who liked, for you would be always at hand. "

* I told Mr. Bullock, I really thought we might avoid **the** amputation; but his mind was preoccupied with the idea of it, and he did not care to listen to me.

The whole town was full of it. That is a charm in a little town, everybody is so sympathetically full of the same events. Even Miss Horsman stopped me to ask after John Brouncker with interest; but she threw cold water upon my intention of saving the arm.

' "As for the wife and family, we'll take care of them. Think what a fine opportunity you have of showing off, Mr. Harrison !"

' That was just like her. Always ready with her suggestions of ill-natured or interested motives.

' Mr. Morgan heard my proposal of a mode of treatment by which I thought it possible that the arm might be saved.

' "I differ from you, Mr. Harrison," said he. "I regret it, but I differ *in toto* from you. Your kind heart deceives you in this instance. There is no doubt that amputation must take place—not later than to-morrow morning, I should say. I have made myself at liberty to attend upon you, sir; I shall be happy to officiate as your assistant. Time was when I should have been proud to be principal, but a little trembling in my arm incapacitates me."

' I urged my reasons upon him again ; but he was obstinate. He had, in fact, boasted so much of my acquirements as an operator, that he was unwilling I should lose this opportunity of displaying my skill. He could not see that there would be greater skill evinced in saving the arm ; nor did I think of this at the time. I grew angry at his old-fashioned narrow-mindedness, as I thought it ; and I became dogged in my resolution to adhere to my own course. We parted very coolly ; and I went straight off to John Brouncker to tell him I believed that I could save the arm, if he would refuse to have it amputated. When I calmed myself a little, before going in and speaking to him, I could not help acknowledging that we should run some risk of locked jaw ; but, on the whole, and after giving most earnest, conscientious thought to the case, I was sure that my mode of treatment would be best.

' He **was** a sensible man. I told him **the** difference of opinion that existed between Mr. Morgan and myself.

I said that there might be some little risk attending the non-amputation; but that I should guard against it, and I trusted that I should be able to preserve his arm.

' "Under God's blessing," said he reverently. I bowed my head. I don't like to talk too frequently of the dependence which I always felt on that holy blessing, as to the result of my efforts; but I was glad to hear that speech of John's, because it showed a calm and faithful heart; and I had almost certain hopes of him from that time.

' We agreed that he should tell Mr. Morgan the reason of his objections to the amputation, and his reliance on my opinion. I determined to recur to every book I had relating to such cases, and to convince Mr. Morgan, if I could, of my wisdom. Unluckily, I found out afterwards that he had met Miss Horsman in the time that intervened before I saw him again at his own house that evening; and she had more than hinted that I shrank from performing the operation, "for very good reasons, no doubt. She had heard that the medical students in London were a bad set, and were not remarkable for regular attendance in the hospitals. She might be mistaken; but she thought it was, perhaps, quite as well poor John Brouncker had not his arm cut off by———Was there not such a thing as mortification coming on after a clumsy operation? It was, perhaps, only a choice of deaths!"

' Mr. Morgan had been stung at all this. Perhaps I did not speak quite respectfully enough; I was a good deal excited. We only got more and more angry with each other; though he, to do him justice, was as civil as could be all the time, thinking that thereby he concealed his vexation and disappointment. He did not try to conceal his anxiety about poor John. I went home weary and dispirited. I made up and took the necessary applications to John; and, promising to return with the dawn of day (I would fain have stayed, but I did not wish him to be alarmed about himself), I went home, and resolved to sit up and study the treatment of similar cases.

' Mrs. Rose knocked at the door.

' " Come in ! " said I sharply.

' She said she had seen I had something on my mind all day, and she could not go to bed without asking if there was nothing she could do. She was good and kind; and I could not help telling her a little of the truth. She listened pleasantly ; and I shook her warmly by the hand, thinking that though she might not be very wise, her good heart made her worth a dozen keen, sharp, hard people, like Miss Horsman.

' When I went at daybreak, I saw John's wife for a few minutes outside of the door. She seemed to wish her husband had been in Mr. Morgan's hands rather than mine; but she gave me as good an account as I dared to hope for of the manner in which her husband had passed the night. This was confirmed by my own examination.

' When Mr. Morgan and I visited him together later on in the day, John said what we had agreed upon the day before ; and I told Mr. Morgan openly that it was by my advice that amputation was declined. He did not speak to me till we had left the house. Then he said—" Now, sir, from this time, I consider this case entirely in your hands. Only remember the poor fellow has a wife and six children. In case you come round to my opinion, remember that Mr. White could come over, as he has done before, for the operation."

' So! Mr. Morgan believed I declined operating because I felt myself incapable. Very well! I was much mortified.

' An hour after we parted, I received a note to this effect—

' " DEAR SIR,—I will take the long round to-day, to leave you at liberty to attend to Brouncker's case, which I feel to be a very responsible one.

" ' J. MORGAN."

' This was kindly done. I went back, as soon as I could, to John's cottage. While I was in the inner room with him, I heard the Miss Tomkinsons' voices

outside. They had called to inquire. Miss Tomkinson came in, and evidently was poking and snuffing about. (Mrs. Brouncker told her that I was within; and within I resolved to be till they had gone.)

' "What is this close smell?" asked she. "I am afraid you are not cleanly. Cheese!—cheese in this cupboard I No wonder there is an unpleasant smell. Don't you know how particular you should be about being clean when there is illness about?"

* Mrs. Brouncker was exquisitely clean in general, and was piqued at these remarks.

' "If you please, ma'am, I could not leave John yasterday to do any house-work, and Jenny put the dinner-things away. She is but eight years old."

' But this did not satisfy Miss Tomkinson, who was evidently pursuing the course of her observations.

' "Fresh butter, I declare! Well now, Mrs. Brouncker, do you know I don't allow myself fresh butter at this time of the year? How can you save, indeed, with such extravagance!"

' "Please, ma'am," answered Mrs. Brouncker, "you'd think it strange, if I was to take such liberties in your house as you're taking here."

* I expected to hear a sharp answer. No! Miss Tomkinson liked true plain-speaking. The only person in whom she would tolerate round-about ways of talking was her sister.

' "Well, that's true," she said. "Still, you must not be above taking advice. Fresh butter is extravagant at this time of the year. However, you're a good kind of woman, and I've a great respect for John. Send Jenny for some broth as soon as he can take it. Come, Caroline, we have got to go on to Williams's."

' But Miss Caroline said that she was tired, and would rest where she was till Miss Tomkinson came back. I was a prisoner for some time, I found. When she was alone with Mrs. Brouncker, she said—

' "You must not be hurt by my sister's abrupt manner. She means well. She has not much imagination or sympathy, and cannot understand the distrao-

tion of mind produced by the illness of a worshipped husband." I could hear the loud sigh of commiseration which followed this speech. Mrs. Brouncker said—

" Please, ma'am, I don't worship my husband. I would not be so wicked."

" Goodness ! You don't think it wicked, do you ? For my part, if . . . I should worship, I should adore him." I thought she need not imagine such improbable cases. But sturdy Mrs. Brouncker said again—

" I hope I know my duty better. I've not learned my Commandments for nothing. I know whom I ought to worship."

' Just then the children came in, dirty and unwashed, I have no doubt. And now Miss Caroline's real nature peeped out. She spoke sharply to them, and asked them if they had no manners, little pigs as they were, to come brushing against her silk gown in that way ? She sweetened herself again, and was as sugary as love when Miss Tomkinson returned for her, accompanied by one whose voice, " like winds in summer sighing," I knew to be my dear Sophy's.

' She did not say much ; but what she did say, and the manner in which she spoke, was tender and compassionate in the highest degree ; and she came to take the four little ones back with her to the Vicarage, in order that they might be out of their mother's way ; the older two might help at home. She offered to wash their hands and faces; and when I emerged from my inner chamber, after the Miss Tomkinsons had left, I found her with a chubby child on her knees, bubbling and spluttering against her white wet hand, with a face bright, rosy, and merry under the operation. Just as I came in, she said to him, " There, Jemmy, now I can kiss you with this nice clean face."

' She coloured when she saw me. I liked her speaking, and I liked her silence. She was silent now, and I ' ' lo'ed a' the better ". I gave my directions to Mrs. Brouncker, and hastened to overtake Sophy and the children; but they had gone round by the lanes, I suppose, for I saw nothing of them.

* I was very anxious about the case. At night I went again. Miss Horsman had been there ; I believe she was really kind among the poor, but she could not help leaving a sting behind her everywhere. She had been frightening Mrs. Brouncker about her husband; and been, I have no doubt, expressing her doubts of my skill; for Mrs. Brouncker began—

' " Oh, please, sir, if you'll only let Mr. Morgan take off his arm, I will never think the worse of you for not being able to do it. '

' I told her it was from no doubt of my own competency to perform the operation that I wished to save the arm; but that he himself was anxious to have it spared.

' " Aye, bless him ! he frets about not earning enough to keep us, if he's crippled ; but, sir, I don't care about that. I would work my fingers to the bone, and so would the children ; I'm sure we'd be proud to do for him, and keep him; God bless him ! it would be far better to have him only with one arm, than to have him in the churchyard, Miss Horsman says "——

' " Confound Miss Horsman ! " said I.

' " Thank you, Mr. Harrison," said her well-known voice behind me. She had come out, dark as it was, to bring some old linen to Mrs. Brouncker ; for, as I said before, she was very kind to all the poor people of Duncombe.

' " I beg your pardon ; " for I really was sorry for my speech, or rather, that she had heard it.

' " There is no occasion for any apology," she replied, drawing herself up, and pinching her lips into a very venomous shape.

' John was doing pretty well; but of course the danger of locked jaw was not over. Before I left, his wife entreated me to take off the arm ; she wrung her hands in her passionate entreaty. " Spare him to me, Mr. Harrison," she implored. Miss Horsman stood by. It was mortifying enough ; but I thought of the power which was in my hands, as I firmly believed, of saving the limb; and I was inflexible.

* You cannot think how pleasantly Mrs. Rose's sympathy came in on my return. To be sure, she did not understand one word of the case, which I detailed to her ; but she listened with interest, and as long as she held her tongue I thought she was really taking it in ; but her first remark was as malapropos as could be.

' " You are anxious to save the tibia—I see completely how difficult that will be. My late husband had a case exactly similar, and I remember his anxiety ; but you must not distress yourself too much, my dear Mr. Harrison ; I have no doubt it will end well."

* I knew she had no grounds for this assurance, and yet it comforted me.

' However, as it happened, John did fully as well as I could hope ; of course, he was long in rallying his strength : and, indeed, sea-air was evidently so necessary for his complete restoration, that I accepted with gratitude Mrs. Rose's proposal of sending him to Highport for a fortnight or three weeks. Her kind generosity in this matter made me more desirous than ever of paying her every mark of respect and attention.

CHAPTER XV

' ABOUT this time there was a sale at Ashmeadow, a pretty house in the neighbourhood of Duncombe. It was likewise an easy walk, and the spring days tempted many people thither who had no intention of buying anything, but who liked the idea of rambling through the woods, gay with early primroses and wild daffodils, and of seeing the gardens and house, which till now had been shut up from the ingress of the townspeople. Mrs. Rose had planned to go, but an unlucky cold prevented her. She begged me to bring her a very particular account, saying she delighted in details, and always questioned the late Mr. Rose as to the side dishes of the dinners to which he went. The late Mr. Rose's conduct was always held up as a model to me, by the way. I walked to Ashmeadow, pausing or loitering

with different parties of townspeople, all bound in the same direction. At last I found the Vicar and Sophy, and with them I stayed. I sat by Sophy and talked and listened. A sale is a very pleasant gathering after all. The auctioneer, in a country place, is privileged to joke from his rostrum ; and having a personal knowledge of most of the people, can sometimes make a very keen hit at their circumstances, and turn the laugh against them. For instance, on the present occasion, there was a farmer present, with his wife, who was notoriously the grey mare. The auctioneer was selling some horse-cloths, and called out to recommend the article to her, telling her, with a knowing look at the company, that they would make her a dashing pair of trousers, if she was in want of such an article. She drew herself up with dignity, and said, "Come, John, we've had enough of these." Whereupon there was a burst of laughter, and in the midst of it John meekly followed his wife out of the place. The furniture in the sitting-rooms was, I believe, very beautiful, but I did not notice it much. Suddenly I heard the auctioneer speaking to me, "Mr. Harrison, won't you give me a bid for this table ? "

' It was a very pretty little table of walnut-wood. I thought it would go into my study very well, so I gave him a bid. I saw Miss Horsman bidding against me, so I went off with full force, and at last it was knocked down to me. The auctioneer smiled, and congratulated me.

' "A most useful present for Mrs. Harrison, when that lady comes."

'Everybody laughed. They like a joke about marriage; it is so easy of comprehension. But the table which I had thought was for writing, turned out to be a work-table, scissors and thimble complete. No wonder I looked foolish. Sophy was not looking at me, that was one comfort. She was busy arranging a nosegay of wood-anemone and wild sorrel.

'Miss Horsman came up, with her curious eyes.

' "I had no idea things were far enough advanced for you to be purchasing a work-table, Mr. Harrison."

' I laughed off my awkwardness.

' " Did not you, Miss Horsman ? You are very much behindhand. You have not heard of my piano, then ? "

' " No, indeed," she said, half uncertain whether I was serious or not. " Then it seems there is nothing wanting but the lady."

' " Perhaps she may not be wanting either," said I, for I wished to perplex her keen curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

' WHEN I got home from my round, I found Mrs. Rose in some sorrow.

' " Miss Horsman called after you left," said she. " Have you heard how John Brouncker is at Highport ? "

' " Very well," replied I. " I called on his wife just now, and she had just got a letter from him. She had been anxious about him, for she had not heard for a week. However, all's right now ; and she has pretty well of work, at Mrs. Munton's, as her servant is ill. Oh, they'll do, never fear."

* " At Mrs. Munton's ? Oh, that accounts for it, then. She is so deaf, and makes such blunders."

' " Accounts for what ? " asked I.

' " Oh, perhaps I had better not tell you," hesitated Mrs. Rose.

* " Yes, tell me at once. I beg your pardon, but I hate mysteries."

* " You are so like my poor dear Mr. Rose. He used to speak to me just in that sharp, cross way. It is only that Miss Horsman called. She had been making a collection for John Brouncker's widow and "——

' " But the man's alive ! " said I.

' " So it seems. But Mrs. Munton had told her that he was dead. And she has got Mr. Morgan's name down at the head of the list, and Mr. Bullock's."

' Mr. Morgan and I had got into a short, cool way of speaking to each other ever since we had differed so

much about the treatment of Brouncker's arm ; and I had heard once or twice of his shakes of the head over John's case. He would not have spoken against my method for the world, and fancied that he concealed his fears.

' "Miss Horsman is very ill-natured, I think," sighed forth Mrs. Rose.

* I saw that something had been said of which I had not heard, for the mere fact of collectmg money for the widow was good-natured, whoever did it; so I asked, quietly, what she had said.

' " Oh, I don't know if I should tell you. I only know she made me cry ; for I'm not well, and I can't bear to hear any one that I live with abused."

' Come ! this was pretty plain.

' " What did Miss Horsman say of me ? " asked I, half laughing, for I knew there was no love lost between us.

' " Oh, she only said she wondered you could go to sales, and spend your money there, when your ignorance had made Jane Brouncker a widow, and her children fatherless."

' " Pooh ! pooh ! John's alive, and likely to live as long as you or I, thanks to you, Mrs. Rose."

' When my work-table came home, Mrs. Rose was so struck with its beauty and completeness, and I was so much obliged to her for her identification of my interests with hers, and the kindness of her whole conduct about John, that I begged her to accept of it. She seemed very much pleased; and, after a few apologies, she consented to take it, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the front parlour, where she usually sat. There was a good deal of morning calling in Buncombe after the sale, and during this time the fact of John's being alive was established to the conviction of all except Miss Horsman, who, I believe, still doubted. I myself told Mr. Morgan, who immediately went to reclaim his money; saying to me, that he was thankful of the information ; he was truly glad to hear it ; and he shook me warmly by the hand for the first time for a month.

CHAPTER XVII

' A FEW days after the sale, I was in the consulting-room. The servant must have left the folding-doors a little ajar, I think. Mrs. Munton came to call on Mrs. Rose ; and the former being deaf, I heard all the speeches of the latter lady, as she was obliged to speak very loud in order to be heard. She began—

' " This is a great pleasure, Mrs. Munton, so seldom as you are well enough to go out."

* Mumble, mumble, mumble, through the door.

' " Oh, very well, thank you. Take this seat, and then you can admire my new work-table, ma'am; a present from Mr. Harrison."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Who could have told you, ma'am ? Miss Horsman ? Oh, yes, I showed it Miss Horsman."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I don't quite understand you, ma'am."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm not blushing, I believe. I really am quite in the dark as to what you mean."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Oh, yes, Mr. Harrison and I are most comfortable together. He reminds me so of my dear Mr. Rose—just as fidgety and anxious in his profession."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm sure you are joking now, ma'am." Then I heard a pretty loud—

' "' Oh, no "; mumble, mumble, mumble, for a long time.

' " Did he really? Well, I'm sure I don't know. I should be sorry to think he was doomed to be unfortunate in so serious an affair; but you know my undying regard for the late Mr. Rose."

' Another long mumble.

' " You're very kind, I'm sure. Mr. Rose always thought more of my happiness than his own"—a little crying—"but the turtle-dove has always been my ideal, ma'am."

'Mumble, mumble.

' " No one could have been happier than L As you say, it is a compliment to matrimony."

' Mumble.

"" Oh, but you must not repeat such a thing. Mr. Harrison would not like it. He can't bear to have his affairs spoken about."

' Then there was a change of subject; an inquiry after some poor person, I imagine. I heard Mrs. Rose eay—

' " She has got a mucous membrane, I'm afraid, ma'am."

' A commiserating mumble.

' " Not always fatal. I believe Mr. Rose knew some cases that lived for years after it was discovered that they had a mucous membrane." A pause. Then Mrs. Rose spoke in a different tone.

' " Are you sure, ma'am, there is no mistake about what he said ? "

* Mumble.

' " Pray don't be so observant, Mrs. Munton ; you find out too much. One can have no little secrets."

' The call broke up ; and I heard Mrs. Munton say in the passage, " I wish you joy, ma'am, with all my heart. There 's no use denying it ; for I've seen all along what would happen."

' When I went in to dinner, I said to Mrs. Rose—

' " You've had Mrs. Munton here, I think. Did she bring any news ? " To my surprise, she bridled and Bimpered, and replied, " Oh, you must not ask, Mr. Harrison: such foolish reports."

' I did not ask, as she seemed to wish me not, and I knew there were silly reports always about. Then I think she was vexed that I did not ask. Altogether she went on so strangely that I could not help looking at her ; and then she took up a hand-screen, and held it between me and her. I really felt rather anxious.

' " Are you not feeling well ? " said I innocently.

' " Oh, thank you, I believe Fra quite well; only the room is rather warm, is it not ? "

' " Let me put the blinds down for you ? the sun begins to have a good deal of power." I drew down the blinds.

' " You are so attentive, Mr. Harrison. Mr. Rose himself never did more for my little wishes than you do."

' " I wish I could do more—I wish I could show you how much I feel "——her kindness to John Brouncker, I was going on to say ; but I was just then called out to a patient. Before I went I turned back, and said——

' " Take care of yourself, my dear Mrs. Rose ; you had better rest a little."

' " For your sake, I will," said she tenderly.

' I did not care for whose sake she did it. Only I really thought she was not quite well, and required rest. I thought she was more affected than usual at tea-time; and could have been angry with her nonsensical ways once or twice, but that I knew the real goodness of her heart. She said she wished she had the power to sweeten my life as she could my tea. I told her what a comfort she had been all during my Jate time of anxiety, and then I stole out to try if I could hear the evening singing at the Vicarage, by standing close to the garden-wall.

CHAPTER XVIII

' THE next morning I met Mr. Bullock by appointment, to talk a little about the legacy which was paid into his hands. As I was leaving his office, feeling full of my riches, I met Miss Horsman. She smiled rather grimly, and said——

' " Oh ! Mr. Harrison, I must congratulate I believe. I don't know whether I ought to have known, but as I do, I must wish you joy. A very nice little sum, too. I always said you would have money."

* So she had found out my legacy, had she ? Well, it was no secret, and one likes the reputation of being a person of property. Accordingly I smiled, and said

I was much obliged to her, and if I could alter the figures to my liking, she might congratulate me still more.

' She said, " Oh, Mr. Harrison, you can't have everything. It would be better the other way, certainly. Money is the great thing, as you've found out. The relation died most opportunely, I must say."

' " He was no relative," said I; " only an intimate friend."

' " Dear-ah-me ! I thought it had been a brother ! Well, at any rate, the legacy is safe."

' I wished her good morning, and passed on. Before long I was sent for to Miss Tomkinson's.

' Miss Tomkinson sat in severe state to receive me. I went in with an air of ease, because I always felt so uncomfortable.

' " Is this true that I hear ? " asked she, in an inquisitorial manner.

' I thought she alluded to my five hundred pounds ; so I smiled, and said that I believed it was.

' " Can money be so great an object with you, Mr. Harrison ? " she asked again.

' I said I had never cared much for money, except as an assistance to any plan of settling in life ; and then, as I did not like her severe way of treating the subject, I said that I hoped every one was well ; though of course I expected some one was ill, or I should not have been sent for.

' Miss Tomkinson looked very grave and sad. Then she answered : " Caroline is very poorly—the old palpitations at the heart; but of course that is nothing to you."

' I said I was very sorry. She had a weakness there, I knew. Could I see her ? I might be able to order something for her.

' I thought I heard Miss Tomkinson say something in a low voice about my being a heartless deceiver. Then she spoke up. " I was always distrustful of you, Mr. Harrison. I never liked your looks. I begged Caroline again and again not to confide in you. I foresaw how it would end. And now I fear her precious life will be a sacrifice."

' I begged her not to distress herself, for in all probability there was very little the matter with her sister. Might I see her ?

' " No ! " she said shortly, standing up as if to dismiss me. " There has been too much of this seeing and calling. By my consent, you shall never see her again."¹

' I bowed. I was annoyed, of course. Such a dismissal might injure my practice just when I was most anxious to increase it.

' " Have you no apology, no excuse to offer ? "

' I said I had done my best; I did not feel that there was any reason to offer an apology. I wished her good morning. Suddenly she came forwards.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison," said she, ' if you have really loved Caroline, do not let a little paltry money make you desert her for another."

' I was struck dumb. Loved Miss Caroline ! I loved Miss Tomkinson a great deal better, and yet I disliked her. She went on—

' " I have saved nearly three thousand pounds. If you think you are too poor to marry without money, I will give it all to Caroline. I am strong, and can go on working ; but she is weak, and this disappointment will kill her." She sat down suddenly, and covered her face with her hands. Then she looked up.

' " You are unwilling, I see. Don't suppose I would have urged you if it had been for myself ; but she has had so much sorrow." And now she fairly cried aloud. I tried to explain ; but she would not listen, but kept saying, " Leave the house, sir I leave the house ! " But I would be heard.

' " I have never had any feeling warmer than respect for Miss Caroline, and I have never Bhown any different feeling. I never for an instant thought of making her my wife, and she has had no cause in my behaviour to imagine I entertained any such intention."

' " This is adding insult to injury," said she. " Leave the house, sir, this instant !"

CHAPTER XIX

' I WENT, and sadly enough. In a small town such an occurrence is sure to be talked about, and to make a great deal of mischief. When I went home to dinner I was so full of it, and foresaw so clearly that I should need some advocate soon to set the case in its right light, that I determined on making a confidante of good Mrs. Rose. I could not eat. She watched me tenderly, and sighed when she saw my want of appetite.

' " I am sure you have something on your mind, Mr. Harrison. Would it be—would it not be—a relief to impart it to some sympathizing friend ? "

' It was just what I wanted to do.

' " My dear kind Mrs. Rose," said I, " I must tell you, if you will listen."

' She took up the fire-screen, and held it, as yesterday, between me and her.

' " The most unfortunate misunderstanding has taken place. Miss Tomkinson thinks that I have been paying attentions to Miss Caroline ; when, in fact—may I tell you, Mrs. Rose ?—my affections are placed elsewhere. Perhaps you have found it out already ? " for indeed I thought I had been too much in love to conceal my attachment to Sophy from any one who knew my movements as well as Mrs. Rose.

* She hung down her head, and said she believed she had found out my secret.

' " Then only think how miserably I am situated. If I have any hope—oh, Mrs. Rose, do you think I have any hope "——

' She put the hand-screen still more before her face, and after some hesitation she said she thought " if I persevered—in time—I might have hope ". And then she suddenly got up and left the room.

CHAPTER XX

' THAT afternoon I met Mr. Bullock in the street. My mind was so full of the affair with Miss Tomkinson that I should have passed him without notice, if he had not stopped me short, and said that he must speak to me ; about my wonderful five hundred pounds, I supposed. But I did not care for that now.

' " What is this I hear," said he severely, " about your engagement with Mrs. Rose ? "

' " With Mrs. Rose ! " said I, almost laughing, although my heart was heavy enough.

' " Yes ! with Mrs. Rose ! " said he sternly.

' " I'm not engaged to Mrs. Rose," I replied. " There is some mistake."

' " I'm glad to hear it, sir," he answered, ^{4<} very glad. It requires some explanation, however. Mrs. Rose has been congratulated, and has acknowledged the truth of the report. It is confirmed by many facts. The work-table you bought, confessing your intention of giving it to your future wife, is given to her. How do you account for these things, sir ? "

* I said I did not pretend to account for them. At present, a good deal was inexplicable ; and when I could give an explanation, I did not think that I should feel myself called upon to give it to him.

' " Very well, sir ; very well," replied he, growing very red. " I shall take care and let Mr. Morgan know the opinion I entertain of you. What do you think that man deserves to be called who enters a family under the plea of friendship, and takes advantage of his intimacy to win the affections of the daughter, and then engages himself to another woman ? "

' I thought he referred to Miss Caroline. I simply said I could only say that I was not engaged ; and that Miss Tomkinson had been quite mistaken in supposing I had been paying any attentions to her sister beyond those dictated by mere civility.

' " Miss Tomkinson ! Miss Caroline ! I don't under-

stand to what you refer. Is there another victim to your perfidy ? What I allude to are the attentions you have paid to my daughter, Miss Bullock."

' Another ! I could but disclaim, as I had done in the case of Miss Caroline; but I began to be in despair. Would Miss Horsman, too, come forward as a victim to my tender affections ? It was all Mr. Morgan's doing, who had lectured me into this tenderly deferential manner. But on the score of Miss Bullock, I was brave in my innocence. I had positively disliked her ; and so I told her father, though in more civil and measured terms, adding that I was sure the feeling was reciprocal.

' He looked as if he would like to horsewhip me. I longed to call him out.

' " I hope my daughter has had sense enough to despise you; I hope she has, that's all. I trust my wife may be mistaken as to her feelings."

* So, he had heard all through the medium of his wife. That explained something, and rather calmed me. I begged he would ask Miss Bullock if she had ever thought I had any ulterior object in my intercourse with her, beyond mere friendliness (and not so much of that, I might have added). I would refer it to her.

' " Girls," said Mr. Bullock, a little more quietly, " do not like to acknowledge that they have been deceived and disappointed. I consider my wife's testimony as likely to be nearer the truth than my daughter's, for that reason. And she tells me she never doubted but that, if not absolutely engaged, you understood each other perfectly. She is sure *Jemima* is deeply wounded by your engagement to Mrs. Rose."

' " Once for all, I am not engaged to anybody. Till you have seen your daughter, and learnt the truth from her, I will wish you farewell."

' I bowed in a stiff, haughty manner, and walked off homewards. But when I got to my own door, I remembered Mrs. Rose, and all that Mr. Bullock had said about her acknowledging the truth of the report of my engage-

ment to her. Where could I go to be safe ? Mrs. Rose, Miss Bullock, Miss Caroline—they lived as it were at the three points of an equilateral triangle; here was I in the centre. I would go to Mr. Morgan's, and drink tea with him. There, at any rate, I was secure from any one wanting to marry me; and I might be as professionally bland as I liked, without being misunderstood. But there, too, a *contretemps* awaited me.

CHAPTER XXI

'MR. MORGAN was looking grave. After a minute or two of humming and hawing, he said—

' "I have been sent for to Miss Caroline Tomkinson, Mr. Harrison. I am sorry to hear of this. I am grieved to find that there seems to have been some trifling with the affections of a very worthy lady. Miss Tomkinson, who is in sad distress, tells me that they had every reason to believe that you were attached to her sister. May I ask if you do not intend to marry her ?'

* I said, nothing was farther from my thoughts.

' "My dear sir," said Mr. Morgan, rather agitated, "do not express yourself so strongly and vehemently. It is derogatory to the sex to speak so. It is more respectful to say, in these cases, that you do not venture to entertain a hope; such a manner is generally understood, and does not sound like such positive objection."

' "I cannot help it, sir; I must talk in my own natural manner. I would not speak disrespectfully of any woman; but nothing should induce me to marry Miss Caroline Tomkinson; not if she were Venus herself, and Queen of England into the bargain. I cannot understand what has given rise to the idea."

' "Indeed, sir; I think that is very plain. You have a trifling case to attend to in the house, and you invariably make it a pretext for seeing **and** conversing **with the lady.**"

' " That was her doing, not mine !" said I vehemently.

' " Allow me to go on. You are discovered on your knees before her—a positive injury to the establishment, as Miss Tomkinson observes; a most passionate valentine is sent; and when questioned, you acknowledge the sincerity of meaning which you affix to such things." Ho stopped, for in his earnestness he had been talking more quickly than usual, and was out of breath. I burst in with my explanations—

' " The valentine I know nothing about."

' " It is in your handwriting," said he coldly. " I should be most deeply grieved to—in fact, I will not think it possible of your father's son. But I must say, it is in your handwriting."

' I tried again, and at last succeeded in convincing him that I had been only unfortunate, not intentionally guilty of winning Miss Caroline's affections. I said that I had been endeavouring, it was true, to practise the manner he had recommended, of universal sympathy, and recalled to his mind some of the advice he had given me. He was a good deal hurried.

' " But, my dear sir, I had no idea that you would carry it out to such consequences. * Philandering,' Miss Tomkinson called it. That is a hard word, sir. My manner has been always tender and sympathetic; but I am not aware that I ever excited any hopes; there never was any report about me. I believe no lady was ever attached to me. You must strive after this happy medium, sir."

' I was still distressed. Mr. Morgan had only heard of one, but there were three ladies (including Miss Bullock) hoping to marry me. He saw my annoyance.

' " Don't be too much distressed about it, my dear sir; I was sure you were too honourable a man, from the first. With a conscience like yours, I would defy the world."

' He became anxious to console me, and I was hesitating whether I would not tell him all my three

dilemmas, when a note was brought in to him. It was from Mrs. Munton. He threw it to me, with a face of dismay.

' " MY DEAR MR. MORGAN,—I most sincerely congratulate you on the happy matrimonial engagement I hear you have formed with Miss Tomkinson. All previous circumstances, as I have just been remarking to Miss Horsman, combine to promise you felicity. And I wish that every blessing may attend your married life.—Most sincerely yours,

' " JANE MUNTON."

* I could not help laughing, he had been so lately congratulating himself that no report of the kind had ever been circulated about himself. He said—

' " Sir ! this is no laughing matter ; I assure you it is not."

' I could not resist asking, if I was to conclude that there was no truth in the report.

' " Truth, sir ! it's a lie from beginning to end. I don't like to speak too decidedly about any lady ; and I've a great respect for Miss Tomkinson ; but I do assure you, sir, I'd as soon marry one of Her Majesty's Life Guards. I would rather ; it would be more suitable. Miss Tomkinson is a very worthy lady ; but she's a perfect grenadier."

' He grew very nervous. He was evidently insecure. He thought it not impossible that Miss Tomkinson might come and marry him, *vi et armis*. I am sure he had some dim idea of abduction in his mind. Still, he was better off than I was ; for he was in his own house, and report had only engaged him to one lady ; while I stood, like Paris, among three contending beauties. Truly, an apple of discord had been thrown into our little town. I suspected at the time, what I know now, that it was Miss Horsman's doing ; not intentionally, I will do her the justice to say. But she had shouted out the story of my behaviour to Miss Caroline up Mrs. Munton's trumpet ; and that lady, possessed with the idea that I was engaged to Mrs. Rose, had imagined

the masculine pronoun to relate to Mr. Morgan, whom she had seen only that afternoon *tete a tete* with Miss Tomkinson, condoling with her in some tender deferential manner, I'll be bound

CHAPTER XXII

' I WAS very cowardly. I positively dared not go home ; but at length I was obliged to. I had done all I could to console Mr. Morgan, but he refused to be comforted. I went at last. I rang at the bell. I don't know who opened the door, but I think it was Mrs. Rose. I kept a handkerchief to my face, and muttering something about having a dreadful toothache, I flew up to my room and bolted the door. I had no candle ; but what did that signify. I was safe. I could not sleep; and when I did fall into a sort of doze, it was ten times worse wakening up. I could not remember whether I was engaged or not. If I was engaged, who was the lady ? I had always considered myself as rather plain than otherwise; but surely I had made a mistake. Fascinating I certainly must be; but perhaps I was handsome. As soon as day dawned, I got up to ascertain the fact at the looking-glass. Even with the best disposition to be convinced, I could not see any striking beauty in my round face, with an unshaven beard and a nightcap like a fool's cap at the top. No ! I must be content to be plain, but agreeable. All this I tell you in confidence. I would not have my little bit of vanity known for the world. I fell asleep towards morning. I was awakened by a tap at my door. It was Peggy: she put in a hand with a note. I took it.

' " It is not from Miss Horsman ? " said I, half in joke, half in very earnest fright.

" No, sir ; Air. Morgan's man brought it. "

' I opened it. It ran thus—

' " MY DEAR SIR,—It is now nearly twenty years since I have had a little relaxation, and I find that my health

requires it. I have also the utmost confidence in you, and I am sure this feeling is shared by our patients. I have, therefore, no scruple in putting in execution a hastily formed plan, and going to Chesterton to catch the early tram on my way to Paris. If your accounts are good, I shall remain away probably a fortnight. Direct to Meurice's.—Yours, most truly,

" ' J. MORGAN.

" " PS.—Perhaps it may be as well not to name where I am gone, especially to Miss Tomkmson."

' He had deserted me. He—with only one report—had left me to stand my ground with three.

' " Mrs. Rose's kind regards, sir, and it's nearly nine o'clock. Breakfast has been ready this hour, sir."

' " Tell Mrs. Rose I don't want any breakfast. Or stay " (for I was very hungry), " I will take a cup of tea and some toast up here."

' Peggy brought the tray to the door.

' " I hope you're not ill, sir ? " said she kindly.

' " Not very. I shall be better when I get into the air.

' " Mrs. Rose seems sadly put about," said she; " she seems so grieved like."

' I watched my opportunity, and went out by the side door in the garden.

CHAPTER XXIII

' I HAD intended to ask Mr. Morgan to call at the vicarage, and give his parting explanation before they could hear the report. Now, I thought that if I could see Sophy, I would speak to her myself; but I did not wish to encounter the Vicar. I went along the lane at the back of the vicarage, and came suddenly upon Miss Bullock. She coloured, and asked me if I would allow her to speak to me. I could only be resigned; but I thought I could probably set one report at rest by this conversation.

She was almost crying.

" I must tell you, Mr. Harrison, I have watched you here in order to speak to you. I heard with the greatest regret of papa's conversation with you yesterday." She was fairly crying. " I believe Mrs. Bullock finds me in her way, and wants to have me married. It is the only way in which I can account for such a complete misrepresentation as she had told papa. I don't care for you in the least, sir. You never paid me any attentions. You've been almost rude to me ; and I have liked you the better. That's to say, I never have liked you."

' " I am truly glad to hear what you say," answered I. " Don't distress yourself. I was sure there was some mistake."

' But she cried bitterly.

' " It is so hard to feel that my marriage—my absence—is desired so earnestly at home. I dread every new acquaintance we form with any gentleman. It is sure to be the beginning of a series of attacks on him, of which everybody must be aware, and to which they may think I am a willing party. But I should not much mind if it were not for the conviction that she wishes me so earnestly away. Oh, my own dear mamma, you would never "——

' She cried more than ever. I was truly sorry for her, and had just taken her hand, and began—"My dear Miss Bullock "——when the door in the wall of the vicarage garden opened. It was the Vicar letting out Miss Tomkinson, whose face was all swelled with crying. He saw me ; but he did not bow, or make any sign. On the contrary, he looked down as from a severe eminence, and shut the door hastily. I turned to Miss Bullock.

" I am afraid the Vicar has been hearing something to my disadvantage from Miss Tomkinson, and it is very awkward "——She finished my sentence—" To have found us here together. Yes, but as long as we understand that we do not care for each other, it does not signify what people say."

' " Oh, but to me it does," said I. " I may, perhaps, tell you—but do not mention it to a creature—I am attached to Miss Hutton."

' " To Sophy ! Oh, Mr. Harrison, I am so glad; she is such a sweet creature. Oh, I wish you joy."

' " Not yet; I have never spoken about it."

* " Oh, but it is certain to happen." She jumped with a woman's rapidity to a conclusion. And then she began to praise Sophy. Never was a man yet who did not like to hear the praises of his mistress. I walked by her side; we came past the front of the vicarage together. I looked up, and saw Sophy there, and she saw me.

' That afternoon she was sent away ; sent to visit her aunt ostensibly ; in reality, because of the reports of my conduct, which were showered down upon the Vicar, and one of which he saw confirmed by his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV

¹ I HEARD of Sophy's departure as one heard of everything, soon after it had taken place. I did not care for the awkwardness of my situation, which had so perplexed and amused me in the morning. I felt that something was wrong; that Sophy was taken away from me. I sank into despair. If anybody liked to marry me they might. I was willing to be sacrificed. I did not speak to Mrs. Rose. She wondered at me, and grieved over my coldness, I saw; but I had left off feeling anything. Miss Tomkinson cut me in the street; and it did not break my heart. Sophy was gone away ; that was all I cared for. Where had they sent her to ? Who was her aunt, that she should go and visit her ? One day I met Lizzie, who looked as though she had been told not to speak to me, but could not help doing so.

' " Have you heard from your sister ? " said I.

' " Yes."

' "Where is she ? I hope she is well."

' "She is at the Leoms" — I was not much wiser. "Oh yes, she is very well. Fanny says she was at the Assembly last Wednesday, and danced all night with the officers."

' I thought I would enter myself a member of the Peace Society at once. She was a little flirt, and a hard-hearted creature. I don't think I wished Lizzie good-bye.

CHAPTER XXV

' WHAT most people would have considered a more serious evil than Sophy's absence, befell me. I found that my practice was falling off. The prejudice of the town ran strongly against me. Mrs. Munton told me all that was said. She heard it through Miss Horsman. It was said—cruel little town—that my negligence or ignorance had been the cause of Walter's death ; that Miss Tyrrell had become worse under my treatment; and that John Brouncker was all but dead, if he was not quite, from my mismanagement. All Jack Marshland's jokes and revelations, which had, I thought, gone to oblivion, were raked up to my discredit. He himself, formerly, to my astonishment, rather a favourite with the good people of Duncombe, was spoken of as one of my disreputable friends.

' In short, so prejudiced were the good people of Duncombe that I believe a very little would have made them suspect me of a brutal highway robbery, which took place in the neighbourhood about this time. Mrs. Munton told me, apropos of the robbery, that she had never yet understood the cause of my year's imprisonment in Newgate; she had no doubt, from what Mr. Morgan had told her, there was some good reason for it ; but if I would tell her the particulars, she should like to know them.

' Miss Tomkinson sent for Mr. White, from Chesterton, to see Miss Caroline; and, as he was coming over, all

our old patients seemed to take advantage of it, and send for him too.

' But the worst of all was the Vicar's manner to me. If he had cut me, I could have asked him why he did so. But the freezing change in his behaviour was indescribable, though bitterly felt. I heard of Sophy's gaiety from Lizzie. I thought of writing to her. Just then Mr. Morgan's fortnight of absence expired. I was wearied out by Mrs. Rose's tender vagaries, and took no comfort from her sympathy, which indeed I rather avoided. Her tears irritated, instead of grieving me.

wished I could tell her at once that I had no intention of marrying her.

CHAPTER XXVI

' MR. MORGAN had not been at home above two hours before he was sent for to the Vicarage. Sophy had come back, and I had never heard of it. She had come home ill and weary, and longing for rest: and the *rest* seemed approaching with awful strides. Mr. Morgan forgot all his Parisian adventures, and all his terror of Miss Tomkinson, when he was sent for to see her. She was ill of a fever, which made fearful progress. When he told me, I wished to force the Vicarage door, if I might but see her. But I controlled myself; and only cursed my weak indecision, which had prevented my writing to her. It was well I had no patients: they would have had but a poor chance of attention. I hung about Mr. Morgan, who might see her, and did see her. But from what he told me, I perceived that the measures he was adopting were powerless to check so sudden and violent an illness. Oh! if they would but let me see her. But that **was** out of the question. It was not merely **that** the Vicar had heard of my character as a gay Lothario, but that doubts had been thrown out of my medical skill. The accounts grew worse. Suddenly my resolution was taken. Mr. Morgan's very regard for Sophy made him more than usually timid in

his practice. I had my horse saddled, and galloped to Chesterton. I took the express train to town. I went to Dr.——. I told him every particular of the case. He listened ; but shook his head. He wrote down a prescription; and recommended a new preparation, not yet in full use ; a preparation of a poison, in fact.

' " It may save her," said he. " It is a chance, in such a state of things as you describe. It must be given on the fifth day, if the pulse will bear it. Crabbe makes up the preparation most skilfully. Let me hear from you, I beg."

' I went to Crabbe's ; I begged to make it up myself ; but my hands trembled, so that I could not weigh the quantities. I asked the young man to do it for me. I went, without touching food, to the station, with my medicine and my prescription in my pocket. Back we flew through the country. I sprang on Bay Maldon, which my groom had in waiting, and galloped across the country to Duncombe.

' But I drew bridle when I came to the top of the hill—the hill above the old hall, from which we catch the first glimpse of the town, for I thought within myself that she might be dead; and I dreaded to come near certainty. The hawthorns were out in the woods, the young lambs were in the meadows, the song of the thrushes filled the air ; but it only made the thought the more terrible.

' " What, if in this world of hope and life she lies dead ! " I heard the church bells soft and clear. I sickened to listen. Was it the passing bell ? No ! it was ringing eight o'clock. I put spurs to my horse, down hill as it was. We dashed into the town. I turned him, saddle and bridle, into the stable-yard, and went off to Mr. Morgan's.

' " Is she——? " said I. " How is she ? "

' " Very ill. My poor fellow, I see how it is with you. She may live—but I fear. My dear sir, I am very much afraid.

' I told him of my journey **and consultation with Dr.——, and showed him the** prescription. His hands trembled as he put on his spectacles to read it.

' "(This is a very dangerous medicine, sir,)" said he, with his finger under the name of the poison.

' " It is a new preparation," said I. " Dr.——relies much upon it."

' " I dare not administer it," he replied. " I have never tried it. It must be very powerful. I dare not play tricks in this case."

' I believe I stamped with impatience ; but it was all of no use. My journey had been in vain. The more I urged the imminent danger of the case requiring some powerful remedy, the more nervous he became.

' I told him I would throw up the partnership. I threatened him with that, though, in fact, it was only what I felt I ought to do, and had resolved upon before Sophy's illness, as I had lost the confidence of his patients. He only said—

' " I cannot help it, sir. I shall regret it for your father's sake ; but I must do my duty. I dare not run the risk of giving Miss Sophy this violent medicine—a preparation of a deadly poison."

' I left him without a word. He was quite right in adhering to his own views, as I can see now ; but at the time I thought him brutal and obstinate.

CHAPTER XXVII

' I WENT home. I spoke rudely to Mrs. Rose, who awaited my return at the door. I rushed past, and locked myself in my room. I could not go to bed.

' The morning sun came pouring in, and enraged me, as everything did since Mr. Morgan refused. I pulled the blind down so violently that the string broke. What did it signify ? The light might come in. What was the sun to me ? And then I remembered that that sun might be shining on her—dead.

' I sat down and covered my face. Mrs. Rose knocked at the door. I opened it. She had never been in bed, and had been crying too.

' " Mr. Morgan wants to speak to you, sir."

' I rushed back for my medicine, and went to him. He stood at the door, pale and anxious.

"She's alive, sir," said he, "but that's all. We have sent for Dr. Hamilton. I'm afraid he will not come in time. Do you know, sir, I think we should venture—with Dr.——'s sanction—to give her that medicine. It is but a chance ; but it is the only one, I'm afraid." He fairly cried before he had ended.

' " I've got it here," said I, setting off to walk ; but he could not go so fast.

' " I beg your pardon, sir," said he, " for my abrupt refusal last night."

' " Indeed, sir," said I; " I ought much rather to beg your pardon. I was very violent."

' " Oh ! never mind ! never mind ! Will you repeat what Dr.——said ? "

' I did so; and then I asked, with a meekness that astonished myself, if I might not go in and administer it.

' "No, sir," said he, "I'm afraid not. I am sure your good heart would not wish to give pain. Besides, it might agitate her, if she has any consciousness before death. In her delirium she has often mentioned your name ; and, sir, I'm sure you won't name it again, as it may, in fact, be considered a professional secret; but I did hear our good Vicar speak a little strongly about you ; in fact, sir, I did hear him curse you. You see the mischief it might make in the parish, I'm sure, if this were known."

' I gave him the medicine, and watched him in, and saw the door shut. I hung about the place all day. Poor and rich all came to inquire. The county people drove up in their carriages—the halt and the lame came on their crutches. Their anxiety did my heart good. Mr. Morgan told me that she slept, and I watched Dr. Hamilton into the house. The night came on. She slept. I watched round the house. I saw the light high up, burning still and steady. Then I saw it moved. It was the crisis, in one way or other.

CHAPTER XXVIII

* MR. MORGAN came out. Good old man ! The tears were running down his cheeks: he could not speak; but kept shaking my hands. I did not want words. I understood that she was better.

' " Dr. Hamilton says, it was the only medicine that could have saved her. I was an old fool, sir. I beg your pardon. The Vicar shall know all. I beg your pardon, sir, if I was abrupt."

' Everything went on brilliantly from this time.

' Mr. Bullock called to apologize for his mistake, and consequent upbraiding. John Brouncker came home, brave and well.

' There was still Miss Tomkinson in the ranks of the enemy ; and Mrs. Rose too much, I feared, in the ranks of the friends.

CHAPTER XXIX

' ONE night she had gone to bed, and I was thinking of going. I had been studying in the back room, where I went for refuge from her in the present position of affairs (I read a good number of surgical books about this time, and also *Vanity Fair*)—when I heard a loud, long-continued knocking at the door, enough to waken the whole street. Before I could get to open it, I heard that well-known bass of Jack Marshland's, once heard never to be forgotten, pipe up the negro song—

Who's dat knocking at de door?

* Though it was raining hard at the time, and I stood waiting to let him in, he would finish his melody in the open air; loud and clear along the street it sounded. I saw Miss Tomkinson's night-capped head emerge from a window. She called out " Police ! police ! "

' Now there were no police, only a rheumatic constable in the town ; but it was the custom of the ladies,

when alarmed at night, to call an imaginary police, which had, they thought, an intimidating effect; but as every one knew the real state of the unwatched town, we did not much mind it in general. Just now, however, I wanted to regain my character. So I pulled Jack in, quavering as he entered.

' " You've spoilt a good shake," said he, " that's what you have. I'm nearly up to Jenny Lind; and you see I'm a nightingale, like her."

' We sat up late; and I don't know how it was, but I told him all my matrimonial misadventures.

' " I thought I could imitate your hand pretty well," said he. " My word ! it was a flaming valentine ! No wonder she thought you loved her ! "

' " So that was your doing, was it ? Now I'll tell you what you shall do to make up for it. You shall write me a letter confessing your hoax—a letter that I can show."

' " Give me pen and paper, my boy ! you shall dictate. ' With a deeply penitent heart'——Will that do for a beginning ? "

' I told him what to write ; a simple, straightforward confession of his practical joke. I enclosed it in a few lines of regret that, unknown to me, any of my friends should have so acted.

CHAPTER XXX

' ALL this time I knew that Sophy was slowly recovering. One day I met Miss Bullock, who had seen her.

' " We have been talking about you," said she, with a bright smile; for since she knew I disliked her, she felt quite at her ease, and could smile very pleasantly. I understood that she had been explaining the misunderstanding about herself to Sophy; so that when Jack Marshland's note had been sent to Miss Tomkinson's, I thought myself in a fair way to have my character established in two quarters. But the third was my dilemma. Mrs. Rose had really so much of my true

regard for her good qualities, that I disliked the idea of a formal explanation, in which a good deal must be said on my side to wound her. We had become very much estranged ever since I had heard of this report of my engagement to her. I saw that she grieved over it. While Jack Marshland stayed with us, I felt at my ease in the presence of a third person. But he told me confidentially he durst not stay long, for fear some of the ladies should snap him up, and marry him. Indeed I myself did not think it unlikely that he would snap one of them up if he could. For when we met Miss Bullock one day, and heard her hopeful, joyous account of Sophy's progress (to whom she was a daily visitor), he asked me who that bright-looking girl was? And when I told him she was the Miss Bullock of whom I had spoken to him, he was pleased to observe that he thought I had been a great fool, and asked me if Sophy had anything like such splendid eyes. He made me repeat about Miss Bullock's unhappy circumstances at home, and then became very thoughtful—a most unusual and morbid symptom in his case.

'Soon after he went, by Mr. Morgan's kind offices and explanations, I was permitted to see Sophy. I might not speak much; it was prohibited, for fear of agitating her. We talked of the weather and the flowers; and we were silent. But her little white thin hand lay in mine; and we understood each other without words. I had a long interview with the Vicar afterwards; and came away glad and satisfied.

'Mr. Morgan called in the afternoon, evidently anxious, though he made no direct inquiries (he was too polite for that), to hear the result of my visit at the vicarage. I told him to give me joy. He shook me warmly by the hand; and then rubbed his own together. I thought I would consult him about my dilemma with Mrs. Rose, who, I was afraid, would be deeply affected by my engagement.

' "There is only one awkward circumstance," said I—"about Mrs. Rose." I hesitated how to word the fact of her having received congratulations on her supposed

engagement with me, and her manifest attachment; but, before I could speak, he broke in—

'My dear sir, you need not trouble yourself about that; she will have a home. In fact, sir," said he, reddening a little, "I thought it would, perhaps, put a stop to those reports connecting my name with Miss Tomkinson's, if I married some one else. I hoped it might prove an efficacious contradiction. And I was struck with admiration for Mrs. Rose's undying memory of her late husband. Not to be prolix, I have this morning obtained Mrs. Rose's consent to—to marry her, in fact, sir!" said he, jerking out the climax.

'Here was an event! Then Mr. Morgan had never heard the report about Mrs. Rose and me. (To this day, I think she would have taken me, if I had proposed.) So much the better.

'Marriages were in the fashion that year. Mr. Bullock met me one morning, as I was going to ride with Sophy. He and I had quite got over our misunderstanding, thanks to Jemima, and were as friendly as ever. This morning he was chuckling aloud as he walked.

' "Stop, Mr. Harnson!" he said, as I went quickly past. "Have you heard the news? Miss Horsman has just told me Miss Caroline has eloped with young Hoggins! She is ten years older than he is! How can her gentility like being married to a tallow-chandler? It is a very good thing for her, though," he added, in a more serious manner; "old Hoggins is very rich; and though he's angry just now, he will soon be reconciled."

•Any vanity I might have entertained on the score of the three ladies who were, at one time, said to be captivated by my charms, was being rapidly dispersed. Soon after Mr. Hoggins's marriage, I met Miss Tomkinson face to face, for the first time since our memorable conversation. She stopped me, and said—

' "Don't refuse to receive my congratulations, Mr. Harrison, on your most happy engagement to Miss Hutton. I owe you an apology, too, for my behaviour when I last saw you at our house. I really did think Caroline was attached to you then; and it

irritated me, I confess, in a very wrong and unjustifiable way. But I heard her telling Mr. Hoggins only yesterday that she had been attached to him for years ; ever since he was in pinafores, she dated it from ; and when I asked her afterwards how she could say so, after her distress on hearing that false report about you and Mrs. Rose, she cried, and said I never had understood her ; and that the hysterics which alarmed me so much were simply caused by eating pickled cucumber. I am very sorry for my stupidity, and improper way of speaking ; but I hope we are friends now, Mr. Harrison, for I should wish to be liked by Sophy's husband."

* Good Miss Tomkinson ! to believe the substitution of indigestion for disappointed affection. I shook her warmly by the hand ; and we have been all right ever since. I think I told you she is baby's godmother.

CHAPTER XXXI

'I HAD some difficulty in persuading Jack Marshland to be groomsman ; but when he heard all the arrangements, he came. Miss Bullock was bridesmaid. He liked us all so well, that he came again at Christmas, and was far better behaved than he had been the year before. He won golden opinions indeed. Miss Tomkinson said he was a reformed young man. We dined all together at Mr. Morgan's (the Vicar wanted us to go there ; but, from what Sophy told me, Helen was not confident of the mincemeat, and rather dreaded so large a party). We had a jolly day of it. Mrs. Morgan was as kind and motherly as ever. Miss Horsman certainly did set out a story that the Vicar was thinking of Miss Tomkinson for his second ; or else, I think, we had no other report circulated in consequence of our happy, merry Christmas Day ; and it is a wonder, considering how Jack Marshland went on with Jemima.'

Here Sophy came back from putting baby to bed ; and Charles wakened up.

III

THE SEXTON'S HERO

First published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847 Reprinted with 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' and 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' under the title of 'Life in Manchester by Cotton Mather Mills Esq.' in 1848, and with 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' in 1850. First appeared in book form in 'Lizzie Leigh and Other Stories' 1855 and in 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' in 1865.

THE SEXTON'S HERO

THE afternoon sun shed down his glorious rays on the grassy churchyard, making the shadow, cast by the old yew-tree under which we sat, seem deeper and deeper by contrast. The everlasting hum of myriads of summer insects made luxurious lullaby.

Of the view that lay beneath our gaze, I cannot speak adequately. The foreground was the grey-stone wall of the Vicarage garden; rich in the colouring made by innumerable lichens, ferns, ivy of most tender green and most delicate tracery, and the vivid scarlet of the crane's-bill, which found a home in every nook and crevice—and at the summit of that old wall flaunted some unpruned tendrils of the vine, and long flower-laden branches of the climbing rose-tree, trained against the inner side. Beyond, lay meadow green and mountain grey, and the blue dazzle of Morecambe Bay, as it sparkled between us and the more distant view.

For a while we were silent, living in sight and murmuring sound. Then Jeremy took up our conversation where, suddenly feeling weariness, as we saw that deep green shadowy resting-place, we had ceased speaking a quarter of an hour before.

It is one of the luxuries of holiday-time that thoughts are not rudely shaken from us by outward violence of hurry and busy impatience, but fall maturely from our lips in the sunny leisure of our days. The stock may be bad, but the fruit is ripe.

'How would you then define a hero?' I asked.

There was a long pause, and I had almost forgotten my question in watching a cloud-shadow floating over the far-away hills, when Jeremy made answer—

'My idea of a hero is one who acts up to the highest idea of duty he has been able to form, no matter at

what sacrifice. I think that by this definition we may include all phases of character, even to the heroes of old, whose sole (and to us, low) idea of duty consisted in personal prowess.'

'Then you would even admit the military heroes?' asked I.

'I would; with a certain kind of pity for the circumstances which had given them no higher ideas of duty. Still, if they sacrificed self to do what they sincerely believed to be right, I do not think I could deny them the title of hero.'

'A poor, unchristian heroism, whose manifestation consists in injury to others!' I said.

We were both startled by a third voice.

* If I might make so bold, sir '—and then the speaker stopped.

It was the Sexton, whom, when we first arrived, we had noticed, as an accessory to the scene, but whom we had forgotten, as much as though he were as inanimate as one of the moss-covered headstones.

'If I might be so bold,' said he again, waiting leave to speak. Jeremy bowed in deference to his white, uncovered head. And so encouraged, he went on.

'What that gentleman' (alluding to my last speech) 'has just now said, brings to my mind one who is dead and gone this many a year ago. I, may be, have not rightly understood your meaning, gentlemen, but as far as I could gather it, I think you'd both have given in to thinking poor Gilbert Dawson a hero. At any rate,' said he, heaving a long, quivering sigh, * I have reason to think him so.'

'Will you take a seat, sir, and tell us about him?' * said Jeremy, standing up until the old man was seated. I confess I felt impatient at the interruption.

'It will be forty-five year come Martinmas,' said the Sexton, sitting down on a grassy mound at our feet, 'since I finished my 'prenticeship, and settled down at Lindal. You can see Lindal, sir, at evenings and mornings across the bay; a little to the right of Grange; at least, I used to see it, many a time and oft,

afore my sight grew so dark : and I have spent many a quarter of an hour a-gazing at it far away, and thinking of the days I lived there, till the tears came so thick to my eyes, I could gaze no longer. I shall never look upon it again, either far off or near, but you may see it, both ways, and a terrible bonny spot it is. In my young days, when I went to settle there, it was full of as wild a set of young fellows as ever were clapped eyes on; all for fighting, poaching, quarrelling, and suchlike work. I were startled myself when I first found what a set I were among, but soon I began to fall into their ways, and I ended by being as rough a chap as any on 'em. I'd been there a matter of two year, and were reckoned by most the cock of the village, when Gilbert Dawson, as I was speaking of, came to Lindal. He were about as strapping a chap as I was (I used to be six feet high, though now I'm so shrunk and doubled up), and, as we were like in the same trade (both used to prepare osiers and wood for the Liverpool coopers, who get a deal of stuff from the cospes round the bay, sir), we were thrown together, and took mightily to each other. I put my best leg foremost to be equal with Gilbert, for I'd had some schooling, though since I'd been at Lindal I'd lost a good part of what I'd learnt; and I kept my rough ways out of sight for a time, I felt so ashamed of his getting to know them. But that did not last long. I began to think he fancied a girl I dearly loved, but who had always held off from me. Eh ! but she was a pretty one in those days ! There's none like her, now. I think I see her going along the road with her dancing tread, and shaking back her long yellow curls, to give me or any other young fellow a saucy word ; no wonder Gilbert was taken with her, for all he was grave, and she so merry and light. But I began to think she liked him again ; and then my blood was all afire. I got to hate him for everything he did. Aforetime I had stood by, admiring to see him, how he leapt, and what a quoiter and cricketer he was. And now I ground my teeth with hatred whene'er he did a thing which caught Letty's eye. I could read it in

her look that she liked him, for all she held herself just as high with him as with all the rest. Lord God forgive me ! how I hated that man.'

He spoke as if the hatred were a thing of yesterday, so clear within his memory were shown the actions and feelings of his youth. And then he dropped his voice and said—

' Well ! I began to look out to pick a quarrel with him, for my blood was up to fight him. If I beat him (and I were a rare boxer in those days), I thought Letty would cool towards him. So one evening at quoits (I'm sure I don't know how or why, but large doings grow out of small words) I fell out with him, and challenged him to fight. I could see he were very wroth by his colour coming and going—and, as I said before, he were a fine active young fellow. But all at once he drew in, and said he would not fight. Such a yell as the Lindal lads, who were watching us, set up ! I hear it yet. I could na' help but feel sorry for him, to be so scorned, and I thought he'd not rightly taken my meaning, and I'd give him another chance ; so I said it again, and dared him, as plain as words could speak, to fight out the quarrel. He told me then, he had no quarrel against me; that he might have said something to put me up ; he did not know that he had, but that if he had, he asked pardon; but that he would not fight no-how.

* I was so full of scorn at his cowardliness, that I was vexed I'd given him the second chance, and I joined in the yell that was set up, twice as bad as before. He stood it out, his teeth set, and looking very white, and when we were silent for want of breath, he said out loud, but in a hoarse voice, quite different from his own—

' " I cannot fight, because I think it is wrong to quarrel, and use violence."

' Then he turned to go away; I were so beside myself with scorn and hate, that I called out—

' " Tell truth, lad, at least; if thou dare not fight, dunnot go and tell a lie about it. Mother's moppet is

afraid of a black eye, pretty dear, It shannot be hurt, but it munnot tell lies."

' Well, they laughed, but I could not laugh. It seemed such a thing for a stout young chap to be a coward, and afraid !

' Before the sun had set, it was talked of all over Lindal, how I had challenged Gilbert to fight, and how he'd denied me; and the folks stood at their doors, and looked at him going up the hill to his home, as if he'd been a monkey or a foreigner—but no one wished him good e'en. Such a thing as refusing to fight had never been heard of afore at Lindal. Next day, however, they had found voice. The men muttered the woid " coward " in his hearing, and kept aloof ; the women tittered as he passed, and the little impudent lads and lasses shouted out, " How long is it sin' thou turned Quaker ? " " Good-bye, Jonathan Broad-brim," and suchlike jests.

' That evening I met him, with Letty by his side, coming up from the shore. She was almost crying as I came upon them at the turn of the lane ; and looking up in his face, as if begging him something. And so she was, she told me it after. For she did really like him ; and could not abide to hear him scorned by every one for being a coward; and she, coy as she was, all but told him that very night that she loved him, and begged him not to disgrace himself, but fight me as I'd dared him to. When he still stuck to it he could not, for that it was wrong, she was so vexed and mad-like at the way she'd spoken, and the feelings she'd let out to coax him, that she said more stinging things about his being a coward than all the rest put together (according to what she told me, sir, afterwards), and ended by saying she'd never speak to him again, as long as she lived; she did once again, though—her blessing was the last human speech that reached his ear in his wild death-struggle.

' But much happened afore that time. From the day I met them walking, Letty turned towards me; I could see a part of it was to spite Gilbert, for she'd be

twice as kind when he was near, or likely to hear of it % but by and by she got to like me for my own sake, and it was all settled for our marriage. Gilbert kept aloof from every one, and fell into a sad, careless way. His very gait was changed ; his step used to be brisk and sounding, and now his foot lingered heavily on the ground. I used to try and daunt him with my eye, but he would always meet my look in a steady, quiet way, for all so much about him was altered ; the lads would not play with him ; and as soon as he found he was to be slighted by them whenever he came to quoiting or cricket, he just left off coming.

' The old clerk was the only one he kept company with ; or perhaps, rightly to speak, the only one who would keep company with him. They got so thick at last, that old Jonas would say, Gilbert had gospel on las side, and did no more than gospel told him to do ; but we none of us gave much credit to what he said, more by token our vicar had a brother, a colonel in the army ; and as we threeped it many a time to Jonas, would he set himself up to know the gospel better than the vicar ? that would be putting the cart afore th[^] horse, like the French radicals. And if the vicar had thought quarrelling and fighting wicked, and again the Bible, would he have made so much work about all the victories, that were as plenty as blackberries at that time of day, and kept the little bell of Lindal church for ever ringing ; or would he have thought so much of " my brother the colonel ", as he was always talking on?

' After I was married to Letty I left off hating Gilbert, leven kind of pitied him—he was so scorned and slighted ; and for all he d a bold look about him, as if he were not ashamed, he seemed pining and shrunk. It's a wearying thing to be kept at arm's length by one's kind ; and so Gilbert found it, poor fellow. The little children took to him, though ; they'd be round about him like a swarm of bees—them as was too young to know what a coward was, and only felt that he was ever ready to love and to help them, and was never loud or cross, however naughty they might be. After a while we

had our little one, too ; such a blessed darling she was, and dearly did we love her; Letty in especial, who seemed to get all the thought I used to think sometimes she wanted, after she had her baby to care for.

' All my kin lived on this side the bay, up above Kellet. Jane (that's her that lies buried near yon white rose-tree) was to be married, and naught would serve her but that Letty and I must come to the wedding ; for all my sisters loved Letty, she had such winning ways with her. Letty did not like to leave her baby, nor yet did I want her to take it: so, after a talk, we fixed to leave it with Letty's mother for the afternoon. I could see her heart ached a bit, for she'd never left it till then, and she seemed to fear all manner of evil, even to the French coming and taking it away. Well! we borrowed a shandry, and harnessed my old grey mare, as I used in th' cart, and set off as grand as King George across the sands about three o'clock, for you see it were high-water about twelve, and we'd to go and come back same tide, as Letty could not leave her baby for long. It were a merry afternoon, were that; last time I ever saw Letty laugh heartily; and, for that matter, last time I ever laughed downright hearty myself. The latest crossing-time fell about nine o'clock, and we were late at starting. Clocks were wrong ; and we'd a piece of work chasing a pig father had given Letty to take home ; we bagged him at last, and he screeched and screeched in the back part o' th' shandry, and we laughed and they laughed ; and in the midst of all the merriment the sun set, and that sobered us a bit, for then we knew what time it was. I whipped the old mare, but she was a deal beener than she was in the morning, and would neither go quick up nor down the brows, and they're not a few 'twixt Kellet and the shore. On the sands it were worse. They were very heavy, for the fresh had come down after the rains we'd had. Lord ! how I did whip the poor mare, to make the most of the red light as yet lasted. You, maybe, don't know the sands, gentlemen. From Bolton side, where we started from, it is better than six mile to Cart

Lane, and two channels to cross, let alone holes and quicksands. At the second channel from us the guide waits, all during crossing-time from sunrise to sunset; but for the three hours on each side high-water he's not there, in course. He stays after sunset if he's forespoken, not else. So now you know where we were that awful night. For we'd crossed the first channel about two mile, and it were growing darker and darker above and around us, all but one red line of light above the hills, when we came to a hollow (for all the sands look so flat, there's many a hollow in them where you lose all sight of the shore). We were longer than we should ha' been in crossing the hollow, the sand was so quick; and when we came up again, there, again the blackness, was the white line of the rushing tide coming up the bay! It looked not a mile from us; and when the wind blows up the bay it comes swifter than a galloping horse. "Lord help us!" said I; and then I were sorry I'd spoken, to frighten Letty; but the words were crushed out of my heart by the terror. I felt her shiver up by my side, and clutch my coat. And as if the pig (as had screeched himself hoarse some time ago) had found out the danger we were all in, he took to squealing again, enough to bewilder any man. I cursed him between my teeth for his noise; and yet it was God's answer to my prayer, blind sinner as I was. Aye! you may smile, sir, but God can work through many a scornful thing, if need be.

* By this time the mare was all in a lather, and trembling and panting, as if in mortal fright; for though we were on the last bank afore the second channel, the water was gathering up her legs; and she so tired out! When we came close to the channel she stood still, and not all my flogging could get her to stir; she fairly groaned aloud, and shook in a terrible quaking way. Till now Letty had not spoken; only held my coat tightly. I heard her say something, and bent down my head.

"I think, John—I think—I shall never see baby again!"

* And then she sent up such a cry—so loud, and shrill, and pitiful! It fairly maddened me. I pulled out my knife to spur on the old mare, that it might end one way or the other, for the water was stealing sullenly up to the very axle-tree, let alone the white waves that knew no mercy in their steady advance. That one quarter of an hour, sir, seemed as long as all my life since. Thoughts, and fancies, and dreams, and memory ran into each other. The mist, the heavy mist, that was like a ghastly curtain, shutting us in for death, seemed to bring with it the scents of the flowers that grew around our own threshold; it might be, for it was falling on them like blessed dew, though to us it was a shroud. Letty told me at after, she heard her baby crying for her, above the gurgling of the rising waters, as plain as ever she heard anything; but the sea-birds were skirling, and the pig shrieking; I never caught it; it was miles away, at any rate.

' Just as I'd gotten my knife out, another sound was close upon us, blending with the gurgle of the near waters, and the roar of the distant (not so distant though); we could hardly see, but we thought we saw something black against the deep lead colour of wave, and mist, and sky. It neared and neared: with slow, steady motion, it came across the channel right to where we were.

' Oh, God! it was Gilbert Dawson on his strong bay horse.

' Few words did we speak, and little time had we to say them in. I had no knowledge at that moment of past or future—only of one present thought—how to save Letty, and, if I could, myself. I only remembered afterwards that Gilbert said he had been guided by an animal's shriek of terror; I only heard, when all was over, that he had been uneasy about our return, because of the depth of fresh, and had borrowed a pillion, and saddled his horse early in the evening, and ridden down to Cart Lane to watch for us. If all had gone well, we should ne'er have heard of it. As it was, old Jonas told it, the tears down-dropping from his withered cheeks.

' We fastened his horse to the shandry. We lifted Letty to the pillion. The waters rose every instant with sullen sound. They were all but in the shandry. Letty clung to the pillion handles, but drooped her head as if she had yet no hope of life. Swifter than thought (and yet he might have had time for thought and for temptation, sir—if he had ridden off with Letty, he would have been saved, not me), Gilbert was in the shandry by my side.

' " Quick ! " said he, clear and firm. " You must ride before her, and keep her up. The horse can swim. By God's mercy I will follow. I can cut the traces, and if the mare is not hampered with the shandry, she'll carry me safely through. At any rate, you are a husband and a father. No one cares for me."

' Do not hate me, gentlemen. I often wish that night was a dream. It has haunted my sleep ever since like a dream, and yet it was no dream. I took his place on the saddle, and put Letty's arms around me, and felt her head rest on my shoulder. I trust in God I spoke some word of thanks ; but I can't remember. I only recollect Letty raising her head, and calling out—

' " God bless you, Gilbert Dawson, for saving my baby from being an orphan this night." And then she fell against me, as if unconscious.

' I bore her through; or, rather, the strong horse swam bravely through the gathering waves. We were dripping wet when we reached the banks in-shore ; but we could have but one thought—where was Gilbert ? Thick mists and heaving waters compassed us round. Where was he ? We shouted. Letty, faint as she was, raised her voice and shouted clear and shrill. No answer came, the sea boomed on with ceaseless sullen beat. I rode to the guide's house. He was a-bed, and would not get up, though I offered him more than I was worth. Perhaps he knew it, the cursed old villain ! At any rate, I'd have paid it if I'd toiled my life long. He said I might take his horn and welcome. I did, and blew such a blast through the still, black night, the echoes came back upon the heavy air: but no human voice or

sound was heard—that wild blast could not awaken the dead !

'I took Letty home to her baby, over whom she wept the livelong night. I rode back to the shore about Cart Lane ; and to and fro, with weary march, did I pace along the brink of the waters, now and then shouting out into the silence a vain cry for Gilbert. The waters went back and left no trace. Two days afterwards he was washed ashore near Flukeborough. The shandry and poor old mare were found half-buried in a heap of sand by Arnside Knot. As far as we could guess, he had dropped his knife while trying to cut the traces, and so had lost all chance of life. Any rate, the knife was found in a cleft of the shaft.

' His friends came over from Garstang to his funeral. I wanted to go chief mourner, but it was not my right, and I might not; though I've never done mourning him to this day. When his sister packed up his things, I begged hard for something that had been his. She would give me none of his clothes (she was a right-down having woman), as she had boys of her own, who might grow up into them. But she threw me his Bible, as she said they'd gotten one already, and his were but a poor used-up thing. It was his, and so I cared for it. It were a black leather one, with pockets at the sides, old-fashioned-wise ; and in one were a bunch of wild flowers, Letty said she could almost be sure were some she had once given him.

' There were many a text in the Gospel, marked broad with his carpenter's pencil, which more than bore him out in his refusal to fight. Of a surety, sir, there 's call enough for bravery in the service of God, and to show love to man, without quarrelling and fighting.

' Thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me. Your words called up the thoughts of him, and my heart was full to speaking. But I must make up; I've to dig a grave for a little child, who is to be buried to-morrow morning, just when his playmates are trooping off to

' But tell us of Letty; is she yet alive ? ' asked Jeremy.

The old man shook his head, and struggled against a choking sigh. After a minute's pause he said—

' She died in less than two year at after that night. She was never like the same again. She would sit thinking, on Gilbert, I guessed: but I could not blame her. We had a boy, and we named it Gilbert Dawson Knipe ; he that's stoker on the London railway. Our girl was carried off in teething ; and Letty just quietly drooped, and died in less than a six week. They were buried here; so I came to be near them, and away from Lindal, a place I could never abide after Letty was gone.'

He turned to his work, and we, having rested sufficiently, rose up, and came away.

iv

CLOPTON HOUSE

First written as a private letter to William Howitt and then incorporated by him in his chapter on Stratford-on-Avon in 'Visits to Remarkable Places', 1840.

CLOPTON HOUSE

' I WONDER if you know Clopton Hall, about a mile from Stratford-on-Avon. Will you allow me to tell you of a very happy day I once spent there. I was at school in the neighbourhood, and one of my school-fellows was the daughter of a Mr. W——, who then lived at Clopton. Mrs. W——asked a party of the girls to go and spend a long afternoon, and we set off one beautiful autumn day, full of delight and wonder respecting the place we were going to see. We passed through desolate half-cultivated fields, till we came within sight of the house—a large, heavy, compact, square brick building, of that deep, dead red almost approaching to purple. In front was a large formal court, with the massy pillars surmounted with two grim monsters ; but the walls of the court were broken down, and the grass grew as rank and wild within the enclosure as in the raised avenue walk down which we had come. The flowers were tangled with nettles, and it was only as we approached the house that we saw the single yellow rose and the Austrian brier trained into something like order round the deep-set diamond-paned windows. We trooped into the hall, with its tessellated marble floor, hung round with strange portraits of people who had been in their graves two hundred years at least; yet the colours were so fresh, and in some instances they were so life-like, that looking merely at the faces, I almost fancied the originals might be sitting in the parlour beyond. More completely to carry us back, as it were, to the days of the civil wars, there was a sort of military map hung up, well finished with pen and ink, showing the stations of the respective armies, and with old-fashioned writing beneath, the names of the principal towns, setting forth the strength

of the garrison, &c. In this hall we were met by our kind hostess, and told we might ramble where we liked, in the house or out of the house, taking care to be in the "recessed parlour" by tea-time. I preferred to wander up the wide shelving oak staircase, with its massy balustrade all crumbling and worm-eaten. The family then residing at the hall did not occupy one-half,—no, not one-third of the rooms; and the old-fashioned furniture was undisturbed in the greater part of them. In one of the bed-rooms (said to be haunted), and which, with its close pent-up atmosphere and the long shadows of evening creeping on, gave me an "eirie" feeling, hung a portrait so singularly beautiful! a sweet-looking girl, with paly gold hair combed back from her forehead and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew", for there was the glittering of unshed tears before their deep dark blue—and that was the likeness of Charlotte Clopton, about whom there was so fearful a legend told at Stratford church. In the time of some epidemic, the sweating-sickness or the plague, this young girl had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton chapel, attached to Stratford church, but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight, Charlotte Clopton in her grave-clothes leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer, she was indeed dead, but not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder! Of course, she had *walked* ever since. This was "Charlotte's chamber", and beyond Charlotte's chamber was a state-chamber carpeted with the dust of many years, and darkened by the creepers which had covered up the windows, and even forced themselves in luxuriant daring through the broken panes. Beyond, again, there was an old Catholic chapel, with a chaplain's room, which had been walled up and forgotten till within the last few years. I went

in on my hands and knees, for the entrance was very low. I recollect little in the chapel; but in the chaplain's room were old, and I should think rare editions of many books, mostly folios. A large yellow-paper copy of Dryden's *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, date 1686, caught my eye, and is the only one I particularly remember. Every here and there, as I wandered, I came upon a fresh branch of a staircase, and so numerous were the crooked, half-lighted passages, that I wondered if I could find my way back again; There was a curious carved old chest in one of these passages, and with girlish curiosity I tried to open it; but the lid was too heavy, till I persuaded one of my companions to help me, and when it was opened, what do you think we saw—BONES !—but whether human, whether the remains of the lost bride, we did not stay to see, but ran off in partly feigned, and partly real terror.

' The last of these deserted rooms that I remember, the last, the most deserted, and the saddest, was the Nursery,—a nursery without children, without singing voices, without merry chiming footsteps ! A nursery hung round with its once inhabitants, bold, gallant boys, and fair, arch-looking girls, and one or two nurses with round, fat babies in their arms. Who were they all ? What was their lot in life ? Sunshine, or storm ? or had they been "loved by the gods, and died young" ? The very echoes knew not. Behind the house, in a hollow now wild, damp, and overgrown with elder-bushes, was a well called Margaret's Well, for there had a maiden of the house of that name drowned herself.

' I tried to obtain any information I could as to the family of Clopton of Clopton. They had been decaying ever since the civil wars ; had for a generation or two been unable to live in the old house of their fathers, but had toiled in London, or abroad, for a livelihood; and the last of the old family, a bachelor, eccentric, miserly, old, and of most filthy habits, if report said true, had died at Clopton Hall but a few months before, a sort of boarder in Mr. W——'s family. He was

buried in the gorgeous chapel of the doptions in Stratford church, where you see the banners waving, and the armour hung over one or two splendid monuments. Mr. W——had been the old man's solicitor, and completely in his confidence, and to him he left the estate, encumbered and in bad condition. A year or two afterwards, the heir-at-law, a very distant relation living in Ireland, claimed and obtained the estate, on the plea of undue influence, if not of forgery, on Mr. W——'s part; and the last I heard of our kind entertainers on that day, was that they were outlawed, and living at Brussels.'

V

COMPANY MANNERS

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COMPANY MANNERS

VICTOR COUSIN, the French philosopher, has undertaken a new task within the last few years. Whether as a relaxation from, or a continuation of, his study of metaphysics, I do not know, but he has begun to write the biographies of some of the celebrated French women of the seventeenth century. In making out his list, he is careful to distinguish between authoresses and *femmes d'esprit*, ranking the latter infinitely the higher in every point of view. The first of his series is Jacqueline Pascal, the sister of Blaise, known at Port Royal as the Sister Euphemia—a holy, pure, and sainted woman. The second whom the grave philosopher has chosen as a subject for his biography is that beautiful, splendid sinner of the Fronde, the fair-haired Duchess de Longueville. He draws the pure and perfect outlines of Jacqueline Pascal's character with a severe and correct pencil; he paints the lovely Duchess with the fond, admiring exaggeration of a lover. The wits of Paris, in consequence, have written the following epitaph for him: 'Here lies Victor Cousin, the great philosopher, in love with the Duchess de Longueville, who died a century and a half before he was born.'

Even the friends of this Duchess, insignificant in themselves, become dear and illustrious to Cousin for her fair sake. It is not long since he contributed an article on Madame de Sablé to the *Revue des Deux Mowles*, which has since been published separately, and which has suggested the thoughts and fancies that I am now going to lay before the patient public. This Madame de Sablé was, in her prime, an habitual guest at the Hotel Rambouillet, the superb habitation which

was the centre of the witty and learned as well as the pompous and pedantic society of Paris, in the days of Louis the Thirteenth. When these gatherings had come to an end after Madame de Rambouillet's death, and before Moliere had turned the tradition thereof into exquisite ridicule, there were several attempts to form circles that should preserve some of the stately refinement of the Hotel Rambouillet. Mademoiselle Scudery had her Saturdays; but, an authoress herself, and collecting around her merely clever people, without regard to birth or breeding, M. Cousin does not hold the idea of her Saturdays in high esteem. Madame de Sable, a gentlewoman by birth: intelligent enough doubtless from having been an associate of Menage, Voiture, Madame de Sevigne, and others in the grand hotel (whose meetings must have been delightful enough at the time, though that wicked Moliere has stepped between us and them, and we can only see them as he chooses us to do): Madame de Sabli, friend of the resplendent fair-haired Duchess de Longueville, had weekly meetings which M. Cousin ranks far above the more pretentious Saturdays of Mademoiselle Scudery. In short, the last page of his memoir of Madame de Sable—where we matter-of-fact English people are apt to put in praise of the morals and religion of the person whose life we have been writing—is devoted to this acme of praise. Madame de Sabli had all the requisites which enabled her *tenir un salon* with honour to herself and pleasure to her friends.

Apart from this crowning accomplishment, the good French lady seems to have been commonplace enough. She was well-born, well-bred, and the company she kept must have made her tolerably intelligent. She was married to a dull husband, and doubtless had her small flirtations after she early became a widow; M. Cousin hints at them, but they were never scandalous or prominently before the public. Past middle life, she took to the process of *making her salvation', and inclined to the Port Royalists. She was given to liking dainty things to eat, in spite of her Jansenism. She had

a female friend that she quarrelled with, off and on, during her life. And (to wind up something like Lady O'Looney, of famous memory) she knew how *tenir un salon*. M. Cousin tells us that she was remarkable in no one thing or quality, and attributes to that single, simple fact the success of her life.

Now, since I have read these memoirs of Madame de Sable, I have thought much and deeply thereupon. At first, I was inclined to laugh at the extreme importance which was attached to this art of 'receiving company'—no, that translation will not do!—'holding a drawing-room' is even worse, because that implies the state and reserve of royalty;—shall we call it the art of 'Sableing'? But when I thought of my experience in English society—of the evenings dreaded before they came, and sighed over in recollection, because they were so ineffably dull—I saw that, to Sable well, did require, as M. Cousin implied, the union of many excellent qualities and not-to-be-disputed little graces. I asked some French people if they could give me the recipe, for it seemed most likely to be traditional, if not still extant in their nation. I offer to you their ideas, fragmentary though they be; and then I will tell you some of my own; at last, perhaps, with the addition of yours, oh most worthy readers! we may discover the lost art of Sableing.

Said the French lady: 'A woman to be successful in Sableing must be past youth, yet not past the power of attracting. She must do this by her sweet and gracious manners, and quick, ready tact in perceiving those who have not had their share of attention, or leading the conversation away from any subject which may give pain to any one present.' 'Those rules hold good in England,' said I. My friend went on: 'She should never be prominent in anything; she should keep silence as long as any one else will talk; but when conversation flags, she should throw herself into the breach with the same spirit with which I notice that the young ladies of the house, where a ball is given, stand quietly by till the dancers are tired, and then spring into the

arena to carry on the spirit and the music till the others are ready to begin again.'

'But,' said the French gentleman, * even at this time, when subjects for conversation are wanted, she should rather suggest than enlarge—ask questions rather than give her own opinions.'

'To be sure,' said the lady. 'Madame Recamier, whose salons were the most perfect of this century, always withheld her opinions on books, or men, or measures, until all around her had given theirs ; then she, as it were, collected and harmonized them, saying a kind thing here, and a gentle thing there, and speaking ever with her own quiet sense, till people the most opposed learnt to understand each other's point of view, which it is a great thing for opponents to do.'

'Then the number of the people whom you receive is another consideration. I should say not less than twelve, or more than twenty,' continued the gentleman. 'The evenings should be appointed—say weekly—fortnightly at the beginning of January, which is our season. Fix an early hour for opening the room. People are caught then in their freshness, before they become exhausted by other parties.*

The lady spoke, 'For my part, I prefer catching my friends after they have left the grander balls or receptions. One hears then the remarks, the wit, the reason, and the satire which they had been storing up during their evening of imposed silence or of ceremonious speaking.'

'A little good-humoured satire is a very agreeable sauce,' replied the gentleman, 'but it must be good-humoured, and the listeners must be good-humoured ; above all, the conversation must be general, and not the chat, chat, chat up in a corner, by which the English so often distinguish themselves. You do not go into society to exchange secrets with your intimate friends ; you go to render yourselves agreeable to every one present, and to help all to pass a happy evening.'

* Strangers should not be admitted,' said the lady, taking up the strain. 'They would not start fair with

the others; they would be ignorant of the allusions that refer to conversations on the previous evenings; they would not understand the—what shall I call it—slang ? I mean those expressions having relation to past occurrences, or bygone witticisms common to all those who are in the habit of meeting.'

'Madame de Duras and Madame Recamier never made advances to any stranger. Their salons were the best that Paris has known in this generation. All who wished to be admitted, had to wait and prove their litness by being agreeable elsewhere ; to earn their diploma, as it were, among the circle of these ladies' acquaintances ; and, at last, it was a high favour to be received by them.'

'They missed the society of many celebrities by adhering so strictly to this unspoken rule,' said the gentleman.

'Bah !' said the lady. ' Celebrities ! what has one to do with them in society ? As celebrities, they are simply bores. Because a man has discovered a planet, it does not follow that he can converse agreeably, even on his own subjects ; often people are drained dry by one action or expression of their lives—drained dry for all the purposes of a " salon ". The writer of books, for instance, cannot afford to talk twenty pages for nothing, so he is either profoundly silent, or else he gives you the mere rinsings of his mind. I am speaking now of him as a mere celebrity, and justifying the wisdom of the ladies we were speaking of, in not seeking after such people ; indeed, in being rather shy of them. Some of their friends were the most celebrated people of their day, but they were received in their old capacity of agreeable men ; a higher character, by far. Then,' said she, turning to me, * I believe that you English spoil the perfection of conversation by having your rooms as brilliantly lighted for an evening the charm of which depends on what one hears, as for an evening when youth and beauty are to display themselves among flowers and festoons, and every kind of pretty ornament. I would never have a room affect people as being dark

on their first entrance into it; but there is a kind of moonlight as compared to sunlight, in which people talk more freely and naturally; where shy people will enter upon a conversation without a dread of every change of colour or involuntary movement being seen—just as we are always more confidential over a fire than anywhere else—as women talk most openly in the dimly-lighted bedroom at curling-time.'

'Away with your shy people,' said the gentleman. 'Persons who are self-conscious, thinking of an involuntary redness or paleness, an unbecoming movement of the countenance, more than the subject of which they are talking, should not go into society at all. But, because women are so much more liable to this nervous weakness than men, the preponderance of people in a salon should always be on the side of the men.'

I do not think I gained more hints as to the lost art from my French friends. Let us see if my own experience in England can furnish any more ideas.

First, let us take the preparations to be made before our house, our room, or our lodgings can be made to receive society. Of course I am not meaning the preparations needed for dancing or musical evenings. I am taking those parties which have pleasant conversation and happy social intercourse for their affirmed intention. They may be dinners, suppers, tea—I don't care what they are called, provided their end is defined. If your friends have not dined, and it suits you to give them a dinner, in the name of Lucullus, let them dine; but take care that there shall be something besides the mere food and wine to make their fattening agreeable at the time and pleasant to remember, otherwise you had better pack up for each his portions of the dainty dish, and send it separately, in hot-water trays, so that he can eat comfortably behind a door, like Sancho Panza, and have done with it. And yet I don't see why we should be like ascetics; I fancy there is a grace of preparation, a sort of festive trumpet-call, that is right and proper to distinguish the day on which we receive our friends from common days, unmarked by such

white stones. The thought and care we take for them to set before them of our best, may imply some self-denial on our less fortunate days. I have been in houses where all, from the scullion-maid upward, worked double tides gladly, because 'Master's friends' were coming; and everything must be nice, and good, and all the rooms must look bright, and clean, and pretty. And, as 'a merry heart goes all the way', preparations made in this welcoming, hospitable spirit never seem to tire anyone half so much as where servants instinctively feel that it has been said in the parlour, 'We must have so-and-so,' or, 'Oh, dear! we have never had the so-and-so's.' Yes, I like a little pomp, and luxury, and stateliness, to mark our happy days of receiving friends as a festival; but I do not think I would throw my power of procuring luxuries solely into the eating and drinking line.

My friends would probably be surprised (some wear caps, and some wigs) if I provided them with garlanda of flowers, after the manner of the ancient Greeks; but, put flowers on the table (none of your shams, wax or otherwise; I prefer an honest wayside root of primroses, in a common vase of white ware, to the grandest bunch of stiff-rustling artificial rarities in a silver epergne). A flower or two by the side of each person's plate would not be out of the way, as to expense, and would be a very agreeable pretty piece of mute welcome. Cooks and scullion-maids, acting in the sympathetic spirit I have described, would do their very best, from boiling the potatoes well, to sending in all the dishes in the best possible order. I think I would have every imaginary dinner sent up on the 'Original' Mr. Walker's plan; each dish separately, hot and hot. I have an idea that when I go to live in Utopia (not before next Christmas), I will have a kind of hot-water side-board, such as I think I have seen in great houses, and that nothing shall appear on the table but what is pleasant to the eye. However simple the food, I would do it and my friends (and may I not add the Giver?) the respect of presenting it at table as well cooked, as

eatable, as wholesome as my poor means allowed ; and to this end, rather than to a variety of dishes, would I direct my care. We have no associations with beef and mutton ; geese may remind us of the Capitol; and peacocks of Juno; a pigeon-pie of * the simplicity of Venus' doves'; but who thinks of the leafy covert which has been her home in life, when he sees a roasted hare ? Now, flowers as an ornament do lead our thoughts away from their present beauty and fragrance. I am almost sure Madame de Sable had flowers in her salon, and, as she was fond of dainties herself, I can fancy her smooth benevolence of character, taking delight in some personal preparations made in the morning for the anticipated friends of the evening. I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan, or dressing salad with her delicate, plump, white hands;—not that I ever saw a silver saucepan. I was formerly ignorant enough to think that they were only used in the Sleeping Beauty's kitchen, or in the preparations for the marriage of Riquet-with-the-Tuft; but I have been assured that there are such things, and that they impart a most delicate flavour, or no flavour, to the victuals cooked therein; so I assert again, Madame de Sable cooked sweetbreads for her friends in a silver saucepan; but never to fatigue herself with those previous labours. She knew the true taste of her friends too well; they cared for her firstly, as an element in their agreeable evening—the silver saucepan in which they were all to meet: the oil in which their several ingredients were to be softened of what was harsh or discordant—very secondary would be their interest in her sweetbreads.

Of sweetbreads they'll get mony an ane,
Of Sable ne'er anither.

But part of my care beforehand should go to the homely article of waiting. I should not mind having none at all; a dumb waiter, pepper, salt, bread, and condiments within the reach or by the side of all. Little kindly attentions from one guest to another tend to take off the selfish character of the mere act of eating;

and, besides, the guests would (or should) be too well educated, too delicate of tact, to interrupt a burst of wit, or feeling, or eloquence, as a mere footman often does with the perpetual 'Sherry, or Madeira?' or with the names of those mysterious entremets that always remind me of a white kid glove that I once ate with bechamel sauce, and found very tender and good, under the name of Oreilles de Veau a-la-something, but which experiment I never wish to repeat. There is something graceful and kindly in the little attention by which one guest silently puts by his neighbour all that he may require. I consider it a better opening to ultimate friendship, if my unknown neighbour mutely passes me the salt, or silently understands that I like sugar to my soup, than if he had been introduced by his full name and title, and labelled with the one distinguishing action or book of his life, after the manner of some who are rather showmen than hosts.

But to return to the subject of waiting. I have always believed that the charm of those little suppers, famous from time immemorial as the delightful PS. to operas, was that there was no formal waiting, or over-careful arrangement of the table; a certain sweet neglect pervaded all, very compatible with true elegance. The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the White Cat, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits at table with the White Cat, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies, I am very far from meaning hands without heads. Some people prefer female waiters; foot-women, as it were. I have weighed both sides of the subject well in my mind, before sitting down to write this paper, and my verdict goes in favour of men; for, all other things being equal, their superior strength gives them the power of doing things without effort, and consequently with less noise than any woman. The quiet ease and solemn soundless movement of some men-servants is wonderful to watch. Last summer I was staying in a house served by such list-shod, soft-spoken, velvet-handed domestics. One

day, the butler touched a spoon with a fork—the master of the house looked at him as Jupiter may have looked at Hebe, when she made that clumsy step. 'No noise, sir, if you please;' and we, as well as the servant, were hushed into the solemn stillness of the room, and were graced and genteel, if not merry and sociable. Still, bursts and clashes, and clatters at the side-table, do disturb conversation; and I maintain that, for avoiding these, men-servants are better than women. Women have to add an effort to the natural exercise of what strength they possess before they can lift heavy things—sirloins of beef, saddles of mutton, and the like; and they cannot calculate the additional force of such an effort, so down comes the dish and the mutton and all, with a sound and a splash that surprises us even more than the Phillis, who is neat-handed only when she has to do with things that require delicacy and lightness of touch, not struggle of arm.

And, now I think of it, Madame de Sable must have taken the White Cat for her model; there must evidently have been the same noiseless ease and grace about the movements of both; the same purring, happy, inarticulate moments of satisfaction, when surrounded by pleasant circumstances, must have been uttered by both. My own mouth has watered before now at the account of that fricassee of mice prepared especially for the White Cat; and M. Cousin alludes more than once to Madame de Sable's love for 'friandises'. Madame de Sable avoided the society of literary women, and so, I am sure, did the White Cat. Both had an instinctive sense of what was comfortable; both loved home with tenacious affection; and yet I am mistaken if each had not their own little private love of adventure—touches of the gipsy.

The reason why I think Madame de Sable had this touch in her is because she knew how *tenir un salon*. You do not see the connexion between gipsyism and the art of being a good hostess—of receiving pleasantly. I do, but I am not sure if I can explain it. In the first place, gipsies must be people of quick impulse and

ready wit; entering into fresh ideas and new modes of life with joyous ardour and energy, and fertile in expedients for extricating themselves from the various difficulties into which their wandering life leads them. They must have a lofty disregard for *convenances*, and yet a power of graceful adaptation. They evidently have a vivid sense of the picturesque, and a love of adventure, which, if it does not show itself in action, must show itself in sympathy with others' doings. Now, which of these qualities would be out of place in Madame de Sable? From what we read of the life of her contemporary, Madame de Sevigne, we see that impromptu expedients were necessary in those times, when the thought of the morning made the pleasure of the evening, and when people snatched their enjoyments from hand to mouth, as it were, while yet six-weeks-invitations were not. Now, I have noticed that in some parties where we were all precise and sensible, ice-bound under some indefinable stiff restraint, some little domestic contretemps, if frankly acknowledged by the hostess, has suddenly unloosed tongues and hearts in a supernatural manner;

The upper air bursts into life,

more especially if some unusual expedient had to be resorted to, giving the whole the flavour and zest of a picnic. Toasting bread in a drawing-room, coaxing up a half-extinguished fire by dint of brown sugar, newspapers, and pretty, good-for-nothing bellows, turning a packing-case upside down for a seat, and covering in with a stray piece of velvet; these are, I am afraid, the only things that can call upon us for unexpected exertion, now that all is arranged and re-arranged for every party a month beforehand. But I have lived in other times and other places; I have been in the very heart and depth of Wales, within three miles of the house of the high sheriff of the county, who was giving a state dinner on a certain day, to which the gentleman with whom I was staying was invited. He was on the point of leaving his house in his little

Norwegian carriage, and we were on the point of sitting down to dinner, when a man rode up in hot haste—a servant from the high sheriff's came to beg for our joint off the spit. Fish, game, poultry—they had all the delicacies of their own land; but the butcher from the nearest market-town had failed them, and at the last moment they had to send off a groom a-begging to their neighbours. My relation departed ignorant of our dinnerless state; but he came back in great delight with his party. After the soup and fish had been removed, there had been a long pause (the joint had got cold on its ride, and had to be re-warmed); a message was brought to the host, who had immediately confided his perplexity to his guests, and put it to the vote whether they would wait for the joint, or have the order of the courses changed, and eat the third before the second. Every one had enjoyed the merry dilemma; the ice was broken, and all went on pleasantly and easily in a party where there was rather a heterogeneous mixture of politics and opinions. Dinner-parties in those days and in that part of Wales were somewhat regulated by the arrival of the little sailing-vessels, which, having discharged their cargo at Bristol or Liverpool, brought back commissioned purchases for the different families. A chest of oranges for Mr. Williams or Mr. Wynn was a sure signal that, before many days were over, Mr. Williams or Mr. Wynn would give a dinner-party; strike while the iron was hot; eat while the oranges were fresh. A man rode round to all the different houses when any farmer planned such a mighty event as killing a cow, to ask what part each family would take. Visiting acquaintances lived ten or twelve miles from each other, separated by bad and hilly roads; the moon had always to be consulted before issuing invitations; and then the mode of proceeding was usually something like this: The invited friends came to dinner at half-past five or six; these were always those from the greatest distance—the nearer neighbours came later on in the evening. After the gentlemen had left the dining-room, it was cleared

for dancing. The fragments of the dinner, prepared by ready cooks, served for supper; tea was ready some time towards one or two, and the dancers went merrily on till a seven or eight o'clock breakfast, after which they rode or drove home by broad daylight. I was never at one of these meetings, although staying in a house from which many went; I was considered too young; but from what I heard, they were really excessively pleasant, sociable gatherings, although not quite entitled to be classed with Madame de Sable's salons.

To return to the fact that a slightly gipsy and impromptu character, either in the hostess, or in the arrangements, or in the amusements, adds a piquancy to the charm: let any one remember the agreeable private teas that go on in many houses about five o'clock. I remember those in one house particularly, as remarkably illustrating what I am trying to prove. These teas were held in a large dismantled schoolroom: and a superannuated schoolroom is usually the most doleful chamber imaginable. I never saw this by full daylight; I only know that it was lofty and large, that we went to it through a long gallery library, through which we never passed at any other time, the schoolroom having been accessible to the children in former days by a private staircase—that great branches of trees swept against the windows with a long, plaintive moan, as if tortured by the wind—that below in the stable-yard two Irish staghounds set up their musical bays to mingle with the outlandish Spanish which a parrot in the room continually talked out of the darkness in which its perch was placed—that the walls of the room seemed to recede as in a dream, and, instead of them, the flickering firelight painted tropical forests or Norwegian fiords, according to the will of our talkers. I know this tea was nominally private to the ladies, but that all the gentlemen strayed in most punctually by accident—that the fire was always in that state when somebody had to poke with the hard blows of despair, and somebody else to fetch in logs of wood

from the basket outside, and somebody else to unload his pockets of fir-bobs, which last were always efficacious, and threw beautiful dancing lights far and wide. And then there was a black kettle, long ago too old for kitchen use, that leaked and ran, and sputtered against the blue and sulphur-coloured flames, and did everything that was improper, but the water out of which made the best tea in the world, which we drank out of unmatched cups, the relics of several schoolroom sets. We ate thick bread-and-butter in the darkness with a vigour of appetite which had quite disappeared at the well-lighted eight o'clock dinner. Who ate it I don't know, for we stole from our places round the fireside to the tea-table, in comparative darkness, in the twilight, near the window, and helped ourselves, and came back on tiptoe to hear one of the party tell of wild enchanted spicy islands in the Eastern Archipelago, or buried cities in farthest Mexico; he used to look into the fire and draw and paint with words in a manner perfectly marvellous, and with an art which he had quite lost at the formal dinner-time. Our host was scientific; a name of high repute; he, too, told us of wonderful discoveries, strange surmises, glimpses into something far away and utterly dream-like. His son had been in Norway, fishing; then, when he sat all splashed with hunting, he, too, could tell of adventures in a natural, racy way. The girls, busy with their heavy kettle, and with their tea-making, put in a joyous word now and then. At dinner the host talked of nothing more intelligible than French mathematics; the heir drawled out an infinite deal of nothing about the 'Shakespeare and musical glasses' of the day; the traveller gave us latitudes and longitudes, and rates of population, exports and imports, with the greatest precision; and the girls were as pretty, helpless, inane fine ladies as you would wish to see.

Speaking of wood fires reminds me of Madame de Sabfe's fires. Of course they were of wood, being in Paris; but I believe that even if she had lived in a coal country, she would have burned wood by instinctive

preference, as a lady I once knew always ordered a lump of cannel coal to be brought up if ever her friends seemed silent and dull. A wood fire has a kind of spiritual, dancing, glancing life about it. It is an elfish companion, crackling, hissing, bubbling: throwing out beautiful jets of vivid, many-coloured flame. The best wood fires I know are those at Keswick. Making lead pencils is the business of the place; and the cedar chips for scent, and the thinnings of the larch and fir plantations thereabouts for warm and brilliant light, make such a fire as Madame de Sable would have delighted in.

Depend upon it, too, every seat in her salon was easy and comfortable of its kind. They might not be made of any rare kind of wood, nor covered very magnificently, but the bodies of her friends could rest and repose in them in easy, unconstrained attitudes. No one can be agreeable, perched on a chair which does not afford space for proper support. I defy the most accomplished professional wit to go on uttering *mots* in a chair with a stiff, hard, upright back, or with his legs miserably dangling. No! Madame de Sables seats were commodious, and probably varied to suit all tastes; nor was there anything in the shape of a large and cumbrous article of furniture placed right in the middle of her room, so as to prevent her visitors from changing their places, or drawing near to each other, or to the fire, if they so willed it. I imagine, likewise, that she had that placid, kindly manner which would never show any loss of self-possession. I fancy that there was a welcome ready for all, even though some came a little earlier than they were expected.

I was once very much struck by the perfect breeding of an old Welsh herb-woman, with whom I drank tea—a tea which was not tea, after all—an infusion of balm and black-currant leaves, with a pinch of lime blossom to give it a Pekoe flavour. She had boasted of the delicacy of this beverage to me on the previous day, and I had begged to be allowed to come and drink a cup with her. The only drawback was that she had but one

cup, but she immediately bethought her that she had two saucers, one of which would do just as well, indeed better, than any cup. I was anxious to be in time, and so I was too early. She had not done dusting and rubbing when I arrived, but she made no fuss; she was glad to see me, and quietly bade me welcome, though I had come before all was as she could have wished. She gave me a dusted chair, sat down herself with her kilted petticoats and working apron, and talked to me as if she had not a care or a thought on her mind but the enjoyment of the present time. By and by, in moving about the room, she slipped behind the bed-curtain, still conversing. I heard the splash of water, and a drawer open and shut; and then my hostess emerged spruce, and clean, and graced, but not one whit more agreeable or at her ease than she had been for the previous half-hour in her working dress.

There are a set of people who put on their agreeableness with their gowns. Here, again, I have studied the subject, and the result is, that I find people of this description are more pleasant in society in their second-best than in their very best dresses. These last are new; and the persons I am speaking of never feel thoroughly at home in them, never lose their consciousness of unusual finery until the first stain has been made. With their best gowns they put on an unusual fineness of language; they say 'commence' instead of 'begin'; they inquire if they may 'assist', instead of asking if they may 'help' you to anything. And yet there are some, very far from vain or self-conscious, who are never so agreeable as when they have a dim, half-defined idea that they are looking their best—not in finery, -but in air, arrangement, or complexion. I have a notion that Madame de Sable, with her fine instincts, was aware of this, and that there were one or two secrets about the furniture and disposition of light in her salon which are lost in these degenerate days. I heard, or read, lately, that we make a great mistake in furnishing our reception-rooms with all the light **and** delicate colours, the profusion of ornament, and

flecked and spotted chintzes, if we wish to show off the human face and figure; that our ancestors and the great painters knew better, with their somewhat sombre and heavy-tinted backgrounds, relieving, or throwing out into full relief, the rounded figure and the delicate, peach-like complexion.

I fancy Madame de Sable's salon was furnished with deep warm soberness of tone; lighted up by flowers, and happy animated people, in a brilliancy of dress which would be lost nowadays against our satin walls, and flower-bestrewn carpets, and gilding, gilding everywhere. Then, somehow, conversation must have flowed naturally into sense or nonsense, as the case might be. People must have gone to her house well prepared for either lot. It might be that wit would come uppermost, sparkling, crackling, leaping, calling out echoes all around; or the same people might talk with all their might and wisdom, on some grave and important subject of the day, in that manner which we have got into the way of calling 'earnest', but which term has struck me as being slightly flavoured by cant, ever since I heard of an 'earnest uncle'. At any rate, whether grave or gay, people did not go up to Madame de Sable's salons with a set purpose of being either the one or the other. They were carried away by the subject of the conversation, by the humour of the moment. I have visited a good deal among a set of people who piqued themselves on being rational. We have talked what they called sense, but what I call platitudes, till I have longed, like Southey, in the *Doctor*, to come out with some interminable nonsensical word (Aballibogibouganorribo was his, I think) as a relief for my despair at not being able to think of anything more that was sensible. It would have done me good to have said it, and I could have started afresh on the rational tack. But I never did. I sank into inane silence, which I hope was taken for wisdom. One of this set paid a relation of mine a profound compliment, for so she meant it to be: 'Oh, Miss F.; you are so trite!' But as it is not in every one's power

to be rational, and 'trite,' at all times and in all places, discharging our sense at a given place, like water from a fireman's hose; and as some of us are cisterns rather than fountains, and may have our stores exhausted, why is it not more general to call in other aids to conversation, in order to enable us to pass an agreeable evening?

But I will come back to this presently. Only let me say that there is but one thing more tiresome than an evening when everybody tries to be profound and sensible, and that is an evening when everybody tries to be witty. I have a disagreeable sense of effort and unnaturalness at both times; but the everlasting attempt, even when it succeeds, to be clever and amusing, is the worse of the two. People try to say brilliant rather than true things; they not only catch eager hold of the superficial and ridiculous in other persons and in events generally, but, from constantly looking out for subjects for jokes, and *mots*, and satire, they become possessed of a kind of sore susceptibility themselves, and are afraid of their own working selves, and dare not give way to any expression of feeling, or any noble indignation or enthusiasm. This kind of wearying wit is far different from humour, which wells up and forces its way out irrepressibly, and calls forth smiles and laughter, but not very far apart from tears. Depend upon it, some of Madame de Sable's friends had been moved in a most abundant and genial measure. They knew how to narrate, too. Very simple, say you? I say, no! I believe the art of telling a story is born with some people, and these have it to perfection; but all might acquire some expertness in it, and ought to do so, before launching out into the muddled, complex, hesitating, broken, disjointed, poor, bald accounts of events which have neither unity, nor colour, nor life, nor end in them, that one sometimes hears.

But as to the rational parties that are in truth so irrational, when all talk up to an assumed character, instead of showing themselves what they really are,

and so extending each other's knowledge of the infinite and beautiful capacities of human nature—whenever I see the grave, sedate faces, with their good but anxious expression, I remember how I was once, long ago, at a party like this ; every one had brought out his or her wisdom, and aired it for the good of the company; one or two had, from a sense of duty, and without any special living interest in the matter, improved us by telling us of some new scientific discovery, the details of which were all and each of them wrong, as I learnt afterwards ; if they had been right, we should not have been any the wiser—and just at the pitch when any more useful information might have brought on congestion of the brain, a stranger to the town—a beautiful, audacious, but most feminine romp—proposed a game, and such a game, for us wise men of Gotham ! But she (now long still and quiet after her bright life, so full of pretty pranks) was a creature whom all who looked on loved; and with grave, hesitating astonishment we knelt round a circular table at her word of command. She made one of the circle, and producing a feather out of some sofa pillow, she told us she should blow it up into the air, and whichever of us it floated near, must puff away to keep it from falling on the table. I suspect we all looked like Keeley in the *Camp at Chdbham*, and were surprised at our own obedience to this ridiculous, senseless mandate, given with a graceful imperiousness, as if it were too royal to be disputed. We knelt on, puffing away with the utmost intentness, looking like a set of elderly——

'Fools I' No, my dear sir. I was going to say elderly cherubim. But making fools of ourselves was better than making owls, as we had been doing.

I will mention another party, where a game of some kind would have been a blessing. It was at a very respectable tradesman's house. We went at half-past four, and found a well-warmed, handsome sitting-room, with block upon block of unburnt coal behind the fire; on the table there was a tray with wine and cake, oranges and almonds and raisins, of which we were

urged to partake. In half an hour came tea ; none of your flimsy meals, with wafer bread and butter, and three biscuits and a half. This was a grave and serious proceeding—tea, coffee, bread of all kinds, cold fowl, tongue, ham, potted meats—I don't know what. Tea lasted about an hour, and then the cake and wine-tray was restored to its former place. The stock of subjects of common interest was getting low, and, in spite of our goodwill, long stretches of silence occurred, producing a stillness, which made our host nervously attack the fire, and stir it up to a yet greater glow of intense heat; and the hostess invariably rose at such times, and urged us to ' eat another maccaroon \ The first I revelled in, the second I enjoyed, the third I got through, the fourth I sighed over, the fifth reminded me uncomfortably of that part of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* where he feeds a donkey with macoaroons—and when, at the sight of the sixth, I rose to come away, a burst of imploring, indignant surprise greeted me: ' You are surely never going before supper !' I stopped. I ate that supper. Hot jugged hare, hot roast turkey, hot boiled ham, hot apple-tart, hot toasted cheese. No wonder I am old before my time. Now these good people were really striving, and taking pains, and laying out money, to make the evening pass agreeably, but the only way they could think of to amuse their guests was, giving them plenty to eat. If they had asked one of their children they could doubtless have suggested half a dozen games, which we could all have played at when our subjects of common interest failed, and which would have carried us over the evening quietly and simply, if not brilliantly. But in many a small assemblage of people, where the persons collected are incongruous, where talking cannot go on through so many hours, without becoming flat or laboured, why have we not oftener recourse to games of some kind ?

Wit, Advice, Bouts-rimes, Lights, Spanish Merchant, Twenty Questions—every one knows these, and many more, if they would only not think it beneath them to be called upon by a despairing hostess to play at them.

Of course to play them well requires a little more exertion of intellect than quoting other people's sense and wisdom, or misquoting science. But I do not think it takes as much thought and memory and consideration, as it does to be 'up' in the science of good eating and drinking. A profound knowledge of this branch of learning seems in general to have absorbed all the faculties before it could be brought to anything like perfection. So I do not consider games as entailing so much mental fatigue as a man must undergo before he is qualified to decide upon dishes. I once noticed the worn and anxious look of a famous diner-out, when called upon by his no less anxious host to decide upon the merits of a salad, mixed by no hands, as you may guess, but those of the host in question. The guest, doctor of the art of good living, tasted, paused, tasted again—and then, with gentle solemnity, gave forth his condemnatory opinion. I happened to be his next neighbour, and slowly turning his meditative full-moon face round to me, he gave me the valuable information that to eat a salad in perfection some one should be racing from lettuce to shalot, from shalot to endive, and so on, all the time that soup and fish were being eaten; that the vegetables should be gathered, washed, sliced, blended, eaten, all in a quarter of an hour. I bowed as in the presence of a master; and felt, no wonder his head was bald, and his face heavily wrinkled.

I have said nothing of books. Yet I am sure that if Madame de Sable lived now, they would be seen in her salon as part of its natural indispensable furniture; not brought out, and strewed here and there when 'company was coming', but as habitual presences in her room, wanting which, she would want a sense of warmth and comfort and companionship. Putting out books as a sort of preparation for an evening, as a means for making it pass agreeably, is running a great risk. In the first place, books are by such people, and on such occasions, chosen more for their outside than their inside. And in the next, they are the 'mere material with which wisdom (or wit) builds'; and if

persons don't know how to use the material, they will suggest nothing. I imagine Madame de Sablé would have the volumes she herself was reading, or those which, being new, contained any matter of present interest, left about, as they would naturally be. I could also fancy that her guests would not feel bound to talk continually, whether they had anything to say or not, but that there might be pauses of not unpleasant silence—a quiet darkness out of which they might be certain that the little stars would glimmer soon. I can believe that in such pauses of repose, some one might open a book, and catch on a suggestive sentence, might dash off again into a full flow of conversation. But I cannot fancy any grand preparations for what was to be said among people, each of whom brought the best dish in bringing himself; and whose own store of living, individual thought and feeling, and mother-wit, would be infinitely better than any cut-and-dry determination to devote the evening to mutual improvement. If people are really good and wise, their goodness and their wisdom flow out unconsciously, and benefit like sunlight. So, books for reference, books for impromptu suggestion, but never books to serve for texts to a lecture. Engravings fall under something like the same rules. To some they say everything; to ignorant and unprepared minds, nothing. I remember noticing this in watching how people looked at a very valuable portfolio belonging to an acquaintance of mine, which contained engraved and authentic portraits of almost every possible person; from king and kaiser down to notorious beggars and criminals; including all the celebrated men, women, and actors whose likenesses could be obtained. To some, this portfolio gave food for observation, meditation, and conversation. It brought before them every kind of human tragedy—every variety of scenery and costume and grouping in the background, thronged with figures called up by their imagination. Others took them up and laid them down, simply saying, 'This is a pretty face!' 'Oh, what a pair of eyebrows!' * Look at this queer dress!'

Yet, after all, having something to take up and to look at is a relief and of use to persons who, without being self-conscious, are nervous from not being accustomed to society. O Cassandra ! Remember when you, with your rich gold coins of thought, with your noble power of choice expression, were set down, and were thankful to be set down, to look at some paltry engravings, just because people did not know how to get at your ore, and you did not care a button whether they did or not, and were rather bored by their attempts, the end of which you never found out. While I, with my rattling, tinselly rubbish, was thought 'agreeable and an acquisition !' You would have been valued at Madame de Sable's, where the sympathetic and intellectual stream of conversation would have borne you and your golden fragments away with it, by its soft, resistless, gentle force.

VI
FRENCH LIFE

Being three essays that appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*
April, May, and June, 1864.

FRENCH LIFE

I

Paris, February, 1862.

WE went to-day along the Boulevard Sevastopol, Rive Gauche, to pay a call. I knew the district well about six years ago, when it was a network of narrow tortuous streets; the houses high, irregular, picturesque, historical, dirty, and unhealthy. I used to have much difficulty in winding my way to certain points in the Quartier Latin from the Faubourg St. Germain, where I was staying. Now, the Hotel Cluny is enclosed in a neat garden, the railings of which run alongside of the Boulevard Sevastopol; a little farther on the same side to the left, the Sorbonne Church is well exposed to view; and the broad artery of the new Boulevard runs up to the Luxembourg gardens, making a clear passage for air and light through the densely populated quartier. It is a great gain in all material points; a great loss to memory and to that kind of imagination which loves to repeople places. The street in which our friend lived was old and narrow; the trottoir was barely wide enough for one uncrinolined person to walk on; and it was impossible to help being splashed by the passing carriages, which indeed threw dirt upon the walls of the houses till there was a sort of dado of mud all along the street. In the grander streets of former days this narrowness did not signify; the houses were of the kind called 'entre cour et jardin' (of which there are specimens in Piccadilly), with the porter's lodge, the offices, and stables abutting on the street; the grand court intervening between the noise and bustle and the high dwelling-house of the family, which out-topped the low buildings in front. But in the humbler street to which we were bound there were few houses 'entre cour et jardin'; and I could not help wondering how people

bore to live in the perpetual noise, and heavy closeness of atmosphere. The friend we were going to see, Madame A——, had lived in this street for many years. Her rooms were lofty and tolerably large. The gloomy outlook of the long narrow windows was concealed by the closed muslin curtains, which were of an irreproachable whiteness. I knew the rooms of old. We had to pass through the *salle-a-manger* to the *salon* ; and from thence we, being intimate friends, went on into her bedroom. The *salle-a-manger* had an inlaid floor, very slippery, and without a carpet; the requisite chairs and tables were the only furniture. The pile of clean dinner-plates was placed on the top of a china stove; a fire would be lighted in it, half-an-hour before dinner, which would warm the plates as well as the room. The *salon* was graced with the handsome furniture of thirty or forty years ago ; but it was a room to be looked at rather than used. Indeed, the family only sit in it on Sunday evenings, when they receive. The floor was *parquete* in this room, but here and there it was covered with small brilliantly-coloured Persian carpets : before the sofa, underneath the central table, and before the fire. There were the regular pieces of furniture which were *de rigueur* in a French household of respectability when Madame A——was married: the gilt vases of artificial flowers, each under a glass shade ; the clock, with a figure of a naked hero, supposed to represent Achilles, leaning on his shield (the face of the clock); and the '*gueridon*' (round, marble-topped table), which was so long the one indispensable article in a French drawing-room. But, altogether, Madame A——'s *salon* does not look very habitable, and we pass on into the bedroom, which has little enough of daylight coming through the high narrow windows, but is bright and home-like from the brilliant blaze and flicker of the wood-fire on the hearth. In the far corner is the bed: a grand four-post, with looped-up draperies of some warm colour, which I dare say would prove to be faded if one were to see them close in full country daylight; but which look like a pictorial background to the rest

of the room. On each side of the fire is a great arm-chair ; in front is a really comfortable sofa: not elegant, nor hard, nor gilded like the sofas in the drawing-room, but broad, low, clean, fit to serve, as I dare say it has done before now, for a bed on occasion. Parallel to this, but farther from the fire, is a table with Madame's work-box; her two pots of flowers, looking as fresh as if the plants were growing in a country garden; the miniatures of her children, set up on little wooden easels; and her books of devotion. But Madame reads more than books of devotion. She is up in the best modern literature of more than one country. To-day we were exceedingly struck with her great powers of narration. She seizes the points of a story and reproduces them in the most effective simple language. She is certainly aided in this by her noble expressive face, still bearing traces of remarkable beauty in the severe and classical style. Her gesticulation, too, is unlike what we commonly call French; there is no rapid action of the graceful hands and arms, but a gentle and slow movement from time to time, as if they sympathized with the varying expression of her face. She sat by her fireside, dressed in black, her constant colour; which she wears as appropriate to her age rather than to her condition, for she is not a widow. Every now and then she addressed a few tender words to an invalid of the family; showing that with all her lively interest in the histories she was telling us, her eye and ear were watchful for the slightest signs of discomfort in another. . . . Our conversation drifted along to the old French custom of receiving in bed. It was so highly correct, that the newly-made wife of the Due de St. Simon went to bed, after the early dinner of those days, in order to receive her wedding-visits. The Duchesse de Maine, of the same date, used to have a bed in the ball-room at Sceaux, and to lie (or half-sit) there, watching the dancers. I asked if there was not some difference in dress between the day and the night occupation of the bed. But Madame A——seemed to think there was very little.

The custom was put an end to by the Revolution ; but one or two great ladies preserved the habit until their death. Madame A——had often seen Madame de Villette receiving in bed; she always wore white gloves, which Madame A——imagined was the only difference between the toilette of day and night. Madame de Villette was the adopted daughter of Voltaire, and, as such, all the daring innovators upon the ancient modes of thought and behaviour came to see her, and pay her their respects. She was also the widow of the Marquis de Villette, and as such she received the homage of the ladies and gentlemen of the ancien regime. Altogether her weekly receptions must have been very amusing, from Madame A——'s account. The old Marquise lay in bed; around her sat the company; and, at the crisis of the visit, she would desire her *femme de chambre* to hand round the heart of Voltaire, which he had bequeathed to her, and which she preserved in a little golden case. Then she would begin and tell anecdotes about the great man; great to her, and with some justice. For he had been travelling in the South of France, and had stopped to pass the night in a friend's house, where he was very much struck by the deep sadness on the face of a girl of seventeen, one of his friend's daughters; and, on inquiring the cause he found out that, in order to increase the portions of the others, this young woman was to be sent into a convent—a destination which she extremely disliked. Voltaire saved her from it by adopting her, and promising to give her a * dot ' sufficient to insure her a respectable marriage. She had lived with him for some time at Ferney before she became Marquise de Villette. (You will remember the connexion existing between her husband's family and Madame de Maintenon, as well as with Bolingbroke's second wife.)

Madame de Villette must have been an exceedingly inconsequente person, to judge from Madame A——'s very amusing description of her conversation. Her sentences generally began with an assertion which was

disproved by what followed. Such as, 'It was wonderful with what ease Voltaire uttered witty impromptus. He would shut himself up in his library all the morning, and in the evening he would gracefully lead the conversation to the point he desired, and then bring out the verse or the epigram he had composed for the occasion, in the most unpremeditated and easy manner!' Or, 'He was the most modest of men. When a stranger arrived at Ferney, his first care was to take him round the village, and to show him all the improvements he had made, the good he had done, the church he had built. And he was never easy until he had given the newcomer the opportunity of hearing his most recent compositions.' Then she would show an old grandfather's high-backed, leather arm-chair, in which she said he wrote his *Henriade*, forgetting that he was at that time quite a young man.

Madame A——said that Madame de Villette's receptions were worth attending, because they conveyed an idea of the ways of society before the Revolution. There was one old French marquis, a contemporary of Madame de Villette's, who regularly came with his chapeau-bras under his arm, to pay her his respects, and to talk over the good old times when both were young. Voltaire had called her 'Belle et bonne', and by these epithets her friend the Marquis saluted her to her dying day.

'Belle et bonne Marquise' (and she had long ceased to be 'belle'; even the other adjective was a matter of doubt), 'do you know why I preserve this old hat with so much care,—with reverence I may say?' said this friend to her one day. 'Years ago it had the privilege of saving your lovely cheek from being cut by the glass of your carriage-window, when by some maladroitness you were on the point of being overturned, ma belle et bonne Marquise.'

February.—We are staying with a French family of the middle class; and I cannot help noticing the ways of daily life here, so different from those of England. We are a party of seven; and we live on the fourth

floor, which is extensive enough to comprise the two sitting-rooms, the bedrooms, the kitchen, and the chamber for the two maids. I do not dislike this plan of living on a flat, especially as it is managed in Paris. I have seen the same mode adopted in Edinburgh and Rome, besides other continental towns; but, as in these towns there is no concierge, I have never liked it so much as in Paris. Here it seems to me to save one servant's work, at the least: and besides this, there is the moral advantage of uniting mistresses and maids in a more complete family bond. I remember a very charming young married lady, who had been brought by her husband from the country to share his home in Ashley Buildings, Victoria Street, saying that she had two of her former Sunday scholars as servants; but that, if they had had to live in the depths of a London kitchen, she should not have tried to have brought them out of their primitive country homes; as it was, she could have them under her own eye without any appearance of watching them; and, besides this, she could hear of their joys and sorrows, and, by taking an interest in their interests, induce them to care for hers. French people appear to me to live in this pleasant kind of familiarity with their servants—a familiarity which does not breed contempt, in spite of proverbs. The concierge here receives letters and parcels for the different families in the house, which he generally brings up himself, or sends by one of his family. Sometimes they are kept in the compartments appropriated to each family in the conciergerie; and any one of the inhabitants who may return to the house looks in, and seldom fails to have the complaisance to bring up letters, cards, or parcels for any family living below his etage. The concierge is paid by the landlord for these services, in which is included the carrying up or down of a moderate quantity of luggage. A certain portion of every load of wood or coal belongs to the concierge as payment for carrying it up to the respective apartments for which it is destined. If he cleans the shoes and knives for any family, they pay him separately. He also expects

an etrenne from each of the locataires on New Year's Day; say a napoleon from each family, and half that sum from any bachelors lodging in the house. Very often he knows how to wait at table, and his services are available for a consideration to any one living in the house. But he must always provide a deputy in case of absence from his post. As the concierges are, however, generally married, this does not press very hard upon him. In the house where we are staying the custom is for every one going out at night to lock up their apartment, desiring the servants to go to bed at the usual time; to hide the key in some well-known and customary place (under the door-mat for instance), and to take a bed-candle down to the conciergerie. When we return from our party, or whatever it may be, we ring the bell, and the concierge,—perhaps asleep in bed in his little 'cabinet',—pulls the string, and the latch flies up, as in the days of Little Red Riding-hood; we come in, shut the great porte-cochere, open the ever-unfastened door of the conciergerie, light our own particular bed-candles at the dim little lamp, pick out any letters, &c, belonging to us which may have come in by the late post, and go quietly upstairs. This sounds unsafe to our English ears, as it would seem that any one might come in; but I believe there is a small window of inspection in all conciergeries which may be used in cases of suspicion. The French at any rate esteem it more safe than our self-contained houses: and French servants in a modest household, where no personal attendants are kept, would be very indignant if they had to sit up for their mistresses' gaieties. For, as a rule, French servants are up earlier than English ones.

In this house is a *salle-a-manger* with a fire-place and a parquettèd floor without a carpet. The shape is an oblong, with the two corners near the door of entrance cut off to form cupboards. The walls are wainscoted with deal, that is afterwards painted oak. The **window-curtains** and portieres are made of handsome **dark** Algerine stripe. As far as I can see, carpets are

not considered a necessary article of furniture in France, but portieres are. And certainly the rich folds of the latter, and the polished floors, off which every crumb or drop of grease is cleansed immediately, take my fancy very much. A door on one side of the windows opens into Madame's room; on the opposite side, another leads into the drawing-room. If we were French we should have a cup of *café au lait* and piece of bread brought into our bedrooms every morning; but *in* deference to us as strangers, a tray (without a napkin) with sugar, a copper pan containing the boiling milk just taken off the kitchen fire, and the white covered jug of bright strong coffee, is put on the dining-room table. Also, in deference to our English luxury, there is a plate of butter: our French friends never take butter and not always bread at this early breakfast. But where is the bread? I look round, and at last see a basket about a yard high standing on the ground near the fire-place; it is of dimensions just sufficient to hold a roll of bread a yard long and more, and about as thick as a man's wrist. It looks like a veritable staff of life. None of our French friends think of completing their toilette for this early breakfast, which, indeed, as I have said, they would have taken in their bedrooms if we had not been here. Nor, indeed, is it any family gathering. I sometimes see the old black skirts of our hostess quickly vanishing into her bedroom at the sound of my approach; and perhaps I find Nanette, the youngest daughter, in a coloured petticoat and white camisole, her thick black hair put neatly away under a cap which is on the full-dress side of a nightcap. She reddens a little as she wishes me 'Bon jour', as she knows that hers is not the finished morning toilette of an English young lady. But two hours hence, who so neat as Nanette in her clean print gown of some delicate pattern, her black hair all brushed and plaited, and waved, and creped? for now she has done her household work: perhaps she has helped Julie to make her own bed; she has certainly dusted her room, with all its knick-knacks and ornaments.

Madame, too, has been out to market; half across Paris, it may be, in her old black gown, to some shop she knows of, where she fancies such and such an article can be had better or cheaper. She has gone by the omnibus, taking advantage of the 'correspondance', by which, on payment of thirty centimes, and declaring her wish for a 'correspondance' ticket to the conducteur of that which passes her door, she is conveyed in it to the general omnibus office, close to the Place des Victoires, where she may have to wait for a few minutes for an omnibus going in the direction for which her 'correspondance' ticket is taken. If she has to return by any of the midway stations at which omnibuses stop, she has to purchase a ticket with a number upon it at the 'bureau', and await her turn, at busy times of the day—say at five o'clock, at the Place Palais Royal. Her number may be eighty-seven, while the next grenelle omnibus is filling with twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, and so on, as the conducteur calls the numbers. But in the morning they are not so crowded, and Madame is always at home and dressed with delicate neatness by eleven o'clock, the time of our 'second dejeuner', or what we should call lunch in England. This breakfast consists generally of cold meat, a rechauffe of some entree or dressed vegetables of the day before, an omelette, bread, wine, and a pot of confitures. For us our kind hostess has tea, but I can see that this is not their ordinary custom. It is curious to see how little butter is eaten in a French family; they, however, make up for this by the much greater use of it in cookery; for vegetables form a dish by themselves, always requiring either gravy, butter, or oil, in their preparation. After lunch is over, we all sit down to work; perhaps Nanette practises a little, and perhaps some of us go out for a walk, but always with some object, either of pleasure or business. A Frenchwoman never takes a walk in the English constitutional sense. There are books about in the salon, but not so many as in England. They have nothing equivalent to 'Mudie' in Paris, and the books at their circulating libraries are of so very

mixed a character, that no careful mother likes to have them lying about on the table. Indeed 'novels and romances' are under much the same ban as they were in England seventy or eighty years ago. There is the last *Revue des Deux Mondes*, and a pamphlet or two besides, lying by Madame's work-basket, and there are the standard French authors in the bookcase in the cupboard. Yet somehow my friends always know what is going on in the literary world of Paris. The newspapers here are so doctored that they are deprived of much of the interest which usually attaches to political news ; but I generally see *La Presse* lying about.

Once a week Madame 'receives'. Then the covers are taken off the furniture in the salon, a fresh nosegay is put in the vase, Madame and Mademoiselle and Nanette put off their final dressing for the day till after the second breakfast, and then appear in the gowns they wear on jours de fetes. Monsieur keeps out of the way, but nevertheless is much disappointed if when we all meet together at dinner we have not accumulated a little stock of news and gossip to amuse him with. Madame's day of reception is well known to all her friends and acquaintances, who make a point of calling on her two or three times a season. But sometimes no one comes at all on the Thursdays, and it is rather flat to sit from two to five or thereabouts in our company dresses, and company faces, all for no use. Then again, on other Thursdays, the room is quite full, and I sit and admire Madame's tact. A new arrival comes up to her, and without appearing to displace any one, the last comer invariably finds an empty chair by the lady of the house. The hostess also accompanies every departing guest to the room-door, and they part with pretty speeches of affection and good-will, sincere enough I do not doubt, but expressive of just those feelings which the English usually keep in the background.

On Thursdays we have generally much the same sort of dinner that in England we associate with the idea of washing-days, for both Julie and Gabrielle have been

busy admitting or letting out visitors ; or at any rate Madame anticipated this probability when she ordered dinner.

The dinner-hour is six o'clock ; real, sharp six. And here I may warn my English friends of the necessity of punctuality to the hour specified in a French dinner invitation. In England, a quarter of an hour beyond the time is considered as nothing, and half an hour's grace is generally acceded. But it is not so in France ; and it is considered very ill-breeding to be behind the time. And this remark applies not merely to the middle-class life I have been describing, but to the highest circles. Indeed, the French have an idea that punctuality is a virtue unknown among the English ; and numerous were the stories of annoyance from English unpunctuality which the French officers brought home from the Crimea. But to return to our day at Madame——'s. We do not dress for dinner, as we should do in England ; that ceremony, as they consider it—refreshment, as we should call it—is reserved for the days when we go into society, and then it takes place after dinner.

We have soup—always good. On Fridays we have fish ; not from any religious feeling, but because that is the day when the best fish is brought into Paris, and it is not very fresh even then. Then we have a made dish, or two or three times a week the bouilli from which the stock for the soup is made—a tender, substantial, little hunch of boiled beef of no known joint. Then come the vegetables, cooked with thick rich gravy, which raises them to the rank they hold in a French dinner, instead of being merely an accessory to the meat, as they are in England. The roti and the salad follow. The mixing of the salad is too important an operation to be trusted to a servant. As we are here, Madame does not like to leave her visitors ; but I see Gabrielle peep from behind the portieres, and make a sign to Mademoiselle, about five minutes before dinner, and Mademoiselle goes into the *salle-a-manger*, and Madame rather loses the thread of her discourse, and

looks wistfully after her daughter; for if Monsieur is particular about anything, it is about his salads. Strictly speaking, Madame tells me, the vegetables ought to be gathered while the soup is on the table, washed and cleansed while we are eating the bouilli, ana sliced and dressed with the proper accompaniments while the roti is being brought in. Madame's mother always mixed it at the table, she says, and I have no doubt Madame follows the hereditary precedent herself when she has no foreign visitors staying with her. After this, a chocolate custard, or a sweet omelette, a puree of apples, perhaps ; and then dessert is put on the table—a bit of gruyere cheese under a glass, and the ' Quatre Mendiants', i. e. nuts, almonds, raisins, figs, called after the four begging orders of friars, because these fruits are so cheap that any beggar can have them.

We have a little cup of black coffee all round when we return to the salon, and if we were not here our friends would have nothing more that night; but out of compliment to us there is tea at nine o'clock, that is to say, there is hot water with a spoonful of tea soaked in it. They look upon this mixture in much the same light as we consider *sal volatile*—not quite a dram, but as something that ought to be used medicinally, and not as a beverage.

March 10th.—Madame and I have had a long talk about prices, expenditure, &c. As far as I can make out, provisions are to the full as dear as in London; house-rent is dearer, servants' wages are much the same. She pays her cook and housemaid four hundred and fifty and four hundred francs respectively. But the household work is differently arranged to what it is in England. The cook takes the entire charge of a certain portion of the apartment, bedrooms included; the housemaid attends to the rest, waits at table, helps one of the daughters of the house to get up the fine linen, and renders them any little services they may require in dressing. The cook is enabled to take part of the household work because it is the custom in Paris to prepare provisions in the shops where they are sold, so

that the cook can buy a sweetbread, or small joint, or poultry, ready larded, the spinach ready boiled and pulped for a puree, vegetables all cut into shapes for her soup, and so on. The milk, which I had remarked upon as so remarkably good, is, it appears, subjected to the supervision of inspectors armed with lactometres, delicately weighted glass tubes marked with degrees : this ought to sink up to a particular number in good unadulterated milk, and all that is brought into Paris is tested in this and other ways at the various barriers. It is very difficult, however, to obtain milk in the afternoons or evenings, even at the cremeries, without ordering it beforehand. The Government regulates the price of bread, which is lower in Paris than in the neighbouring towns; the legal tariff is exposed in every baker's shop, and false weights and measures severely punished. As to dress, from what I can gather, I think that good articles bear the same price as in England ; but in our shops it is difficult to meet with an inferior article in even moderately good taste, while in France those who are obliged to consider expense can find cheap materials of the most elegant design. Then French ladies give up so much more thought and time to dress than the English do ; I mean in such ways as changing a gown repeatedly in the course of a day if occasion requires, taking care never to wear a better dress when an inferior one will do, no, not even for five unnecessary minutes. And when handsome articles are taken off, they are put by with as much care as if they were sleeping babies laid down in a cot. Silver paper is put between every fold of velvet or of silk; cushions of paper are placed so as to keep the right sit of any part; ribbons are rolled up; soiled spots are taken out immediately; and thus the freshness of dress which we so much admire in Frenchwomen is preserved; but, as I said, at a considerable expense of time and thought in the case of people of moderate means. Madame——declares that she knows many a young French couple who have reduced their table to the lowest degree of meagreness, in order

that the wife (especially) might be well dressed. She says that dress is the only expenditure for which a Frenchwoman will go in debt. I remember some years ago hearing a letter from the Prince de la Ligne read at Lord E——'s. He gave an account in it of the then recent coronation at Moscow, and went on to speak of the French Emperor's politics. As one of his engines of influence, the Prince gravely named 'la luxe de la toilette', as an acknowledged political means. At the time, I remember, I wondered in silence, but things have come to my knowledge since then which make me understand what was then meant. Six years ago a friend took me to call on Madame de——. It was a raw, splashy, February day, and as we walked through the slushy streets, half-covered with melting snow, my friend told me something about the lady we were going to see. Madame de——was married to the eldest son of a Frenchman of rank; she herself belonged to an old family. Her husband was a distinguished member of one of the Academies, and held a high position among those who had devoted themselves to his particular branch of recondite knowledge. Madame de——was one of the 'lionnes' of Paris, and as a specimen of her class we were now going to see her. She and her husband had somewhere about seven thousand a year, but for economy's sake they lived in an apartment rather than a house. They had, I think, two or three children. I recollect feeling how out of place my substantial winter dress and my splashed boots were, the moment I entered the little hall or ante-room to her apartment. The floor was covered with delicate Indian matting, and round the walls ran a bordering of snowdrops, crocuses, violets, and primroses, as fresh and flowering as if they were growing in a wood, but all planted by some Paris gardener in boxes of soil, and renewed perpetually. Then we went into the lady's own boudoir. She was about thirty, of a very peculiar style of beauty, which grew upon me every moment I looked. She had black hair, long black curling eyelashes, long soft grey eyes, a smooth olive skin, a dimple, and most beautiful teeth.

She was in mourning ; her thick hair fastened up with great pins of pearls and amethyst, her ear-rings, brooch, bracelets, all the same. Her gown was of black watered silk, lined with violet silk (wherever a lining could be seen), her boots black watered silk, her petticoat of stiff white silk, with a wreath of violet-coloured embroidery just above the hem. Her manners were soft and caressing to the last degree ; and when she was told that I had come to see her as a specimen of her class, she was prettily amused, and took pains to show me all her arrangements and ' coquetteries '. In her boudoir there was not a speck of gilding ; that would have been bad taste, she said. Around the mirrors, framed in white polished wood, creeping plants were trained so that the tropical flowers fell over and were reflected in the glass. There was a fire, fed with cedar-wood chips ; and the crimson velvet curtains on each side of the grate had perfumes quilted within their white silk linings. The window-curtains were trimmed with point lace. We went through a little antechamber to Madame de——'s bedroom—an oblong room, with her bed filling up half the space on one side ; the other all wardrobe, with six or seven doors, covered with looking-glass, and opening into as many closets. After we had admired the rare Palissy ware, the lace draperies of the mirror, the ornaments on the toilette-table, and the pink silk curtains of the bed, she laughed her little soft laugh, and told me that now I should see how she amused herself as she lay in bed of a morning : and pulling something like a bell-rope which hung at the head of her bed, the closet doors flew open, and displayed gowns hung on wire frames (such as you may see at any milliner's) : gowns for the evening, and gowns for the morning, with the appropriate head-dresses, chausses, and gloves, lying by them.

' I have not many gowns,' said she. ' I do not like having too many, for I never wear them after they are a month old ; I give them to my maid then, for I never wear anything that is old-fashioned.'

I was quite satisfied with my ' lionne . ' She was

quite as much out of the way of anything I had ever seen before as I had expected. But to go on with the bearing she had upon the Prince de la Ligne's letter, I must not forget to say that Madame de——expressed very strong political opinions, and all distinctly anti-Bonapartean. Among other things she mentioned, was the fact that when her husband went to pay his respects, as a member of the Academy of——, to the Emperor at the Tuileries, she would not allow him to use their carriage (nor indeed was he willing to do it, but went in a hackney coach), saying that the arms of the de——s should never be seen in the courts of a usurper. Two years afterwards I came to Paris, and I inquired after M. and Madame de——. To my infinite surprise, I heard that he had become a senator, one of that body who receive about a thousand pounds a year from Government, and who are admitted to that dignity by the express will of the Emperor. How in the world could it have come about? And Madame, too, at all the balls and receptions at the Tuileries. The arms of the de——were no longer invisible in the courts of a usurper. What was the reason of this change? Madame's extravagance. Their income would not suffice for her 'luxe de la toilette', and the senator's salary was a very acceptable addition.

April 24th.—We were asked to go in some evening, 'pour dire le petit bon soir,' at a neighbour's house. Accordingly we walked thither about eight o'clock. M. E——'s house is one of the most magnificent in this quartier: it is on the newly-built Boulevard de Sevastopol. M. E——himself is a leading man in his particular branch of trade, which, in fact, he has made himself; and he is now a French millionaire, as different from an English one as francs are different from pounds. I remember when I first knew monsieur and madame, they lived in an apartment over the shop, and this was situated in one of the narrow old streets of the Quartier Latin. I was asked there to dinner, and I had to make my way through bales of goods, that were piled as high as walls on each side of the narrow passage

through the shop. I went through madame's bedroom, furnished with purple velvet and amber satin, to the room where we assembled before dinner. It was a weekly dinner, at which all M. E——'s family came, as a matter of course; and any one connected with him in business was also sure of finding a place there. The table was spread with every luxury, and there was almost an ostentatious evidence of wealth, which contrasted oddly and simply with the hard signs of business and trade down below. I fancy their way of living at that time must have been like that of the great old city families of the last century. And there was another resemblance. Two generations ago it was customary for our own London merchants to retain their married children under the paternal roof, for the first year at least; and so it was at M. E——'s. His own child, his wife's children—for they had each been married before—lived in the same house as he did, both in winter and summer, in town and country. Yet the younger generation were all married, and had families. All the grandchildren, little and big, were assembled at these weekly dinners; if there was not room for them at the principal table, there were nurses and servants ready to attend upon them at side-tables. And now, when increasing and well-deserved prosperity has enabled M. E——to remove into the large hotel to which we have been to-night, to 'say our little good evening', I find that his sons and his daughters, his maid-servants and his men-servants, have all migrated with him in truly patriarchal fashion. We did not see them all to-night, for some have already gone into the country, whither the others are going to follow in a day or two. Out of compliment to us, tea was brought in—tea at a guinea the pound, as Madame E——informed us. I saw that the family did not like the drink well enough to wish to join us. There was a little telegraphing as to who was to be the victim, and keep us in company; and the young lady singled out as the tea-drinker for the family took care to put in so much sugar that I doubt if she could recognize the flavour of any-

thing else. The others excused themselves from partaking by saying—one, that she had been so feverish all day; another said that he felt himself a good deal excited, and so on. Sugar is considered by the French as fitted to soothe the nerves, and to induce sleep. I really am becoming a convert to this idea, and can take my glass of eau sucrée as well as any one before going to bed; indeed, we have a little tray in our bedroom, on which is a Bohemian glass carafe of water, a goblet with a gold spoon, and a bowl of powdered sugar. But I think it is a drink for society, not for solitude. Inspired by the example of others, I relish it; but I never tipple at it in private.

Somehow to-night we began to talk upon the custom of different families of relations living together. I said it would never do in England. They asked me, why not? And, after some reflection, I was obliged to confess we all liked our own ways too much to be willing to give them up at the will of others—were too independent, too great lovers of our domestic privacy. I am afraid I gave the impression that we English were too ill-tempered and unaccommodating, for I drew down upon myself a vehement attack upon the difficulties thrown in the way of young people's marrying in England.

'Even when there is a great large house, and a table well-spread enough to fill many additional mouths, they tell me that in England the parents will go on letting their sons and daughters waste the best years of their lives in long engagements,' said Madame E——.

'That does not sound to me amiable.'

'It is not the custom in France,' put in her husband.

* You English are apt to think us bad-tempered, because we talk loud, and use a good deal of gesticulation; but I believe we are one of the most good-tempered nations going, in spite of the noise we make.'

By and by some one began to speak of *Les Misérables*; and M. E——, like a prosperous merchant as he is, objected to the socialist tendency of the book. From that we went on to talking about a greve (or strike)

which had lately taken place among the builders in Paris. They had obtained their point, whatever it was, because it was the supreme aim of the Government to keep the 'blouses'—the Faubourg St. Antoine—in good humour; and 'Government,' in fact, has the regulation of everything in France. Monsieur E—— said that the carpenters were now about to strike, encouraged by the success of the builders, and that he heard from his own carpenter that the object they were going to aim at was that skilled and unskilled labour should be paid at the same rate—viz. five francs a day. He added that the carpenter, his informant, looked upon this project with disfavour, saying it might be all very well as long as there was enough of work for all; but when it grew scarce, none but the best workmen would have any employment, as no one would send for an inferior craftsman when he could have a first-rate one for the same money.

May 4th.—It is becoming intolerably hot in Paris. I almost wish the builders would strike, for my part, for the carnages scarcely cease rumbling past my open windows before two; and at five the men are clapping and hammering at the buildings of the new boulevard opposite. I have had to go into the narrow streets of the older parts of Paris lately; and the smells there are insufferable—a mixture of drains and cookery, which makes one loathe one's food. Yet how interesting these old streets are! and the people inhabiting them are quite different to those of the more fashionable quarters: they have so much more originality of character about them; and yet one sees that they are the descendants of the Dames de la Halle, who went out to Versailles on the memorable fifth of October. I see curious little customs too in these more primitive parts of the town. Every morning a certain number of Sisters of Charity put themselves at the disposition of the Mairie of the Arrondissements. There were formerly only twelve arrondissements; but now, owing to the extension of the city of Paris, there are twenty. In the former days, before the annexation of the suburbs

to the city in 1859, by which the number of the arrondissements was increased to twenty, it was 'slang' to speak of any disreputable person as belonging to the 'treizieme', an arrondissement not recognized by any law. Every such division has a 'mairie' and two 'adjoints', who are responsible for the well-doing and well-being of the district in their charge. I see the 'Sisters' leaving the Mairie on their errands of mercy early every morning. About the same time the chiffonier comes his rounds, eagerly raking out the heaps of dust and rubbish before the doors, then by and by—generally, however, after eleven, that universal meal-hour—I meet an old woman busily trotting along towards the Luxembourg Gardens, surrounded by fifteen or twenty little children, aged from two or three years to seven or eight. Their parents pay the old lady about ten centimes an hour to take their children out, and give them a walk or a game of play in the gardens. It is pretty to see her convoy her little regiment over a crossing: it reminds me of the old puzzle of the fox, the goose, and the bag of corn. The elder children are left in charge on one side while the very little ones are carried over; then one of the oldest is beckoned across and lectured on her care of them while the old woman trots back for the rest; and I notice she is much more despotic during her short reign of power than the old woman herself. At length they are past all dangers, and safe in the gardens, where they may make dirt-pies to their hearts' content, while their chaperone takes out her knitting and seats herself on a bench in their midst. Say she has fifteen children, and keeps them out for two hours, it makes her a little income of half-a-crown a day; and many a busy mother is glad that her child should have happy play and exercise, while she goes a-shopping, or does some other piece of house-keeping work, which would prevent her from attending properly to her child. Each 'mairie' has its *salle d'asile* (or infant school) and its *creche* (or public nursery), under the superintendence of the *sisters'; but perhaps these are for a lower class than my little

Luxembourg friends. Their mothers are, for the most part, tolerably well off, only not rich enough to keep a servant expressly for the children.

Then the shop-placards in these old-fashioned parts of the town are often amusing enough. For instance: the other day I saw a crowd in a by-street, near the Rue l'Ecole de Medecine, all intent upon a great piece of written paper put out of the window of a shop, where almost every article of woman's dress was to be sold. It was headed, in letters almost a quarter of a yard long,

MA FEMME EST FOLLE.

A person, of whom I asked the meaning, laughed a little as he said—

' Oh ! it is only a contrivance for attracting custom. He goes on to state, lower down in the paper, that his wife, being mad, offered certain gown-pieces for sale yesterday at a ruinous price (they are really only about half a franc lower than what you can get them for at any other shop); that he is miserable in the conflict he is undergoing between his honour and the prospect of the sacrifice he will have to make if he sells them at the price his wife offered them for; but, "Honour above all," they shall be sold at that price, and therefore every one had better rush in and buy.'

May 7th.—Seeing an apartment to let in the Place Royale, we went over it yesterday. I have always liked the looks of this stately old place: so full of historical associations too. Then, again, the quietness of it charms me ; it is almost like a cloister, for no carriages can come in; and the sheltered walks under the arcades must be very pleasant to the inhabitants on rainy days. The houses are built of very handsome red bricks with stone facings, and all after the same plan, designed by an architect of the time of Henry IV—about our Queen Elizabeth's reign; but if the Place Royale was in England we should date it, judging from the style of the architecture, a century later at least. It is more like the later additions to Hampton Court. There is

a pleasant square **in** the centre, with a fountain, shady chestnut trees, and gay flower-beds, and a statue of Louis XIII in the midst. Tradition says that it was either on this piece of ground or very near it that the famous mask took place in the old Palace des Tournelles, when, the dresses of the masquer scatching fire, King Charles VI, who was one of them, became mad in consequence of the fright, and to soothe his madness, our present playing-cards were invented. When first the present place was built, all the fashionable world rushed to secure houses in it. This was the old hotel of the De Rohans, that was Cardinal de Richelieu's before his Palais Cardinal—the present Palais Royal—was completed; in this house Madame de SeVign6 was born—and so on. Now the ground floor, which was formerly occupied by the offices of the great houses above, is turned into shops, warehouses, and cafes of a modest and substantial kind ; and the upper floors are inhabited by respectable and well-to-do people, who do not make the least pretension to fashion. The apartment we went over consisted of five handsome and very lofty reception-rooms opening out of one another, and lighted by many high narrow windows opening on to a wide balcony at the top of the arcade. One or two of these rooms were panelled with looking-glass, but old-fashioned, in many pieces, not like our modern plates in size. Possibly it was Venetian, and dated from the times of the early proprietors. The great height of the rooms, as compared to their area, struck me much. Only two or three of the rooms had fire-places, and these were vast and cavernous. Besides the doors of communication between the rooms, there was, in each, one papered like the walls, opening into a passage which ran the whole length of the apartment. On the opposite side of this passage there were doors opening into the kitchens, storerooms, servants' bedrooms, &c.—so small, so close, so unhealthy. Yet in those days there were many servants and splendid **dinners**. Perhaps, however, some of the lacqueys slept on the upper floor, to which there is now no access from

the apartments au premier. At the end of the passage was the bedroom of the late proprietress, with a closet opening out of it for her maid. The bedroom was spacious and grand enough; but the closet—well, I suppose she *could* lie full length in it if she was not tall. The only provision for light and air was a window opening on to the passage. We inquired the rent of this apartment: 3,000 francs—£120. But perhaps Monsieur, le propriétaire, might reduce it to 2,500 francs—£100. The front rooms were charming, in their old-fashioned stateliness; but if I lived there, I should be sorely perplexed as to where my servants were to sleep.

May 10th.—Utterly weary of the noise and heat of Paris, we went out to St. Germain yesterday. I had never been there before; and now, once having been, I want to go agam. It is only half an hour from Paris by railroad. We could just see Malmaison as we went along, past pretty villas with small gardens brilliant with flowers, as French gardens always are. All the plants seem to go into flower; the mass of bloom almost over-balances the leaves. I believe this is done by skilful pruning and cutting-in. For instance, they take up their rose-trees at the beginning of February, and cut off the coarse red suckers and the superfluous growth of root. The hedges to these little suburban gardens are principally made of acacia, and pollard trees of the same species border nearly all the roads near Paris. In the far distance, on the left, almost against the horizon, we saw the famous Aqueduct de Marly, formerly used to conduct a part of the water to Versailles. I do not know what it is in the long line of aqueducts and viaducts which charms one. Is it the vanishing perspective which seems to lead the eye, and through it the mind, to some distant invisible country? or is it merely the association with other aqueducts, with the broken arches of the Claudian aqueduct, stretching across the Campagna, with Nismes, Ac. ? By means of some skilfully adjusted atmospherio power, the trains have of late years been conducted up to nearly the level

of **the** terrace at St. Germain's by a pretty steep inclined **plane**. We went up **a** few steps on leaving the station, **and** then we were on the plateau, the castle on our left, **and** a 'Place' at the entrance to the town on the right.

Nothing could be more desolate-looking than the Chateau; the dull red bricks of which it is built are painted dark-lead colour round the many tiers of windows—the glass in which is broken in numerous places, and its place here and there supplied by iron bars. Somehow, the epithet that rose to our lips on first seeing the colouring of the whole place, was *livid \ Nor is the present occupation of the grim old chateau one to suggest cheerful thoughts. After being a palace, it was degraded to a 'caserne' or barracks, and from that it has come down to a penitentiary. All round the building there is a deep dry area, railed round ; and now I have said all I can against St. Germain and recorded a faithful impression at first sight. But two minutes afterwards, there came **a** lovely slant of sunlight ; the sun had been behind a fine thunderous cloud, and emerged just at the right moment, causing all the projections in the chateau to throw deep shadows, brightening the tints in all the other parts, calling out the vivid colours in the flower-beds that surround the railing on the park side of the chateau, and half compelling us with its hot brilliancy, half luring us by the full fresh green it gave to the foliage, to seek the shelter of the woods not two hundred yards beyond the entrance to the park. We did not know where we were going to, we only knew that it was shadowed ground ; while the *English garden ' we passed over was all one blaze of sunlight and scarlet geraniums, and intensely blue lobelias, yellow calceolarias, and other hot-looking flowers. The space below the ancient mighty oaks **and** chestnut-trees was gravelled over, and given up to nursery-maids **and** children, with here and there an **invalid sitting on** the benches. Mary and Irene were **bent** upon sketching, so we wandered on to find the impossible point of view which is to combine **all** the **excellences desired by two** eager sketchers. So we

loitered over another hundred yards in the cool shade of the trees. And suddenly we were on the terrace, looking down over a plain steeped in sunlight, and extending for twenty miles and more. We all exclaimed with delight at its unexpectedness, and yet we had heard of the terrace at St. Germain, and associated it with James II and Maria d'Este all our lives. The terrace is a walk as broad as a street, on the edge of the bluff overhanging the silver tortuous Seine. It is bounded by a wall just the right height for one to lean upon and gaze and muse upon the landscape below. The mellow mist of a lovely day enveloped the more distant objects then, but we came again in the evening, when all the gay world of St. Germain was out and abroad on the terrace listening to the music of the band ; and we could then distinguish the aqueduct of Marly on our right, before us the old woods of Vesinet—that ill-omened relic of the ancient forest that covered the lie de France ; and here in the very centre is the star-shaped space called La Table de la Trahison ; here it was that Ganelan de Hauteville planned to betray Roland the Brave and the twelve peers of France, at Roncevaux ; and on the very spot the traitors were burnt to death by the order of Charlemagne. Beyond Vesinet rise the fortified heights of Mont Valerien and Montmartre ; so we know that the great city of Pans, with its perpetual noise and bustle, must be the cause of that thickening of the golden air just beyond the rising ground in the mid-distance. And some one found out—far away again—as far as eye could see, the spire of the Cathedral of St. Denis, and Irene fell to moralizing and comparing. The palace, she said, was ever present—an every-day fact to the great old kings who had inhabited it—and fertile life and busy pomp were the golden interspace which all but concealed from them the inevitable grave at St. Denis. But sermons always make me hungry ; and Irene's moralizing seemed to have the same effect on herself as well as on us, or else it was the ' nimble ' air—for that epithet of Shakespeare's exactly fits the clear brisk

air of St. Germain. They sat down to sketch, and I was sent in search of provender. I could not find a confectioner's, nor, indeed, would it have been of much use, for French confectioners only sell sugary or creamy nothings, extremely unsatisfactory to hungry people. So I went boldly into the restaurant to the right of the station—the Cafe Galle, I think it was called—and told the Dame du Comptoir my errand. I was in hopes that she would have allowed one of the garçons to accompany me with a basket of provisions, and some plates, and knives and forks ; perhaps some glasses, and a bottle of wine. But it seems that this was against the rules ; and all I could do was, to have the loan of a basket for a short time. Madame split up some oval rolls of delicious bread, buttered them, and placed some shoes of raw ham between the praces; and with these, and some fresh strawberries, I returned to my merry hungry sketchers, who were beginning to find that a seat on the hard gravel was not quite so agreeable as sitting on (comparatively) soft English turf. Yet the benches were too high for their purpose. After eating their lunch they relapsed into silence and hard work. It was rather dull for me, so I rambled about, struck up an acquaintanceship with one of the gardeners, and with a hackney-coachman, who tried to tempt me into engaging him for a ' course' to Versailles by Marly-le-Roi—the Marly, the famous Marly of Louis XIV, of which the faint vestiges alone remain in the marks of the old garden plots. I was tempted. I remembered what St. Simon says; how the king, weary of noise and of grandeur, found out a little narrow valley within a few miles of his magnificent and sumptuous Versailles ; there was a village near this hollow—for it really was nothing more—and this village was called Marly, whence the name of the palace or ' hermitage' which the king chose to have built. He thought that he went there to lead a simple and primitive life, away from the flattery of his courtiers. But it is not so easy for a king to avoid flattery. His architect built one great pavilion, which was to repre-

sent the sun; in it dwelt Louis XIV. There were twelve smaller pavilions surrounding this large one ; in them dwelt the planets, that is to say, the favourite courtiers of the time being. Every morning the king set out to visit his satellites ; there were six on one side of the parterre, six on the other; and their pavilions communicated with each other by means of close avenues of lime-trees. It was etiquette for these courtiers to salute the king, who had taken the sun for his device, by placing their right hand so as to shade their eyes from his brilliancy ; hence, some people say, our own military salute. Each courtier, as he was visited, followed the king in his round. At first, the king only came to Marly two or three times a year, staying from Wednesday to Saturday ; he only brought a comparatively moderate train; but in time he grew weary of his so-called simplicity, and the surrounding hills were scooped out to make gardens, and woods, and waterworks; and statues and courtiers thronged the place. Still, as no one could come here without express invitation from the king, to be of the parties to Marly was an object to be longed for, and asked for, and intrigued for. Indeed, it was the highest favour that could be obtained from royalty. At the last moment of awful suspense as to who was to go, the king's valet de chambre, Bontemps, went round with the invitations. There was no need of preparation, for in each pavilion there was a store of all things needed for masculine and feminine toilettes. Only two could inhabit a pavilion ; and, if a married lady was asked, her husband was included in the invitation, though not in the compliment. But to the end of his reign, the days for Marly were invariable. Sunday the King spent, as became the eldest son of the Church, at his parish of Versailles; Monday and Tuesday he allowed himself to be worshipped by the whole court at Versailles ; on Wednesday he went to Marly with the selected few. The amusements at Marly were high play, or, as it might be called, gambling; and a kind of bazaar, where the ladies dressed themselves up as Syrians, Japanese,

Greeks, what not, and played at keeping shop; the king furnishing the infinite variety of things sold. Louis XV and his unfortunate successor went to Marly occasionally; but the great days of Marly were over when Louis XIV died. After that, the Governor of St. Germain kept the keys of Marly, and occasionally lent the use of the pavilions to his private friends. But the Convention did not approve of this appropriation of national property, and the old statues, the remains of magnificent furniture, the marbles, and the mirrors, were sold for the good of the people. Some one bought the buildings and turned them into a spinning-mill; but it was not a profitable speculation, and by and by the whole place was pulled down; but I believe you may yet trace out the foundations of the Palace of the Sun. So that was why I wanted to see Marly—a place once so famous and so populous gone to ruin, nay, the very ruins themselves covered up by nature with her soft harmony of grass and flowers. How much would it cost, how long would it take, to go by Marly to Versailles in time to catch the last tram thence to Paris? It would take an hour, not including any stopping at Marly, and it would cost fifteen francs, also not including any stoppage at Marly. I was vexed at the man for thinking I could be so grossly imposed upon. Why, two francs an hour, with a decent *pour-boire*, was on the tariff of every carriage; so I turned away in silent indignation, heedless of his cries of * *Dix francs, madame. Tenez! huit, cinq, ce que vous vouiez, madame.* ' And immediately afterwards I was glad I had not planned to leave St. Germain an hour earlier than was necessary—the place looked so bright and cheerful, with all the gaily-dressed people streaming over the Place du Chateau to go to the Terrace and hear the band. I went into the restaurant, and ordered coffee to be ready at six, and had a little more gossip with the Dame du Comptoir. She told me that no one was admitted to see the interior of the castle, although it was no longer a penitentiary; that the air at St. Germain was better and purer than at any other place

within twenty miles of Paris ; and that I ought to come and see the forest of St. Germain at the time of the Fete des Loges—a sort of open-air festival held in the forest on the 30th of August; and all the waiters at liberty came forward to make a chorus in praise of the merry-go-rounds, mountebanks, wine, stoves cooking viands, spits turning joints, and general merriment, which seemed to go on at this fair, which took its rise in the pilgrimages made to a certain hermitage built by a devout seigneur of the time of Louis XIII.

Then I went back to Mary and Irene, and told them my adventures; and we all, attracted by the good music of the military band, went on to the crowded terrace and leant over the wall, and saw the view I have described, and gazed down into the green depths of the far-stretching forest, and wondered if we should not have done wiser to have gone thither and spent our day there. And so to our excellent coffee and bread, and then back to Paris.

II

Chartres, May 10th, 1862.

WE were quite worn out with the ever increasing noise of Paris ; or, perhaps, I should rather say, as the heat became greater, so our necessity for open windows by day and by night increased; and the masons opposite rose to their work with the early morning light. So we determined to go off to Brittany for our few remaining days, having a sort of happy mixture of the ideas of sea, heath, rocks, ferns, and Madame de Sevigne in our heads. The one and first destined point in our plans being to see the cathedral at Chartres.

We left Paris about three o'clock, and went past several stations, the names of which reminded us of Madame de Sevigne's time—Rambouillet, perhaps, the most of all. The station is some distance from the town of Chartres, which, like so many French provincial towns, consists of a ' Place ,' and a few appendent streets. The magnificent cathedral stands a little

aloof; we left it on one side as we came in an omnibus up to our hotel, which looked on to the Place. But, alas for my hopes of a quiet night! The space before the house is filled with booths—dancing booths, acting booths, wild-beast shows, music booths, each and all making their own separate and distinct noises; the 'touter' to one booth sitting in front of it and blowing a trumpet as hard as any angel in the old pictures; the hero of the theatrical booth walking backwards and forwards in front of his stage, and ranting away in King Cambyse's vein; the lions and tigers are raging with hunger, to judge from their roars; and the musicians are in the full burst of the overture to *OuUlaume Tell*. Mary and Irene have gone out, in spite of it all, to have a peep at the cathedral before it is too dark; and I have chosen our bedrooms. If the lion only knew it, he could easily make a spring into our balcony; but I hope, as he is great, he will be stupid. I have rung the bell, and rung the bell, and gone out in the corridor and called; and, at last, I shall have to go downstairs to try and find some one to bring up the meal which I have promised the others they shall find ready on their return, I have been and found Madame, and laid my complaint before her. She says the servants are all gone out to see the shows in the Place, which is very wicked in them; but I suspect, from her breathless way of speaking, she has only just rushed in herself to see that I am not running away with the house. I fancy I am the only person in it. She assures me, with true French volubility, that she will send up some coffee and bread directly, and will scold Jeannette well.

May 11th.—Mary and Irene returned from the cathedral last night before anything was ready, and were too full of the extraordinary architectural magnificence they had seen to care about my Martha-like troubles. But I had not seen the cathedral, and I was hungry if they were not. I went down again, and this time I found Madame in full tilt against an unfortunate woman, who looked as if she had been captured, *vi et armis*, out of the open-air gaiety and the pleasant

company of friends in the Place. She brought us up our meal with sullen speed, giving me occasionally such scowls of anger that I almost grew afraid at the feeling I had provoked. Yet she refused to be soothed by our little expressions of admiration for the fair, and our questions as to what was to be seen. Her only attempt at an apology was a sort of grumbling soliloquy to the effect that ladies who knew what was *comme il faut* would never have gone out so late in the evening of a *jour de fete* to walk about the town; and that, as Mary and Irene had done this improper thing, there was no knowing when, if ever, they would return. I wish she had let us try to comfort her, for I really was very sorry to have dragged a poor creature back from what was, perhaps, the great enjoyment of the year. After our coffee we went to bed; and I am not at all sure if we were not, for some hours, the only occupants of the hotel. But the lion did not take advantage of his opportunity, though we were obliged to leave the windows open for the heat. This morning we went to see the cathedral. It is so wonderfully beautiful that no words can describe it. I am thoroughly glad we came by Chartres.

May 12th.—*Vitre*—We came on here yesterday afternoon. Irene, who is the most wide-awake person I know, sat upright in the railway carriage, looking out of the window with eager intelligent eyes, and noting all she saw. It was a *fete* day; and at all the little cabarets, with their wayside gardens, there were groups of peasants in their holiday dress, drinking what appeared to be cider, from its being in large stone bottles, and eating *galette*—a sort of flat cake of puff-paste, dusted over with powdered sugar, with which we had become well acquainted in Paris. The eating and drinking seemed, however, to be rather an excuse for sitting round well-scoured tables in the open air, than an object in itself. I sank back in my seat in a lazy, unobservant frame of mind, when Irene called out, 'Oh, look! there is a peasant in the goat-skin dress one reads about; we must be in Brittany now, look,

look !' I had to sit up again and be on the alert; all the time thinking how bad for the brain it was to be straining one's attention perpetually after the fast-flitting objects to be seen through a railway carriage window. This is a very good theory; but it did not quite hold water in practice. Irene was as bright as ever when we stopped at Vitro"; I was tired and stupid. Perhaps the secret was, that I did unwillingly what she did with pleasure. The station at Vitre is a little outside the town, and is smart and new and in apple-pie order, as a station on a line that has to make its character ought to be. The town, on the contrary, is ancient, picturesque, and deserted. There have been fortified walls all round it, but these are now broken down in many places, and small hovels have been built of the debris wherever this is the case, giving one the impression of a town stuffed too full, which has burst its confines and run over. Yet inside the walls there are many empty houses, and many grand fortified dwellings, with coats of arms emblazoned over the doorway, which are only half-occupied. All the little world of the town seemed to be at the railway station, and everybody welcomed us with noise and advice. The inn down in our ten-years-old Murray no longer existed ; so we were glad to be told of the Hotel Sevigne, although we suspected it to be a mere trick of a name. Not at all. We are really veritably lodged in the very house she occupied when she left Les Rochers to come and do the honours of Vitre to the Governor of Brittany—the Due de Chaulnes. Our hotel is the Tour de SeVign6 of her letters. On being told this, I asked for the tower itself. It had been pulled down only a year or two before in order to make the great rambling mansion more compact as an hotel. As it was, they had changed the main entrance from back to front; and to arrive at it, we had to go over a great piece of vacant irregular ground, the inequalities of which were caused by the debris of the tower. The place belongs to the Marquis de Nethumieres, a descendant of the de Sevignes, so our host said. At any rate, he lives at Les Rochers, and

owns our hotel. It seems as though our landlord had not had capital enough to furnish the whole of this immense, far-stretching house, which is entered in the middle of the building with long corridors to the right and to the left, both upstairs and downstairs—corridors so wide and well lighted by the numerous windows looking to the back (or town-side), that they are used as store-rooms and sculleries. Here there are great sacks of corn and unpacked boxes of possible groceries ; there a girl sits and sings as she mends the house-linen by a window, apparently diligent enough, but perfectly aware, all the time, that the ostler in the yard below is trying to attract her attention; and there, again, a woman is standing, shoulders square, to an open window, ' topping and tailing ' a basket of gooseberries, and shouting out her part of a conversation with some one unseen in the yard below. Yet the great corridor looks empty and strangely deserted. Somehow, I suppose that as soon as I heard the name of Tour de Seigne, I expected to see a fair, plump lady, in hanging sleeves and long light-brown ringlets, walking before me wherever I went, half-turning her pretty profile over her white shoulder to say something bright and playful; and instead, we follow our rather spruce landlord into the bedrooms at the end of the corridor, and coolly order our dinner for this day of May, 1862. The rooms in this house are not large, but so very lofty, that I suspect that the panelled partition walls are but later wooden divisions of larger rooms, and so, on tapping, we find to be the case. My window looks out on the country outside the town ; Irene's is just on the opposite side, and she sees roofs of deeply furrowed tiles—roofs of every possible angle and shape, but mostly high pitched; they are covered with golden and grey lichens which tone down the old original red. There are broad gutters round the verge of every one, regular cats' Pall Malls. And see, there is an old black grimalkin coming round yonder corner, with meek and sleepy gait, of course entirely unconscious of the flock of pigeons towards which she is advancing with her

velvet steps. They strut and pout and ruffle themselves up, turning their pretty soft plumage to the sun till they catch the rainbow tints ; and whiff—they are all off in mid-air, and the hypocritical cat has to go on walking in the gutter as if pigeons had been the last thing in her thoughts when she made that playful spring round the corner. How picturesque the old town looks beyond, though, to be sure, we see little besides roofs—the streets must be so narrow. Let us make haste and have our meal, and go out before the sun sets. Pigeons for dinner ! Ah, Pussy, we begin to have a fellow-feeling for you.

May 13th.—We have had a busy day, but a very pleasant one. In the first place, we had a long talk with our landlord about the possibility of seeing Les Rochers. The Marquis was very strict about not letting it be shown without his permission, and he and Madame were known to be at Rennes ; so we thought of giving it up. Then our landlord turned round in his opinions, and said that doubtless the Marquis and Madame would be very sorry for any foreigners to come so far on a bootless errand ; and so—after a good many pro's and con's, we always following our landlord's lead, and agreeing to all that he said, in hopes of getting to the end of the discussion—we made a bargain for a little conveyance—half Irish car, half market cart, which was to take us to Les Rochers, and to stay there as long as we liked. Who so merry as we this bright dewy May morning, cramped up in our jolting, rattling carriage, the fourth place occupied by sketch-books and drawing materials ? First, we rattled along the narrow streets of Vitre ; the first floors of the houses are propped up upon black beams of wood, making a rude sort of colonnade, under which people walk ; something like Chester—and then we passed out of the old turretted gate of the town, into the full and pleasant light of early morning. We began to climb a hill, the road winding round Vitre, till we peeped down upon the irregular roofs and stacks of chimneys pent in the circular walls ; and we saw the remains of the old

castle, inhabited by the Due and Duchesse de Chaulnes, in the days when Madame de Sevigne came to stay at the 'Tour' and show hospitality to her Paris friends in that barbarous region. And now we were on a high level, driving along pretty wooded lanes, with here and there a country chateau or manor house, surrounded by orchards on either side of us. Towards one of these our driver pointed. It was low and gabled; I have seen a hundred such in England. 'That is the old house of the de la Tremouilles,' said he. And then we began to think of a daughter of that house who had been transplanted by marriage into England, and was known in English history and romance, as Charlotte, the heroic Countess of Derby. By this time we had made great friends with our driver, by admiring his brisk little Breton pony, and asking him various questions about Breton cows. Suddenly he turned into a field-road on our left; and in three minutes we were in full sight of Les Rochers. We got down, and looked about us. We were on the narrow side of an oblong of fine delicate grass; on our right were peaked-roofed farm buildings, granaries, barns, stables, and cow-houses; opposite to us, a thick wood, showing dark in the sunlight; in the corner to our left was the house, with tourelles and towers, and bits of high-roof, and small irregular doors; a much larger and grander building than I had expected; very like the larger castles in Scotland. Then quite on our right was the low wall, and ha-ha of the gardens, and the bridge over the ha-ha, and the richly-worked iron gates. We turned round; we were at the edge of the rising ground which fell rather abruptly from this point into a rich smiling plain—the Bocage country, in fact. We could see far away for miles and miles, till it all melted into the blue haze of distance. Our driver took out his horse, and went to make friends with the farm-servants, who had turned out with lazy curiosity to look at the strangers. We sat down on the ground; the turf **was** fine and delicate, and the little flowerets interspersed were all of such kinds as tell of a lime soil and of pure air.

There were larks up above, right in the depth of the blue sky, singing as if they would crack their throats for **joy**; the sort of open farmyard before us was full of busy, prosperous poultry of all kinds—hens clucking up their large broods of chickens, cocks triumphantly summoning their wives to the feast before the barn door, fussy turkeys strutting and gobbling, and flocks of pigeons now basking on the roof, now fluttering down to the ground. There were dogs baying in **the** unseen background to add to the various noises. I never saw **a** place so suggestive of the ideas of peace and plenty. There were cows, too, tethered in the dusky shadows of the open cow-houses, with heaps of cut green food before them. Our plan was to sketch first, and then to try to see the house. Now and then a servant in rather clumsy livery, or a maid in the country dress of Brittany, went across the space, to have a little talk with the farm-servants, and a side-long look at us. At last an old man in a blue blouse came out from the group near the barn door, and slowly approaching, sat himself down on a hillock near. Of course we began to talk, seeing his sociable intentions; and he told us he was a de la Roux, and had relations * in London '. I fancied he might mean the de la Rues, but he corrected my misspelling with some indignation, and again asked me if I did not know his relations in London—the de la Roux. Ah yes! they were noble, he was noble; his ancestors had been as great as the ancestors of the Marquis yonder, but they had taken the wrong side in the wars; and here was he, their grandchild, obliged to work for his daily bread. We sighed out of sympathy with his sighs, and amplified the text, * Sic transit,' &c. Then he offered us a pinch of snuff, which **we** took, and sneezed accordingly; and this afforded our old friend much amusement. To wind up this little story all at once—when we were going **away**, we demurred as to whether we could venture to offer **a de la Roux a couple of francs**, or whether it would not seem like an insult to his noble **blood**. **The wisdom of age carried the day** against

the romance of youth, and was justified in seeing the eager eyes in the worn sharp face watching the first initiatory sign of a forthcoming gift with trembling satisfaction. How pleasant the long, quiet morning was ! A cloud-shadow passing over us, a horse coming too near with its loud champing of the sweet herbage, our only disturbance; while before us the evident leisure for gossip, and signs of plenty to eat, filled up the idea of rural happiness. Then we went and saw the house, and the portraits, and passed out of the window into the garden—like all French gardens—with neglected grass, and stone fountains, and cut yews and cypresses, and a profusion of lovely flowers, roses especially. We were all very sorry to come away.

Early this evening, Mary and Irene went out to sketch, and planted themselves down in a street already occupied by picturesque booths and open-air shops for pottery, men's clothes, and the really serviceable articles for country use. It seems it was the market-day at Vitre; and it was very pretty to watch the young housewives in their best attire, bargaining and hesitating over their purchases. Their dress was invariably a gown of some bright-coloured cotton, a handkerchief of the same material, but a different colour, crossed over the breast *à la Marie Antoinette*, and a large apron, with a bib of a third hue almost covering the petticoat, and confining and defining the bust. They rang the changes on turkey red, bright golden brown, and full dark blue. Indeed, the dark narrow streets, with their colonnades, black with the coming shadows, needed this relief of colour. The little boys of Vitre, let loose from school, came clustering round about our sketchers. It was certainly a great temptation to the lads ; but they came too close, and entirely obstructed the view, and only laughed, at first shyly, afterwards a little rudely, at my remonstrances. I applied to a *gendarme*, slowly coming down the street, but he only shrugged his shoulders with the hopeless beginning of '*Que voulez-vous, Madame!* I am not here to impede the concourse of children,' and

passed on. Just at this moment a stout woman selling men's clothes in the open street close by, observed the dilemma, and came to the rescue. She wielded a pair of good strong fustian trousers, and scolded in right down earnest—and also in right down good humour, casting her weapon about her with considerable dexterity, so as to make it answer the purpose of a cat-o'-nine-tails. And thus she cleared a circle for us; and whenever she saw us too much crowded she came again; and the lads laughed, and wo laughed, and we all ended capital friends. By and by she began to pack up her stock of clothes: she had a cart brought to her by her husband, and first she took down the poles of her booth, and then the awning, then the impromptu counter came to pieces, and lastly the coats and trousers, the blouses and jackets, were packed into great sacks. And she was on the point of departure—being, as we afterwards heard, a pedlaress who made the circuit of the markets in the district with her wares—when I thought that the only civility I could offer her was to show her the drawings that Mary and Irene had made, thanks to her well-timed interposition. She swore many a good round oath to enforce her admiration of the sketches, and called her little obedient husband to look at them; but on his failing to recognize some object, she gave him a good cuff on the ear, apologizing to us for his stupidity. I do not think he liked her a bit the less for this conduct.

May 4th.—We have decided to return to England to see the Exhibition. We are going by Fougères, Pont Orson, Mont St. Michel, Avranches, Caen, and Rouen; and by that time we shall have made an agreeable 'loop' of a little journey, full of objects of interest.

February 16th, 1863.—Again in Paris! and, as I remember a young English girl saying with great delight, 'we need never be an evening at home!' But her visions were of balls; our possibilities are the very pleasant ones of being allowed to go in on certain evenings of the week to the houses of different friends,

sure to find them at home ready to welcome any who may come in. Thus, on Mondays, Madame de Circourt receives; Tuesdays, Madame——; Wednesdays, Madame de M——; Thursdays, Monsieur G——, and so on. There is no preparation of entertainment; a few more lights, perhaps a Baba, or cake savouring strongly of rum, and a little more tea is provided. Every one is welcome, and no one is expected. The visitors may come dressed just as they would be at home; or in full toilette, on their way to balls and other gaieties. They go without any formal farewell; whence, I suppose, our expression, 'French leave.' Of course the agreeableness of these informal receptions depends on many varying circumstances, and I doubt if they would answer in England. A certain talent is required in the hostess; and this talent is not kindness of heart, or courtesy, or wit, or cleverness, but that wonderful union of all these qualities, with a dash of intuition besides, which we call tact. Madame R^{ac}amier had it in perfection. Her wit or cleverness was of the passive or receptive order; she appreciated much, and originated little. But she had the sixth sense, which taught her when to speak, and when to be silent. She drew out other people's powers by her judicious interest in what they said; she came in with sweet words before the shadow of a coming discord was perceived. It could not have been all art; it certainly was not all nature. As I have said, invitations are not given for these evenings. Madame receives on Tuesdays. Any one may go. But there are temptations for special persons which can be skilfully thrown out. You may say in the hearing of one whom you wish to attract, 'I expect M. Guizot will be with us on Tuesday, he is just come back to Paris,'—and the bait is pretty sure to take: and of course you can vary your fly with your fish. Yet, in spite of all experience and all chances, some houses are invariably dull. The people who would be dreary at home, go to be dreary there. The gay, bright spirits are always elsewhere; or perhaps come in, make their bows to the hostess, glance round

the room, and quietly vanish. I cannot make out why this is; but so it is.

But a delightful reception, which will never take place again—a more than charming hostess, whose virtues, which were the real source of her charms, have ere this 'been planted in our Lord's garden,'—awaited us to-night. In this one case I must be allowed to chronicle a name—that of Madame de Circourt—so well known, so fondly loved, and so deeply respected. Of her accomplished husband, still among us, I will for that reason say nothing, excepting that it was, to all appearances, the most happy and congenial marriage I have ever seen. Madame de Circourt was a Russian by birth, and possessed that gift for languages which is almost a national possession. This was the immediate means of her obtaining the strong regard and steady friendship of so many distinguished men and women of different countries. You will find her mentioned as a dear and valued friend in several memoirs of the great men of the time. I have heard an observant Englishman, well qualified to speak, say she was the cleverest woman he ever knew. And I have also heard one, who is a saint for goodness, speak of Madame de Circourt's piety and benevolence and tender kindness, as unequalled among any women she had ever known. I think it is Dekker who speaks of our Saviour as 'the first true gentleman that ever lived.' We may choose to be shocked at the freedom of expression used by the old dramatist: but is it not true? Is not Christianity the very core of the heart of all gracious courtesy? I am sure it was so with Madame de Circourt. There never was a house where the weak and dull and humble got such kind and unobtrusive attention, or felt so happy and at home. There never was a place that I heard of, where learning and genius and worth were more truly appreciated, and felt more sure of being understood. I have said that I will not speak of the living; but of course every one must perceive that this state could not have existed without the realization of the old epithet—

They were so one, it never could be said
Which of them ruled, and which of them obeyed.
There was between them but this one dispute,
'Twas which the other's will should execute.

In the prime of life, in the midst of her healthy relish for all social and intellectual pleasures, Madame de Circourt met with a terrible accident; her dress caught fire, she was fearfully burnt, lingered long and long on a sick-bed, and only arose from it with nerves and constitution shattered for life. Such a trial was enough, both mentally and physically, to cause that form of egotism which too often takes possession of chronic invalids, and which depresses not only their spirits, but the spirits of all who come near them. Madame de Circourt was none of these folks. Her sweet smile was perhaps a shade less bright; but it was quite as ready. She could not go about to serve those who needed her; but, unable to move without much assistance, she sat at her writing-table, thinking and working for others still. She could never again seek out the shy or the slow or the awkward; but, with a pretty beckoning movement of her hand, she could draw them near her, and make them happy with her gentle sensible words. She would no more be seen in gay brilliant society; but she had a very active sympathy with the young and the joyful who mingled in it; could plan their dresses for them; would take pains to obtain a supply of pleasant partners at a ball to which a young foreigner was going; and only two or three days before her unexpected death—for she had suffered patiently for so long that no one knew how near the end was—she took much pains to give a great pleasure to a young girl of whom she knew very little, but who, I trust, will never forget her.

I could not help interrupting the course of my diary to pay this tribute to Madame de Circourt's memory. At the end of February, 1863, many were startled with a sudden pang of grief. 'Have you heard? Madame de Circourt is dead!' 'Dead!—why, we were at her house not a week ago!' * And I had a note from her

only two days ago, about a poor woman,' &c. And then the cry was ' Oh, her poor husband ! who has lived but for her, who has watched over her so constantly !'

We were at her house not a fortnight before, and met the pretty gay people all dressed out for a Carnival ball at the Russian Embassy. The whole thing looked unreal. They came and showed themselves in their brilliant costumes, exchanged a witticism or a compliment, and then flitted away to exhibit themselves elsewhere, and left the room to a few quiet, middle-aged, or quieter people. A lady was introduced to me, whose name I recognized, although I could not at the moment remember where I had heard it before. She looked, as she was, a French Marquise. I forget how much her dress was in full costume, but she had much the air of a picture of the date of Louis XV. After she was gone I recollected where I had heard the name. She was the present lady of Les Rochers, whose ancient manor-house we had visited in Brittany the year before. Instead of a Parisian drawing-room, full of scented air, brilliant with light, through which the gay company of high-born revellers had just passed, the bluff of land overlooking the Bocage rose before me, the short sweet turf on which we lay, fragrant with delicate flowers; the grey-turretted manor-house, with here and there a faint yellow splash of colour on the lichen-tinted walls ; the pigeons wheeling in the air above the high dovecot; the country servants in their loosely-fitting, much-belaced liveries; and old de la Roux in his blouse, shambling around us, with his horn snuff-box and story of ancestral grandeur. I told M. de Circourt of our visit to Brittany, and in return he gave me the following curious anecdote:—An uncle of his was the General commanding the Western district of France in or about 1816. He had a Montmorenci for his aide-de-camp ; and on one of his tours of inspection the General and aide were guests at Les Rochers. They were to have left their hospitable quarters the next day; but in the morning the General said to M. de Montmorenci

that their host **had** pressed him to remain there another night, which he found, on inquiry, would be perfectly convenient for his plans, and therefore he had determined to accept the invitation. M. de Montmorenci, however, to the General's surprise, begged to be allowed to go and sleep at Vitre; and, on the General's inquiring what could be his reason for making such a request, he said that he had not been properly lodged; that the bedroom assigned to him was not one befitting a Montmorenci. 'How so?' said the General. 'Did they put you in a garret? Bachelors have often to put up with rough quarters when a house is full of visitors.' 'No, sir; I was on the ground-floor. My room was spacious and good enough; but it was that which had once belonged to Madame de Sevigne.'

M. de Montmorenci after he had said this, looked as though he had given a full explanation; but the General was rather more perplexed than before.

'Well! and why should you object to sleeping in the room which once belonged to Madame Sevigne? From all accounts she was a very pretty, charming woman: and certainly she wrote delightful letters.'

'Pardon me, sir, but it appears to me that you forget that Madame de Sevigne was a Jansenist, and that I am a Montmorenci, of the family of the first Baron of Christendom.'

The young man was afraid of the contamination of heresy that might be lingering in the air of the room. There are old rooms in certain houses shut up since the days of the great plague, which are not to be opened for the world. I hope that certain Fellows' rooms in Balliol may be hermetically sealed, when their present occupants leave them, lest a worse thing than the plague may infect the place.

February 21st.—All this evening I have been listening to fragmentary recollections of the Reign of Terror, told us by two ladies of high distinction. One of them said that her remembrances of that time would have **a peculiar** value, as she was then **only a child** of five or six years of age; and could not have attempted at that

age to join her fragments together by any theory, however wild and improbable. She could simply recall what struck on her senses as extraordinary and unprecedented. I think the first thing she named was her indignation at seeing her mother assume a servant's dress, as she then thought. Evidently it had been considered advisable that Madame de——should set aside all outward sign of superior rank or riches, and put on the clothes of what we should now call a 'working-woman .' The next thing my friend remembered was the temporary absence of her father ; who must have been arrested on suspicion, and, strange to say, in those days, released, but kept under strict surveillance. During his absence from home all the servants were dismissed, excepting the child's *bonne*. They lived in an apartment in the Place Vendome, and there was grass in the centre of the Place ; what we, in England, should call a ' green', I should imagine. When her father returned home two men came with him. They were ' citizens' told off to keep a watch upon M. de ——'s movements. The little girl looked upon them as rude, vulgar men (she was a true little aristocrat, in fact), and wondered and chafed at her mother's trembling civility to these two fellows. They sat in the drawing-room, lolled in the best satin-cushioned chairs, smoked their pipes, and the dainty mother never upbraided them! It was very inexplicable. Madame cooked the family dinner; and probably did not do it remarkably well, even though she was a Frenchwoman. One day, one of the two citizen-guards, rinding the idleness of his life in the drawing-room wearisome, or seized with a fit of good nature, offered to turn cook. I think it was imagined he had been a cook somewhere under the old regime. And after he had found for himself this congenial appointment, his fellow-guard offered to knit stockings for the family, and to sit in the *salle-a-manger*, through which every one going in or out of the salon must pass. Either he or the cook left whatever they were about to accompany Monsieur le Suspect whenever he made any signs of wanting to go

out. But altogether, and considering the office they held, they were not disobliging inmates, after their first jealousy of neglect was soothed. Another circumstance which Madame de———had observed was her mother's silence and depression of spirits at a particular hour. As sure as eleven o'clock drew near, the poor lady ceased talking to her little girl, and listened. Then by and by came a horrid heavy rumble in the distant streets; clearer and clearer it sounded, advancing slowly, then turning, and dying away into a sudden stop. This ominous noise was the more recognizable because of the general silence of Paris streets at that time. The carriage of the Prosecutor General, Fouquier-Tinville, was the only one that rolled about pretty much as it did in former years; any other was put down for fear lest it might be considered a mark of *aristocracy*. But the diurnal heavy sound at which the poor lady grew pale and crossed herself and prayed, was the Charrette with its daily tale of forty or fifty victims, going to the Place Louis XV. From the Place Vendome a sort of lane between two dead walls led down to the gardens of the Tuileries. These walls bounded the respective gardens of the convents of the Feuillants and the Jacobins, which gave their names to the different political parties that met in the deserted buildings. Indeed, the iron gate leading into the Tuileries Gardens opposite to the end of the Rue Castiglione is still called the Porte des Feuillants. Along this dreary walled-in lane Madame de———was taken by her *bonne* for a daily walk in the Palace Gardens. I asked her how it was that her parents *in* sending their child for her exercise into these Gardens did not dread the chance of her being shocked by the sights and sounds in the adjoining Place Louis XV. She replied that in those days there was a row of irregular, unshapely buildings at the farther end of the Gardens, completely shutting out the Place. Every one about the court who fancied that **the** erection of any edifice would add to his convenience, ordered it to be built at the end of the Gardens, **at the national expense; and thus** there was a very **sufficient**

screen between the Gardens and the Place. Besides, added her friend, Madame de St. A——, it was terrible to think how soon people are familiarized with horror ; terrible in one sense—merciful in another; for otherwise how could persons have kept their senses in those days ? She said that her husband, M. de St. A——, when a boy of ten or twelve, was only saved from being shut up with his parents and all the rest of his family in the Abbaye by the faithful courage of an old servant, who carried the little fellow off to his garret in the Faubourg St. Antoine. Of course this was done at the risk of the man's life, harbouring a suspected aristocrat being almost as criminal as being an aristocrat yourself. The little lad pined in the necessary confinement of his refuge ; the close air, the difference of food, the anxiety about his father and mother, all told upon his health ; and the man, his protector, seeing this, began to cast about him for some amusement and relaxation for the boy. So once a week he took the boy, well disguised, out for a walk. Where to, do you think ? To the Place Louis XV to see the guillotine at work on the forty or fifty victims ! The delicate little boy shrank and sickened at the sight ; yet tried to conquer all signs of his terror and loathing, partly out of regard to the man who had run so much risk in saving him, partly out of an instinctive consciousness that in those times of excitement, and among that impulsive race, his very friend and protector might have a sudden irritation against him, if he saw the boy's repugnance to the fearful exhibition, and might there and then denounce him as a little enemy to the public safety. And again, and also to mark the apathy as to life, and the wild excitement which people took in witnessing the deadly terror and sufferings of others, Madame de St. A——went on to say that her husband's family, to the number of six, were imprisoned in the Abbaye, and made part of that strange sad company who lived there, and resigned themselves to their fate by keeping up that mockery of **the** society they **had** enjoyed in happier days: visiting **each other**, carrying on amusements and etiquette with

dignity and composure; and when the day's list of victims was read out by the gaoler, bidding farewell to those who still bided their time with quiet dignity and composure. **One** morning the gaoler's daughter, a bonny, good-tempered girl of fourteen or fifteen, who was a favourite with all that sad company, came instead of her father to read out the list of those for whom at that very minute the tumbril was waiting outside the gate. Every one of the six members of the St. A——family were named. It was well; no one would remain in bitter solitude awaiting their day. One after another rose up, and bade the remaining company their solemn, quiet farewell, and followed the girl out of the door into the corridor, through another door, and then she stopped; she had not the key of the next. She turned round and laughed at those who were following her with the glee of one who had performed a capital practical joke. * Have not you all been well taken in? Was it not a good trick? Look! it is only a blank sheet of paper. The list has not come yet. You may all go back again!' And their names, by some good fortune, were never placed on the lists; and the death of Robespierre set them free. The conversation then turned upon the marvel it was now to think upon the immunity which Robespierre seemed to enjoy from all chances of assassination. There was no appearance of precaution in either his dress or his movements. His hours of going out and coming in were punctiliously regular; his methodical habits known to any one who cared to inquire. At a certain time of day he might be seen by crowds issuing forth from his house in the Rue St. Honore, dressed with the utmost nicety, neither hurried in gait, nor casting any suspicious glances around him. His secretary, so said my friends, was alive not more than twenty years ago; living in an apartment in the Quartier Latin, which he seldom left for any purpose. He had learnt to avoid all public notice at the time of his master's death; **and long** after most of those were dead who **might have recognized** him, the old **man** lived on in the seclusion of

his rooms ; maintaining to the few who cared to visit him his belief that Robespierre was a conscientious if a mistaken man. Then my friend Madame de—— took up the tale of her childish remembrances, and told us that the next thing she remembered clearly was her terror when, one day, being at the window, she saw a wild mob come dancing and raging, shouting, laughing, and yelling into the Place Vendome, with red nightcaps on their heads, their shirt-sleeves stripped up above the elbows, their hands and arms discoloured and red. Her mother, shuddering, drew the child away before she saw more ; and the two cowered together in the farther corner of the room till the infernal din died away in the distance. The following summer, or so she thought it was—it was hot, bright weather at any rate—some order was given, or terrific hint whispered—she knew not what, but her parents and all the inhabitants of the houses in the Place had their tables spread in the open air, and took their meals *al fresco*, joined at pleasure by any of the Carmagnoles who chanced to be passing by, dressed much as those whom I have just mentioned as having so terrified the little girl and her mother. This enforced hospitality was considered a mark of good citizenship ; and woe be to those who shrank from such companionship at their board !

March 1st.—To-night, at home, the conversation turned upon English and French marriages. As several Frenchmen of note who had married English wives were present (and one especially, whose mother also was English, and who can use either tongue with equal eloquence), the discussion was based on tolerably correct knowledge. Most of those present objected strongly to the English way of bringing up the daughters of wealthy houses in all the luxurious habits of their fathers' homes. Their riding-horses, their maids, their affluence of amusement; when, if the question of marriage arose—say to a young man of equal birth and education, but who had his way to make in the world—the father of the young lady could rarely pay any money down. It was even doubtful if he could make

her an annual allowance; hardly ever one commensurate with the style in which she had been accustomed to live. In all probability a younger child's portion would be hers when her father died; when either the two lovers had given up all thoughts of uniting their fates, or when perhaps they no longer needed it, having had force of character enough to face poverty together, and had won their way upwards to competence. The tardy five or ten thousand pounds would have been invaluable once, that comes too late to many a one; so they said. They added that the luxurious habits of English girls, and the want of due provision for them on the part of their fathers, made both children and parents anxious and worldly in the matter of wedlock. The girls knew that as soon as their fathers died they must quit their splendid houses, and give up much of those habits and ways which had become necessary to them; and their parents knew this likewise; and hence the unwomanly search for rich husbands on the part of the mothers and daughters, which they maintained the existence of in England. Now, said our French friends, look at a household in our country; in every rank it is the custom to begin to put by a marriage portion for a girl as soon as she is born. A father would think he was neglecting a duty if he failed to do this, just as much as if he starved the little creature. Our girls are brought up simply; luxury and extravagance with us belong to the married women. When his daughter is eighteen or twenty, a good father begins to look about him, and inquire the characters of the different young men of his acquaintance. He observes them, or his wife does so still more efficiently; and when they have settled that such a youth will suit their daughter, they name the portion they can give their child to the young man's father or to some common friend. In reply, they are possibly informed that Monsieur Alphonse's education has cost so much; that he is now an avocat in a fair way to earn a considerable income, but at present unable to marry unless the young lady can contribute her share, not merely her pin-money, but a bona-fide share towards

the joint expenses of housekeeping. Or he is a son of a man of property—property somewhat involved at present, but could it be released from embarrassment by the payment of an immediate sum of money, his father would settle a certain present income upon **the** young people, and so on. My friends said that there was no doubt whatever that if, after these preliminary matters of business were arranged, either the young man or the girl did not entirely like each other on more intimate acquaintance, the proposed marriage would fall through in the majority of French families, and no undue influence would be employed to compel either party into what they disliked. But in general the girl has never been allowed to be on intimate terms with any one, till her parents' choice steps forward and is allowed by them to court her notice. And as for the young fellow, it has been easy for him to see enough of the young lady to know whether he can fancy her or not, before it comes to the point when it is necessary that he should take any individually active steps in the affair,

III

Paris, March 2nd, 1863.

STAYING here in a French family, I get glimpses of life for which I am not prepared by any previous reading of French romances, or even by former visits to Paris, when I remained in an hotel frequented by English, and close to the street which seems to belong almost exclusively to them. The prevalent English idea of French society is that it is very brilliant, thoughtless, and dissipated; that family life and domestic affections are almost unknown, and that the sense of religion is confined to mere formalities. Now I will give you two glimpses which I have had: one into the more serious side of Protestant, the other into the under-current of Roman Catholic life. The friend with whom I am staying belongs to a 'Dizaine', that is to say, she is one of ten Protestant ladies, who group themselves **into** this number in order to meet together at regular

intervals of time, and bring before each other's consideration any cases of distress they may have met with. There are numbers of these 'Dizaines' in Paris; and now as to what I saw of the working' of this plan. One of their principles is to give as little money as possible in the shape of 'raw material', but to husband their resources so as to provide employment by small outlays of capital in such cases as they find on inquiry to prove deserving. Thus women of very moderate incomes find it perfectly agreeable to belong to the same 'Dizaine' as the richest lady in the Faubourg St. Germain. But what all are expected to render is personal service of some kind; and in these services people of various degrees of health and strength can join: the invalid who cannot walk far, or even she who is principally confined to the sofa, can think and plan and write letters; the strong can walk, and use bodily exertion. They try to raise the condition of one or two families at a time—to raise their condition into self-supporting independence. For instance, the *Dizaine' I am acquainted with had brought before their notice the case of a sick shoemaker, and found him, upon inquiry, living in a room on the fifth floor of one of those high, dark, unclean houses which lie behind the eastern end of the Rue Jacob. Up the noisome, filthy staircase—badly lighted and frequented by most disreputable people—to the close, squalid room in which the man lay bed-ridden, did the visitors from the 'Dizaine' toil. He was irritable and savage. I think the English poor are generally depressed and sullen under starvation and neglect; but the French are too apt to become fierce even to those who would fain help them; or it might be illness in the case of this man. His wife was a poor patient creature, whose spirit and intelligence seemed pressed out of her by extreme sorrow, and who had neither strength of mind nor body to enable her to make more of an effort than to let on© of the 'Dizaine' know of the case. There were children, too, scrofulous from bad air and poor living. The medical men say, that the diseases arising from this

insidious taint are much more common **in Paris than in London.** Well, this case was grave matter of consideration for the 'Dizaine'; and the end of the deliberation was this:—One lady undertook to go and seek out a lodging in the same quarter as that in which the shoemaker lived at present, but with more air, more light, and a cleaner, sweeter approach. It was a bad neighbourhood; but it was that in which the family had taken root, and it would have occasioned too great a wrench from all their previous habits and few precious affections, to pull them up by force, and transplant them to an entirely different soil. Another lady undertook to seek out among her acquaintance for a subscriber to a certain sea-bathing charity at Dieppe, who could give an order to the poor little boy who was the worst victim to scrofula. An invalid said that while awaiting this order she would see that some old clothes of her own prosperous child should be altered and arranged so that the little cripple should go to Dieppe decently provided. Some one knew a leather merchant, and spoke of getting a small stock of leather at wholesale prices; while all these ladies declared they would give some employment to the shoemaker himself; and I *know* that they—great ladies as one or two of them were—toiled up the noisome staircase, **and** put their delicate little feet up on to the bed where he lay, in order to give him the cheerful comfort of employment again. I suppose this was disturbing the regular course of labour; but I do not fancy that cases of this kind are so common as to greatly affect the more prosperous tradespeople. The last I heard of this shoemaker was, that he was in a (comparatively) healthy lodging; his wife more cheerful, he himself slightly sarcastic instead of positively fierce, and (still bed-ridden) managing to earn a tolerable livelihood by making shoes to be sold ready-made in the American market; a piece of permanent employment procured for him through the instrumentality of the 'Dizaine'. Of course these **ladies, being human, have their foibles and faults.** Their meetings are apt to become gossipy, **and** they

require the firm handling of some superior woman to keep them to the subject and business in hand. Occasional bickerings as to the best way of managing a case, or as to the case most deserving of immediate assistance, will occur; and may be blamed or ridiculed by those who choose rather to see blemishes in execution than to feel righteousness of design. The worst that can be said is, that 'Dizaines' (like all ladies' committees I ever knew) are the better for having one or two men among them. And some of them at least are most happy and fortunate in being able to refer for counsel and advice to M. Jules Simon, whose deep study of the condition of the workwoman (Pouvriere) in France, and the best remedies to be applied to her besetting evils—whose general, wise, and loving knowledge of the life of the labouring classes, empower him to judge wisely on the various cases submitted to him.

Now as to my glimpse into Roman Catholic wisdom and goodness in Paris. Not long ago—it is probably still going on—there was a regular service held in the crypt under St. Sulpice for very poor workmen, immediately after the grand (high) mass. It was almost what we should call a 'ragged church.' They listened to no regular sermon on abstract virtues,* but among them stood the priest, with his crucifix, speaking to them in their own homely daily language—speaking of brotherly love, of self-sacrifice, like that of which he held the symbol in his hands—of the temptations to which they were exposed in their various trades and daily lives, using even the technical words, so that every man felt as if his own individual soul was being entreated. And by and by there was a quiet for those still poorer, still more helpless and desolate than themselves; many of them of course could not give even the sous, or the five-centime piece. But after that the priest went round, speaking low and softly to each individual, and asking each what effort, what sacrifice he could make' in the name of the Lord.' One said he could sit up with a sick neighbour who needed watching in the night; another offered a day's wages

for the keep of the family of the incapacitated man; the priest suggested to a third that he and his wife might take one of the noisy little children to play among their own children for the day; another offered to carry out the weekly burden of a poor widow. One could not hear all; it was better that such words should be spoken low; that the left hand should not know what the right hand did. But the priests seemed always ready with little suggestions which nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the lives of these poor men could have enabled them to give.

We are talking of leaving Paris, and going leisurely on to Rome. M. de Montalembert was here last night, and wrote me down a little detour which he said we could easily make, rejoining the railroad at Dijon.

March 5th. Avignon.—After all we were not able to follow out M. de Montalembert's instructions, but I shall keep his paper (written in English), as the places he desired us to visit sound full of interest, and would make a very pleasant week's excursion from Paris at some future time.

'Provide yourself with Ed. Joanne's *Guide du Voyageur*. *Est-et-Mur*.

'By the Lyons railway to Auxerre (a beautiful city with splendid churches).

'At Auxerre take the diligence (very bad) to Avallon, a very pretty place with fine churches. At Avallon hire a vehicle of some sort to Vezelay, only three leagues off; the most splendid Romance church in Europe; and to Chastellux, a fine old castle belonging to the family of that name, from the Crusade of 1147. Returning to Avallon, there is a very bad coach to Semur, another very pretty place, with a delightful church; seven or eight leagues off. From Semur by omnibus to Montbard, or Les Launes, which are both railroad stations. Stop at Dijon, a most interesting city, and be sure you see the Museum.'

When M. de Montalembert wrote out his little plan, I said something about the name 'Avallon,' 'the Isle of Avallon' being in France, instead of Bretagne; but

he reminded me of the fact that the fragments of the Arthurian romances were to be found in one shape or another all over the west of Europe, and claimed Avallon as *the* place

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.

He said that there is also a Morvan, a Forêt de Morvan, in the same district. Speaking of the Crusades (a propos of the family of de Chastellux, alluded to in the sketch of a possible journey which he had drawn out for us), the company present fell to talking about the rapid disappearance of old French families within the last twenty or thirty years; during which time the value for 'long pedigrees' has greatly increased after the fifty years of comparative indifference in which they were held. The five 'Salles des Croisades', at Versailles, were appropriated to the commemoration of the events from which they take their names, by Louis Philippe, in 1837; previously to which the right of the hundred and ninety-three families that claim to be directly descended from the Crusaders who went on the three first Crusades (from A. D. 1106 to 1191) was thoroughly examined into, and scrutinized by heralds and savants and lawyers acquainted with the difficulty of establishing descent, before the proud hundred and ninety-three could have their arms emblazoned in the first Salle des Croisades. Among them rank de Chastellux, de Biron, de Lamballe, de Guérin (any ancestor of Eugénie de Gué>in, I wonder?), de la Gueche, de Rohan, de La Rochefoucauld, de Montalembert, &c. And now in 1864 not two-thirds of these families exist in the direct male line! Yet such has become the value affixed to these old historical titles and names, that they are claimed by collateral relations, by descendants in the female line, nay, even by the purchasers of the lands from which the old Crusaders derived their appellations! **and** it has even become necessary to have an authorized court

to judge of the rights of those who assume new titles and designations. The Montmorencis, indeed, to this day hold a kind of 'parliament' of their own, and pluck off the plumage of any jay who dares to assume their name and armorial bearings. There is apparently no power of becoming a 'Norfolk Howard' at will in France. They spoke as if our English nobility was a very modern race in comparison with the French; but assigned the palm of antiquity to the great old Belgian families, even in preference to the Austrians, so vain of their many quarterings.

We could not manage to go by Avallon and Dijon, and so we came straight on here, and are spending a few days in this charming inn; the mistral howling and whistling without, till we get the idea that the great leafless acacia close to the windows of our salon has been convulsed into its present twisted form by the agony it must have suffered in its youth from the cruel sharpness of this wind. But inside, we are in a lofty salon, looking into the picturesque inn yard, sheltered by a folding screen from the knife-like draught of the door; a fire heaped up with blazing logs, resting on brass andirons; skins of wild beasts making the floor soft and warm for our feet; old military plans, and bird's-eye views of Avignon as it was two hundred years ago, hanging upon the walls, which are covered with an Indian paper; *Eugenie de Guerin* to read; and we do not care for the mistral, and are well content to be in our present quarters for a few days.

March 8th.—It was all very well to huddle ourselves up in in-doors comfort for a day or two; but, after that, we longed to go out in spite of the terrible mistral. We certainly found Avignon *cum vento fastidioso*; and began to wish that we had delayed our progress by stopping at Avallon, if that indeed was the place where never wind blows loudly. So on the day but one after our arrival here, we huddled and wrapped ourselves up tightly and well, and sallied out of the courtyard. We were taken and seized in a moment by the tyrant; all we could do was to shut our eyes, and keep our ground,

and wonder where our petticoats were. Going across the bridge was impossible ; even the passers-by warned us against the attempt ; but after we had caught our breath again, we turned and went slowly up the narrow streets, choosing those that offered us the most shelter, until we had reached the wide space in front of the Palace of the Popes. With slow perseverance we made our way from point to point, and at length came to a corner in the massive walls where we could rest and look about us. Up above our heads rose the enormous walls—the far-extending shadow of Rome ; for never did the French build such a mighty structure ; it seemed like a growth of the solid rock itself. The prettiness of the garden round the base of the Palace looked to us mean and out of place, with its tidy flower-beds and low shrubs. All entrance to the Palace was forbidden ; it is now a prison. We went into the cathedral, and the calm atmosphere was so soothing and delightful, that we were inclined to stop there till the mistral had ceased blowing ; but as that might not be for a month or six weeks, on second thoughts we believed it would be better to return to our hotel. We stood for a few minutes on the cathedral steps, looking at the magnificent view before us, and only regretting the clouds of fine dust which from time to time were whirled over the landscape. Close to us rose the colossal walls of the Palace ; before us, in the centre of the open space, there was a bronze statue of a man dressed in Eastern robes ; and we asked whom it represented—what saint ? what martyr ? It was that of the Persian Jean Althen, the Persian who first introduced the culture of madder into the South of France. His father had held high office under Thomas Koulikhan, but was involved in the fall of his master, and his son fled for protection to the French Consul at Smyrna. It was forbidden under penalty of death to carry the seed of the madder plant out of the district ; but Althen managed to bring some of it to Marseilles, and thus originated the cultivation of madder in le Comtat ; the profits of which to the inhabitants may be imagined from the fact that the

revenue from this source in one department alone (Vaucluse) amounts annually to more than fifteen millions of francs. Althen and his daughter died in poverty ; but of late years the statue which we saw in the Place Rocher des Doms, has been erected to the Persian unbeliever, right opposite to the cathedral, and the Palace of the Popes—where once John XXII (that most infamous believer) lived. I had often seen madder in England in the shape of a dirty brown powder—the roots ground down; it has a sweetish taste, and the workmen in print-works will not unfrequently take a little in their hands as they pass the large bales, and put it into their mouths. I had heard a young English philanthropist say that he had often entertained thoughts of buying a tract of land in Eastern Italy, and introducing the cultivation of madder there, as a means of raising the condition of the people ; but I had never heard of Jean Althen before; and tempestuous as it was, I made my way up to the statue, so that I could look up at the calm, sad face of the poor Persian. I suppose the newly discovered aniline dyes may uproot the commerce he established, at some future period; but he did a good work in his day, of which no man knew the value while he lived. Our kind landlady at the Hotel de l'Europe was at the hall-door to greet us on our return, and warned us with some anxiety against going out in the mistral; we were not acclimatized, she said ; the English families resident in Avignon did not suffer because they had been there so long. Of course we asked questions as to these English families, and heard that some had resided in the city for two or three generations; all engaged in the commerce de la garance; so they too had cause to bless the memory of Jean Althen.

March 12th.—I suppose our landlady thought she would keep us prudent and patient in-doors, until we receive the telegram from Marseilles announcing that it is safe for the boats to Civita Vecchia to start—hitherto they have been delayed by this horrid mistral—for she has brought us in a good number of books—most of them

topographical, but one or two relating to the legends or history of the district. We are very content to be in the house to-day ; the wind is blowing worse than ever ; Irene has a bad pain in her side, which we suppose must be a local complaint; for, after trying to cure it by mustard plaisters, she sent our maid out at last to get a blister of a particular size, but without naming what part required the application ; and the druggist immediately said, ' Ah, for the side ' it will last while the mistral lasts ; or till she leaves Avignon.' We are learning now to manage wood-fires; the man who waits upon us, and is chambermaid as well as footman, gave us a little lesson yesterday. Always rake the living ashes to the front, and lay on the fresh wood behind; those are his directions, and hitherto they have answered well. This old man is a Pole, and came, an exile, to be a servant in the hotel about thirty years ago. He likes talking to us ; but his language is very difficult to understand, though we can quite make out the soft, satiny patois of the South of France, the Provençal dialect, in which our questions are answered in the streets. To-night he has brought in our lamp and cleared away our ' the simple'. Mary is sitting by the fire, tempted sorely by the wood logs ; for every stroke of the sharp, thin poker brings out springing fountains of lovely sparkles. I, having a frugal mind, exclaim at her; for we pay heavily for our basketful of wood; but she, in a pleading, coaxing way, calls my attention to the brilliant effect of her work, and I cannot help watching the bright little lives which one by one vanish, till at length a poor solitary spark runs about vainly to find its companions, and then dies out itself. It reminds me of a story I heard long ago in Ramsay, in the Isle of Man ;—and here I think of it at Avignon. We were questioning a fisherman's wife at Ramsay about the Manthe Doog of Peel Castle, in which she had a firm belief; and from this talk we passed on to fairies. ' Are there any in the island now ?' I asked, gravely, of course, for it was a grave and serious subject with her. ' None now ; none now,' she replied. ' My

brother saw the last that ever was in the island. He was making a short cut in the hills above Kirk Maughold, and came down on a green hollow, such as there are on the hill-tops, just green all round, and the blue sky above, ana as still as still can be, but for the larks. He heard the larks singing up above; but this time he heard a little piping cry out of the ground; so he looked about him everywhere, and followed the sound of the cry, and at length he came to a dip in the grass, and there lay a fairy, ever so weak and small, crying sadly. ' Oh ! ' she said, when she saw him, ' you are none of my own people ; I thought perhaps they had come back for me: but they've left me here alone, and all gono away, and I am faint and weak, and could not go with them,' and she began to cry again. So he meant it well, and he thought he'd carry her home to be a play-thing to his children; it would have been better than lying there playing alone in the damp grass; so he tried to catch her, but somehow—he had big hands, had my brother, and an awkward horny way of holding things ; and fairies is as tickle to handle as butterflies ; and when he had caught her, and she lay very still, he thought he might open his hand after a time, and tell her he was doing it all for her own good ; but she was just crushed to death, poor thing ! So, as he said, there was no use bringing her home in that state; and he threw her away: and that was the end of the last fairy I ever heard of in the island' The last sparks in the wooden logs at Avignon were my last fairies.

Among our hostess's books was the authorized report of the trial for the murder of Madame la Marquise de Gange. It is so interesting, and has so strong a local flavour, that we are determind, blow high, blow low, to go over to Ville-Neuve to-morrow, and see her portrait by Mignard m the figlise de l'Hopital at Ville-Neuve. She lived in the seventeenth century, and was the daughter of a certain Sieur de Roseau, a gentleman of Avignon, who had married an heiress, the daughter of Joanis Sieur de Nooheres. Her father died when she **was** very young; and she and her mother went to live

with the *Sieur de Nocheres*, probably in one of the large gloomy houses in the narrow old streets we have passed through to-day, with no windows on the lower floor, only strongly-barred gratings; they are almost like fortified dwellings—which, indeed, the state of affairs at the time they were built required them to be. The little girl promised to be a great beauty, and had besides a dowry of 500,000 livres; and it was no great wonder that all the well-born young men of Provence (and some who were not young, too) came a-wooing to the granddaughter of the rich old burgher of Avignon. But where force was so often employed as a method of courtship, and at a time when obstacles to success (in the way of fathers or mothers or obstinate relations) were so easily got rid of by determined suitors, it was thought better to arrange an early marriage for the little girl, who was called *Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc*, after one of the estates of her grandfather; and accordingly, she was espoused in 1649, at the age of thirteen, by the *Marquis de Castellane*, grandson of the *Duc de Villars*. Her husband is described as being as charming as his bride. He was handsome and sweet-tempered, as well as being a scion of a great French house. He took his lovely little bride to Paris, where she was the admired of all beholders at the court of the young King Louis XIV. His boyish majesty was struck with her rare beauty, and conferred on her the honour of dancing with her in a court ballet; and the docile courtiers followed his lead, and christened her '*La belle Provençale*', by which name she was thereafter better known than by her legitimate title of *Marquise de Castellane*.

When first she came to town
They ca'd her *Jess MacFarlane*,
But now she's come and gone,
They ca' her *The Wandering Darling*.

Poor young *Belle Provençale*! admired by the King of France and all his men; living a bright, happy life of innocent pleasure in Paris; with a charming husband, by whom she was passionately beloved, and whose affec-

tion she fondly esteemed; rich, lovely, and of high rank—how little she could have anticipated her rapid descent from the pinnacle of good fortune ! Her first deep grief was the loss of her husband. He was drowned off the coast of Sicily; and she came back from the gay life of Paris to mourn him deeply in the austere home of her grandfather, in the city of Avignon. The only change she sought for in these years of mourning was to go into retreat in the convent at Ville-Neuve—the village we saw on the opposite side of the Rhone the other day when we stood on the cathedral steps. The account of her sorrow and regret at the death of her young husband is evidently so truthful and sincere that one almost wonders at her marrying again ; but I suppose in those days a bourgeois grandfather and a widowed mother were considered but poor protectors for a beautiful young woman of great wealth. At any rate, I read of her having at length selected from among many suitors the *Sieur de Lanide*, *Marquis de Gange*, *Baron du Languedoc*, *Gouverneur de St. Andre*, to be her second husband. She was married to him in 1658, when he was twenty, and she twenty-two years of age. He was as beautiful as she was, but of a violent and ferocious character. For the first few months after their marriage he appeared to be devoted to her, but, by and by, he grew both weary of her society and suspiciously jealous of all her former friends. It was rather a lonely life now for the poor lady, shut up in her husband's *Chateau de Gange*, while he went about enjoying himself in provincial society, and occasionally visiting Paris, where once she had been so sought after and cherished. Still there is no account of her ever having repined at this seclusion ; of course, the official reports of events begin at a much later period. Things went on in this way between the husband and wife for some time without any change. Then two of his brothers, the *Abbe* and the *Chevalier de Gange*, came to live at the *Chateau de Gange*; and a short time afterwards her old grandfather the *Sieur de Nocheres* died, leaving *Madame de Gange* his heiress. The

Marquis, her husband, was much occupied in looking after the various estates to which his wife had succeeded under her grandfather's will. Gange is seven leagues from Montpellier, and nineteen from Avignon, in a lonely wild district; the chateau the principal house in a small village, the inhabitants of which were dependants of the Marquis. But for some little time after the *Sieur de Nocheres'* death it was necessary for his heiress to be in Avignon; and whether it was, as the rumour went at the time, that she had reason to suspect that a cream, which her husband pressed her much to eat one day at her mother's table, was poisoned with arsenic, or whether she remembered the horoscope drawn for her in Paris which predicted that she should die a violent death, or whether, as is most likely, her seven or eight years' knowledge of her husband's character made her fearful and suspicious, it is certain that before leaving Avignon at this time, she made a singular will, which was attested with all possible legal forms, to tins effect. Her mother was to be her sole heir, with power to leave all the property after her death to either of the children which *Madame de Gange* had had by her second husband; the boy was six, the girl five years old at this time, and they were living with their grandmother at Avignon. Although this will was executed in secret, she made a solemn declaration before the magistrates of Avignon to the effect that, though she might be compelled to make a subsequent will, this and this alone was valid. Poor lady! she had but too much reason to dread the time when she would be obliged to return to the lonely chateau far away from her friends, in the power of a cruel and negligent husband, who hungered after the uncontrolled and unincumbered possession of her fortune, and who might leave her again, as he had done before, exposed to the profligate and insolent solicitations of the *Abbe*, the cleverest of the three brothers, who had already traded on her misery at her husband's neglect and ill-concealed dislike of her, by saying that if his sister-in-law would accede to his wishes, he would bring her back her husband's affection. The *Chevalier* seems

to have been a brutal fool, under the influence of his clever brother, the Abbe. In the interval between her grandfather's death and her return to the Chateau de Gange, these three brothers veiled their designs under an appearance of the greatest complaisance to Madame de Gange. But all their seeming attention and consideration, all her husband's words and acts of lover-like devotion, ended in this question, How soon would she go back to the Chateau de Gange? Avignon was unhealthy in hot weather, while the autumn, the vintage season, was exquisite at the chateau. At length, wearied out with their urgency, and dreading the consequences of too persistent a refusal, she left Avignon for La Gange. But first she gave the sum of twenty pistoles to different convents, to say masses for her soul, in case of her dying suddenly without extreme unction. It gives one an awful idea of the state of society in those days (reign of Charles II in England), to think of this helpless young woman, possessed by a too well-founded dread, yet not knowing of any power to which she could appeal for protection, and obliged to leave the poor safety of a city to go to a lonely house where those who wished her evil would be able to work their will. At the Chateau de Gange she found the two brothers-in-law, who had returned from Avignon a few days previously, and her mother-in-law, a good kind woman, to whose presence one fancies the young Marquise must have clung. But the Dowager Marquise habitually lived at Montpellier, and she returned there soon after our Marquise's arrival. While the old lady had remained in the chateau all had gone on well; but on her departure the Marquis set off back to Avignon, leaving instructions to his brothers to coax his wife into making another will. They performed their work skilfully; they told her there could be no perfect reconciliation with her husband until she had shown full confidence in him by bequeathing him all her property in case of her death. For the sake of peace, and remembering her secret testament at Avignon, she agreed to their wishes, and a will, leaving all her property unconditionally to

her husband, was made at the Chateau de **Gange**. It was short-sighted of the poor lady, if she valued her life. They at any rate did not value it; and now, the sooner they got rid of her the better. So much is stated in the report of the trial, on authority which seems to have satisfied the judges at the time. For the further events, there is the direct testimony of the Marquise on her death-bed, and of other witnesses; and there are curious glimpses of the manners of the period, as well as of the state of society. The *dramatis personae* were disposed of as follows on the 17th of May, 1667: The mother of these three wicked sons—the Marquis, the Abbe, and the Chevalier de Gange—was at her house in Montpellier; the Marquis himself was tarrying in the neighbourhood of Avignon, ostensibly employed in looking after the estates of his wife; she was at the chateau in the lonely village, keeping up the farce of friendly politeness with her brothers-in-law, whom she dreaded inexpressibly. There was a chaplain in the house, who was their tool, as she well knew; and a few neighbours from the village came to see her from time to time, the wives of the Intendant and of the Huguenot minister; worthy and kind-hearted women, as will be proved, though not of the class of society to which she had been accustomed in the happy days in Paris. On this 17th of May, she required some medicine, and sent for a draught to the village doctor. When it came, it was so black and nasty that she took some physic which she had ready in her chamber instead, and threw the draught away. A pig which licked up the draught died that same day. She was not well, and stopped in bed for the whole morning; but in the afternoon, finding it rather dull, she sent for two or three of the good women of the neighbourhood to come and keep her company, and ordered a collation to be served to her friends in her bedroom. Her indisposition, whatever it was, does not seem to have affected her appetite, for she deposed that she ate a great deal, and to that fact she attributes her safety from one way of attacking her life.

The Abbe and the Chevalier, hearing of their eister-in-

law's party, **and** the entertainment that was going on, came into the chamber uninvited, and made themselves very agreeable. By and by the neighbours went away ; it was still early in the afternoon ; and the Abbe and Chevalier accompanied the good ladies to the great **hall**, and Madame was left alone in bed. Presently back came the Abbe, with a terrible face ; he brought **a** pistol, a sword, and a cup of poison—a greater choice of deaths than that offered to Fair Rosamond ; but, all the same, the Marquise must die by either fire, steel, or poison. With quick presence of mind she chose to drink the latter ; and after doing so, she turned round as in writhing agony, and spat out the contents of her mouth into the pillow. Her skin was blackened by the burning drops that fell upon it, and her mouth was horribly burnt ; and no wonder, for the deposition says that the drink was made of arsenic and corrosive sublimate, mixed up in aqua-fortis. There was evidently no idea of doing things by halves in those days. She left the thick part of the liquid in the bottom of the glass ; but the Chevalier, who by this time had come up to see if he could render himself useful in the business, stirred up the sediment and made her drink it. Then she begged hard to have a priest to shrive her soul ; and, as they felt pretty secure that no help could now avail her, they went away, and sent the household chaplain, le Pretre Perrette, who was also *cure** of the village, to give her what spiritual aid he could. He had lived in the family of de Gange for five-and-twenty years, and was ready to connive at any wickedness which they might plan. Now while they went to find this worthy chaplain, the poor lady was left alone in her bedchamber, and looked about for means of escape. There was none, except jumping from the window into the great enclosed courtyard, twenty feet below, and all paved with flags : but that risk was better than remaining where she was ; so she took courage, and was on the **point of** throwing herself out, when Perrette, the **chaplain**, came **in** with the viaticum. He ran to the **window**, **and** tried to pluck her back ; but the petticoat

which he caught hold of gave way, and only a fragment of it remained in his hand. She was down below, pushing her long black hair down her throat, and thus, with wonderful presence of mind, trying to make herself sick ; in which attempt she succeeded. Then she went round the courtyard, trying all the doors with trembling haste: but they were all locked; and that wicked chaplain in the chateau above, hastening to find the relentless brothers-in-law and to tell them of her escape. She ran round and round the enclosure, beating and striving at the doors ; and at length a groom came out of the stables, which were at one end of the yard, and she implored him to let her out by the stable-door into the street or road; saying she had swallowed some poison by mistake, and must find an antidote without loss of time. When she was once out of the accursed premises, she went to the house of the *Sieur des Prats*, who lived in the village. He was absent; but many of the good women of the place were assembled there on a visit to his wife. We may judge of the rank of the company by the fact that, in the depositions, all the married women are called 'Mademoiselle', e.g. * *Mademoiselle Brunei*, wife of the Huguenot minister/ &c; and in the *Traite sur la maniere d'Ecrire des Lettres*, par Grimarest, 1667, the rules for the addresses to letters are these : If a letter is to a lady of quality, she is to be called *Madame* on the direction, and the letter is to be tied up with silk, and sealed with three seals ; if the correspondent is only 'la femme d'un gentilhomme', her titles on the superscription must be 'Mademoiselle Mademoiselle', so and so ; but if she is merely the wife of a bourgeois, simple 'Mademoiselle' is all that is to be accorded to her.

Now all the ladies assembled at the *Sieur des Prats* were *Mademoiselles*; but they were brave women, as we shall see. In amongst this peaceful company, enjoying an afternoon's gossip, burst the lady of the *Chateau de Gange* ; her dress (that which she had worn in bed) torn and disordered; her hair hanging about her ; her face in all probability livid with mortal terror

and the effects of the fierce poison. She had hardly had time to give any explanation of her appearance, when the Chevalier de Gange rushed into the room in search of his half-killed victim; the Abbé remained below, guarding the door of the house. The Chevalier walked up and down the room, saying that Madame was mad; that she must return with him, and uttering angry menaces. While his back was turned, Mademoiselle Brunei, wife of the Huguenot minister of the village, gave Madame de Gange small pieces of orvietan out of a box which she carried in her pocket. Orvietan, be it remembered, was considered a sovereign remedy against all kinds of poisons; and the fact of the minister's wife carrying this antidote about in her pocket, wherever she went, tells a good deal of the insecurity of life at that period. Madame de Gange managed to swallow a number of pieces of orvietan, unperceived by the Chevalier; but when one of the ladies, pitying her burning thirst, went and brought her a glass of water, he perceived the kindness, and broke out afresh, dashing the glass from Madame's mouth, and bidding all present to leave the room instantly, as he did not like witnesses to his sister-in-law's madness. He drove them out, indeed, but they only went as far as the next room, where they huddled together in affright, wondering what they could do for the poor lady. She, meanwhile, begged for mercy in the most touching manner; she promised that she would forgive all if he would but spare her life: but at these words he ran at her with his sword; holding it short, so that it could serve him as a dagger and give the surer stabs. She ran to the door, and clung to it, crying out afresh for pity, for mercy, for help. He stabbed her five times before his weapon broke in her shoulder. Then the ladies burst in to the assistance of Madame, who was lying on the floor bathed in blood. Some ran to her help, others called through the window to the passers-by to fetch the surgeon quickly. Hearing their cry through the window, the Abbé came up, and finding his sister-in-law not yet dead, he began to hit

her with the butt-end of his pistol, till brave Mademoiselle Brunei caught hold of his arm, and hung all her weight upon it. He struck her over and over again to make her let go, but she would not; and all the women flew upon him 'like lionesses', and dragged him by main force out of the house, and turned him into the village-street. One of the ladies, who was skilled in surgery, returned to the room where Madame de Gange lay, and at her desire she put her knee against the wounded shoulder of Madame, and pulled out the broken point of the sword by main force. Then she staunched the blood, and bound up the wounds. The Chevalier had been in too blind a passion, apparently, to think of stabbing any vital part; and in spite of poison, and the heavy fall on the paved courtyard, and the five stabs, there seemed yet a chance for Madame de Gange's life. That long and terrible May afternoon was now drawing to a close; and the Abbe" and the Chevalier thought it well to take advantage of the coming darkness to ride off to Auberas, an estate of their brother's, about a league from La Gange. There they quarrelled with each other, because their work was left incomplete; and were on the point of fighting, when it seems as if they thought it better to take again to flight. After the steed was stolen, every one bethought him of locking the stable door. The 'consuls', so the magistrates of the district were called, came to offer their services to Madame de Gange, who was lying between life and death. The neighbouring barons paid her visits of condolence; one of them was practical enough to think of seouring the assassins; but two or three days had then elapsed, and the Abbe and Chevalier had embarked at Ogde, a small port on the Mediterranean. Her husband, the Marquis, took the affair very coolly. He heard of it at Avignon one morning; but he did not mention it to any friends whom he met in the street, nor did he set off to see his wife till the afternoon of the following day. But he had the will, which his wife had been compelled to make at La Gange, safe with him at Avignon; and before he left the city,

he went to see the Vice-Legate, with a view to this document, by which his wife bequeathed him all in case of her death. The Vice-Legate refused to recognize it, and then first informed him of the will by which Madame de Gange had left her property to her mother, and which rendered null any testament made after that date. The Marquis was not induced by this information to be more tender towards his poor wounded wife. He found her lying at the house of the *Sieur des Prats*, in the most dangerous state. At first she reproached him a little for leaving her at the mercy of his brothers ; but almost directly she begged his pardon for what she had said, and was most tender and sweet in her conversation with him. He thought he could take advantage of her gentle frame of mind, and urged her to revoke her declaration about the perpetual legality of the *Avignon* will ; but his pertinacity on this point at such a time opened her eyes, and henceforward she had no hope of touching his stony heart. Her mother, Madame de Ropace, came to see her ; but she was so disgusted at seeing the Marquis's pretended affection and assumption of watchful care over his wife, that she left at the close of three days. It was evident now to all that the end was drawing near ; the wounds did not touch life, but enough of the poison had been swallowed to destroy any constitution. Madame de Gange begged to have the extreme unction administered ; but the monks in attendance said that before that could be done, she must forgive all her enemies. She was too gentle to harbour revenge ; but when *Perrette*, the chaplain, and the accomplice of her assassins, came in his sacred vestments to administer the last sacrament, it did cost her a severe struggle to receive the wafer from his hands. But she forgave him, too, as completely as the rest ; and fearing that her little son might at some future time think it his duty to avenge her death, she sent for him, and tried to make him understand the Christian duty of forgiveness. Meanwhile, the report of her assassination had spread far and wide, and the parliament of *Toulouse* dispatched Monsieur de Catelan to La Gange

to take her evidence as that of a dying woman. When he first came she was in a state of stupor; but the next day she rallied and saw him alone. A fresh terror had seized upon her, and she believed herself not safe at La Gange, and entreated him to take her to Montpellier; but it was too late then, and in the afternoon she died, nineteen days after the attack upon her life. Monsieur de Gange now became alarmed, and pretended to be in the deepest distress, and that his grief could only be alleviated by the discovery and punishment of the murderers of his dear wife. But the unmoved M. de Catelan arrested him, and took the charge of prosecution and punishment for the crime upon himself in the name of the parliament of Toulouse. The effects of the Marquis were sealed up, and he was to be conveyed to the prison at Montpellier: but he could not arrive there before night for some reason; and the inhabitants of the town illuminated it in order that the populace might see the face of the accused criminal as he came slowly up the street. The ladies of Avignon, and those of Montpellier, put on mourning for the murdered Madame de Gange, as if she had been a near relation. Her mother, of whom we hear very little until now, led the chorus of feminine indignation. She vowed vengeance against the Marquis, and swore that she would pursue him through every court of justice in the kingdom till her daughter was avenged. She published a pamphlet on the case, to which M. de Gange replied, saying that her statements were all based on presumption. But the stern hand of the law was upon him, and from it he could not so easily escape. M. de Catelan twice interrogated the Marquis, the last time for eleven hours; the basis on which he founded his questions being not 'presumptions', but the evidence which the lawyer had obtained from the dying Madame de Gange in that interview which they two had had alone. On the 21st of August, 1667, judgement was given through the mouth of the President of the Parliament of Toulouse. It was always supposed by the public that the powerful relations of the Marquis had used unfair

means to mitigate the severity of the sentence. But it was severe enough, if only it had been carried into execution. The Abbe and the Chevalier de Gange were to be broken alive upon the wheel. The Marquis was to be banished for life, to be degraded from his rank, and to have all his lands, goods, and property confiscated to the use of the king. The chaplain, Perrette, was to be deprived of ecclesiastical orders, and to become a galley-slave for life.

The ladies of Avignon and Montpellier were indignant that the Marquis de Gange was not to be broken on the wheel as well as his brothers. But where were these three guilty men ? The Abbe and the Chevalier had escaped by sea, months ago ; and now the Marquis had made his way out of the prison of Toulouse ; prison doors, in those days, had a fatal facility in opening before rank or wealth. The Marquis and the Chevalier met in Venice—escaped felons as they were. But they took service with the republic ; and, being good Christians, they went to fight the heathen Turks in Candia, where they met an honourable death in 1669. The Abbe, superior in intellect to the others, lived a longer and more eventful life. He fled into Holland, and after some wanderings about he met with an old acquaintance, who was unscrupulous, or perhaps was ignorant of his crime, and who introduced him to the Count de la Lippe, sovereign prince of Viane, about two leagues from Utrecht. To him the Abbe de Gange was presented as the *Sieur de la Martelliere*, a Frenchman of extraordinary learning and merit, of the Huguenot or Protestant religion, and who was consequently under social disadvantages in his own country. The Count was pleased with the appearance and manners of the so-called *Sieur de la Martelliere*, and appointed him governor, or tutor, to his son, a little boy of nine or ten years old. But by and by the persecution of the French Huguenots began, and hundreds of them were leaving France, some one of whom might recognize the former Abbe de Gange, in the Protestant *Sieur de la Martelliere* ; so he opposed the settlement of French refugees in the neighbourhood

of Viane on purely political reasons. He had been governor to the son of the Count de la Lippe for several years, when he fell desperately in love with a beautiful young girl, a distant relation of the Countess's, who lived with her. His poverty and his dependent position were no obstacles to his marriage with the lovely portionless maiden; but the obscurity of his supposed birth made a marriage between them impossible. He presumed on his services to the Count, and on the years of moral conduct which he had passed under the Count's own eyes. He wrote an eloquent letter, in which he confessed himself to be that Abbé de Gange for whom the kingdom of France had been ransacked in vain; pleading false witness, perjury, passion, whatever you will, in extenuation of the crime of which he was accused; but proving his sixteen quarterings through it all. He spoke of his many years' life of pure morality, such as the Count de la Lippe himself could bear witness to; of his conversion to the faith which the sovereign Prince of Viane held himself; and of his zeal in its interests: had he not advised the Huguenot refugees not to tarry where the long arm of France might reach them, but to fly further east?

His eloquence was all in vain. The Count de la Lippe seems to have been shocked beyond measure at finding out that in the tutor of his little boy—his growing lad—he had been harbouring the profligate, terrible, and infamous Abbé de Gange, with whose crimes all civilized Europe had been made acquainted. The Sieur de la Martelhere was ordered to leave the dominions of the Count de la Lippe without delay. He went to Amsterdam, and thither also, without delay, the young girl—the poor, pretty relation of Madame la Comtesse—followed him, and became his wife. His pupil, the young Count, now growing up to manhood, although told by his father what an infamous criminal he had had for tutor, persevered in sending help to the Sieur de la Martelhere and his wife at Amsterdam, until some unexpected fortune from one of Madame's relations put them at ease, as far as regarded money. M. de 1\$

Martelliere bore so high a character that he was admitted into the Consistory of Protestants at Amsterdam. But wherever he went—at church or at synod, in market or alone with his wife in their most humble secret privacy, he was haunted by the face of Madame de Gange. That was said at the time; that is believed now.

The poor lady's daughter did not do her much credit, and I will say nothing about her. The son, whom she had taught on her death-bed, became a captain of dragoons; and when at Metz, suppressing the Huguenots (perhaps he had never been told of Mademoiselle Brunei, and how she had helped and defended his mother in her great strait), he fell in love with the beautiful wife of a goldsmith. The dragoons were billeted at her house, and tried to force her, at the point of the bayonet, to go to mass. Apparently, her religion was dearer to her than her virtue; for she sent for the captain, and said to him: 'Monsieur, vous m'avez dit que vous m'aimez; voulez-vous me le prouver? donnez-moi les moyens de sortir du royaume; et pour recompense de ce service, que votre amour s' imagine le prix.' 'Non, Madame,' said the Marquis, 'je ne me preVaudrai point de votre situation; je serais au comble de mes voeux si vous accordiez a ma tendresse ce que je pourrais obtenir ou vous etes, mais je me reprocherais toute ma vie d'abuser de votre etat; je vais vous en d6livrer; je ne vous demande pour recompense que la grace de penser quelquefois a moL' After that, he sent her secretly across the frontier.

I shut up my landlady's books, and prepared to go to bed. I am alone in the lofty salon, which was perhaps in existence when Madame de Gange used to reside in Avignon; the fire is gone out, the lamp flickers. The ever-persistent wind is tearing round the house. Mary and Irene are fast asleep in the chambers beyond. The quietness of all things, the dead stillness of the hour, has made me realize all the facts deposed to, as if they had only happened to-day. To-morrow we will go to Ville-Neuve, and see the portrait of the murdered lady

*March 16*ft.*—Though the mistral has but little abated

we went across to Ville-Neuve this morning. Irene was not well enough to go ; so Mary and I, attended by Demetrius, our courier, made the expedition, Demetrius has no fancy for excursions off the common route, and only went with us because he thought himself bound in duty to humour our eccentricity. The suspension-bridge over the Rhone was shaking and trembling with the wind as we crossed it; and our struggle in that long exposure was so exhausting, that" when we were once in the comparative tranquillity of the other side, we stood still and looked about us for some time before going on. The colour of the landscape on each side of the rushing river was a warm grey ; rocks, soil, buildings, all the same. There was but little vegetation to be seen; a few olive-trees, of a moonlight green, grew in sheltered places. We thought it must be like the aspect of Palestine, from Stanley's account; and Demetrius, who had been several times in the Holy Land, confirmed this notion of ours; but then he was rather apt to confirm all our notions, provided they did not occasion him extra trouble. After we had crossed the bridge, we turned to the right, and went along a steep rocky road to the summit of the hill, above Ville-Neuve. Below us lay the town founded by Philippe le Bel, but completed by the Popes resident at Avignon, and fallen to comparative decay ever since the papal seat was re-established at Rome. We dropped down to the centre of the old town ; the buildings in it were of the same massive construction as the palace, three miles off, at Avignon ; the houses were very lofty, and built of solid blocks of rough yellow-grey stone. There were arcades beneath their lower stories ; and but little space between the two sides of the winding streets for carriages or horses. The way through the town was so tortuous that there was no bit of distance ever seen; and we felt as if we had fallen into a crevasse. Not a person was in the deserted streets. After trying at one or two porte-cocheres we at length hit upon the convent in which there was the portrait of Madame de Gange, painted by Mignard, her famous contemporary.

A nun, in attendance upon the hospital at the end of the courtyard, came to receive us, and was all surprise at our request to see the picture. Was it not the famous painting of the 'Last Judgement', done by the good King Rene, that we wished to look at ? At any rate, both pictures hung side by side in the ante-chapel to our right on entering. So we went in, and gazed at the face of the heroine of the tragical history we had been reading the night before. She was dressed, like our guide the nun, in a black and white conventual dress, such as I suppose she would assume when * *en retraite* * after her first husband's death; she held red and white roses in her hands, in her scapular; the lovely colour was needed by the painter, or perhaps la Belle Provencale was fond of the flowers. Her face was one of exquisite beauty and great peacefulness of expression—round rather than oval; dark hair, dark eyebrows, and blue eyes ; there was very little colour excepting in the lips. You would have called it a portrait of a sweet, happy, young woman, innocently glad in her possession of rare beauty.

After gratifying the nun by looking at the newly-painted and tawdry chapel beyond, and by doing our utmost to feel admiration for King Rene's picture, we left the convent. For a minute or two we were full of Madame de Gange ; then, I am sorry to say, the carnal feeling of hunger took possession of us, after our long walk ; and we sent Demetrius off in every direction to buy us a cake—bread—anything eatable. He came back to where we were sitting under the shelter of a rock. There was no shop for eatables, not even an hotel, or a restaurant, or a caf e, or an estaminet. So we came back to the Hotel de l Europe, Avignon, with very good appetites for the capital table d'hote.

March 11th.—A telegram from Marseilles. A boat starts to-day for Civita Vecchia.

VII

MODERN GREEK SONGS

First published in *Household Words*, February 25, 1854

MODERN GREEK SONGS

I HAVE lately met with a French book which has interested me much ; and, as it is now out of print, and was never very extensively known, I imagine some account of it may not be displeasing to the readers of *Household Words*,

It is called ' Chants Populaires de la Grece Moderne, par C. Fauriel'. M. Fauriel is a Greek, in spite of his French name, and the language in which he writes. The plan on which he has collected these ' Chants Populaires resembles that of Sir Walter Scott, in his *Border Minstrelsy*'. In both cases there is a preliminary discourse explaining the manners and peculiar character of the people among whom these ballads circulate, and the history of whose ancestors and popular heroes they commemorate. This discourse and the explanatory notes give the principal interest to the book, as they tell of the habits and customs and traditions of a people whom we are apt to moan over, as having fallen low from the high estate of the civilization of their ancestors. But, as there are four millions of men who claim a direct descent from the most polished people the world has ever known, it becomes worth one's while to learn something of their present state.

M. Fauriel divides the poetry of modern Greece into two kinds ; works of literature, written down as composed, and corrected and revised in strict accordance with the rules of art, and the real ballads—poems springing out of the heart of the nation whenever it is deeply stirred, and circulating from man to man with the rapidity of flame: never written down, but never forgotten. Some of these songs relate to domestic, but the majority to popular, events.

Let us take the household songs. There are two feasts which are celebrated in every house. The first is on New Year's Day, the feast of St. Basil in the Greek Church. The account which M. Fauriel gives reminds me much of a Scottish New Year's Day. The young men pass from one house to another until all their friends have been visited ; bringing with them presents, and going, in glad procession, to salute all their acquaintances. But, instead of our ' I wish you a happy new year and many of them ', the young Greeks, on entering each house, sing some verses in honour of the master or head of the family ; others in honour of the mistress ; the sons of the house have each their song, nor are the daughters forgotten. Those who are absent or dead receive this compliment last of all. The key changes ; the remembrance of the lost is sung mournfully and sadly ; but none of the family are left out on the feast of St. Basil. As they go along the streets they sing in honour of the saint. I was once, in England, most kindly received by a Greek family, who allowed me to witness their Easter Day ceremonies ; which, in the expression of good wishes and the glad visits of congratulation paid by all the gentlemen to their friends, must have resembled a feast of St. Basil without the songs. The family consisted of a Greek mother, a most lovely daughter, and a son, who left his own home on this day to visit his friends.

In one corner of the small English drawing-room there was spread a table covered with mellow-looking sweetmeats, all as if the glow of sunset rested on their amber and crimson colours ; and there were decanters containing mysterious liquids to match. In came one Greek gentleman after another with some short sentence, which burst forth as if it contained the perfection of joy. It was the Greek for ' Christ is risen '. Then all shook hands ; the visitors tasted of the jewel-like sweetmeats, and rushed off to go somewhere else, and to have their places taken by other troops of friends. But we had no songs ; nor do I know if, in our cold northern climate, the Greeks keep up the feast of **the**

coming Spring. In Greece this is held on the first of March ; the first of May would often be early greeting to the spring in England. At this pretty holiday, the children in their spring of human life join the young men, and go singing about the streets, and asking for small presents in honour of the soft and budding time ; and every one gives them an egg, or some cheese, or some other simple produce of the country. The song they sing is one which, for its grace and the breath of spring and flowers which perfumes it, is known in many countries, as well as in Greece, under the name of the 'Song of the Swallow .' The children carry about with them the figure of a swallow rudely cut in wood, and fastened to a kind of little windmill, which is turned by a piece of string fastened to a cylinder.

The modern Greeks are an essentially commercial people. I have heard a saying which shows the popular opinion of their bargaining talents: ' It takes two Englishmen to cheat a Scotchman ; two Scotchmen to cheat a Jew ; two Jews to cheat a Greek.' This turn for commerce, added to the poverty of their own country, and the uncertain tenure of property there, causes numbers of Greeks to become merchants in other countries ; but they suffer acutely on first leaving their homes; the nearer to the mountains the more they mourn; and their sadness as well as their joy is expressed by song.

When any one is leaving his home to go into a strange land, his friends and companions meet together at his house to share with him one final meal; and, after that, they accompany him on a part of his way, as Orpah and Ruth accompanied Naomi; as Raphael's companions, for the great love they bore him, went with him when he left the studio of Perugino. And as they walk along they sing. There are songs set apart from time immemorial for the sad occasion of a Greek's departure from Greece; and others are made on the spot, out of the excited feelings of the moment. There is a story told of a youth—the youngest of three brothers—but little beloved by his mother: the poor

fellow endeavoured in vain to win some scanty sprinkling of the affection that was showered on his elder brothers; and at last he determined to become an exile from that home which was no home to him. So he set forth, accompanied by his young companions, his brothers, his sisters, and, as a matter of form, by his mother herself. Four or five miles from his birth-place there was a small gorge through which the narrow road wound. This was the determined point of separation; and here, among the rocky echoes, were sung the most doleful farewell songs. Suddenly the young man mounted upon a rock, and improvised a poem on the sufferings he had experienced from the indifference of his mother. He cried to her to bless him once, before he went away for ever, with something of the wild entreaty of Esau when he adjured Isaac to 'Bless me, also, O my father !' Nor was this strange poetic appeal in vain: 'the mother, with a sudden Eastern change of feeling, could hardly wait until the improvised song was finished (I have sometimes felt as impatient over an improvised sermon), before she *in her turn* sang her repentance; and promised, if he would remain at home, that she would be a better mother for the future.' M. Fauriel says no more. I should not have been sorry to have had the old fairy-tale ending affixed to this true story, * And they lived together very happily for ever after.'

Now let us hear about the marriage-songs. Life seems like an opera amongst the modern Greeks; all emotions, all events, require the relief of singing. But a marriage is a singing time among human beings as well as birds. Among the Greeks the youth of both sexes are kept apart, and do not meet excepting on the occasion of some public feast, when the young Greek makes choice of his bride, and asks her parents for their consent. If they give it, all is arranged for the betrothal; but the young people are not allowed to see each other again until that event. There are parts of Greece where the young man is allowed to declare his passion himself to the object of it. Not in words, however,

does he breathe his tender suit. He tries to meet with her in some path, or other place in which he may throw her an apple or a flower. If the former missile be chosen, one can only hope that the young lady is apt at catching, as a blow from a moderately hard apple is rather too violent a token of love. After this apple or flower throwing, his only chance of meeting with his love is at the fountain ; to which all Greek maidens go to draw water, as Rebekah went, of old, to the well.

The ceremony of betrothal is very simple. On an appointed evening, the relations of the lovers meet together in the presence of a priest, either at the house of the father of the future husband, or at that of the parents of the bride elect. After the marriage contract is signed, two young girls bring in the affianced maiden—who is covered all over with a veil—and present her to her lover, who takes her by the hand, and leads her up to the priest. They exchange rings before him, and he gives them his blessing. The bride then retires; but all the rest of the company remain, and spend the day in merry-making and drinking the health of the young couple. The interval between the betrothal and the marriage may be but a few hours ; it may be months, and it may be years ; but, whatever the length of time, the lovers must never meet again until the wedding day comes. Three or four days before that time, the father and mother of the bride send round their notes of invitation ; each of which is accompanied by the present of a bottle of wine. The answers come in with even more substantial accompaniments. Those who have great pleasure in accepting, send a present with their reply; the most frequent is a ram or lamb dressed up with ribands and flowers ; but the poorest send their quarter of mutton as their contribution to the wedding-feast.

The eve of the marriage, or rather during the night, the friends on each side go to deck out the bride and groom for the approaching ceremony. The bridegroom is shaved by his paranymp or groom's man, in a very grave and dignified manner, in the presence of all the

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COUSIN PHILLIS
AND OTHER TALES
ETC.

BY
ELIZABETH C. GASKELL

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
CLEMENT SHORTER



HENRY FROWDE
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
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ELIZABETH CLEGHORN GASKELL

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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	vii
COUSIN PHILLIS	1
MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS	109
THE SEXTON'S HERO	195
CLOFTON HOUSE	209
COMFANY MANNERS	215
FRENCH LIFE	241
MODERN GREEK SONGS	319
AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION	341

INTRODUCTION

I

Now that the works of Mrs. Gaskell have taken their place among the acknowledged classics of English literature it will be, of necessity, a desire among the growing army of her admirers to possess not only her principal stories, but also the large collection of fugitive pieces that she contributed from time to time to the periodical literature of her day. Mrs. Gaskell wrote live remarkable novels, all of which are familiar to readers of 'The World's Classics V and the incomparable *Cranford*, which is popular, it may be, far beyond any book of the Victorian era, excepting only the novels of Charles Dickens. She was also an indefatigable writer from year to year in the *Cornhill Magazine*, *Household Words*, *All the Year Round*, and other publications; and her present-day fame makes all this work interesting. There is a natural and perfectly legitimate curiosity concerning the minor writings of a great author. That curiosity may indeed be carried too far. Lady Ritchie, the daughter of Thackeray, has recently protested,² we think rightly, against the disposition to 'rake up' all

¹ *Mary Barton, Ruth, North and South, Sylvia's Lovers, and Wives and Daughters.*

² *Vanity Fair*, Centenary Biographical Edition, p. vii

kinds of fragments from the newspapers and magazines and to republish these with Thackeray's name attached to them. Lady Ritchie thinks that many of such fragments were not her father's work, but whether they were or not, this reproduction of odds and ends of hack journalism of the anonymous order can scarcely be commended. But the less known work of Mrs. Gaskell that we desire to see better known bears in almost every case the writer's name in the various magazines where it first appeared, and, moreover, has already been once reprinted¹ with the sanction of Mrs. Gaskell's daughter.

II

Assuredly the quite unnecessary apology with which somehow I have commenced this Introduction has no relation to the first story in this little volume. That dainty romance, *Cousin Phillis*, has been reproduced more than once since its copyright was exhausted, and it will in the coming years take its place with *Granford* as a charming idyll—with a tragic note withal—destined to an ever-increasing popularity. I fully believe that *Cousin Phillis* is one of the best short stories ever written, and I have not the slightest doubt that this fact will come in time to be universally recognized.

There lie before me some of the original red cloth volumes of the *Comhill Magazine* of its opening and best years. In volumes iii and iv you will find *Cousin Phillis* running its serial course. It appeared in four sections, and it concluded in gloomy surroundings, for

¹ In the Knutsford Edition of the Works of Mrs. Gaskell, edited by Dr. A. W. Ward, the Master of Peterhouse.

Thackeray had died, and the Magazine containing the **final** issue of *Cousin Phillis*—that of February 1864—opened with an 'In Memoriam' appreciation of Thackeray by Charles Dickens. Mrs. Gaskell shared the monthly parts of *Cornhill* during those four issues with Anthony Trollope, who was writing *The Small House of Allington*; with Thackeray, whose *Denis Duval* concluded with all that its lamented author had left behind him of the story, being brought to some kind of a termination with brief 'notes' by Mr. Frederick Greenwood, who, as we have already seen,¹ was to live to do the same sad service for Mrs. Gaskell. So much for the *Cornhill Magazine*. We do not hear of *Cousin Phillis* again until, in November 1865, Mrs. Gaskell's publishers, Messrs. Smith & Elder, issued *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* in red cloth, with three illustrations by George Du Maurier.' The 'other tales' were *Company Manners*, which is not in the wildest interpretation of the word a 'tale' at all, *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*, and *The Sexton's Hero*—all of which will be found in this volume. As Mrs. Gaskell died on November 12, 1865, it will be seen that this book appeared wellnigh simultaneously with its author's death. The story *Cousin Phillis* seems to have gone through more than one edition in the French language.²

¹ *Wives and Daughters*, by Mrs. Gaskell, in 'The World's Classics'.

² It was translated by F. D. Forgues in 1866, first appearing in the *Revue des Deux Mondes* for April and May of that year. In 1867 *Cousin Phillis and Other Tales* appeared in the Tauchnitz Library, but the 'other tales' were none of them those of the English volume with the same title.

There is another point in common between *Cranford* and *Cousin Phillis* other than the beautiful idyllic note that is to be found in the two stories. Sandlebridge, the home of Mrs. Gaskeil's uncles, appears in both tales. 'My cousin Mrs. Gaskell, who knew Sandlebridge well,' writes Sir Henry Holland,¹ 'has pictured the place by some short but very descriptive touches in one or two of her novels.' Sandlebridge, then, is the Woodley where Miss Matty visits her old lover, Mr. Holbrook, in *Cranford*, and it is the Hope Farm, Heathbridge, of this story. When Mrs. Gaskell was a child, living with her Aunt Lumb at Knutsford, she had frequent opportunities of visiting Sandlebridge, her mother's early home, three miles away. The farm was kept in these years by one of her uncles, a brother of her mother's. The picture of the farmer so lovingly drawn may well be in part a portrait of the writer's own father, William Stevenson, who was for a time, as we know, a minister, and for a time a farmer, before he took up the really successful work of his life as the Keeper of Treasury Records, but it is only right to say that Mrs. Gaskeil's daughter denies this attempt at identification, and also the less probable identification that has been attempted with Mrs. Gaskell's grandfather, who lived at Sandlebridge. The point is of little importance. It is obvious that Mrs. Gaskell frequently went to people she had known for her characters. Every novelist does this, and every novelist repudiates doing so, and it may therefore be assumed that the likeness presented is unconsciously presented, and that

¹ *Recollections of Past Life*, by Sir Henry Holland, Bart., M.P., 1862.

in nine cases out of ten the portrait is a composite one, made from more than a single original. Thus we need not affirm or deny the suggestion that has been made that many of the scenes in *Cousin Phillis* are taken from the novelist's own experiences of girlhood, or such a suggestion as that James Nasmyth, the well-known inventor of the steam-hammer, was the prototype of Paul Manning's father.¹ One thing is certain, that the episode of the beautiful Phillis, disappointed by the too susceptible but by no means criminal Holdsworth, had some slight counterpart in the experience of a charming girl of Mrs. Gaskell's acquaintance. But this method of treating a novelist's work is obviously uncritical. It suffices to say that the author gave her very sweet and sympathetic imagination full play, with the result that *Cousin Phillis* is undoubtedly, as I have already said, one of the best short stones in our language.

III

It is important to recall that *Mr. Hcurisoris Confessions* was first published in a now-forgotten serial, *The Ladies' Companion*, in February, March, and April, 1851. Otherwise, as *Cranford* commenced to appear in *Household Words* in December of that year, the reader would be bewildered both by the likeness and the unlikeness of the two stories, and would have found it hard to account for the fact, assumed by most of us before Mr. W. E. A. Axon made the welcome discovery of the story in its serial form, that Mrs. Gaskell could

¹ Both statements are denied emphatically by Miss Gaskell in a letter to the present writer.

have written *Cranford* some four years before *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. The latter is so obviously 'younger' in its style and method. Duncombe is as obviously Knutsford as *Cranford* is Knutsford, but the author of *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* had not, when she wrote that story, become possessed of the perfect geniality and kindness of humour that was to make *Cranford* so unique in English literature. The author is satirical, and here and there even a little cruel to her creations in the earlier story. She is never one or the other in the later. One name and that not a very pretty one, is adopted in both stories. We have Hoggins the doctor in *Cranford*, and Hoggins the tallow-chandler in *Mr. Harrison's Confessions*. Mrs. Gaskell exhibited a fuller maturity of power in the love-episodes of *Cranford* than *he displayed in so farcical a situation as that of young Dr. Harrison with three damsels at his heels at the same time. But *Mr. Harrison's Confessions* has its value if only as a first draft, a somewhat crude anticipation of the greater story.

IV

Mrs. Gaskell's little story, *The Sexton's Hero*, first appeared in the second volume of *Howitt's Journal* in 1847. It was reprinted with two other stories in 1848 under the title of *Life in Manchester*, by Cotton Mather Mills, and with a single story, *Christmas Storms and Sunshine*, in 1850, as a paper cover booklet. A copy of this tract, as we may almost call it, lies before me. It is marked * price fourpence , ' and is one of those cases of which some of Shelley's pamphlets are the most marked examples, of the disposition to throw away the

cheap booklet, with the result that in another generation we have few preserved, and consequently great rareness. Shelley's *Appeal to the Irish People*, thrown by him broadcast from a window in Dublin, is now worth a hundred pounds. Mrs. Gaskell's work is not necessarily so great a cult as Shelley's, but the fourpenny form of *The Sexton's Hero* is considered of great value to-day. Miss Gaskell, I may add, presented a copy to the Moss Side Free Library at Manchester, a library that contains many rare Gaskell books.

The scene of *The Sexton's Hero* is Silverdale in Morecambe Bay, some seventy miles from Manchester, where Mr. and Mrs. Gaskell frequently stayed for a holiday during their early married life. Silverdale has been identified as the 'Abermouth' of *Ruth*, and it is clearly the 'Lindal' of this little story. 'Lindeth' is still a common name at Silverdale, which boasts its Lindeth House and Lindeth Lodge. The treacherous sands of Morecambe Bay are also clearly indicated. There is a tidal wave there to trap the unwary exactly as there is or was one in the Norfolk and Lincolnshire fens, where King John in olden days lost his baggage and jewels.

V

There has been much misunderstanding of our next fragment, that describing the ghost of Clopton Hall. It is often represented as the first of Mrs. Gaskell's works, the publication of which made her an author. It was really only a hastily written reminiscence of girlhood, written off on the spur of the moment, and there was really no thought of authorship then or for many a long year afterwards. Dr. Ward, the Master of

Peterhouse, tells us ¹ that upon the announcement of William Howitt's book, *Visits to Remarkable Places*, in 1840, Mrs. Gaskell wrote offering him an account of (Hopton Hall, which she had visited as a schoolgirl at Stratford-on-Avon in the period between 1825 and 1827, in which she had resided in the neighbourhood.

⁴ 'It was readily accepted,' says Dr. Ward, 'and forms part of a discursive chapter of a discursive book.' The matter may not be of much importance, but it is quite worth while for us to aspire to biographical accuracy. Here is the story as Mary Howitt tells it:

My husband, on the announcement of his intended *Visits to Remarkable Places*, received in 1838 a letter from Manchester signed E. C. Gaskell, drawing his attention to a fine old seat, Clopton Hall, near Stratford-on-Avon. It described in so powerful and graphic a manner the writer's visit as a schoolgirl to the mansion and its inmates, that, in replying, he urged his correspondent to use her pen for the public benefit. This led to the production of the beautiful story of *Mary Barton*, the first volume of which was sent in MS to my husband, stating that to be the result of his advice.

We venture to accept a part of Mrs. Howitt's narrative and to reject a part. It is quite clear, as indeed the document shows, that Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her correctly so far as the actual contribution to William Howitt's book is concerned. It was obviously a spontaneous letter, and as such it is actually printed in the text of Howitt's *Visits*. 'It was of this goodly old abode,' writes Howitt, after describing Clopton Hall, 'that a fair lady thus wrote to me on seeing the

¹ The Knutsford Edition of Mrs. Gaskell's Novels, with Introduction by A. W. Ward, vol. i, p. 502.

announcement of this volume,' and then he puts the letter that we reprint here, adding a footnote in later issues of the *Visits* to the effect that the 'fair lady' is 'since well known as the authoress of *Mary Barton*.' There is apparently no evidence of any previous correspondence between Mrs. Gaskell and William Howitt, and here I come to the point where Mrs. Howitt's memory has served her less satisfactorily. The publication of the Clopton Hall letter did not make Mrs. Gaskell an author. It was written in 1838, and not until nine years later do we hear any more about authorship from the same source. Mrs. Gaskell's earliest stories, it is true, appeared in *Howitt's Journal* of 1847,¹ and doubtless it is with that circumstance that Mrs. Howitt, writing her *Autobiography* long years later, has confused the Clopton Hall episode. William Howitt's encouragement in 1847 no doubt helped to prompt the writer to achieve *Mary Barton*. This is not inconsistent with the family tradition, that Mr. Gaskell persuaded his wife to write in order to distract her mind after the loss of her little boy. We may add that Mrs. Howitt wrote her *Autobiography* at the age of eighty! Here our comment upon Clopton Hall, or more correctly Clopton House, may well end. The story of the Clopton family has been told in every guide-book to Warwickshire. An amplification of Mrs. Gaskell's interesting letter would rather we think spoil the effect of it.

¹ *Libbie Marsh's Three, Eras and The Sexton's Hero.*

VI

Of the six essays which conclude the volume, little need be said. The first, *Company Manners*, and the three following on *French Life*, indicate her interest in a country to which she was pleasantly allied through friendship. The essay entitled *Company Manners* is little more than a review of Victor Cousin's *Vie de Madame de Sable*, although this was not published until 1855, and the essay was therefore entirely based upon the article in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, which was afterwards expanded into a volume. Madelaine de Sable was the daughter of Marshal de Souvre. She was born in 1598 and died in 1678. Mrs. Gaskell carries us into a more modern atmosphere in the studies of *French Life* that had appeared under this title in *Fraser's Magazine* for three issues of 1864. They were the outcome of a journey in the company of one of her daughters and a friend, Miss Isabel Thompson, who became Mrs. William Sidgwick. The three were frequently in the company of Madame Mohl, who had inherited the tradition of the *salon* from Madame Recamier, whom she had once known personally. Mrs. Gaskell's friendship with Madame Mohl is too long a story to recapitulate here. Letters from the clever Frenchwoman to Mrs. Gaskell may be found in her *Letters and Recollections*. Although written so long ago, these studies of French life are still exceedingly interesting, if only as indicating the changes that half a century has brought. Avignon, for example, still has its mistral, but not a garden 'round the base' of the Palace of the Popes. The palace was a gaol when

Mrs. Gaskell saw it; it has since been a barrack, and is now a museum. One notes the greater love of picturesque legend in our day, in that Mrs. Gaskell occupies many pages to recall the tragedy of the Marquise de Gange—it should be 'Ganges'—and not one word is given to the lovely and romantic story of the old Pont d'Avignon and its boy-saint. Moreover, the tragic story of the Marquise is told at greater length in Alexandre Dumas's *Famous Crimes*. Mrs. Gaskell was very fond of French literature. In a letter in my possession from her to one of her publishers she expresses surprise that a supposed-to-be well-educated young lady she had met knew nothing about Madame de Sevigne, 'who had been like a well-known friend to me all my life', and indeed in this same letter she proposes to write Madame de Sevigne's *Life*. It was yet another demonstration of her interest in French literature that led to the article on *Modern Greek Songs*, here reprinted from *Household Words*. It was, as we shall see, a simple review of M. Faunel's *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne*. Fauriel, who was not a Greek, as Mrs. Gaskell says, but a Frenchman born at Saint-Etienne, had his book translated into English by Charles Brinsley Sheridan. Fauriel (1772-1844) also wrote a *History of the Gaids*, a *History of Provencal Literature*, and other works. M. Renan said of him that he was the man of the nineteenth century who had put the largest number of ideas in circulation, and had inaugurated the most numerous branches of study. Concerning the little sketch, *An Italian Institution*, little need be said. It is a study of an organization that has had many

pages devoted to it. The Camorra still exists, but has now little hold on any but the criminal class, and outside of Naples but few supporters. Even as I write, thirty-one members of the Camorra are on trial at Viterbo, and perhaps before a dozen years have passed the Italian Government will have stamped out the organization. The story as here told pleasantly recalls Mrs. Gaskell's interest in Italy, an interest that found many outlets, including her preface to Colonel Vecchj's little book, *Garibaldi at Caprera*, a copy of which lies before me.

CLEMENT SHORTER.

February, 1911.

A CHRONOLOGY OF MRS. GASKELL'S LIFE AND WORKS

Elizabeth Cleghorn Stevenson, born at 12 Lindsey Row, Chelsea, now 93 Cheyne Walk, September 29.	1810
Death of Mrs. Stevenson, Elizabeth's mother, November.	1811
Removed when fifteen months old to Knutsford in Cheshire, December.	1811
At School at Stratford-on-Avon	1825
Lost her only brother, John Stevenson, at sea	1827
Death of her father, William Stevenson	1829
Lengthy Visit to Newcastle-on-Tyne	1829-1831
Married the Rev. William Gaskell, Minister of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester, August 30	1832
Resided at Dover Street, Manchester	1832-42
„ „ Rumford Street, Manchester	1842-50
„ „ 84 Plymouth Grove, Manchester	1850-65
A Poem in <i>Blackwood's Magazine</i> written in conjunction with her husband and entitled <i>Sketches among the Poor</i> , January.	1837
Contributed a Letter to Howitt's <i>Visits upon Clopton Hall</i> , Warwickshire, 1838, published	1840
Published <i>Mary Barton</i> , 2 vols.	1848
„ <i>The Moorland Cottage</i>	1850
„ <i>Ruth</i>	1853
„ <i>Cranford</i>	1853
„ <i>North and South</i> , 2 vols	1855
„ <i>Lizzie Leigh, and Other Stories</i>	1855
„ <i>Libbie Marsh's Three Eras</i>	1855
„ <i>Life of Charlotte Bronte</i>	1857
„ <i>Mabel Vaughan</i> , by the author of <i>The Lamplighter</i> , edited, by arrangement with the author, by Mrs. Gaskell	1857
„ <i>Bound the Sofa and Other Tales</i> , 2 vols.	1859
„ <i>My Lady Ludlow, and Other Tales</i>	1859
„ <i>Right at Last, and Other Tales</i>	1860
„ <i>Garibaldi at Caprera</i> , by Colonel Vecchj. Translated from the Italian, with Preface by Mrs. Gaskell	1862

Published	<i>Sylvia's Lovers</i> , 3 vols.	1863
	<i>A Dark Night's Work</i>	1803
	<i>Cousin Phillis, and Other Talcs</i> . . .	1865
„	<i>The Grey Woman, and Other Tales</i> .	1865
„	<i>Wives and Daughters</i> , 2 vols. . . .	1860
Mrs. Gaskell died at	Holybourne, Alton, Hants,	
	November 12	1805

That the house in Chelsea where Mrs. Gaskell was born is now 93 Cheyne Walk was first proclaimed in the *Cornhill Magazine* for October 1910. The age of Mrs. Gaskell when removed from Chelsea to Knutsford was only discovered by her daughter in November 1910 through a contemporary letter. Hence these two modifications of previous chronologies.

1

COUSIN PHILLIS

First published in *The Cornhill Magazine*, November 1863, to February 1864. Reprinted in book form in *Cousin Phillis, and Other Tales*, 1865.

COUSIN PHILLIS

PART I

IT is a great thing for a lad when he is first turned into the independence of lodgings. I do not think I ever was so satisfied and proud in my life as when, at seventeen, I sat down in a little three-cornered room above a pastry-cook's shop in the county town of Eltham. My father had left me that afternoon, after delivering himself of a few plain precepts, strongly expressed, for my guidance in the new course of life on which I was entering. I was to be a clerk under the engineer who had undertaken to make the little branch line from Eltham to Hornby. My father had got me this situation, which was in a position rather above his own in life ; or perhaps I should say, above the station in which he was born and bred ; for he was raising himself every year in men's consideration and respect. He was a mechanic by trade ; but he had some inventive genius, and a great deal of perseverance, and had devised several valuable improvements in railway machinery. He did not do this for profit ; though, as was reasonable, what came in the natural course of things was acceptable ; he worked out his ideas, because, as he said, ' until he could put them into shape, they plagued him by night and by day.' But this is enough about my dear father ; it is a good thing for a country where there are many like him. He was a sturdy Independent by descent and conviction ; and this it was, I believe, which made him place me in the lodgings at the pastry-cook's. The shop was kept by the two sisters of our minister at home ; and this was considered as a sort of safeguard to my morals, when I was turned loose upon the temptations of the county town, with a salary of thirty pounds a year.

My father had given up two precious days, and put on his Sunday clothes, in order to bring me to Eltham, and accompany me first to the office, to introduce me to my new master (who was under some obligations to my father for a suggestion), and next to take me to call on the Independent minister of the little congregation at Eltham. And then he left me ; and, though sorry to part with him, I now began to taste with relish the pleasure of being my own master. I unpacked the hamper that my mother had provided me with, and smelt the pots of preserve with all the delight of a possessor who might break into their contents at any time he pleased. I handled and weighed in my fancy the home-cured ham, which seemed to promise me interminable feasts; and, above all, there was the fine savour of knowing that I might eat of these dainties when I liked, at my sole will, not dependent on the pleasure of any one else, however indulgent. I stowed my eatables away in the little corner cupboard—that room was all corners, and everything was placed in a corner, the fireplace, the window, the cupboard; I myself seemed to be the only thing in the middle, and there was hardly room for me. The table was made of a folding leaf under the window, and the window looked out upon the market-place; so the studies for the prosecution of which my father had brought himself to pay extra for a sitting-room for me, ran a considerable chance of being diverted from books to men and women. I was to have my meals with the two elderly Miss Dawsons in the little parlour behind the three-cornered shop downstairs; my breakfasts and dinners at least, for, as my hours in an evening were likely to be uncertain, my tea or supper was to be an independent meal.

Then, after this pride and satisfaction, came a sense of desolation. I had never been from home before, and I was an only child; and though my father's spoken maxim had been, ' Spare the rod, and spoil the child,' yet, unconsciously, his heart had yearned after me, and his ways towards me were more tender than he knew, or would have approved of in himself could he have

known. My mother, who never professed sternness, was far more severe than my father: perhaps my boyish faults annoyed her more; for I remember, now that I have written the above words, how she pleaded for me once in my riper years, when I had really offended against my father's sense of right.

But I have nothing to do with that now. It is about cousin Phillis that I am going to write, and as yet I am far enough from even saying who cousin Phillis was.

For some months after I was settled in Eltham, the new employment in which I was engaged—the new independence of my life—occupied all my thoughts. I was at my desk by eight o'clock, home to dinner at one, back at the office by two. The afternoon work was more uncertain than the morning's; it might be the same, or it might be that I had to accompany Mr. Holdsworth, the managing engineer, to some point on the line between Eltham and Hornby. This I always enjoyed, because of the variety, and because of the country we traversed (which was very wild and pretty), and because I was thrown into companionship with Mr. Holdsworth, who held the position of hero in my boyish mind. He was a young man of five-and-twenty or so, and was in a station above mine, both by birth and education; and he had travelled on the Continent, and wore moustachios and whiskers of a somewhat foreign fashion. I was proud of being seen with him. He was really a fine fellow in a good number of ways, and I might have fallen into much worse hands.

Every Saturday I wrote home, telling of my weekly doings—my father had insisted upon this; but there was so little variety in my life that I often found it hard work to fill a letter. On Sundays I went twice to chapel, up a dark narrow entry, to hear droning hymns, and long prayers, and a still longer sermon, preached to a small congregation, of which I was, by nearly a score of years, the youngest member. Occasionally, Mr. Peters, the minister, would ask me home to tea after the second service. I dreaded the honour, for I usually sat on the edge of my chair all the evening, and answered solemn

questions, put in a deep bass voice, until household prayer-time came, at eight o'clock, when Mrs. Peters came in, smoothing down her apron, and the maid-of-all-work followed, and first a sermon, and then a chapter was read, and a long impromptu prayer followed, till some instinct told Mr. Peters that supper-time had come, and we rose from our knees with hunger for our predominant feeling. Over supper the minister did unbend a little into one or two ponderous jokes, as if to show me that ministers were men, after all. And then at ten o'clock I went home, and enjoyed my long-repressed yawns in the three-cornered room before going to bed.

Dinah and Hannah Dawson, so their names were put on the board above the shop-door—I always called them Miss Dawson and Miss Hannah—considered these visits of mine to Mr. Peters as the greatest honour a young man could have; and evidently thought that if, after such privileges, I did not work out my salvation, I was a sort of modern Judas Iscariot. On the contrary, they shook their heads over my intercourse with Mr. Holdsworth. He had been so kind to me in many ways, that when I cut into my ham, I hovered over the thought of asking him to tea in my room, more especially as the annual fair was being held in Eltham market-place, and the sight of the booths, the merry-go-rounds, the wild-beast shows, and such country pomps, was (as I thought at seventeen) very attractive. But when I ventured to allude to my wish in even distant terms, Miss Hannah caught me up, and spoke of the sinfulness of such sights, and something about wallowing in the mire, and then vaulted into France, and spoke evil of the nation, and all who had ever set foot therein, till, seeing that her anger was concentrating itself into a point, and that that point was Mr. Holdsworth, I thought it would be better to finish my breakfast, and make what haste I could out of the sound of her voice. I rather wondered afterwards to hear her and Miss Dawson counting up their weekly profits with glee, and saying that a pastry-cook's shop in the corner of the market-place, in Eltham

fair week, was no such bad thing. However, I never ventured to ask Mr. Holdsworth to my lodgings.

There is not much to tell about this first year of mine at Eltham. But when I was nearly nineteen, and beginning to think of whiskers on my own account, I came to know cousin Phillis, whose very existence had been unknown to me till then. Mr. Holdsworth and I had been out to Heathbridge for a day, working hard, Heathbridge was near Hornby, for our line of railway was above half finished. Of course a day's outing was a great thing to tell about in my weekly letters; and I fell to describing the country—a fault I was not often guilty of. I told my father of the bogs, all over wild myrtle and soft moss, and shaking ground over which we had to carry our line; and how Mr. Holdsworth and I had gone for our midday meals—for we had to stay here for two days and a night—to a pretty village hard by, Heathbridge proper; and how I hoped we should often have to go there, for the shaking, uncertain ground was puzzling our engineers—one end of the line going up as soon as the other was weighted down. (I had no thought for the shareholders' interests, as may be seen; we had to make a new line on firmer ground before the junction railway was completed.) I told all this at great length, thankful to fill up my paper. By return letter, I heard that a second cousin of my mother's was married to the Independent minister of Hornby, Ebenezer Holman by name, and lived at Heathbridge proper; the very Heathbridge I had described, or so my mother believed, for she had never seen her cousin Phillis Green, who was something of an heiress (my father believed), being her father's only child, and old Thomas Green had owned an estate of near upon fifty acres, which must have come to his daughter. My mother's feeling of kinship seemed to have been strongly stirred by the mention of Heathbridge; for my father said she desired me, if ever I went thither again, to make inquiry for the Reverend Ebenezer Holman; and if indeed he lived there, I was further to ask if he had not married one Phillis Green; and if both these questions were answered in the affirmative, I was

to go and introduce myself as the only child of Margaret Manning, born Money Penny. I was enraged at myself for having named Heathbridge at all, when I found what it was drawing down upon me. One Independent minister, as I said to myself, was enough for any man; and here I knew (that is to say, I had been catechized on Sabbath mornings by) Mr. Hunter, our minister at home; and I had had to be civil to old Peters at Eltham, and behave myself for five hours running whenever he asked me to tea at his house; and now, just as I felt the free air blowing about me up at Heathbridge, I was to ferret out another minister, and I should perhaps have to be catechized by him, or else asked to tea at his house. Besides, I did not like pushing myself upon strangers, who perhaps had never heard of my mother's name, and such an odd name as it was—Money Penny; and if they had, had never cared more for her than she had for them, apparently, until this unlucky mention of Heathbridge.

Still, I would not disobey my parents in such a trifle, however irksome it might be. So the next time our business took me to Heathbridge, and we were dining in the little sanded inn-parlour, I took the opportunity of Mr. Holdsworth's being out of the room, and asked the questions which I was bidden to ask of the rosy-cheeked maid. I was either unintelligible or she was stupid; for she said she did not know, but would ask master; and of course the landlord came in to understand what it was I wanted to know; and I had to bring out all my stammering inquiries before Mr. Holdsworth, who would never have attended to them, I dare say, if I had not blushed and blundered, and made such a fool of myself.

'Yes,' the landlord said, 'the Hope Farm was in Heathbridge proper, and the owner's name was Holman, and he was an Independent minister, and, as far as the landlord could tell, his wife's Christian name was Phillis; anyhow, her maiden name was Green/

Relations of yours?' asked Mr. Holdsworth.

'No, sir—only my mother's second oousitu. Yes, I suppose they are relations. But I never saw them in my life.'

'The Hope Farm is not a stone's throw from here,' said the officious landlord, going to the window. 'If you carry your eye over yon bed of hollyhocks, over the damson-trees in the orchard yonder, you may see a stack of queer-like stone chimneys. Them is the Hope Farm chimneys; it's an old place, though Holman keeps it in good order.'

Mr. Holdsworth had risen from the table with more promptitude than I had, and was standing by the window, looking. At the landlord's last words, he turned round, smiling—'It is not often that parsons know how to keep land in order, is it?'

'Beg pardon, sir, but I must speak as I find; and minister Holman—we call the Church clergyman here "parson", sir; he would be a bit jealous if he heard a Dissenter called parson—minister Holman knows what he '8 about as well as e'er a farmer in the neighbourhood. He gives up five days a week to his own work, and two to the Lord's; and it is difficult to say which he works hardest at. He spends Saturday and Sunday a-writing sermons and a-visiting his flock at Hornby; and at five o'clock on Monday morning he'll be guiding his plough in the Hope Farm yonder just as well as if he could neither read nor write. But your dinner will be getting cold, gentlemen.'

So we went back to table. After a while, Mr. Holdsworth broke the silence—* If I were you, Manning, I'd look up these relations of yours. You can go and see what they're like while we're waiting for Dobson's estimates, and I'll smoke a cigar in the garden meanwhile.'

'Thank you, sir. But I don't know them, and I don't think I want to know them.'

'What did you ask all those questions for, then?' said he, looking quickly up at me. He had no notion of doing or saying things without a purpose. I did not answer, so he continued—'Make up your mind, and go off and see what this farmer-minister is like, and come back and tell me—I should like to hear.'

I was so in the habit of yielding to his authority, or

influence, that I never thought of resisting, but went on my errand, though I remember feeling as if I would rather have had my head cut off. The landlord, who had evidently taken an interest in the event of our discussion, in a way that country landlords have, accompanied me to the house-door, and gave me repeated directions, as if I was likely to miss my way in two hundred yards. But I listened to him, for I was glad of the delay, to screw up my courage for the effort of facing unknown people and introducing myself. I went along the lane, I recollect, switching at all the taller roadside weeds, till, after a turn or two, I found myself close in front of the Hope Farm. There was a garden between the house and the shady, grassy lane ; I afterwards found that this garden was called the court; perhaps because there was a low wall round it, with an iron railing on the top of the wall, and two great gates between pillars crowned with stone balls for a state entrance to the flagged path leading up to the front door. It was not the habit of the place to go in either by these great gates or by the front door ; the gates, indeed, were locked, as I found, though the door stood wide open. I had to go round by a side path slightly worn on a broad, grassy way, which led past the court-wall, past a horse-mount, half covered with stone-crop and a little wild yellow fumitory, to another door—'the curate', as I found it was termed by the master of the house, while the front door,' handsome and all for show,' was termed *the rector'. I knocked with my hand upon the 'curate* door; a tall girl, about my own age, as I thought, came and opened it, and stood there silent, waiting to know my errand. I see her now—cousin Phillis. The westering sun shone full upon her, and made a slanting stream of light into the room within. She was dressed in dark blue cotton of some kind; up to her throat, down to her wrists, with a little frill of the same wherever it touched her white skin. And such a white skin as it was ! I have never seen the like. She had light hair, nearer yellow than any other colour. She looked me steadily in the face with large, quiet eyes,

wondering, but untroubled by the sight of a stranger. I thought it odd that so old, so full-grown as she was, she should wear a pinafore over her gown.

Before I had quite made up my mind what to say in reply to her mute inquiry of what I wanted there, a woman's voice called out, * Who is it, Phillis ? If it is any one for butter-milk, send them round to the back door/

I thought I would rather speak to the owner of that voice than to the girl before me; so I passed her, and stood at the entrance of a room, hat in hand, for this side-door opened straight into the hall or house-place where the family sat when work was done. There was a brisk little woman of forty or so ironing some huge muslin cravats under the light of a long vine-shaded casement window. She looked at me distrustfully till I began to speak. ' My name is Paul Manning,' said I; but I saw she did not know the name. ' My mother's name was Moneypenny,' said I — ' Margaret Moneypenny.*

' And she married one John Manning, of Binningham,' said Mrs. Holman eagerly. ' And you'll be her son. Sit down I I am right glad to see you. To think of your being Margaret's son ! Why, she was almost a child not so long ago. Well, to be sure, it is five-and-twenty years ago. And what brings you into these parts ? '

She sat down herself, as if oppressed by her curiosity as to all the five-and-twenty years that had passed by since she had seen my mother. Her daughter Phillis took up her knitting—a long grey worsted man's stocking, I remember—and knitted away without looking at her work. I felt that the steady gaze of those deep grey eyes was upon me, though once, when I stealthily raised mine to hers, she was examining something on the wall above my head.

When I had answered all my cousin Holman's questions, she heaved a long breath, and said, ' To think of Margaret Moneypenny's boy being in our house ! I wish the minister was here. Phillis, in what field is thy father to-day ? '

' In the five-acre; they are beginning to cut the corn.*

' He'll not like being sent for, then, else I should have **liked** you to have seen the minister. But the five-acre is a good step off. You shall have a glass of wine and a bit of cake before you stir from this house, though. You're bound to go, you say, or else the minister comes in mostly when the men have their four o'clock.'

' I must go—I ought to have been off before now.'

' Here, then, Phillis, take the keys.' She gave her daughter some whispered directions, and Phillis left the room.

She is my consin, is-she not ? ') I asked. I knew she was, but somehow I wanted to talk of her, and did not know how to begin.

' Yes—Phillis Holman. She is our only child—now.'

Either from that ' now', or from a strange momentary wistfulness in her eyes, I knew that there had been moie children, who were now dead.

' How old is cousin Philhs ? ' said I, scarcely venturing on the new name, it seemed too prettily familiar for me to call her by it; but cousin Holman took no notice of it, answering straight to the purpose.

' Seventeen last May-day; but the minister does not like to hear me calling it May-day,' said she, checking herself with a little awe. ' Phillis was seventeen on the first day of May last,' she repeated in an emended edition.

' And I am nineteen in another month,' thought I to myself; I don't know why.

Then Phillis came in, carrying a tray with wine and cake upon it.

' We keep a house-servant,' said cousin Holman, ' but it is churning-day, and she is busy.' It was meant as a little proud apology for her daughter's being the hand-maiden.

* I like doing it, mother,' said Philhs, in her grave, full voice.

' I felt as if I were somebody in the Old Testament—who, I could not recollect—being served and waited upon by the daughter of the host. Was I like Abraham's steward, when Rebekah gave him to drink at the well ?

I thought Isaac had not gone the pleasantest way to work in winning him a wife. But Phillis never thought about such things. She was a stately, gracious young woman, in the dress and with the simplicity of a child.

As I had been taught, I drank to the health of my new-found cousin and her husband; and then I ventured to name my cousin Phillis with a little bow of my head towards her; but I was too awkward to look and see how she took my compliment. 'I must go, now,' said I, rising.

Neither of the women had thought of sharing in the wine; cousin Holman had broken a bit of cake for form's sake.

'I wish the minister had been within,' said his wife, rising too. Secretly I was very glad he was not. I did not take kindly to ministers in those days, and I thought he must be a particular kind of man, by his objecting to the term May-day. But before I went, cousin Holman made me promise that I would come back on the Saturday following and spend Sunday with them, when I should see something of 'the minister'.

'Come on Friday, if you can,' wore her last words as she stood at the curate-door, shading her eyes from the sinking sun with her hand.

Inside the house sat cousin Phillis, her golden hair, her dazzling complexion, lighting up the corner of the vine-shadowed room. She had not risen when I bade her good-bye; she had looked at me straight as she said her tranquil words of farewell.

I found Mr. Holdsworth down at the line, hard at work superintending. As soon as he had a pause, he said, * Well, Manning, what are the new cousins like? How do preaching and farming seem to get on together? If the minister turns out to be practical as well as reverend, I shall begin to respect him.'

But he hardly attended to my answer, he was so much more occupied with directing his workpeople. Indeed, my answer did not come very readily; and the most distinct part of it was the mention of the invitation that had been given me.

* Oh ! of course you can go—and on Friday, too, if you like; there is no reason why not this week; and you've done a long spell of work this time, old fellow.'

I thought that I did not want to go on Friday; but when the day came, I found that I should prefer going to staying away, so I availed myself of Mr. Holdsworth's permission, and went over to Hope Farm some time in the afternoon, a little later than my last visit. I found the 'curate' open to admit the soft September air, so tempered by the warmth of the sun that it was wanner out of doors than in, although the wooden log lay smouldering in front of a heap of hot ashes on the hearth. The vine-leaves over the window had a tinge more yellow, their edges were here and there scorched and browned; there was no ironing about, and cousin Holman sat just outside the house, mending a shirt. Phillis was at her knitting indoors: it seemed as if she had been at it all the week. The many-speckled fowls were pecking about in the farmyard beyond, and the milk-cans glittered with brightness, hung out to sweeten. The court was so full of flowers that they crept out upon the low-covered wall and horse-mount, and were even to be found self-sown upon the turf that bordered the path to the back of the house. I fancied that my Sunday coat was scented for days afterwards by the bushes of sweet-briar and the fraxinella that perfumed the air. From time to time cousin Holman put her hand into a covered basket at her feet, and threw handfuls of corn down for the pigeons that cooed and fluttered in the air around, in expectation of this treat.

I had a thorough welcome as soon as she saw me. * Now, this is kind—this is right down friendly,' shaking my hand warmly. 'Phillis, your cousin Manning is come!'

'Call me Paul, will you?' said I; 'they call me so at home, and Manning in the office.'

'Well; Paul, then. Your room is all ready for you, Paul; for, as I said to the minister, "I'll have it ready whether he comes o' Friday or not." And the minister said he must go up to the Ash-field whether you were to

come or not; but he would come home betimes to see if you were here. I'll show you to your room, and you can wash the dust off a bit.'

After I came down, I think she did not quite know what to do with me; or she might think that I was dull; or she might have work to do in which I hindered her; for she called Phillis, and bade her put on her bonnet, and go with me to the Ash-field, and find father. So we set off, I in a little flutter of a desire to make myself agreeable, but wishing that my companion were not quite so tall; for she was above me in height. While I was wondering how to begin our conversation, she took up the words.

'I suppose, cousin Paul, you have to be very busy at your work all day long in general?'

'Yes, we have to be in the office at half-past eight; and we have an hour for dinner, and then we go at it again till eight or nine.'

'Then you have not much time for reading?'

* No,' said I, with a sudden consciousness that I did not make the most of what leisure I had.

* No more have I. Father always gets an hour before going a-field in the mornings, but mother does not like me to get up so early.'

* My mother is always wanting me to get up earlier when I am at home.'

'What time do you get up?'

'Oh!—ah!—sometimes half-past six; not often, though'; for I remembered only twice that I had done so during the past summer.

She turned her head, and looked at me.

'Father is up at three; and so was mother till she was ill. I should like to be up at four.'

'Your father up at three! Why, what has he to do at that hour?'

'What has he not to do? He has his private exercise in his own room; he always rings the great bell which calls the men to milking; he rouses up Betty, our maid; as often as not he gives the horses their feed before the man is up—for Jem, who takes care of the homes, is an

old man; and father is always loath to disturb him; he looks at the calves, and the shoulders, heels, traces, chaff, and corn, before the horses go a-field; he has often to whip-cord the plough-whips; he sees the hogs fed; he looks into the swill-tubs, and writes his orders for what is wanted for food for man and beast; yes, and for fuel, too. And then, if he has a bit of time to spare, he comes in and reads with me—but only English; we keep Latin for the evenings, that we may have time to enjoy it; and then he calls in the man to breakfast, and cuts the boys' bread and cheese, and sees their wooden bottles filled, and sends them off to their work;—and by this time it is half-past six, and we have our breakfast. There is father !' she exclaimed, pointing out to me a man in his shirt-sleeves, taller by the head than the other two with whom he was working. We only saw him through the leaves of the ash-trees growing in the hedge, and I thought I must be confusing the figures, or mistaken: that man still looked like a very powerful labourer, and had none of the precise demureness of appearance which I had always imagined was the characteristic of a minister. It was the Reverend Ebenezer Holman, however. He gave us a nod as we entered the stubble-field; and I think he would have come to meet us but that he was in the middle of giving some directions to his men. I could see that Phillis was built more after his type than her mother's. He, like his daughter, was largely made, and of a fair, ruddy complexion, whereas hers was brilliant and delicate. His hair had been yellow or sandy, but now was grizzled. Yet his grey hairs betokened no failure in strength. I never saw a more powerful man—deep chest, lean flanks, well-planted head. By this time we were nearly up to him; and he interrupted himself and stepped forwards; holding out his hand to me, but addressing Phillis.

'Well, my lass, this is cousin Manning, I suppose. Wait a minute, young man, and I'll put on my coat, and give you a decorous and formal welcome. But—Ned Hall, there ought to be a water-furrow across this land:

it's a nasty, stiff, clayey, dauby bit of ground, and thou and I must fall to, come next Monday—I beg your pardon, cousin Manning—and there's old Jem's cottage wants a bit of thatch; you can do that job to-morrow while I am busy.' Then, suddenly changing the tone of his deep bass voice to an odd suggestion of chapels and preachers, he added, ' Now, I will give out the psalm, " Come all harmonious tongues,⁷ to be sung to " Mount Ephraim " tune.'

He lilted his spade in his hand, and began to beat time with it; the two labourers seemed to know both words and music, though I did not; and so did Phillis: her rich voice followed her father's as he set the tune; and the men came in with more uncertainty, but still harmoniously. Phillis looked at me once or twice with a little surprise at my silence; but I did not know the words. There we five stood, bareheaded, excepting Phillis, in the tawny stubble-field, from which all the shocks of corn had not yet been carried—a dark wood on one side, where the wood-pigeons were cooing; blue distance seen through the ash-trees on the other. Somehow, I think that if I had known the words, and could have sung, my throat would have been choked up by the feeling of the unaccustomed scene.

The hymn was ended, and the men had drawn off, before I could stir. I saw the minister beginning to put on his coat, and looking at me with friendly inspection in his gaze, before I could rouse myself.

' I dare say you railway gentlemen don't wind up the day with singing a psalm together,' said he; ' but it is not a bad practice—not a bad practice. We have had it a bit earlier to-day for hospitality's sake—that's all.'

I had nothing particular to say to this, though I was thinking a great deal. From time to time I stole a look at my companion. His coat was black, and so was his waistcoat; neck-cloth he had none, his strong full throat being bare above the snow-white shirt. He wore drab-coloured knee-breeches, grey worsted stockings (I thought I knew the maker), and strong-nailed shoes.

He carried his hat in his hand, as if he liked to feel the coming breeze lifting his hair. After a while, I saw that the father took hold of the daughter's hand, and so, they holding each other, went along towards home. We had to cross a lane. In it there were two little children—one lying prone on the grass in a passion of crying; the other standing stock still, with its finger in its mouth, the large tears slowly rolling down its cheeks for sympathy. The cause of their distress was evident; there was a broken brown pitcher, and a little pool of spilt milk on the road.

'Hollo I hollo! What's all this?' said the minister. 'Why, what have you been about, Tommy?' lifting the little petticoated fed, who was lying sobbing, with one vigorous arm. Tommy looked at him with surprise in his round eyes, but no affright—they were evidently old acquaintances.

'Mammy's jug!' said he at last, beginning to cry afresh.

'Well! and will crying piece mammy's jug, or pick up spilt milk? How did you manage it, Tommy?'

'He' (jerking his head at the other) * and me was running races.'

'Tommy said he could beat me,' put in the other.

'Now, I wonder what will make you two silly lads mind, and not run races again with a pitcher of milk between you/ said the minister, as if musing. 'I might flog you, and so save mammy the trouble; for I dare say she'll do it if I don't.' The fresh burst of whimpering from both showed the probability of this. 'Or I might take you to the Hope Farm, and give you some more milk; but then you'd be running races again, and my milk would follow that to the ground, and make another white pool. I think the flogging would be best—don't you?'

'We would never run races no more,' said the elder of the two.

'Then you'd not be boys; you'd be angels.'

'No, we shouldn't.'

'Why not?'

They looked into each other's eyes for an answer to

this puzzling question. At length, one said, * Angels is dead folk.'

'Come; we'll not get too deep into theology. What do you think of my lending you a tin can with a lid, to carry the milk home in? That would not break, at any rate; though I would not answer for the milk not spilling if you ran races. That's it!'

He had dropped his daughter's hand, and now held out each of his to the little fellows. Phillis and I followed, and listened to the prattle which the minister's companions now poured out to him, and which he was evidently enjoying. At a certain point, there was a sudden burst of the tawny, ruddy evening landscape. The minister turned round and quoted a line or two of Latin.

'It's wonderful,' said he, * how exactly Virgil has hit the enduring epithets, nearly two thousand years ago, and in Italy; and yet how it describes to a T what is now lying before us in the parish of Heathbridge, county —, England.'

'I dare say it does,' said I, all aglow with shame, for I had forgotten the little Latin I ever knew.

The minister shifted his eyes to Phillis's face; it mutely gave him back the sympathetic appreciation that I, in my ignorance, could not bestow.

'Oh! this is worse than the catechism,' thought I; 'that was only remembering words.'

'Phillis, lass, thou must go home with these lads, and tell their mother all about the race and the milk. Mammy must always know the truth,' now speaking to the children. 'And tell her, too, from me that I have got the best birch rod in the parish; and that if she ever thinks her children want a flogging she must bring them to me, and, if I think they deserve it, I'll give it them better than she can.' So Phillis led the children towards the dairy, somewhere in the back-yard, and I followed the minister in through the 'curate' into the house-place.

'Their mother,' said he, 'is a bit of a vixen, and apt to punish her children without rhyme or reason. I try to keep the parish rod as well as the parish bull.'

He sat down in the three-cornered chair by the fireside, and looked around the empty room.

' Where's the missus ? ' said he to himself. But she was there in a minute ; it was her regular plan to give him his welcome home—by a look, by a touch, nothing more—as soon as she could after his return, and he had missed her now. Regardless of my presence, he went over the day's doings to her; and then, getting up, he said he must go and make himself ' reverend \ and that then we would have a cup of tea in the parlour. The parlour was a large room with two casemented windows on the other side of the broad flagged passage leading from the rector-door to the wide staircase, with its shallow, polished oaken steps, on which no carpet was ever laid. The parlour-floor was covered in the middle by a home-made carpeting of needlework and list. One or two quaint family pictures of the Holman family hung round the walls; the fire-grate andirons were much ornamented with brass; and on a table against the wall between the windows, a great beau-pot of flowers was placed upon the folio volumes of Matthew Henry's Bible. It was a compliment to me to use this room, and I tried to be grateful for it; but we never had our meals there after that first day, and I was glad of it; for the large house-place, living-room, dining-room, whichever you might like to call it, was twice as comfortable and cheerful. There was a rug in front of the great large fireplace, and an oven by the grate, and a crook, with the kettle hanging from it, over the bright wood-fire; everything that ought to be black and polished in that room was black and polished; and the flags, and window-curtains, and such things as were to be white and clean, were just spotless in their purity. Opposite to the fireplace, extending the whole length of the room, was an oaken shovel-board, with the right incline for a skilful player to send the weights into the prescribed space. There were baskets of white work about, and a small shelf of books hung against the wall, books used for reading, and not for propping up a beau-pot of flowers. I took down one or two of those books once when I was left alone in the

house-place on the first evening—Virgil, Caesar, a Greek grammar—oh, dear! ah, me! and Phillis Holman's name in each of them! I shut them up, and put them back in their places, and walked as far away from the bookshelf as I could. Yes, and I gave my cousin Phillis a wide berth, although she was sitting at her work quietly enough, and her hair was looking more golden, her dark eyelashes longer, her round pillar of a throat whiter than ever. We had done tea, and we had returned into the house-place that the minister might smoke his pipe without fear of contaminating the drab damask window-curtains of the parlour. He had made himself 'reverend' by putting on one of the voluminous white muslin neckcloths that I had seen cousin Holman ironing that first visit I had paid to the Hope Farm, and by making one or two other unimportant changes in his dress. He sat looking steadily at me, but whether he saw me or not I cannot tell. At the time I fancied that he did, and was gauging me in some unknown fashion in his secret mind. Every now and then he took his pipe out of his mouth, knocked out the ashes, and asked me some fresh question. As long as these related to my acquirements or my reading, I shuffled uneasily and did not know what to answer. By and by he got round to the more practical subject of railroads, and on this I was more at home. I really had taken an interest in my work; nor would Mr. Holdsworth, indeed, have kept me in his employment if I had not given my mind as well as my time to it; and I was, besides, full of the difficulties which beset us just then, owing to our not being able to find a steady bottom on the Heathbridge moss, over which we wished to carry our line. In the midst of all my eagerness in speaking about this, I could not help being struck with the extreme pertinence of his questions. I do not mean that he did not show ignorance of many of the details of engineering: that was to have been expected; but on the premisses he had got hold of, he thought clearly and reasoned logically. Phillis—so like him as she was both in body and mind—kept stopping at her work and looking at me, trying to fully

understand all that I said. I felt she did; and perhaps it made me take more pains in using clear expressions, and arranging my words, than I otherwise should.

'She shall see I know something worth knowing, though it mayn't be her dead-and-gone languages,' thought I.

'I see,' said the minister at length. * I understand it all. You've a clear, good head of your own, my lad—choose how you came by it.'

'From my father,' said I proudly. 'Have you not heard of his discovery of a new method of shunting? It was in the *Gazette*, It was patented. I thought every one had heard of Manning's patent winch.'

'We don't know who invented the alphabet,' said he, half smiling, and taking up his pipe.

'No, I dare say not, sir,' replied I, half offended; 'that's so long ago.'

Puff—puff—puff.

* But your father must be a notable man. I heard of him once before; and it is not many a one fifty miles away whose fame reaches Heathbridge.'

'My father is a notable man, sir. It is not me that says so; it is Mr. Holdsworth, and—and everybody.'

* He is right to stand up for his father,' said cousin Holman, as if she were pleading for me.

I chafed inwardly, thinking that my father needed no one to stand up for him. He was man sufficient for himself.

'Yes—he is right,' said the minister placidly. 'Right, because it comes from his heart—right, too, as I believe, in point of fact. Else there is many a young cockerel that will stand upon a dunghill and crow about his father, by way of making his own plumage to shine. I should like to know thy father,' he went on, turning straight to me, with a kindly, frank look in his eyes.

But I was vexed, and would take no notice. Presently, having finished his pipe, he got up and left the room. Phillis put her work hastily down, and went after him. In a minute or two she returned, and sat down again. Not long after, and before I had quite recovered my good temper, he opened the door out of which he had passed,

and called to me to come to him. I went across a narrow stone passage into a strange, many-cornered room, not ten feet in area, part study, part counting-house, looking into the farmyard; with a desk to sit at, a desk to stand at, a spittoon, a set of shelves with old divinity books upon them; another, smaller, filled with books on farriery, farming, manures, and such subjects, with pieces of paper containing memoranda stuck against the whitewashed walls with wafers, nails, pins, anything that came readiest to hand; a box of carpenter's tools on the floor, and some manuscripts in shorthand on the desk.

He turned round, half laughing. 'That foolish girl of mine thinks I have vexed you'—putting his large, powerful hand on my shoulder. 'Nay,' says I; "kindly meant is kindly taken"—is it not so?'

'It was not quite, sir,' replied I, vanquished by his manner; 'but it shall be in future.'

'Come, that's right. You and I shall be friends. Indeed, it's not many a one I would bring in here. But I was reading a book this morning, and I could not make it out; it is a book that was left here by mistake one day; I had subscribed to Brother Robinson's sermons; and I was glad to see this instead of them, for sermons though they be, they're . . . well, never mind! I took 'em both, and made my old coat do a bit longer; but all's fish that comes to my net. I have fewer books than leisure to read them, and I have a prodigious big appetite. Here it is.'

It was a volume of stiff mechanics, involving many technical terms, and some rather deep mathematics. These last, which would have puzzled me, seemed easy enough to him; all that he wanted was the explanations of the technical words, which I could easily give.

While he was looking through the book to find the places where he had been puzzled, my wandering eye caught on some of the papers on the wall, and I could not help reading one, which has stuck by me ever since. At first, it seemed a kind of weekly diary; but then I saw that the seven days were portioned out for special prayers and intercessions: Monday for his family,

Tuesday for enemies, Wednesday for the Independent churches, Thursday for all other churches, Friday for persons afflicted, Saturday for his own soul, Sunday for all wanderers and sinners, that they might be brought home to the fold.

We were called back into the house-place to have supper. A door opening into the kitchen was opened; and all stood up in both rooms, while the minister, tall, large, one hand resting on the spread table, the other lifted up, said, in the deep voice that would have been loud had it not been so full and rich, but with the peculiar accent or twang that I believe is considered devout by some people, 'Whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, let us do all to the glory of God.'

The supper was an immense meat-pie. We of the house-place were helped first; then the minister hit the handle of his buckhorn carving-knife on the table once, and said—

'Now or never,' which meant, did any of us want any more; and when we had all declined, either by silence or by words, he knocked twice with his knife on the table, and Betty came in through the open door, and carried off the great dish to the kitchen, where an old man and a young one, and a help-girl, were awaiting their meal.

'Shut the door, if you will,' said the minister to Betty.

'That's in honour of you,' said cousin Holman, in a tone of satisfaction, as the door was shut. 'When we've no stranger with us, the minister is so fond of keeping the door open, and talking to the men and maids, just as much as to Phillis and me.'

'It brings us all together, like a household, just before we meet as a household in prayer,' said he in explanation.

* But to go back to what we were talking about—can you tell me of any simple book on dynamics that I could put in my pocket, and study a little at leisure times in the day?'

'Leisure times, father?' said Phillis, with a nearer approach to a smile than I had yet seen on her face.

Yes; leisure times, daughter. There is many an

odd minute lost in waiting for other folk; and now that railroads are coming so near us, it behoves us to know something about them.'

I thought of his own description of his 'prodigious big appetite' for learning. And he had a good appetite of his own for the more material victual before him. But I saw, or fancied I saw, that he had some rule for himself in the matter both of food and drink.

As soon as supper was done the household assembled for prayer. It was a long impromptu evening prayer; and it would have seemed desultory enough had I not had a glimpse of the kind of day that preceded it, and so been able to find a clue to the thoughts that preceded the disjointed utterances; for he kept there, kneeling down in the centre of a circle, his eyes shut, his outstretched hands pressed palm to palm—sometimes with a long pause of silence, as if waiting to see if there was anything else he wished to 'lay before the Lord' (to use his own expression)—before he concluded with the blessing. He prayed for the cattle and live creatures, rather to my surprise; for my attention had begun to wander, till it was recalled by the familiar words.

And here I must not forget to name an odd incident at the conclusion of the prayer, and before we had risen from our knees (indeed, before Betty was well awake, for she made a nightly practice of having a sound nap, her weary head lying on her stalwart arms); the minister, still kneeling in our midst, but with his eyes wide open, and his arms dropped by his side, spoke to the elder man, who turned round on his knees to attend. 'John, didst see that Daisy had her warm mash to-night; for we must not neglect the means, John,—two quarts of gruel, a spoonful of ginger, and a gill of beer—the poor beast needs it, and I fear it slipped out of my mind to tell thee; and here was I asking a blessing and neglecting the means, which is a mockery,' said he, dropping his voice.

Before we went to bed he told me he should see little or nothing more of me during my visit, which was to end on Sunday evening, as he always gave up both Saturday and Sabbath to his work in the ministry. I

remembered that the landlord, at the inn had told me this on the day when I first inquired about these new relations of mine; and I did not dislike the opportunity which I saw would be afforded me of becoming more acquainted with cousin Holman and Phillis, though I earnestly hoped that the latter would not attack me on the subject of the dead languages.

I went to bed, and dreamed that I was as tall as cousin Phillis, and had a sudden and miraculous growth of whisker, and a still more miraculous acquaintance with Latin and Greek. Alas! I wakened up still a short, beardless lad, with '*tempus fugit*' for my sole remembrance of the little Latin I had once learnt. While I was dressing, a bright thought came over me: I could question cousin Phillis, instead of her questioning me, and so manage to keep the choice of the subjects of conversation in my own power.

Early as it was, every one had breakfasted, and my basin of bread and milk was put on the oven-top to await my coming down. Every one was gone about their work. The first to come into the house-place was Phillis with a basket of eggs. Faithful to my resolution, I asked—

'What are those ? '

She looked at me for a moment, and then said gravely—
'Potatoes!'

'No ! they are not,' said I. ' They are eggs. What do you mean by saying they are potatoes ? '

'What do you mean by asking me what they were, when they were plain to be seen ? ' retorted she.

We were both getting a little angry with each other.

'I don't know. I wanted to begin to talk to you; and I was afraid you would talk to me about books as you did yesterday. I have not read much; and you and the minister have read so much.'

'I have not,' said she. ' But you are our guest; and mother says I must make it pleasant to you. We won't talk of books. What must we talk about ? '

'I don't know. How old are you ?'

* Seventeen last May, How old are you ? '

' I am nineteen. Older than you by nearly two years,' said I, drawing myself up to my full height.

* I should not have thought you were above sixteen,' she replied, as quietly as if she were not saying the most provoking thing she possibly could. Then came a pause.

' What are you going to do now ? ' asked I.

' I should be dusting the bed-chambers; but mother said I had better stay and make it pleasant to you,' said she, a little plaintively, as if dusting rooms was far the easiest task.

' Will you take me to see the live-stock ? I like animals, though I don't know much about them.'

' Oh, do you ? I am so glad. I was afraid you would not like animals, as you did not like books.'

I wondered why she said this. I think it was because she had begun to fancy all our tastes must be dissimilar. We went together all through the farmyard; we fed the poultry, she kneeling down with her pinafore full of corn and meal, and tempting the little timid, downy chickens upon it, much to the anxiety of the fussy ruffled hen, their mother. She called to the pigeons, who fluttered down at the sound of her voice. She and I examined the great sleek cart-horses; sympathized in our dislike of pigs; fed the calves; coaxed the sick cow, Daisy; and admired the others out at pasture; and came back tired and hungry and dirty at dinner-time, having quite forgotten that there were such things as dead languages, and consequently capital friends.

PART II

COUSIN HOLMAN gave me the weekly county newspaper to read aloud to her, while she mended stockings out of a high piled-up basket, Phillis helping her mother. I read and read, unregardful of the words I was uttering, thinking of all manner of other things; of the bright colour of Phillis's hair, as the afternoon sun fell on her bending head; of the silence of the house, which enabled me to hear the double tick of the old clock which stood

half-way up the stairs; of the variety of inarticulate noises which cousin Holman made while I read, to show her sympathy, wonder, or horror at the newspaper intelligence. The tranquil monotony of that hour made me feel as if I had lived for ever, and should live for ever, droning out paragraphs in that warm sunny room, with my two quiet hearers, and the curled-up pussy-cat sleeping on the hearthrug, and the clock on the house-stairs perpetually clicking out the passage of the moments. By and by Betty the servant came to the door into the kitchen, and made a sign to Phillis, who put her half-mended stocking down, and went away to the kitchen without a word. Looking at cousin Holman a minute or two afterwards, I saw that she had dropped her chin upon her breast, and had fallen fast asleep. I put the newspaper down, and was nearly following her example, when a waft of air from some unseen source slightly opened the door of communication with the kitchen, that Phillis must have left unfastened; and I saw part of her figure as she sat by the dresser, peeling apples with quick dexterity of finger, but with repeated turnings of her head towards some book lying on the dresser by her. I softly rose, and as softly went into the kitchen, and looked over her shoulder; before she was aware of my neighbourhood, I had seen that the book was in a language unknown to me, and the running title was 'L'Inferno.' Just as I was making out the relationship of this word to 'infernal', she started and turned round, and, as if continuing her thought as she spoke, she sighed out—

'Oh! it is so difficult *I* Can you help me?' putting her finger below a line.

'Me! I! Not I! I don't even know what language it is in!'

'Don't you see it is Dante?' she replied, almost petulantly; she did so want help.

'Italian, then?' said I dubiously; for I was not quite sure.

'Yes. And I do so want to make it out. Father can help me a little, for he knows Latin; but then he has so little time.'

' You have not much, I should think, if you have often to try and do two things at once, as you are doing now.'

' Oh! that's nothing! Father bought a heap of old books cheap. And I knew something about Dante before; and I have always liked Virgil so much. Paring apples is nothing, if I could only make out this old Italian. I wish you knew it.'

* I wish I did,' said I, moved by her impetuosity of tone. ' If, now, only Mr. Holdsworth were here; he can speak Italian like anything, I believe.'

' Who is Mr. Holdsworth ?' said Phillis, looking up.

' Oh, he's our head engineer. He's a regular first-rate fellow! He can do anything'; my hero-worship and my pride in my chief all coming into play. Besides, if I was not clever and book-learned myself, it was something to belong to some one who was.

* How is it that he speaks Italian ?' asked Phillis.

' He had to make a railway through Piedmont, which is in Italy, I believe; and he had to talk to all the workmen in Italian; and I have heard him say that for nearly two years he had only Italian books to read in the queer outlandish places he was in.'

' Oh, dear !' said Phillis; ' I wish'—and then she stopped. I was not quite sure whether to say the next thing that came into my mind; but I said it.

' Could I ask him anything about your book, or your difficulties ?'

She was silent for a minute or so, and then she made reply—

' No ! I think not. Thank you very much, though. I can generally puzzle a thing out in time. And then, perhaps, I remember it better than if some one had helped me. I'll put it away now, and you must move off, for I've got to make the paste for the pies; we always have a cold dinner on Sabbaths.'

' But I may stay and help you, mayn't I ?'

' Oh, yes; not that you can help at all, but I like to have you with me.'

I was both nattered and annoyed at this straightforward avowal. I was pleased that she liked me; but I was

young coxcomb enough to have wished to play the lover, and I was quite wise enough to perceive that if she had any idea of the kind in her head she would never have spoken out so frankly. I comforted myself immediately, however, by finding out that the grapes were sour. A great tall girl in a pinafore, half a head taller than I was, reading books that I had never heard of, and talking about them too, as of far more interest than any mere personal subjects; that was the last day on which I ever thought of my dear cousin Phillis as the possible mistress of my heart and life. But we were all the greater friends for this idea being utterly put away and buried out of sight.

Late in the evening the minister came home from Hornby. He had been calling on the different members of his flock; and unsatisfactory work it had proved to him, it seemed, from the fragments that dropped out of his thoughts into his talk.

'I don't see the men; they are all at their business, their shops, or their warehouses; they ought to be there. I have no fault to find with them; only if a pastor's teaching or words of admonition are good for anything, they are needed by the men as much as by the women.'

'Cannot you go and see them in their places of business, and remind them of their Christian privileges and duties, minister?' asked cousin Holman, who evidently thought that her husband's words could never be out of place.

'No !' said he, shaking his head. 'I judge them by myself. If there are clouds in the sky, and I am getting in the hay just ready for loading, and rain sure to come in the night, I should look ill upon Brother Robinson if he came into the field to speak about serious things.'

'But, at any rate, father, you do good to the women, and perhaps they repeat what you have said to them to their husbands and children ?'

'It is to be hoped they do, for I cannot reach the men directly; but the women are apt to tarry before coming to me, to put on ribbons and gauds; as if they could

hear the message I bear to them best in **their smart** clothes. Mrs. Dobson to-day—Phillis, I am thankful thou dost not care for the vanities of dress !'

Phillis reddened a little as she said, in a low humble voice—

'But I do, father, I'm afraid. I often wish I could wear pretty-coloured ribbons round my throat like the squire's daughters.'

'It's but natural, minister!' said his wife; 'I'm not above liking a silk gown better than a cotton one myself I'

'The love of dress is a temptation and a snare,' said he gravely. 'The true adornment is a meek and quiet spirit. And, wife,' said he, as a sudden thought crossed his mind, 'in that matter I, too, have sinned. I wanted to ask you, could we not sleep in the grey room, instead of our own ?'

'Sleep in the grey room ?—change our room at this time o' day !' cousin Holman asked, in dismay.

'Yes,' said he. 'It would save me from a daily temptation to anger. Look at my chin !' he continued; * I cut it this morning—I cut it on Wednesday when I was shaving; I do not know how many times I have cut it of late, and all from impatience at seeing Timothy Cooper at his work in the yard.'

'He's a downright lazy tyke !' said cousin Holman, 'He's not worth his wage. There's but little he can do, and what he can do, he does badly.'

'True,' said the minister. * But he is but, so to speak, a half-wit; and yet he has got a wife and children.'

'More shame for him !'

* But that is past change. And if I turn him off, no one else will take him on. Yet I cannot help watching him of a morning as he goes sauntering about his work in the yard; and I watch, and I watch, till the old Adam rises strong within me at his lazy ways, and some day, I am afraid, I shall go down and send him about his business—let alone the way in which he makes me cut myself while I am shaving—and then his wife **and** children will starve. I wish we could move to the grey room.'

I do not remember much more of my first visit to the Hope Farm. We went to chapel in Heathbridge, slowly and decorously walking along the lanes, ruddy and tawny with the colouring of the coming autumn. The minister walked a little before us, his hands behind his back, his head bent down, thinking about the discourse to be delivered to his people, cousin Holman said; and we spoke low and quietly, in order not to interrupt his thoughts. But I could not help noticing the respectful greetings which he received from both rich and poor as we went along; greetings which he acknowledged with a kindly wave of his hand, but with no words of reply. As we drew near the town, I could see some of the young fellows we met cast admiring looks on Phillis; and that made me look too. She had on a white gown, and a short black silk cloak, according to the fashion of the day. A straw bonnet, with brown ribbon strings; that was all. But what her dress wanted in colour, her sweet bonny face had. The walk made her cheeks bloom like the rose; the very whites of her eyes had a blue tinge in them, and her dark eyelashes brought out the depth of the blue eyes themselves. Her yellow hair was put away as straight as its natural curliness would allow. If she did not perceive the admiration she excited, I am sure cousin Holman did; for she looked as fierce and as proud as ever her quiet face could look, guarding her treasure, and yet glad to perceive that others could see that it was a treasure. That afternoon I had to return to Eltham to be ready for the next day's work. I found out afterwards that the minister and his family were all 'exercised in spirit', as to whether they did well in asking me to repeat my visits at the Hope Farm, seeing that of necessity I must return to Eltham on the Sabbath-day. However, they did go on asking me, and I went on visiting them, whenever my other engagements permitted me, Mr. Holdsworth being in this case, as in all, a kind and indulgent Mend. Nor did my new acquaintances oust him from my strong regard and admiration. I had room in my heart for all, I am happy to say, and as far as I can remember, I kept praising

each to the other in a manner which, if I had been an older man, living more amongst people of the world, I should have thought unwise, as well as a little ridiculous. It was unwise, certainly, as it was almost sure to cause disappointment if ever they did become acquainted; and perhaps it was ridiculous, though I do not think we any of us thought it so at the time. The minister used to listen to my accounts of Mr. Holdsworth's many accomplishments and various adventures in travel with the truest interest, and most kindly good faith; and Mr. Holdsworth in return liked to hear about my visits to the farm, and description of my cousins' life there—liked it, I mean, as much as he liked anything that was merely narrative, without leading to action.

So I went to the farm certainly, on an average, once a month during that autumn; the course of life there was so peaceful and quiet, that I can only remember one small event, and that was one that I think I took more notice of than any one else: Phillis left off wearing the pinafores that had always been so obnoxious to me: I do not know why they were banished, but on one of my visits I found them replaced by pretty linen aprons in the morning, and a black silk one in the afternoon. And the blue cotton gown became a 'brown stuff one as winter drew on; this sounds like some book I once read, in which a migration from the blue bed to the brown was spoken of as a great family event.

Towards Christmas my dear father came to see me, and to consult Mr. Holdsworth about the improvement which has since been known as 'Manning's driving wheel'. Mr. Holdsworth, as I think I have before said, had a very great regard for my father, who had been employed in the same great machine-shop in which Mr. Holdsworth had served his apprenticeship; and he and my father had many mutual jokes about one of these gentlemen-apprentices who used to set about his smith's work in white wash-leather gloves, for fear of spoiling his hands. Mr. Holdsworth often spoke to me about my father as having the same kind of genius for mechanical invention as that of George Stephenson, and my father had come

over now to consult him about several improvements, as well as an offer of partnership. It was a great pleasure to me to see the mutual regard of these two men; Mr. Holdsworth, young, handsome, keen, well-dressed, an object of admiration to all the youth of Eltham; my father, in his decent but unfashionable Sunday clothes, his plain, sensible face full of hard lines, the marks of toil and thought,—his hands blackened beyond the power of soap and water by years of labour in the foundry; speaking a strong Northern dialect, while Mr. Holdsworth had a long soft drawl in his voice, as many of the Southerners have, and was reckoned in Eltham to give himself airs.

Although most of my father's leisure time was occupied with conversations about the business I have mentioned, he felt that he ought not to leave Eltham without going to pay his respects to the relations who had been so kind to his son. So he and I ran up on an engine along the incomplete line as far as Heathbridge, and went, by invitation, to spend a day at the farm.

It was odd and yet pleasant to me to perceive how these two men, each having led up to this point such totally dissimilar lives, seemed to come together by instinct, after one quiet straight look into each other's faces. My father was a thin, wiry man of five foot seven; the minister was a broad-shouldered, fresh-coloured man of six foot one; they were neither of them great talkers in general—perhaps the minister the most so—but they spoke much to each other. My father went into the fields with the minister; I think I see him now, with his hands behind his back, listening intently to all explanations of tillage, and the different processes of farming; occasionally taking up an implement, as if unconsciously, and examining it with a critical eye, and now **and** then asking a question, which I could see was considered as pertinent by his companion. Then we returned to look **at** the cattle, housed and bedded in expectation of the snowstorm hanging black on the western horizon, and my father learned the points of a cow with as much **attention** as if he meant to turn farmer. He had his

little book that he used for mechanical memoranda and measurements in his pocket, and he took it out to write down 'straight back*', 'small muzzle', 'deep barrel', and I know not what else, under the head 'cow'. He was very critical on a turnip-cutting machine, the clumsiness of which first incited him to talk; and when we went into the house he sat thinking and quiet for a bit, while Phillis and her mother made the last preparations for tea, with a little unheeded apology from cousin Holman, because we were not sitting in the best parlour, which she thought might be chilly on so cold a night. I wanted nothing better than the blazing, crackling fire that sent a glow over all the house-place, and warmed the snowy flags under our feet till they seemed to have more heat than the crimson rug right in front of the fire. After tea, as Phillis and I were talking together very happily, I heard an irrepressible exclamation from cousin Holman—

'Whatever is the man about!'

And on looking round, I saw my father taking a straight burning stick out of the fire, and, after waiting for a minute, and examining the charred end to see if it was fitted for his purpose, he went to the hard-wood dresser, scoured to the last pitch of whiteness and cleanliness, and began drawing with the stick, the best substitute for chalk or charcoal within his reach, for his pocket-book pencil was not strong or bold enough for his purpose. When he had done, he began to explain his new model of a turnip-cutting machine to the minister, who had been watching him in silence all the time. Cousin Holman had, in the meantime, taken a duster out of a drawer, and, under pretence of being as much interested as her husband in the drawing, was secretly trying on an outside mark how easily it would come off, and whether it would leave her dresser as white as before. Then Phillis was sent for the book on dynamics, about which I had been consulted during my first visit, and my father had to explain many difficulties, which he did in language as clear as his mind, making drawings with his stick wherever they were needed as illustrations, the

minister sitting with his massive head resting on his hands, his elbows on the table, almost unconscious of Phillis, leaning over and listening greedily, with her hand on his shoulder, sucking in information like her father's own daughter. I was rather sorry for cousin Holman; I had been so once or twice before; for do what she would, she was completely unable even to understand the pleasure her husband and daughter took in intellectual pursuits, much less to care in the least herself for the pursuits themselves, and was thus unavoidably thrown out of some of their interests. I had once or twice thought she was a little jealous of her own child, as a fitter companion for her husband than she was herself; and I fancied the minister himself was aware of this feeling, for I had noticed an occasional sudden change of subject, and a tenderness of appeal in his voice as he spoke to her, which always made her look contented and peaceful again. I do not think that Phillis ever perceived these little shadows; in the first place, she had such complete reverence for her parents that she listened to them both as if they had been St. Peter and St. Paul; and besides, she was always too much engrossed with any matter in hand to think about other people's manners and looks.

This night I could see, though she did not, how much she was winning on my father. She asked a few questions which showed that she had followed his explanations up to that point; possibly, too, her unusual beauty might have something to do with his favourable impression of her; but he made no scruple of expressing his admiration of her to her father and mother in her absence from the room; and from that evening I date a project of his which came out to me a day or two afterwards, as we sat in my little three-cornered room in Eltham.

* Paul,' he began, 'I never thought to be a rich man; but I think it's coming upon me. Some folk are making a deal of my new machine' (calling it by its technical name), * and Ellison, of the Borough Green Works, has gone so far as to ask me to be his partner.'

* Mr. Ellison the justice!—who fives in King Street?

why, he drives his carriage!' said I, doubting, yet exultant.

'Aye, lad, John Ellison. But that's no sign that I shall drive my carriage. Though I should like to save thy mother walking, for she's not so young as she was. But that's a long way off, anyhow. I reckon I should start with a third profit. It might be seven hundred, or it might be more. I should like to have the power to work out some fancies o' mine. I care for that much more than for th' brass. And Ellison has no lads; and by nature the business would come to thee in course o' time. Ellison's lassies are but bits o' things, and are not like to come by husbands just yet; and when they do, maybe they'll not be in the mechanical line. It will be an opening for thee, lad, if thou art steady. Thou'rt not great shakes, I know, in th' inventing line; but many a one gets on better without having fancies for something he does not see and never has seen. I'm right down glad to see that mother's cousins are such uncommon folk for sense and goodness. I have taken the minister to my heart like a brother, and she is a womanly quiet sort of a body. And I'll tell you frank, Paul, it will be a happy day for me if ever you can come and tell me that Phillis Holman is like to be my daughter. I think if that lass had not a penny, she would be the making of a man; and she'll have yon house and lands, and you may be her match yet in fortune, if all goes well.'

I was growing as red as fire; I did not know what to say, and yet I wanted to say something; but the idea of having a wife of my own at some future day, though it had often floated about in my own head, sounded so strange when it was thus first spoken about by my father. He saw my confusion, and half smiling said—

* Well, lad, what dost say to the old father's plans? Thou art but young, to be sure; but when I was thy age, I would ha' given my right hand if I might ha' thought of the chance of wedding the lass I cared for'——

'My mother?' asked I, a little struck by the change of his tone of voice.

'No! not thy mother. Thy mother is a very good

woman—none better. No! the lass I cared for at nineteen ne'er knew how I loved her, and a year or two after and she was dead, and ne'er knew. I think she would ha' been glad to ha' known it, poor Molly; but I had to leave the place where we lived for to try to earn my bread—and I meant to come back—but before ever I did, she was dead and gone: I ha' never gone there since. But if you fancy Phillis Holman, and can get her to fancy you, my lad, it shall go different with you, Paul, to what it did with your father.'

I took counsel with myself very rapidly, and I came to a clear conclusion.

'Father,' said I, 'if I fancied Phillis ever so much, she would never fancy me. I like her as much as I could like a sister; and she likes me as if I were her brother—her younger brother.'

I could see my father's countenance fall a little.

'You see, she's so clever—she's more like a man than a woman—she knows Latin and Greek.'

'She'd forget 'em, if she'd a houseful of children,' was my father's comment on this.

'But she knows many a thing besides, and is wise as well as learned: she has been so much with her father. She would never think much of me, and I should like my wife to think a deal of her husband.'

'It is not just book-learning or the want of it as makes a wife think much or little of her husband,' replied my father, evidently unwilling to give up a project which had taken deep root in his mind. 'It s a something—I don't rightly know how to call it—if he's manly, and sensible, and straightforward; and I reckon you're that, my boy.'

'i don't think I should like to have a wife taller than I am, father,' said I, smiling; he smiled too, but not heartily.

'Well,' said he, after a pause. 'It's but a few days I've been thinking of it, but I'd got as fond of my notion as if it had been a new engine as I'd been planning out. Here's our Paul, thinks I to myself, a good sensible breed o' lad, as has never vexed or troubled his mother

or me; with a good business opening out before him, age nineteen, not so bad-looking, though perhaps not to call handsome, and here's his cousin, not too near a cousin, but just nice, as one may say; aged seventeen, good and true, and well brought up to work with her hands as well as her head; a scholar—but that can't be helped, and is more her misfortune than her fault, seeing she is the only child of a scholar—and as I said afore, once she's a wife and a mother she'll forget it all, I'll be bound—with a good fortune in land and house when it shall please the Lord to take her parents to himself; with eyes like poor Molly's for beauty, a colour that comes and goes on a milk-white skin, and as pretty a mouth'——

'Why, Mr. Manning, what fair lady are you describing?' asked Mr. Holdsworth, who had come quickly and suddenly upon our *tete-a-tete*, and had caught my father's last words as he entered the room.

Both my father and I felt rather abashed; it was such an odd subject for us to be talking about; but my father, like a straightforward, simple man as he was, spoke out the truth.

'I've been telling Paul of Ellison's offer, and saying how good an opening it made for him'——

'I wish I'd as good,' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'But has the business a "pretty mouth"?''

'You're always so full of your joking, Mr. Holdsworth,' said my father. 'I was going to say that if he and his cousin Phillis Holman liked to make it up between them, I would put no spoke in the wheel.'

'Phillis Holman!' said Mr. Holdsworth. 'Is she the daughter of the minister-farmer out at Heathbridge? Have I been helping on the course of true love by letting you go there so often? I knew nothing of it.'

'There is nothing to know,' said I, more annoyed than I chose to show. 'There is no more true love in the case than may be between the first brother and sister you may choose to meet. I have been telling father she would never think of me; she's a great deal taller and cleverer; and I'd rather be taller and more learned than my wife when I have one.'

' And it is she, then, that has the pretty mouth your father spoke about ? I should think that would be an antidote to the cleverness and learning. But I ought to apologize for breaking in upon your last night; I came upon business to your father.'

And then he and my father began to talk about many things that had no interest for me just then, and I began to go over again my conversation with my father. The more I thought about it, the more I felt that I had spoken truly about my feelings towards Phillis Holman. I loved her dearly as a sister, but I could never fancy her as my wife. Still less could I think of her ever—yes, *condescending*, that is the word—condescending to marry me. I was roused from a reverie on what I should like my possible wife to be, by hearing my father's warm praise of the minister, as a most unusual character; how they had got back from the diameter of driving-wheels to the subject of the Holmans I could never tell; but I saw that my father's weighty praises were exciting some curiosity in Mr. Holdsworth's mind; indeed, he said, almost in a voice of reproach—

' Why, Paul, you never told me what kind of a fellow this minister-cousin of yours was.'

' I don't know that I found out, sir,' said I. ' But if I had, I don't think you'd have listened to me, as you have done to my father.'

' No I most likely not, old fellow,' replied Mr. Holdsworth, laughing. And again and afresh I saw what a handsome, pleasant, clear face his was ; and though this evening I had been a bit put out with him—through his sudden coming, and his having heard my father's open-hearted confidence—my hero resumed all his empire over me by his bright merry laugh.

And if he had not resumed his old place that night, he would have done so the next day, when, after my father's departure, Mr. Holdsworth spoke about him with such just respect for his character, such ungrudging admiration of his great mechanical genius, that I was compelled to say, almost unawares—

' Thank you, sir. I am very much obliged to you.'

'Oh, you're not at all. I am only speaking the truth. Here's a Birmingham workman, self-educated, one may say—having never associated with stimulating minds, or had what advantages travel and contact with the world may be supposed to afford—working out his own thoughts into steel and iron, making a scientific name for himself—a fortune, if it pleases him to work for money—and keeping his singleness of heart, his perfect simplicity of manner; it puts me out of patience to think of my expensive schooling, my travels hither and thither, my heaps of scientific books, and I have done nothing to speak of. But it's evidently good blood; there's that Mr. Holman, that cousin of yours, made of the same stuff.'

'But he's only cousin because he married my mother's second cousin,' said I.

'That knocks a pretty theory on the head, and twice over, too. I should like to make Holman's acquaintance.'

'I am sure they would be so glad to see you at Hope Farm,' said I eagerly. 'In fact, they've asked me to bring you several times: only I thought you would find it dull.'

'Not at all. I can't go yet though, even if you do get me an invitation; for the——Company want me to go to the——Valley, and look over the ground a bit for them, to see if it would do for a branch line; it's a job which may take me away for some time; but I shall be backwards and forwards, and you're quite up to doing what is needed in my absence; the only work that may be beyond you is keeping old Jevons from drinking.'

He went on giving me directions about the management of the men employed on the Une, and no more was said then, or for several months, about his going to Hope Farm. He went off into——Valley, a dark overshadowed dale, where the sun seemed to set behind the hills before four o'clock on midsummer afternoon.

Perhaps it was this that brought on the attack of low fever which he had soon after the beginning of the new year; he was very ill for many weeks, almost many months; a married sister—his only relation, I think—

came down from London to nurse him, and I went over to him when I could, to see him, and give him 'masculine news', as he called it; reports of the progress of the line, which, I am glad to say, I was able to carry on in his absence, in the slow, gradual way which suited the company best, while trade was in a languid state and money dear in the market. Of course, with this occupation for my scanty leisure, I did not often go over to Hope Farm. Whenever I did go, I met with a thorough welcome; and many inquiries were made as to Holdsworth's illness, and the progress of his recovery.

At length, in June I think it was, he was sufficiently recovered to come back to his lodgings at Eltham, and resume part at least of his work. His sister, Mrs. Robinson, had been obliged to leave him some weeks before, owing to some epidemic amongst her own children. As long as I had seen Mr. Holdsworth in the rooms at the little inn at Hensleydale, where I had been accustomed to look upon him as an invalid, I had not been aware of the visible shake his fever had given to his health. But, once back in the old lodgings, where I had always seen him so buoyant, eloquent, decided, and vigorous in former days, my spirits sank at the change in one whom I had always regarded with a strong feeling of admiring affection. He sank into silence and despondency after the least exertion; he seemed as if he could not make up his mind to any action, or else that, when it was made up, he lacked strength to carry out his purpose. Of course, it was but the natural state of slow convalescence, after so sharp an illness; but, at the time, I did not know this, and perhaps I represented his state as more serious than it was to my kind relations at Hope Farm; who, in their grave, simple, eager way, immediately thought of the only help they could give.

'Bring him out here,' said the minister. 'Our air here is good, to a proverb; the June days are fine; he may loiter away his time in the hay-field, and the sweet smells will be a balm in themselves—better than physic.'

'And,' said cousin Holman, scarcely waiting for her husband to finish his sentence, 'tell him there is new

milk and fresh eggs to be had for the asking; it's lucky Daisy has just calved, for her milk is always as good as other cows' cream; and there is the plaid room with the morning sun all streaming in.'

Phillis said nothing, but looked as much interested in the project as any one. I took it up myself. I wanted them to see him; him to know them. I proposed it to him when I got home. He was too languid, after the day's fatigue, to be willing to make the little exertion of going amongst strangers; and disappointed me by almost declining to accept the invitation I brought. The next morning it was different; he apologized for his ungraciousness of the night before; and told me that he would get all things in train, so as to be ready to go out with me to Hope Farm on the following Saturday.

'For you must go with me, Manning,' said he; 'I used to be as impudent a fellow as need be, and rather liked going amongst strangers and making my way; but since my illness I am almost like a girl, and turn hot and cold with shyness, as they do, I fancy.'

So it was fixed. We were to go out to Hope Farm on Saturday afternoon; and it was also understood that if the air and the life suited Mr. Holdsworth, he was to remain there for a week or ten days, doing what work he could at that end of the line, while I took his place at Eltham to the best of my ability. I grew a little nervous, as the time drew near, and wondered how the brilliant Holdsworth would agree with the quiet quaint family of the minister; how they would like him and many of his half-foreign ways. I tried to prepare him, by telling him from time to time little things about the goings-on at Hope Farm.

'Manning,' said he, 'I see you don't think I am half good enough for your friends. Out with it, man.'

'No,' I replied boldly. 'I think you are good; but I don't know if you are quite of their kind of goodness.'

'And you've found out already that there is greater chance of disagreement between two "kinds of goodness", each having its own idea of right, than between

a given goodness and a moderate degree of naughtiness—which last often arises from an indifference to right ? '

' I don't know. I think you're talking metaphysics, and I am sure that's bad for you.'

' " When a man talks to you in a way that you don't understand about a thing which he does not understand, them's metaphysics." You remember the clown's definition, don't you, Manning ?'

' No, I don't,' said I. ' But what I do understand is, that you must go to bed; and tell me at what time we must start to-morrow, that I may go to Hepworth, and get those letters written we were talking about this morning.'

' Wait till to-morrow, and let us see what the day is like,' he answered, with such languid indecision as showed me he was over-fatigued. So I went my way.

The morrow was blue and sunny, and beautiful; the very perfection of an early summer's day. Mr. Holdsworth was all impatience to be off into the country; morning had brought back his freshness and strength, and consequent eagerness to be doing. I was afraid we were going to my cousin's farm rather too early, before they would expect us ; but what could I do with such a restless vehement man as Holdsworth was that morning ? We came down upon the Hope Farm before the dew was off the grass on the shady side of the lane ; the great house-dog was loose, basking in the sun, near the closed side door. I was surprised at this door being shut, for all summer long it was open from morning to night; but it was only on latch. I opened it, Rover watching me with half-suspicious, half-trustful eyes. The room was empty.

' I don't know where they can be/ said I. ' But come in and sit down while I go and look for them. You must be tired.'

' Not I. This sweet balmy air is like a thousand tonics. Besides, this room is hot, and smells of those pungent wood-ashes. What are we to do ? '

' Go round to the kitchen. Betty will tell us where they are.'

So we went round into the farmyard, Rover accompanying us out of a grave sense of duty. Betty was washing out her milk-pans in the cold bubbling spring-water that constantly trickled in and out of a stone trough. In such weather as this most of her kitchen-work was done out of doors.

⁴ 'Eh, dear !' said she, 'the minister and missus is away at Hornby! They ne'er thought of your coming so betimes ! The missus had some errands to do, and she thought as she'd walk with the minister and be back by dinner-time.'

'Did not they expect us to dinner ?' said I.

'Well, they did, and they did not, as I may say. Missus said to me the cold lamb would do well enough if you did not come; and if you did I was to put on a chicken and some bacon to boil; and I'll go do it now, for it is hard to boil bacon enough.'

'And is Phillis gone, too ?' Mr. Holdsworth was making friends with Rover.

'No ! She's just somewhere about. I reckon you'll find her in the kitchen-garden, getting peas.'

'Let us go there,' said Holdsworth, suddenly leaving off his play with the dog.

So I led the way into the kitchen-garden. It was in the first promise of a summer profuse in vegetables and fruits. Perhaps it was not so much cared for as other parts of the property; but it was more attended to than most kitchen-gardens belonging to farm-houses. There were borders of flowers along each side of the gravel-walks ; and there was an old sheltering wall on the north side covered with tolerably choice fruit-trees; there was a slope down to the fish pond at the end, where there were great strawberry-beds; and raspberry-bushes and rose-bushes grew wherever there was a space; it seemed a chance which had been planted. Long rows of peas stretched at right angles from the main walk, and I saw Phillis stooping down among them, before she saw us. As soon as she heard our cranching steps on the gravel, she stood up, and, shading her eyes from the sun, recognized us. She was quite still for a moment, and then

came slowly towards us, blushing a little from evident shyness. I had never seen Phillis shy before.

This is Mr. Holdsworth, Phillis,' said I, as soon as I had shaken hands with her. She glanced up at him, and then looked down, more flushed than ever at his grand formality of taking his hat off and bowing; such manners had never been seen at Hope Farm before.

'Father and mother are out. They will be so sorry; you did not write, Paul, as you said you would.'

'It was my fault,' said Holdsworth, understanding what she meant as well as if she had put it more fully into words. 'I have not yet given up all the privileges of an invalid; one of which is indecision. Last night, when your cousin asked me at what time we were to start, I really could not make up my mind.'

Phillis seemed as if she could not make up her mind as to what to do with us. I tried to help her—

'Have you finished getting peas?' taking hold of the half-filled basket she was unconsciously holding in her hand; 'or may we stay and help you?'

'If you would. But perhaps it will tire you, sir?' added she, speaking now to Holdsworth.

'Not a bit,' said he. 'It will carry me back twenty years in my life, when I used to gather peas in my grandfather's garden. I suppose I may eat a few as I go along?'

'Certainly, sir. But if you went to the strawberry-beds you would find some strawberries ripe, and Paul can show you where they are.'

'I am afraid you distrust me. I can assure you I know the exact fullness at which peas should be gathered. I take great care not to pluck them when they are unripe. I will not be turned off, as unfit for my work.'

This was a style of half-joking talk that Phillis was not accustomed to. She looked for a moment as if she would have liked to defend herself from the playful charge of distrust made against her, but she ended by not saying a word. We all plucked our peas in busy silence for the next five minutes. Then Holdsworth lifted himself up from between the rows, and said, a little wearily—

* 1 am afraid I must strike work. I am not as strong as I fancied myself.'

Phillis was full of penitence immediately. He did, indeed, look pale; and she blamed herself for having allowed him to help her.

' It was very thoughtless of me. I did not know— 1 thought, perhaps, you really liked it. 1 ought to have offered you something to eat, sir! Oh, Paul, we have gathered quite enough ; how stupid I was to forget that Mr. Holdsworth had been i l l ! ' And in a blushing hurry she led the way towards the house. We went in, and she moved a heavy cushioned chair forwards, into which Holdsworth was only too glad to sink. Then with deft and quiet speed she brought in a little tray—wine, water, cake, home-made bread, and newly-churned butter. She stood by in some anxiety till, after bite and sup, the colour returned to Mr. Holdsworth's face, and he would fain have made us some laughing apologies for the fright he had given us. But then Phillis drew back from her innocent show of care and interest, and relapsed into the cold shyness habitual to her when she was first thrown into the company of strangers. She brought out the last week's county paper (which Mr. Holdsworth had read five days ago), and then quietly withdrew; and then he subsided into languor, leaning back and shutting his eyes as if he would go to sleep. I stole into the kitchen after Phillis; but she had made the round of the corner of the house outside, and I found her sitting on the horse-mount, with her basket of peas, and a basin into which she was shelling them. Rover lay at her feet, snapping now and then at the flies. I went to her, and tried to help her; but somehow the sweet crisp young peas found their way more frequently into my mouth than into the basket, while we talked together in a low tone, fearful of being overheard through the open casements of the house-place in which Holdsworth was resting.

' Don't you think him handsome ? ' asked I.

' Perhaps—yes—I have hardly looked at him,' she replied. **But** is not he very like a foreigner ? '

' Yes, he cuts his hair foreign fashion,' said I,
' I like an Englishman to look like an Englishman/
' I don't think he thinks about it. He says he began that way when he was in Italy, because everybody wore it so, and it is natural to keep it on in England.'

' Not if he began it in Italy because everybody there wore it so. Everybody here wears it differently.'

I was a little offended with Phillis's logical fault-finding with my friend; and I determined to change the subject.

' When is your mother coming home ? '

' I should think she might come any time now; but she had to go and see Mrs. Morton, who was ill, and she might be kept, and not be home till dinner. Don't you think you ought to go and see how Mr. Holdsworth is going on, Paul ? He may be faint again.'

I went at her bidding; but there was no need for it. Mr. Holdsworth was up, standing by the window, his hands in his pockets; he had evidently been watching us. He turned away as I entered.

' So that is the girl I found your good father planning for your wife, Paul, that evening when I interrupted you! Are you of the same coy mind still ? It did not look like it a minute ago.'

' Phillis and I understand each other,' I replied sturdily.
* We are like brother and sister. She would not have me as a husband if there was not another man in the world; and it would take a deal to make me think of her—as my father wishes' (somehow I did not like to say ' as a wife '), ' but we love each other dearly.'

' Well, I am rather surprised at it—not at your loving each other in a brother-and-sister kind of way—but at your finding it so impossible to fall in love with such a beautiful woman.'

Woman ! beautiful woman ! I had thought of Phillis as a comely but awkward girl; and I could not banish the pinafore from my mind's eye when I tried to picture her to myself. Now I turned, as Mr. Holdsworth had done, to look at her again out of the window: she had just finished her task, and was standing up, her back to us, holding the basket, and the basin in it, high in air,

out of Rover's reach, who was giving vent to his delight at the probability of a change of place by glad leaps and barks, and snatches at what he imagined to be a withheld prize. At length she grew tired of their mutual play, and with a feint of striking him, and a * Down, Kover ! do hush !' she looked towards the window where we were standing, as if to reassure herself that no one had been disturbed by the noise, and seeing us, she coloured all over, and hurried away, with Rover still curving in sinuous lines about her as she walked.

'I should like to have sketched her,' said Mr. Holds* worth, as he turned away. He went back to his chair, and rested in silence for a minute or two. Then he was up again.

'I would give a good deal for a book,' said he. 'It would keep me quiet.' He began to look round ; there were a few volumes at one end of the shovel-board.

'Fifth volume of Matthew Henry's *Commentary*,' said he, reading their titles aloud. '*Housewife's Complete Manual*; *Bemdge on Prayer* ; *L' Inferno*—Dante !' in great surprise. 'Why, who reads this ?'

'I told you Phillis read it. Don't you remember ? She knows Latin and Greek, too.'

'To be sure ! I remember ! But somehow I never put two and two together. That quiet girl, full of household work, is the wonderful scholar, then, that put you to rout with her questions when you first began to come here. To be sure, "Cousin Phillis!" What's here ? a paper with the hard, obsolete words written out. I wonder what sort of a dictionary she has got. Baretti won't tell her all these words. Stay! I have got a pencil here. I'll write down the most accepted meanings, and save her a little trouble.'

So he took her book and the paper back to the little round table, and employed himself in writing explanations and definitions of the words which had troubled her. I was not sure if he was not taking a liberty; it did not quite please me, and yet I did not know why. He had only just done, **and** replaced the paper in the book, **and** put the latter back in its place, when I **heard** the **sound**

of wheels stopping in the lane, and looking out, I saw cousin Holman getting out of a neighbour's gig, making her little curtsy of acknowledgement, and dien coming towards the house. I went out to meet her.

' Oh, Paul!' said she, ' I am so sorry I was kept; and then Thomas Dobson said if I would wait a quarter of an hour he would—But where's your friend Mr. Holdsworth? I hope he is come? '

Just then he came out, and with his pleasant, cordial manner took her hand, and thanked her for asking him to come out here to get strong.

' I'm sure I am very glad to see you, sir. It was the minister's thought. I took it into my head you would be dull in our quiet house, for Paul says you've been such a great traveller; but the minister said that dullness would perhaps suit you while you were but ailing, and that I was to ask Paul to be here as much as he could. I hope you'll find yourself happy with us, I'm sure, sir. Has Phillis given you something to eat and drink, I wonder? there 's a deal in eating a little often, if one has to get strong after an illness.' And then she began to question him as to the details of his indisposition in her simple motherly way. He seemed at once to understand her, and to enter into friendly relations with her. It was not quite the same in the evening, when the minister came home. Men have always a little natural antipathy to get over when they first meet as strangers. But in this case each was disposed to make an effort to like the other; only each was to each a specimen of an unknown class, I had to leave the Hope Farm on Sunday afternoon, as I had Mr. Holdsworth's work as well as my own to look to in Eltham; and I was not at all sure how things would go on during the week that Holdsworth was to remain on his visit; I had been once or twice in hot water already, at the near clash of opinions between the minister and my much-vaunted friend. On the Wednesday I received a short note from Holdsworth; he was going to stay on, and return with me on the following Sunday, and he wanted me to send him a

certain list of books, his theodolite, and other surveying instruments, all of which could easily be conveyed down the line to Heathbridge. I went to his lodgings and picked out the books. Italian, Latin, trigonometry; a pretty considerable parcel they made, besides the implements. I began to be curious as to the general progress of affairs at Hope Farm, but I could not go over till the Saturday. At Heathbridge I found Holdsworth, come to meet me. He was looking quite a different man to what I had left him; embrowned; sparkles in his eyes, so languid before. I told him how much stronger he looked.

'Yes !' said he. 'I am fidgeting-fain to be at work again. Last week I dreaded the thoughts of my employment; now I am full of desire to begin. This week in the country has done wonders for me.'

'You have enjoyed yourself, then ?'

'Oh ! it has been perfect in its way. Such a thorough country life ! and yet removed from the dullness which I always used to fancy accompanied country life, by the extraordinary intelligence of the minister. I have fallen into calling him "the minister", like every one else.'

'You get on with him, then ?' said I. 'I was a little afraid.'

'I was on the verge of displeasing him once or twice, I fear, with random assertions and exaggerated expressions, such as one always uses with other people, and thinks nothing of; but I tried to check myself when I saw how it shocked the good man; and really it is very wholesome exercise, this trying to make one's words represent one's thoughts, instead of merely looking to their effect on others.'

'Then you are quite friends now ?' I asked.

'Yes, thoroughly; at any rate, as far as I go. I never met a man with such a desire for knowledge. In information, as far as it can be gained from books, he far exceeds me on most subjects; but then I have travelled and seen——Were not you surprised at the list of things I sent for ?'

' Yes; I thought it did not promise much rest/

' Oh, some of the books were for the minister, and some for his daughter. (I call her Phillis to myself, but I use euphemisms in speaking about her to others. I don't like to seem familiar, and yet Miss Holman is a term I have never heard used.)'

' I thought the Italian books were for her.'

' Yes ! Fancy her trying at Dante for her first book in Italian ! I had a capital novel by Manzoni, *I Promessi Sposi*, just the thing for a beginner ! and if she must still puzzle out Dante, my dictionary is far better than hers.'

' Then she found out you had written those definitions on her list of words ?'

' Oh ! yes '—with a smile of amusement and pleasure. He was going to tell me what had taken place, but checked himself.

* But I don't think the minister will like your having given her a novel to read ?'

' Pooh ! What can be more harmless ? Why make a bugbear of a word ! It is as pretty and innocent a tale as can be met with. You don't suppose they take Virgil for gospel ?'

By this time we were at the farm. I think Phillis gave me a warmer welcome than usual, and cousin Holman was kindness itself. Yet somehow I felt as if I had lost my place, and that Holdsworth had taken it. He knew all the ways of the house; he was full of little filial attentions to cousin Holman; he treated Phillis with the affectionate condescension of an elder brother; not a bit more; not in any way different. He questioned me about the progress of affairs in Eltham with eager interest.

' Ah !' said cousin Holman, ' you'll be spending a different kind of time next week to what you have done this ! I can see how busy you'll make yourself ! But if you don't take care you'll be ill again, and have to come back to our quiet ways of going on.'

* Do you suppose I shall need to be ill to wish to come back here ?' he answered warmly. * I am only afraid

you have treated me so kindly that I shall always be turning up on your hands.'

'That's right,' she replied. 'Only don't go and make yourself ill by over-work. I hope you'll go on with a cup of new milk every morning, for I am sure that is the best medicine ; and put a teaspoonful of rum in it, if you like; many a one speaks highly of that, only we had no rum in the house.'

I brought with me an atmosphere of active life which I think he had begun to miss; and it was natural that he should seek my company, after his week of retirement. Once I saw Phillis looking at us as we talked together with a kind of wistful curiosity; but as soon as she caught my eye, she turned away, blushing deeply.

That evening I had a little talk with the minister. I strolled along the Hornby road to meet him; for Holdsworth was giving Phillis an Italian lesson, and cousin Holman had fallen asleep over her work.

Somehow, and not unwillingly on my part, our talk fell on the friend whom I had introduced to the Hope Farm.

'Yes ! I like him !' said the minister, weighing his words a little as he spoke. 'I like him. I hope I am justified in doing it, but he takes hold of me, as it were; and I have almost been afraid lest he carries me away, in spite of my judgement.'

'He is a good fellow ; indeed he is,' said I. 'My father thinks well of him; and I have seen a deal of him. I would not have had him come here if I did not know that you would approve of him.'

'Yes' (once more hesitating), * I like him, and I think he is an upright man; there is a want of seriousness in his talk at times, but, at the same time, it is wonderful to listen to him ! He makes Horace and Virgil living, instead of dead, by the stories he tells me of his sojourn in the very countries where they lived, and where to this day, he says——But it is like dram-drinking. I listen to him till I forget my duties, and am carried off my feet. Last Sabbath evening he led us away into talk on profane subjects ill befitting the day.'

By this time we were at the house, and our conversation stopped. But before the day was out, I saw the unconscious hold that my friend had got over all the family. And no wonder: he had seen so much and done so much as compared to them, and he told about it all so easily and naturally, and yet as I never heard any one else do; and his ready pencil was out in an instant to draw on scraps of paper all sorts of illustrations—modes of drawing up water in Northern Italy, wine-carts, buffaloes, stone-pines, I know not what. After we had all looked at these drawings, Phillis gathered them together, and took them.

It is many years since I have seen thee, Edward Holdsworth, but thou wast a delightful fellow! Aye, and a good one too; though much sorrow was caused by thee!

PART III

JUST after this I went home for a week's holiday. Everything was prospering there; my father's new partnership gave evident satisfaction to both parties. There was no display of increased wealth in our modest household; but my mother had a few extra comforts provided for her by her husband. I made acquaintance with Mr. and Mrs. Ellison, and first saw pretty Margaret Ellison, who is now my wife. When I returned to Eltham, I found that a step was decided upon which had been in contemplation for some time; that Holdsworth and I should remove our quarters to Hornby; our daily presence, and as much of our time as possible, being required for the completion of the line at that end.

Of course this led to greater facility of intercourse with the Hope Farm people. We could easily walk out there after our day's work was done, and spend a balmy evening hour or two, and yet return before the summer's twilight had quite faded away. Many a time, indeed, we would fain have stayed longer—the open air, the fresh and pleasant country, made so agreeable a contrast to the close, hot town lodgings which

I shared with Mr. Holdsworth ; but early hours, both at eve and morn, were an imperative necessity with the minister, and he made no scruple at turning either or both of us out of the house directly after evening prayer, or 'exercise,' as he called it. The remembrance of many a happy day, and of several little scenes, comes back upon me as I think of that summer. They rise like pictures to my memory, and in this way I can date their succession; for I know that corn-harvest must have come after hay-making, apple-gathering after corn-harvest.

The removal to Hornby took up some time, during which we had neither of us any leisure to go out to the Hope Farm. Mr. Holdsworth had been out there once during my absence at home. One sultry evening, when work was done, he proposed our walking out and paying the Holmans a visit. It so happened that I had omitted to write my usual weekly letter home in our press of business, and I wished to finish that before going out. Then he said that he would go, and that I could follow him if I liked. This I did in about an hour; the weather was so oppressive, I remember, that I took off my coat as I walked, and hung it over my arm. All the doors and windows at the farm were open when I arrived there, and every tiny leaf on the trees was still. The silence of the place was profound ; at first I thought that it was entirely deserted; but just as I drew near the door I heard a weak, sweet voice begin to sing ; it was cousin Holman, all by herself in the house-place, piping up a hymn, as she knitted away in the clouded light. She gave me a kindly welcome, and poured out all the small domestic news of the fortnight past upon me, and, in return, I told her about my own people and *my* visit at home.

'Where were the rest?' at length I asked.

Betty and the men were in the field helping with the last load of hay, for the minister said there would be rain before the morning. Yes, and the minister himself, and Phillis, and Mr. Holdsworth, were all there helping. She thought that she herself could have done

something; but perhaps she was the least fit for hay-making of any one ; and somebody must stay at home and take care of the house, there were so many tramps about; if I had not had something to do with the railroad she would have called them navvies. I asked her if she minded being left alone, as I should like to go and help ; and having her full and glad permission to leave her alone, I went off, following her directions: through the farmyard, past the cattle-pond, into the ash-field, beyond into the higher field with two holly-bushes in the middle. I arrived there : there was Betty with all the farming men, and a cleared field, and a heavily laden cart; one man at the top of the great pile ready to catch the fragrant hay which the others threw up to him with their pitchforks; a little heap of cast-off clothes in a corner of the field (for the heat, even at seven o'clock, was insufferable), a few cans and baskets, and Rover lying by them panting, and keeping watch. Plenty of loud, hearty, cheerful talking ; but no minister, no Phillis, no Mr. Holdsworth. Betty saw me first, and understanding who it was that I was in search of, she came towards me.

' They're out yonder—agait wi' them things o' Measter Holdsworth's.'

So ' out yonder ' I went; out on to a broad upland common, full of red sand-banks, and sweeps and hollows; bordered by dark firs, purple in the coming shadows, but near at hand all ablaze with flowering gorse, or, as we call it in the south, furze-bushes, which, seen against the belt of distant trees, appeared brilliantly golden. On this heath, a little way from the field-gate, I saw the three. I counted their heads, joined together in an eager group over Holdsworth's theodolite. He was teaching the minister the practical art of surveying and taking a level. I was wanted to assist, and was quickly set to work to hold the chain. Phillis was as intent as her father ; she had hardly time to greet me, so desirous was she to hear some answer to her father's question.

So we went on, the dark clouds still gathering, for

COUS

perhaps five minutes a
blinding lightning and
rattling peal of thund
sooner than I expected, soo .
for : the rain delayed not; it came pouring .
what were we to do for shelter ? Phillis had nothing
on but her indoor things—no bonnet, no shawl. Quick
as the darting lightning around us, Holdsworth took off
his coat and wrapped it round her neck and shoulders,
and, almost without a word, hurried us all into such
poor shelter as one of the over-hanging sand-banks could
give. There we were, cowered down, close together,
Phillis innermost, almost too tightly packed to free her
arms enough to divest herself of the coat, which she,
in her turn, tried to put lightly over Holdsworth's
shoulders. In doing so she touched his shirt.

' Oh, how wet you are !' she cried, in pitying dismay;
' and you've hardly got over your fever ! Oh, Mr. Holdsworth, I am so sorry !' He turned his head a little, smiling at her.

' If I do catch cold, it is all my fault for having deluded you into staying out here ! ' But she only murmured again, ' I am so sorry.'

The minister spoke now. ' It is a regular downpour. Please God that the hay is saved ! But there is no likelihood of its ceasing, and I had better go home at once, and send you all some wraps ; umbrellas will not be safe with yonder thunder and lightning.'

Both Holdsworth and I offered to go instead of him ; but he was resolved, although perhaps it would have been wiser if Holdsworth, wet as he already was, had kept himself in exercise. As he moved off, Phillis crept out, and could see on to the storm-swept heath. Part of Holdsworth's apparatus still remained exposed to all the rain. Before we could have any warning, she had rushed out of the shelter and collected the various things, and brought them back in triumph to where we crouched. Holdsworth had stood up, uncertain whether to go to her assistance or not. She came running back, her long lovely hair floating and dripping,

her eyes glad and bright, and her colour freshened to a glow of health by the exercise and the rain.

'Now, Miss Holman, that's what I call wilful,' said Holdsworth, as she gave them to him. 'No, I won't thank you' (his looks were thanking her all the time). * My little bit of dampness annoyed you, because you thought I had got wet in your service; so you were determined to make me as uncomfortable as you were yourself. It was an unchristian piece of revenge !'

His tone of badinage (as the French call it) would have been palpable enough to any one accustomed to the world ; but Phillis was not, and it distressed or rather bewildered her. 'Unchristian' had to her a very serious meaning ; it was not a word to be used lightly ; and though she did not exactly understand what wrong it was that she was accused of doing, she was evidently desirous to throw off the imputation. At first her earnestness to disclaim unkind motives amused Holdsworth ; while his light continuance of the joke perplexed her still more ; but at last he said something gravely, and in too low a tone for me to hear, which made her all at once become silent, and called out her blushes. After a while the minister came back, a moving mass of shawls, cloaks, and umbrellas. Phillis kept very close to her father's side on our return to the farm. She appeared to me to be shrinking away from Holdsworth, while he had not the slightest variation in his manner from what it usually was in his graver moods ; kind, protecting, and thoughtful towards her. Of course, there was a great commotion about our wet clothes ; but I name the little events of that evening now because I wondered at the time what he had said in that low voice to silence Phillis so effectually, and because, in thinking of their intercourse by the light of future events, that evening stands out with some prominence.

I have said that after our removal to Hornby our communications with the farm became almost of daily occurrence. Cousin Holman and I were the two who had least to do with this intimacy. After Mr. Holds-

worth regained his health, he too often talked above her head in intellectual matters, and too often in his light bantering tone for her to feel quite at her ease with him. I really believe that he adopted this latter tone in speaking to her because he did not know what to talk about to a purely motherly woman, whose intellect had never been cultivated, and whose loving heart was entirely occupied with her husband, her child, her household affairs, and, perhaps, a little with the concerns of the members of her husband's congregation, because they, in a way, belonged to her husband. I had noticed before that she had fleeting shadows of jealousy even of Phillis, when her daughter and her husband appeared to have strong interests and sympathies in things which were quite beyond her comprehension. I had noticed it in my first acquaintance with them, I say, and had admired the delicate tact which made the minister, on such occasions, bring the conversation back to such subjects as those on which his wife, with her practical experience of everyday life, was an authority ; while Phillis, devoted to her father, unconsciously followed his lead, totally unaware, in her filial reverence, of his motive for doing so.

To return to Holdsworth. The minister had at more than one time spoken of him to me with slight distrust, principally occasioned by the suspicion that his careless words were not always those of soberness and truth. But it was more as a protest against the fascination which the younger man evidently exercised over the elder one—more as it were to strengthen himself against yielding to this fascination—that the minister spoke out to me about this failing of Holdsworth's, as it appeared to him. In return, Holdsworth was subdued by the minister's uprightness and goodness, and delighted with his clear intellect—his strong, healthy craving after further knowledge. I never met two men who took more thorough pleasure and relish in each other's society. To Phillis his relation continued that of an elder brother: he directed her studies into new paths, he patiently drew out the expression of many of her

thoughts, and perplexities, and unformed theories, scarcely ever now falling into the vein of banter which she was so slow to understand.

One day—harvest-time—he had been drawing on a loose piece of paper—sketching ears of corn, sketching «arts drawn by bullocks and laden with grapes—all the time talking with Phillis and me, cousin Holman putting in her not pertinent remarks, when suddenly he said to Phillis—

'Keep your head still; I see a sketch ! I have often tried to draw your head from memory, and failed ; but I think I can do it now. If I succeed I will give it to your mother. You would like a portrait of your daughter as Ceres, would you not, ma'am ? '

'I should like a picture of her; yes, very much, thank you, Mr. Holdsworth ; but if you put that straw in her hair ' (he was holding some wheat-ears above her passive head, looking at the effect with an artistic eye), 'you'll ruffle her hair. Phillis, my dear, if you're to have your picture taken, go upstairs, and brush your hair smooth.'

'Not on any account. I beg your pardon, but I want hair loosely flowing.'

He began to draw, looking intently at Phillis ; I could see this stare of his discomposed her—her colour came and went, her breath quickened with the consciousness of his regard ; at last, when he said, ' Please look at me for a minute or two, I want to get in the eyes,' she looked up at him, quivered, and suddenly got up and left the room. He did not say a word, but went on with some other part of the drawing; his silence was unnatural, and his dark cheek blanched a little. Cousin Holman looked up from her work, and put her spectacles down.

'What's the matter ? Where is she gone ? '

Holdsworth never uttered a word, but went on drawing. I felt obliged to say something; it was stupid enough, but stupidity was better than silence just then.

'I'll go and call her,' said I. So I went into the hall, and to the bottom of the stairs; but just as I was going to call Phillis, she came down swiftly with her bonnet

on, and saying, 'I'm going to father in the five-acre,' passed out by the open 'rector', right in front of the house-place windows, and out at the little white side-gate. She had been seen by her mother and Holdsworth as she passed ; so there was no need for explanation, only cousin Holman and I had a long discussion as to whether she could have found the room too hot, or what had occasioned her sudden departure. Holdsworth was very quiet during all the rest of that day; nor did he resume the portrait-taking by his own desire, only at my cousin Holman's request the next time that he came ; and then he said he should not require any more formal sittings for only such a slight sketch as he felt himself capable of making. Phillis was just the same as ever, the next time I saw her after her abrupt passing me in the hall. She never gave any explanation of her rush out of the room.

So all things went on, at least as far as my observation reached at the time, or memory can recall now, till the great apple-gathering of the year. The nights were frosty, the mornings and evenings were misty, but at midday all was sunny and bright, and it was one mid-day that, both of us being on the line near Heathbridge, and knowing that they were gathering apples at the farm, we resolved to spend the men's dinner-hour in going over there. We found the great clothes-baskets full of apples, scenting the house and stopping up the way ; and a universal air of merry contentment with this the final produce of the year. The yellow leaves hung on the trees ready to flutter down at the slightest puff of air ; the great bushes of Michaelmas daisies in the kitchen-garden were making their last show of flowers. We must needs taste the fruit off the different trees, and pass our judgement as to their flavour ; and we went away with our pockets stuffed with those that we liked best. As we had passed to the orchard, Holdsworth had admired and spoken about some flower which he saw ; it so happened he had never seen this old-fashioned kind since the days of his boyhood. I do not know whether he had thought anything more about

this chance speech of his, but I know I had not—when Phillis, who had been missing just at the last moment of our hurried visit, reappeared with a little nosegay of this same flower, which she was tying up with a blade of grass. She offered it to Holdsworth as he stood with her father on the point of departure. I saw their faces. I saw for the first time an unmistakable look of love in his black eyes; it was more than gratitude for the little attention; it was tender and beseeching—passionate. She shrank from it in confusion, her glance fell on me; and, partly to hide her emotion, partly out of real kindness at what might appear ungracious neglect of an older friend, she flew off to gather me a few late-blooming China roses. But it was the first time she had ever done anything of the kind for me.

We had to walk fast to be back on the line before the men's return, so we spoke but little to each other, and of course the afternoon was too much occupied for us to have any talk. In the evening we went back to our joint lodgings in Hornby. There, on the table, lay a letter for Holdsworth, which had been forwarded to him from Eltham. As our tea was ready, and I had had nothing to eat since morning, I fell to directly, without paying much attention to my companion as he opened and read his letter. He was very silent for a few minutes; at length he said—

'Old fellow! I'm going to leave you.'

'Leave me!' said I. 'How? When?'

'This letter ought to have come to hand sooner. It is from Greathed the engineer' (Greaded was well known in those days; he is dead now, and his name half-forgotten); 'he wants to see me about some business; in fact, I may as well tell you, Paul, this letter contains a very advantageous proposal for me to go out to Canada, and superintend the making of a line there.'

I was in utter dismay.

'But what will our company say to that?'

'Oh, Greathed has the superintendence of this line, you know; and he is going to be engineer-in-chief to

this Canadian line: many of the shareholders in this company are going in for the other, so I fancy they will make no difficulty in following Greathed's lead. He says he has a young man ready to put in my place.'

'I hate him,' said I.

* Thank you,' said Holdsworth, laughing.

'But you must not,' he resumed; 'for this is a very good thing for me; and, of course, if no one can be found to take my inferior work, I can't be spared to take the superior. I only wish I had received this letter a day sooner. Every hour is of consequence, for Greathed says they are threatening a rival line. Do you know, Paul, I almost fancy I must go up to-night? I can take an engine back to Eltham, and catch the night train. I should not like Greathed to think me lukewarm.'

'But you'll come back?' I asked, distressed at the thought of this sudden parting.

'Oh, yes! At least, I hope so. They may want me to go out by the next steamer, that will be on Saturday.' He began to eat and drink standing, but I think he was quite unconscious of the nature of either his food or his drink.

'I will go to-night. Activity and readiness go a long way in our profession. Remember that, my boy! I hope I shall come back, but if I don't, be sure and recollect all the words of wisdom that have fallen from my lips. Now, where's the portmanteau? If I can gain half an hour for a gathering up of my things in Eltham, so much the better. I'm clear of debt, anyhow; and what I owe for my lodgings you can pay for me out of my quarter's salary, due November 4th.'

'Then you don't think you will come back?' I said despondingly.

'I will come back some time, never fear,' said he kindly. 'I may be back in a couple of days, having been found incompetent for the Canadian work; or I may not be wanted to go out so soon as I now anticipate. Anyhow, you don't suppose I am going to forget you, Paul—this work out there ought not to

take me above two years, and, perhaps, after that, we may be employed together again.'

Perhaps ! I had very little hope. The same kind of happy days never return. However, I did all I could in helping him : clothes, papers, books, instruments ; how we pushed and struggled—how I stuffed. All was done in a much shorter time than we had calculated upon, when I had run down to the sheds to order the engine. I was going to drive him to Eltham. We sat ready for a summons. Holdsworth took up the little nosegay he had brought away from the Hope Farm, and had laid on the mantelpiece on first coming into the room. He smelt at it, and caressed it with his lips.

' What grieves me is that I did not know—that I have not said good-bye to—to them.'

He spoke in a grave tone, the shadow of the coming separation falling upon him at last.

' I will tell them,' said I. ' I am sure they will be very sorry.' Then we were silent.

' I never liked any family so much.'

' I knew you would like them.'

' How one's thoughts change—this morning I was full of a hope, Paul.' He paused, and then he said—

* You put that sketch in carefully ? '

* That outline of a head ? ' asked I. But I knew he meant an abortive sketch of Phillis, which had not been successful enough for him to complete it with shading or colouring.

* Yes. What a sweet, innocent face it is ! and yet so—Oh, dear !

He sighed and got up, his hands in his pockets, to walk up and down the room in evident disturbance of mind. He suddenly stopped opposite to me.

* You'll tell them how it all was. Be sure and tell the good minister that I was so sorry not to wish him good-bye, and to thank him and his wife for all their kindness. As for Phillis—please God, in two years I'll be back and tell her myself all in my heart.'

' You love Phillis, then ? ' said I.

' Love her !—Yes, that I do. Who could help it,

seeing her as I have done ? Her character as unusual and rare as her beauty ! God bless her ! God keep her in her high tranquillity, her pure innocence.—Two years ! It is a long time. But she lives in such seclusion, almost like the sleeping beauty, Paul' (he was smiling now, though a minute before I had thought him on the verge of tears) '—but I shall come back like a prince from Canada, and waken her to my love. I can't help hoping that it won't be, difficult, eh, Paul ? '

This touch of coxcombry displeased me a little, and. I made no answer. He went on, half apologetically—

'You see, the salary they offer me is large ; and; besides that, this experience will give me a name which, will entitle me to expect a still larger in any future undertaking.'

'That won't influence Phillis.'

'No ! but it will make me more eligible in the eyes of her father and mother.'

I made no answer.

* You give me your best wishes, Paul,' said he, almost pleading. 'You would like me for a cousin ? '

I heard the scream and whistle of the engine ready down at the sheds.

* Aye, that I should,' I replied, suddenly softened towards my friend now that he was going away. 'I wish you were to be married to-morrow, and I were to be best man.'

'Thank you, lad. Now for this cursed portmanteau (how the minister would be shocked); but it is heavy ! ' and off we sped into the darkness.

He only just caught the night train at Eltham, and I slept, desolately enough, at my old lodgings at Miss Dawson's, for that night. Of course the next few days I was busier than ever, doing both his work and my own. Then came a letter from him, very short and affectionate. He was going out in the Saturday steamer, as he had more than half expected; and by the following • Monday the man who was to succeed him would be down at Eltham. There was a PS., with only these words:—

' My nosegay goes with me to Canada, but I do not need it to remind me of Hope Farm.'

Saturday came ; but it was very late before I could go out to the farm. It was a frosty night, the stars shone clear above me, and the road was crisping beneath my feet. They must have heard my footsteps before I got up to the house. They were sitting at their usual employments in the house-place when I went in. Phillis's eyes went beyond me in their look of welcome, and then fell in quiet disappointment on her work.

' And where's Mr. Holdsworth ?' asked cousin Holman, in a minute or two. ' I hope his cold is not worse—I did not like his short cough.'

I laughed awkwardly; for I felt that I was the bearer of unpleasant news.

' His cold had need be better—for he's gone—gone away to Canada ! '

I purposely looked away from Phillis, as I thus abruptly told my news.

' To Uanada !' said the minister.

' Gone away ! ' said his wife.

But no word from Phillis.

' Yes !' said I. ' He found a letter at Hornby when we got home the other night—when we got home from here ; he ought to have got it sooner ; he was ordered to go up to London directly, and to see some people about a new line in Canada, and he's gone to lay it down; he has sailed to-day. He was sadly grieved not to have time to come out and wish you all good-bye; but he started for London within two hours after he got that letter. He bade me thank you most gratefully for all your kindnesses ; he was very sorry not to come here once again.'

Phillis got up and left the room with noiseless steps.

' I am very sorry,' said the minister.

' I am sure so am I ! ' said cousin Holman. ' I was real fond of that lad ever since I nursed him last June after that bad fever.'

The minister went on asking me questions respecting Holdsworth's future plans; and brought out a large

old-fashioned atlas, that he might find out the exact places between which the new railroad was to run. Then supper was ready ; it was always on the table as soon as the clock on the stairs struck eight, and down came Phillis—her face white and set, her dry eyes looking defiance at me, for I am afraid I hurt her maidenly pride by my glance of sympathetic interest as she entered the room. Never a word did she say—never a question did she ask about the absent friend, yet she forced herself to talk.

And so it was all the next day. She was as pale as could be, like one who has received some shock ; but she would not let me talk to her, and she tried hard to behave as usual. Two or three times I repeated, in public, the various affectionate messages to the family with which I was charged by Holdsworth ; but she took no more notice of them than if my words had been empty air. And in this mood I left her on the Sabbath evening.

My new master was not half so indulgent as my old one. He kept up strict discipline as to hours, so that it was some time before I could again go out, even to pay a call at the Hope Farm.

It was a cold, misty evening in November. The air, even indoors, seemed full of haze ; yet there was a great log burning on the hearth, which ought to have made the room cheerful. Cousin Holman and Phillis were sitting at the little round table before the fire, working away in silence. The minister had his books out on the dresser, seemingly deep in study, by the light of his solitary candle ; perhaps the fear of disturbing him made the unusual stillness of the room. But a welcome was ready for me from all ; not noisy, not demonstrative—that it never was ; my damp wrappers were taken off, the next meal was hastened, and a chair placed for me on one side the fire, so that I pretty much commanded a view of the room. My eye caught on Phillis, looking so pale and weary, and with a sort of aching tone (if I may call it so) in her voice. She was doing all the accustomed things—fulfilling small household duties,

but somehow differently—I can't tell you how, for she was just as deft and quick in her movements, only the light spring was gone out of them. Cousin Holman began to question me ; even the minister put aside his books, and came and stood on the opposite side of the fireplace, to hear what waft of intelligence I brought. I had first to tell them why I had not been to see them for so long—more than five weeks. The answer was simple enough ; business and the necessity of attending strictly to the orders of a new superintendent, who had not yet learned trust, much less indulgence. The minister nodded his approval of my conduct, and said—

* Right, Paul! " Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh." I have had my fears lest you had too much licence under Edward Holdsworth.'

' Ah,' said cousin Holman, ' poor Mr. Holdsworth, he'll be on the salt seas by this time ! '

' No, indeed,' said I, ' he's landed. I have had a letter from him from Halifax.'

Immediately a shower of questions fell thick upon me. When ? How ? What was he doing ? How did he like it ? What sort of a voyage ? &c.

' Many is the time we thought of him when the wind was blowing so hard; the old quince-tree is blown down, Paul, that on the right hand of the great pear-tree ; it was blown down last Monday week, and it was that night that I asked the minister to pray in an especial manner for all them that went down in ships upon the great deep, and he said then, that Mr. Holdsworth might be already landed; but I said, even if the prayer did not fit him, it was sure to be fitting somebody out at sea, who would need the Lord's care. Both Phillis and I thought he would be a month on the seas.'

Phillis began to speak, but her voice did not come rightly at first. It was a little higher pitched than usual, when she said—

' We thought he would be a month if he went in a sailing-vessel, or perhaps longer. I suppose he went in a steamer ? '

' Old Obadiah Grimshaw was more than six weeks in getting to America,' observed cousin Holman.

' I presume he cannot as yet tell how he likes his new work ? ' asked the minister.

' No ! he is but just landed ; it is but one page long. I'll read it to you, shall I ?—

" DEAR PAUL,—We are safe on shore, after a rough passage. Thought you would like to hear this, but homeward-bound steamer is making signals for letters. Will write agam soon. It seems a year since I left Hornby. Longer since I was at the farm. I have got my nosegay safe. Remember me to the Holmans.—
Yours, " E. H. "

' That's not much, certainly,' said the minister. ' But it's a comfort to know he's on land these blowy nights.'

Phillis said nothing. She kept her head bent down over her work ; but I don't think she put a stitch in while I was reading the letter. I wondered if she understood what nosegay was meant ; but I could not tell. When next she lifted up her face, there were two spots of brilliant colour on the cheeks that had been so pale before. After I had spent an hour or two there, I was bound to return back to Hornby. I told them I did not know when I could come again, as we—by which I mean the company—had undertaken the Hensleydala line ; that branch for which poor Holdsworth was surveying when he caught his fever.

* But you'll have a holiday at Christmas,' said my cousin. ' Surely they'll not be such heathens as to work you then ? '

' Perhaps the lad will be going home,' said the minister, as if to mitigate his wife's urgency ; but for all that, I believe he wanted me to come. Phillis fixed her eyes on me with a wistful expression, hard to resist. But, indeed, I had no thought of resisting. Under my new master I had no hope of a holiday long enough to enable me to go to Birmingham and see my parents with any comfort ; and nothing could be pleasanter to me than to find myself at home at my cousin's for a day

or two, then. So it was fixed that we were to meet in Hornby Chapel on Christmas Day, and that I was to accompany them home after service, and if possible to stay over the next day.

I was not able to get to chapel till late on the appointed day, and so I took a seat near the door in considerable shame, although it really was not my fault. When the service was ended, I went and stood in the porch to await the coming out of my cousins. Some worthy people belonging to the congregation clustered into a group just where I stood, and exchanged the good wishes of the season. It had just begun to snow, and this occasioned a little delay, and they fell into further conversation. I was not attending to what was not meant for me to hear, till I caught the name of Phillis Holman. And then I listened ; where was the harm ?

'I never saw any one so changed !'

'I asked Mrs. Holman,' quoth another, ' " Is Phillis well ? " and she just said she had been having a cold which had pulled her down ; she did not seem to think anything of it.'

'They had best take care of her,' said one of the oldest of the good ladies ; ' Phillis comes of a family as is not long-lived. Her mother's sister, Lydia Green, her own aunt as was, died of a decline just when she was about this lass's age.'

This ill-omened talk was broken in upon by the coming out of the minister, his wife and daughter, and the consequent interchange of Christmas compliments. I had had a shock, and felt heavy-hearted and anxious, and hardly up to making the appropriate replies to the kind greetings of my relations. I looked askance at Phillis. She had certainly grown taller and slighter, and was thinner ; but there was a flush of colour on her face which deceived me for a time, and made me think she was looking as well as ever. I only saw her paleness after we had returned to the farm, and she had subsided into silence and quiet. Her grey eyes

looked hollow and sad; her complexion was of a dead white. But she went about just as usual; at least, just as she had done the last time I was there, and seemed to have no ailment; and I was inclined to think that my cousin was right when she had answered the inquiries of the good-natured gossips, and told them that Phillis was suffering from the consequences of a bad cold, nothing more.

I have said that I was to stay over the next day; a great deal of snow had come down, but not all, they said, though the ground was covered deep with the white fall. The minister was anxiously housing his cattle, and preparing all things for a long continuance of the same kind of weather. The men were chopping wood, sending wheat to the mill to be ground before the road should become impassable for a cart and horse. My cousin and Phillis had gone upstairs to the apple-room to cover up the fruit from the frost. I had been out the greater part of the morning, and came in about an hour before dinner. To my surprise, knowing how she had planned to be engaged, I found Phillis sitting at the dresser, resting her head on her two hands and reading, or seeming to read. She did not look up when I came in, but murmured something about her mother having sent her down out of the cold. It flashed across me that she was crying, but I put it down to some little spurt of temper; I might have known better than to suspect the gentle, serene Phillis of crossness, poor girl; I stooped down and began to stir and build up the fire, which appeared to have been neglected. While my head was down I heard a noise which made me pause and listen—a sob, an unmistakable, irrepressible sob. I started up.

'Phillis!' I cried, going towards her, with my hand out, to take hers for sympathy with her sorrow, whatever it was. But she was too quick for me, she held her hand out of my grasp, for fear of my detaining her; as she quickly passed out of the house, she said—

'Don't, Paul! I cannot bear it!' and passed me, still sobbing, and went out into the keen, open air.

I stood still and wondered. What could have come to Phillis ? The most perfect harmony prevailed in the family, and Phillis especially, good and gentle as she was, was so beloved that if they had found out that her finger ached, it would have cast a shadow over their hearts. Had I done anything to vex her ? No: she was crying before I came in. I went to look at her book—one of those unintelligible Italian books. I could make neither head nor tail of it. I saw some pencil-notes on the margin, in Holdsworth's handwriting.

Could that be it ? Could that be the cause of her white looks, her weary eyes, her wasted figure, her struggling sobs ? This idea came upon me like a flash of lightning on a dark night, making all things so clear we cannot forget them afterwards when the gloomy obscurity returns. I was still standing with the book in my hand when I heard cousin Holman's footsteps on the stairs, and as I did not wish to speak to her just then, I followed Phillis's example, and rushed out of the house. The snow was lying on the ground; I could track her feet by the marks they had made; I could see where Rover had joined her. I followed on till I came to a great stack of wood in the orchard—it was built up against the back wall of the outbuildings—and I recollected then how Phillis had told me, that first day when we strolled about together, that underneath this stack had been her hermitage, her sanctuary, when she was a child; how she used to bring her book to study there, or her work, when she was not wanted in the house; and she had now evidently gone back to this quiet retreat of her childhood, forgetful of the clue given me by her footmarks on the new-fallen snow. The stack was built up very high ; but through the interstices of the sticks I could see her figure, although I did not all at once perceive how I could get to her. She was sitting on a log of wood, Rover by her. She had laid her cheek on Rover's head, and had her arm round his neck, partly for a pillow, partly from an instinctive craving for warmth on that bitter cold day. She was making a low moan, like an animal in pain, or perhaps

more like the sobbing of the wind. Rover, highly flattered by her caress, and also, perhaps, touched by sympathy, was flapping his heavy tail against the ground, but not otherwise moving a hair, until he heard my approach with his quick, erect ears. Then, with a short, abrupt bark of distrust, he sprang up as if to leave his mistress. Both he and I were immovably still for a moment. I was not sure if what I longed to do was wise ; and yet I could not bear to see the sweet serenity of my dear cousin's life so disturbed by a suffering which I thought I could assuage. But Hover's ears were sharper than my breathing was noiseless: he heard me, and sprang out from under Phillis's restraining hand.

' Oh, Rover, don't you leave me too,' she plained out.

' Phillis !' said I, seeing by Rover's exit that the entrance to where she sat was to be found on the other side of the stack. ' Phillis, come out! You have got a cold already; and it is not fit for you to sit there on such a day as this. You know how displeased and anxious it would make them all.'

She sighed, but obeyed; stooping a little, she came out, and stood upright, opposite to me in the lonely, leafless orchard. Her face looked so meek and so sad that I felt as if I ought to beg her pardon for my necessarily authoritative words.

' Sometimes I feel the house so close,' she said; ' and I used to sit under the wood-stack when I was a child. It was very kind of you, but there was no need to come after me. I don't catch cold easily.'

' Come with me into this cow-house, Phillis. I have got something to say to you; and I can't stand this cold, if you can.'

I think she would have fain run away again; but her fit of energy was all spent. She followed me unwillingly enough—that I could see. The place to which I took her was full of the fragrant breath of the cows, and was a little warmer than the outer air. I put hex inside, and stood myself in the doorway, thinking how I could best begin. At last I plunged into it.

' I must see that you don't get cold for more reasons than one; if you are ill, Holdsworth will be so anxious and miserable out there' (by which I meant Canada)—

She shot one penetrating look at me, and then turned her face away with a slightly impatient movement. If she could have run away then she would, but I held the means of exit in my own power. ' In for a penny in for a pound,' thought I, and I went on rapidly, anyhow.

' He talked so much about you, just before he left—that night after he had been here, you know—and you had given him those flowers.' She put her hands up to hide her face, but she was listening now—listening with all her ears.

* He had never spoken much about you before, but the sudden going away unlocked his heart, and he told me how he loved you, and how he hoped on his return that you might be his wife.'

' Don't,' said she, almost gasping out the word, which she had tried once or twice before to speak; but her voice had been choked. Now she put her hand backwards; she had quite turned away from me, and felt for mine. She gave it a soft lingering pressure; and then she put her arms down on the wooden division, and laid her head on it, and cried quiet tears. I did not understand her at once, and feared lest I had mistaken the whole case, and only annoyed her. I went up to her. ' Oh, Phillis! I am so sorry—I thought you would, perhaps, have cared to hear it; he did talk so feelingly, as if he did love you so much, and somehow I thought it would give you pleasure.'

She lifted up her head and looked at me. Such a look! Her eyes, glittering with tears as they were, expressed an almost heavenly happiness; her tender mouth was curved with rapture—her colour vivid and blushing; but as if she was afraid her face expressed too much, more than the thankfulness to me she was essaying to speak, she hid it again almost immediately. So it was all right then, and my conjecture was well-

founded. I tried to remember something more to tell her of what he had said, but again she stopped me.

'Don't,' she said. She still kept her face covered and hidden. In half a minute she added, in a very low voice, * Please, Paul, I think I would rather not hear any more—I don't mean but what I have—but what I am very much obliged——Only—only, I think I would rather hear the rest from himself when he comes back.'

And then she cried a little more, in quite a different way. I did not say any more, I waited for her. By and by she turned towards me—not meeting my eyes, however; and putting her hand in mine, just as if we were two children, she said—

'We had best go back now—I don't look as if I had been crying, do I?'

'You look as if you had a bad cold,' was all the answer I made.

'Oh! but I am—I am quite well, only cold; and a good run will warm me. Come along, Paul.'

So we ran, hand in hand, till, just as we were on the threshold of the house, she stopped—

'Paul, please, we won't speak about *that* again.'

PART IV

WHEN I went over on Easter Day, I heard the chapel-gossips complimenting cousin Holman on her daughter's blooming looks, quite forgetful of their sinister prophecies three months before. And I looked at Phillis, and did not wonder at their words. I had not seen her since the day after Christmas Day. I had left the Hope Farm only a few hours after I had told her the news which had quickened her heart into renewed life and vigour. The remembrance of our conversation in the cow-house was vividly in my mind as I looked at her when her bright, healthy appearance was remarked upon. As her eyes met mine our mutual recollections flashed intelligence from one to the other. She turned

away, her colour heightening as she did so. She seemed to be shy of me for the first few hours after our meeting, and I felt rather vexed with her for her conscious avoidance of me after my long absence. I had stepped a little out of my usual line in telling her what I did ; not that I had received any charge of secrecy, or given even the slightest promise to Holdsworth that I would not repeat his words. But I had an uneasy feeling sometimes when I thought of what I had done in the excitement of seeing Phillis so ill and in so much trouble. I meant to have told Holdsworth when I wrote next to him; but when I had my half-finished letter before me I sat with my pen in my hand hesitating. I had more scruple in revealing what I had found out or guessed at of Phillis's secret than in repeating to her his spoken words. I did not think I had any right to say out to him what I believed—namely, that she loved him dearly, and had felt his absence even to the injury of her health. Yet to explain what I had done in telling her how he had spoken about her that last night, it would be necessary to give my reasons, so I had settled within myself to leave it alone. As she had told me she should like to hear all the details and fuller particulars and more explicit declarations first from him, so he should have the pleasure of extracting the delicious, tender secret from her maidenly lips. I would not betray my guesses, my surmises, my all but certain knowledge of the state of her heart. I had received two letters from him after he had settled to his business ; they were full of life and energy; but in each there had been a message to the family at the Hope Farm of more than common regard; and a slight but distinct mention of Phillis herself, showing that she stood single and alone in his memory. These letters I had sent on to the minister, for he was sure to care for them, even supposing he had been unacquainted with their writer, because they were so clever and so picturesquely worded that they brought, as it were, a whiff of foreign atmosphere into his circumscribed life. I used to wonder what was the trade or business in which the

minister would not have thriven, mentally I mean, if it had so happened that he had been called into that state. He would have made a capital engineer, that I know; and he had a fancy for the sea, like many other land-locked men to whom the great deep is a mystery **and** a fascination. He read law-books with relish; and once happening to borrow *De Lolme on the British Constitution* (or some such title), he talked about jurisprudence till he was far beyond my depth. But to return to Holdsworth's letters. When the minister sent them back he also wrote out a list of questions suggested by their perusal, which I was to pass on in my answers to Holdsworth, until I thought of suggesting a direct correspondence between the two. That was the state of things as regarded the absent one when I went to the farm for my Easter visit, and when I found Phillis in that state of shy reserve towards me which I have named before. I thought she was ungrateful; for I was not quite sure if I had done wisely in having told her what I did. I had committed a fault, or a folly, perhaps, and all for her sake; and here was she, less friends with me than she had ever been before. This little estrangement only lasted a few hours. I think that as soon as she felt pretty sure of there being no recurrence, either by word, look, or allusion, to the one subject that was predominant in her mind, she came back to her old sisterly ways with me. She had much to tell me of her own familiar interests; how Rover had been ill, and how anxious they had all of them been, and how, after some little discussion between her father and her, both equally grieved by the sufferings of the old dog, he had been 'remembered in the household prayers', and how he had begun to get better only the very next day, and then she would have led me into a conversation on the right ends of prayer, and on special providences, and I know not what; only I jibbed like their old cart-horse, and refused to stir **a** step in that direction. Then we talked about the different broods of chickens, and she showed me the hens that were good mothers, and told me the characters

of all the poultry with the utmost good faith ; and in all good faith I listened, for I believe there was a great deal of truth in all she said. And then we strolled on into the wood beyond the ash-meadow, and both of us sought for early primroses, and the fresh green crinkled leaves. She was not afraid of being alone with me after the first day. I never saw her so lovely, or so happy. I think she hardly knew why she was so happy all the time. I can see her now, standing under the budding branches of the grey trees, over which a tinge of green seemed to be deepening day after day, her sun-bonnet fallen back on her neck, her hands full of delicate wood-flowers, quite unconscious of my gaze, but intent on sweet mockery of some bird in neighbouring bush or tree. She had the art of warbling, and replying to the notes of different birds, and knew their song, their habits and ways, more accurately than any one else I ever knew. She had often done it at my request the spring before ; but this year she really gurgled, and whistled, and warbled just as they did, out of the very fullness and joy of her heart. She was more than ever the very apple of her father's eye ; her mother gave her both her own share of love and that of the dead child who had died in infancy. I have heard cousin Holman murmur, after a long dreamy look at Phillis, and tell herself how like she was growing to Johnnie, and soothe herself with plaintive inarticulate sounds, and many gentle shakes of the head, for the aching sense of loss she would never get over in this world. The old servants about the place had the dumb loyal attachment to the child of the land, common to most agricultural labourers; not often stirred into activity or expression. My cousin Phillis was like a rose that had come to full bloom on the sunny side of a lonely house, sheltered from storms. I have read in some book of poetry—

A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

And somehow those lines always reminded me of Phillis; yet they were not true of her either. I never heard her

praised; and out of her own household there were very few to love her; but though no one spoke out their approbation, she always did right in her parents' eyes, out of her natural simple goodness and wisdom. Holdsworth's name was never mentioned between us when we were alone; but I had sent on his letters to the minister, as I have said; and more than once he began to talk about our absent friend, when he was emoking his pipe after the day's work was done. Then Phillis hung her head a little over her work, and listened in silence.

'I miss him more than I thought for; no offence to you, Paul. I said once his company was like dram-drinking; that was before I knew him; and perhaps I spoke in a spirit of judgement. To some men's minds everything presents itself strongly, and they speak accordingly; and so did he. And I thought in my vanity of censorship that his were not true and sober words; they would not have been if I had used them, but they were so to a man of his class of perceptions. I thought of the measure with which I had been meting to him when Brother Robinson was here last Thursday, and told me that a poor little quotation I was making from the *Oeorgics* savoured of vain babbling and profane heathenism. He went so far as to say that by learning other languages than our own we were flying in the face of the Lord's purpose when He had said, at the building of the Tower of Babel, that He would confound their languages so that they should not understand each other's speech. As Brother Robinson was to me, so was I to the quick wits, bright senses and ready words of Holdsworth.'

The first little cloud upon my peace came in the shape of a letter from Canada, in which there were two three sentences that troubled me more than they ought to have done, to judge merely from the words employed. It was this:—'I should feel dreary enough in this out-of-the-way place if it were not for a friendship I have formed with a French Canadian of the name of Ventadour. He and his family are a great resource to me in

the long evenings. I never heard such delicious vocal music as the voices of these Ventadour boys and girls in their part-songs; and the foreign element retained in their characters and manner of living reminds me of some of the happiest days of my life. Lucille, the second daughter, is curiously like Phillis Holman.' In vain I said to myself that it was probably this likeness that made him take pleasure in the society of the Ventadour family. In vain I told my anxious fancy that nothing could be more natural than this intimacy, and that there was no sign of its leading to any consequence that ought to disturb me. I had a presentiment, and I was disturbed; and I could not reason it away. I dare say my presentiment was rendered more persistent and keen by the doubts which would force themselves into my mind, as to whether I had done well in repeating Holdsworth's words to Phillis. Her state of vivid happiness this summer was markedly different to the peaceful serenity of former days. If in my thoughtfulness at noticing this I caught her eye, she blushed and sparkled all over, guessing that I was remembering our joint secret. Her eyes fell before mine, as if she could hardly bear me to see the revelation of their bright glances. And yet I considered again, and comforted myself by the reflection that, if this change had been anything more than my silly fancy, her father or her mother would have perceived it. But they went on in tranquil unconsciousness and undisturbed peace.

A change in my own life was quickly approaching.

In the July of this year my occupation on the—— railway and its branches came to an end. The lines were completed, and I was to leave——shire, to return to Birmingham, where there was a niche already provided for me in my father's prosperous business. But before I left the north it was an understood thing amongst us all that I was to go and pay a visit of some weeks at **the** Hope Farm. My father was as much pleased at **this** plan as I was; and the dear family of cousins often spoke of things to be done, and sights to be shown me, during this visit. My want of wisdom in having told

* that thing ' (under such ambiguous words I concealed the injudicious confidence I had made to Phillis) was the only drawback to my anticipations of pleasure.

The ways of life were too simple at the Hope Farm for my coming to them to make the slightest disturbance. I knew my room, like a son of the house. I knew the regular course of their days, and that I was expected to fall into it, like one of the family. Deep summer peace brooded over the place ; the warm golden air was filled with the murmur of insects near at hand, the more distant sound of voices out in the fields, the clear far-away rumble of carts over the stone-paved lanes miles away. The heat was too great for the birds to be singing; only now and then one might hear the wood-pigeons in the trees beyond the ash-field. The cattle stood knee-deep in the pond, flicking their tails about to keep off the flies. The minister stood in the hay-field, without hat or cravat, coat or waistcoat, panting and smiling. Phillis had been leading the row of farm-servants, turning the swathes of fragrant hay with measured movement. She went to the end—to the hedge, and then, throwing down her rake, she came to me with her free sisterly welcome. 'Go, Paul!' said the minister. 'We need all hands to make use of the sunshine to-day. "Whatsoever thine hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might." It will be a healthy change of work for thee, lad ; and I find my best rest in change of work.' So off I went, a willing labourer, following Phillis's lead ; it was the primitive distinction of rank; the boy who frightened the sparrows off the fruit was the last in our rear. We did not leave off till the red sun was gone down behind the fir-trees bordering the common. Then we went home to supper—prayers—to bed; some bird singing far into the night, as I heard it through my open window, and the poultry beginning their clatter and cackle in the earliest morning. I had carried what luggage I immediately needed with me from my lodgings, and the rest was to be sent by the carrier. He brought it to the farm betimes that morning, and along with it he brought a letter or two

that had arrived since I had left. I was talking to cousin Holman—about my mother's ways of making bread, I remember; cousin Holman was questioning me, and had got me far beyond my depth—in the house-place, when the letters were brought in by one of the men, and I had to pay the carrier for his trouble before I could look at them. A bill—a Canadian letter ! What instinct made me so thankful that I was alone with my dear unobservant cousin ? What made me hurry them away into my coat-pocket ? I do not know. I felt strange and sick, and made irrelevant answers, I am afraid. Then I went to my room, ostensibly to carry up my boxes. I sat on the side of my bed and opened my letter from Holdsworth. It seemed to me as if I had read its contents before, and knew exactly what he had got to say. I knew he was going to be married to Lucille Ventadour ; nay, that he *was* married ; for this was the 5th of July, and he wrote word that his marriage was fixed to take place on the 29th of June. I knew all the reasons he gave, all the raptures he went into. I held the letter loosely in my hands, and looked into vacancy, yet I saw a chaffinch's nest on the lichen-covered trunk of an old apple-tree opposite my window, and saw the mother-bird come fluttering into feed her brood—and yet I did not see it, although it seemed to me afterwards as if I could have drawn every fibre, every feather. I was stirred up to action by the merry sound of voices and the clump of rustic feet coming home for the mid-day meal. I knew I must go down to dinner ; I knew, too, I must tell Phillis; for in his happy egotism, his new-fangled foppery, Holdsworth had put in a PS., saying that he should send wedding-cards to me and some other Hornby and Eltham acquaintances, and * to his kind friends at Hope Farm \ Phillis had faded away to one among several ' kind friends '. I don't know how I got through dinner that day. I remember forcing myself to eat, and talking hard: but I also recollect the wondering look in the minister's eyes. He **was** not one to think evil without cause ; but many **a** one would have taken me for drunk. As soon as

I decently could I left the table, saying I would go out for a walk. At first I must have tried to stun reflection by rapid walking, for I had lost myself on the high moorlands far beyond the familiar gorse-covered common, before I was obliged for very weariness to slacken my pace. I kept wishing—oh ! how fervently wishing I had never committed that blunder ; that the one little half-hour's indiscretion could be blotted out. Alternating with this was anger against Holdsworth ; unjust enough, I dare say. I suppose I stayed in that solitary place for a good hour or more, and then I turned homewards, resolving to get over the telling Phillis at the first opportunity, but shrinking from the fulfilment of my resolution so much that when I came into the house and saw Phillis (doors and windows open wide in the sultry weather) alone in the kitchen, I became quite sick with apprehension. She was standing by the dresser, cutting up a great household loaf into hunches of bread for the hungry labourers who might come in any minute, for the heavy thunderclouds were overspreading the sky. She looked round as she heard my step.

' You should have been in the field, helping with the hay,' said she, in her calm, pleasant voice. I had heard her as I came near the house softly chanting some hymn-tune, and the peacefulness of that seemed to be brooding over her now.

' Perhaps I should. It looks as if it was going to rain.'

' Yes, there is thunder about. Mother has had to go to bed with one of her bad headaches. Now you are come in '——

' Phillis,' said I, rushing at my subject and interrupting her, ' I went a long walk to think over a letter I had this morning—a letter from Canada. You don't know how it has grieved me.' I held it out to her as I spoke. Her colour changed a little, but it was more the reflection of my face, I think, than because she formed any definite idea from my words. Still she did not take the letter. I had to bid her read it, before she quite understood what I wished. She sat down

rather suddenly as she received it into her hands ; and, spreading it on the dresser before her, she rested her forehead on the palms of her hands, her arms supported on the table, her figure a little averted, and her countenance thus shaded. I looked out of the open window; my heart was very heavy. How peaceful it all seemed in the farm-yard ! Peace and plenty. How still and deep was the silence of the house ! Tick-tick went the unseen clock on the wide staircase. I had heard the rustle once, when she turned over the page of thin paper. She must have read to the end. Yet she did not move, or say a word, or even sigh. I kept on looking out of the window, my hands in my pockets. I wonder how long that time really was ? It seemed to me interminable—unbearable. At length I looked round at her. She must have felt my look, for she changed her attitude with a quick, sharp movement, and caught my eyes.

' Don't look so sorry, Paul,' she said. * Don't, please. I can't bear it. There is nothing to be sorry for. I think not, at least. You have not done wrong, at any rate.' I felt that I groaned, but I don't think she heard me. ' And he—there's no wrong in his marrying, is there ? I'm sure I hope he'll be happy. Oh *I* how I hope it !' These last words were like a wail; but I believe she was afraid of breaking down, for she changed the key in which she spoke, and hurried on. ' Lucille—that's our English Lucy, I suppose ? Lucille Holds worth ! It's a pretty name ; and I hope—I forget what I was going to say. Oh ! it was this. Paul, I think we need never speak about this again; only remember you are not to be sorry. You have not done wrong ; you have been very, very kind ; and if I see you looking grieved I don't know what I might do ;—I might break down, you know.'

I think she was on the point of doing so then, but the dark storm came dashing down, and the thundercloud broke right above the house, as it seemed. Her mother, roused from sleep, called out for Phillis ; the men and women from the hay-field came running into shelter,

drenched through. The minister followed, smiling, and not unpleasantly excited by the war of elements ; for, by dint of hard work through the long summer's day, the greater part of the hay was safely housed in the barn in the field. Once or twice in the succeeding bustle I came across Phillis, always busy, and, as it seemed to me, always doing the right thing. When I was alone in my own room at night, I allowed myself to feel relieved : and to believe that the worst was over, and was not so very bad after all. But the succeeding days were very miserable. Sometimes I thought it must be my fancy that falsely represented Phillis to me as strangely changed, for surely, if this idea of mine was well founded, her parents—her father and mother—her own flesh and blood—would have been the first to perceive it. Yet they went on in their household peace and content; if anything, a little more cheerfully than usual, for the ' harvest of the first fruits ' as the minister called it, had been more bounteous than usual, and there was plenty all around, in which the humblest labourer was made to share. After the one thunderstorm, came one or two lovely, serene summer days, during which the hay was all carried ; and then succeeded long soft rains filling the ears of corn, and causing the mown grass to spring afresh. The minister allowed himself a few more hours of relaxation and home enjoyment than usual during this wet spell: hard, earth-bound frost was his winter holiday; these wet days, after the hay harvest, his summer holiday. We sat with open windows, the fragrance and the freshness called out by the soft-falling rain filling the house-place ; while the quiet ceaseless patter among the leaves outside ought to have had the same lulling effect as all other gentle perpetual sounds, such as mill-wheels and bubbling springs, have on the nerves of happy people. But two of us were not happy. I was sure enough of myself, for one. I was worse than sure—I was wretchedly anxious about Phillis. Ever since that day of the thunderstorm there had been a new, sharp, discordant sound to me in her voice, a sort of jangle in

her tone; and her restless eyes had no quietness in them; and her colour came and went, without a cause that I could find out. The minister, happy in ignorance of what most concerned him, brought out his books; his learned volumes and classics. Whether he read and talked to Phillis, or to me, I do not know; but feeling by instinct that she was not, could not be, attending to the peaceful details, so strange and foreign to the turmoil in her heart, I forced myself to listen, and if possible to understand.

'Look here!' said the minister, tapping the old vellum-bound book he held; in the first *Georgic* he speaks of rolling and irrigation; a little further on he insists on choice of the best seed, and advises us to keep the drains clear. Again, no Scotch farmer could give shrewder advice than to cut light meadows while the dew is on, even though it involve night-work. It is all living truth in these days.' He began beating time with a ruler upon his knee, to some Latin lines he read aloud just then. I suppose the monotonous chant irritated Phillis to some irregular energy, for I remember the quick knotting and breaking of the thread with which she was sewing. I never hear that snap repeated now, without suspecting some sting or stab troubling the heart of the worker. Cousin Holman, at her peaceful knitting, noticed the reason why Phillis had so constantly to interrupt the progress of her seam.

'It is bad thread, I'm afraid,' she said, in a gentle, sympathetic voice. But it was too much for Phillis.

'The thread is bad—everything is bad—I am so tired of it all!' And she put down her work, and hastily left the room. I do not suppose, that in all her life Phillis had ever shown so much temper before. In many a family the tone, the manner, would not have been noticed; but here it fell with a sharp surprise upon the sweet, calm atmosphere of home. The minister put down ruler and book, and pushed his spectacles up to his forehead. The mother looked distressed for a moment, and then smoothed her features **and** said in an explanatory tone—'It's a the

weather, I think. Some people feel it different to others. It always brings on a headache with me.' She got up to follow her daughter, but half-way to the door she thought better of it, and came back to her seat. Good mother ! she hoped the better to conceal the unusual spurt of temper, by pretending not to take much notice of it. * Go on, minister,' she said ; ' it is very interesting what you are reading about, and when I don't quite understand it, I like the sound of your voice.' So he went on, but languidly and irregularly, and beat no more time with his ruler to any Latin lines. When the dusk came on, early that July night because of the cloudy sky, Phillis came softly back, making as though nothing had happened. She took up her work, but it was too dark to do many stitches ; and she dropped it soon. Then I saw her hand steal into her mother's, and how this latter fondled it with quiet little caresses, while the minister, as fully aware as I was of this tender pantomime, went on talking in a happier tone of voice about things as uninteresting to him, at the time, I verily believe, as they were to me ; and that is saying a good deal, and shows how much more real what was passing before him was, even to a farmer, than the agricultural customs of the ancients.

I remember one thing more—an attack which Betty the servant made upon me one day as I came in through the kitchen where she was churning, and stopped to ask her for a drink of butter-milk.

' I say, cousin Paul ' (she had adopted the family habit of addressing me generally as cousin Paul, and always speaking of me in that form), ' something's amiss with our Phillis, and I reckon you've a good guess what it is. She's not one to take up wi' such as you' (not complimentary, but that Betty never was, even to those for whom she felt the highest respect), ' but I'd as lief yon Holds worth had never come near us. So there you've a bit o' my mind.'

And a very unsatisfactory bit it was. I did not know what to answer to the glimpse at the real state of the case implied in the shrewd woman's speech; eo I

tried to put her off by assuming surprise at her first assertion.

' Amiss with Phillis ! I should like to know why you think anything is wrong with her. She looks as blooming as any one can do.'

' Poor lad ! you're but a big child, after all ; and you've likely never heard of a fever-flush. But you know better nor that, my fine fellow ! so don't think for to put me off wi' blooms and blossoms and such-like talk. What makes her walk about for hours and hours o' nights when she used to be abed and asleep ? I sleep next room to her, and hear her plain as can be. What makes her come in panting and ready to drop into that chair'—nodding to one close to the door—* and it's " Oh ! Betty, some water, please " ? That's the way she comes in now, when she used to come back as fresh and bright as she went out. If yon friend o' yours has played her false, he's a deal for t' answer for : she's a lass who's as sweet and as sound as a nut, and the very apple of her father's eye, and of her mother's too, only wi' her she ranks second to th' minister. You'll have to look after yon chap, for I, for one, will stand no wrong to our Phillis.'

What was I to do, or to say ? I wanted to justify Holdsworth, to keep Phillis's secret, and to pacify the woman all in the same breath. I did not take the best course, I'm afraid.

' I don't believe Holdsworth ever spoke a word of—of love to her in all his life. I am sure he didn't.'

' Aye, aye ! but there's eyes, and there's hands, as well as tongues ; and a man has two o' th' one and but one o' t'other.'

' And she's so young ; do you suppose her parents would not have seen it ?'

' Well ! if you ax me that, I'll say out boldly, " No." They've called her " the child " so long—" the child " is always their name for her when they talk on her between themselves, as if never anybody else had a ewe-lamb before them—that she's grown up to be a woman under their very eyes, and they look on her still

as if she were in her long clothes. And you ne'er heard on a man falling in love wi' a babby in long clothes!'

'No!' said I, half-laughing. But she went on as grave as a judge.

'Aye! you see you'll laugh at the bare thought on it—and I'll be bound th' minister, though he's not a laughing man, would ha' sniggled at th' notion of falling in love wi' the child. Where's Holdsworth off to?'

'Canada,' said I shortly.

* Canada here, Canada there,' she replied testily. • Tell me how far he's off, instead of giving me your gibberish. Is he a two days' journey away? or a three? or a week?'

'He's ever so far off—three weeks at the least,' cried I in despair. * And he's either married, or just going to be. So there!' I expected a fresh burst of anger. But no; the matter was too serious. Betty sat down, and kept silence for a minute or two. She looked so miserable and downcast, that I could not help going on, and taking her a little into my confidence.

'It is quite true what I said. I know he never spoke a word to her. I think he liked her, but it's all over now. The best thing we can do—the best and kindest for her—and I know you love her, Betty'——

'I nursed her in my arms; I gave her little brother his last taste o' earthly food,' said Betty, putting her apron up to her eyes.

'Well! don't let us show her we guess that she is grieving; she'll get over it the sooner. Her father and mother don't even guess at it, and we must make as if we didn't. It's too late now to do anything else.'

'I'll never let on; I know nought. I've known true love mysel', in my day. But I wish he'd been farred before he ever came near this house, with his "Please Betty" this, and "Please Betty" that, and drinking up our new milk as if he'd been a cat. I hate such beguiling ways.'

I thought it was as well to let her exhaust herself in abusing the absent Holdsworth; if it was shabby and treacherous in me, I came in for my punishment directly.

' It's a caution to a man how he goes about beguiling. Some men do it as easy and innocent as cooing doves. Don't you be none of 'em, my lad. Not that you've got the gifts to do it, either ; you're no great shakes to look at, neither for figure nor yet for face, and it would need be a deaf adder to be taken in wi' your words, though there may be no great harm in 'em.' A lad of nineteen or twenty is not flattered by such an outspoken opinion even from the oldest and ugliest of her sex ; and I was only too glad to change the subject by my repeated injunctions to keep Philhs's secret. The end of our conversation was this speech of hers—

' You great gaupus, for all you're called cousin o' th' minister—many a one is cursed wi' fools for cousins—d'ye think I can't see sense except through your spectacles ? I give you leave to cut out my tongue, and nail it up on th' barn-door for a caution to magpies, if I let out on that poor wench, either to herself, or any one that is hers, as the Bible says. Now you've heard me speak Scripture language, perhaps you'll be content, and leave me my kitchen to myself.'

During all these days, from the 5th of July to the 17th, I must have forgotten what Holds worth had said about sending cards. And yet I think I could not have quite forgotten ; but, once having told Phillis about his marriage, I must have looked upon the after-consequence of cards as of no importance. At any rate, they came upon me as a surprise at last. The penny-post reform, as people call it, had come into operation a short time before ; but the never-ending stream of notes and letters which seem now to flow in upon most households had not yet begun its course ; at least in those remote parts. There was a post office at Hornby ; and an old fellow, who stowed away the few letters in any or all his pockets, as it best suited hun, was the letter-carrier to Heathbridge and the neighbourhood. I have often met him in the lanes thereabouts, and asked him for letters. Sometimes **I have** come upon him, sitting on the hedge-bank resting ; and he has begged me to read him an address,

too illegible for his spectacled eyes to decipher. When I used to inquire if he had anything for me, or for Holdsworth (he was not particular to whom he gave up the letters, so that he got rid of them somehow, and could set off homewards), he would say he thought that he had, for such was his invariable safe form of answer; and would fumble in breast-pockets, waist-coat-pockets, breeches-pockets, and, as a last resource, in coat-tail pockets; and at length try to comfort me, if I looked disappointed, by telling me, 'Hoo had missed this toime, but was sure to write to-morrow'; 'hoo' representing an imaginary sweetheart.

Sometimes I had seen the minister bring home a letter which he had found lying for him at the little shop that was the post office at Heathbridge, or from the grander establishment at Hornby. Once or twice Josiah, the carter, remembered that the old letter-carrier had trusted him with an epistle to 'Measter,' as they had met in the lanes. I think it must have been about ten days after my arrival at the farm, and my talk to Phillis cutting bread-and-butter at the kitchen dresser, before the day on which the minister suddenly spoke at the dinner-table, and said—

'By the by, I've got a letter in my pocket. Reach me my coat here, Phillis/ The weather was still sultry, and for coolness and ease the minister was sitting in his shirt-sleeves. * I went to Heathbridge about the paper they had sent me, which spoils all the pens—and I called at the post office, and found a letter for me, unpaid,—and they did not like to trust it to old Zekiel. Aye! here it is! Now we shall hear news of Holdsworth—I thought I'd keep it till we were all together.' My heart seemed to stop beating, and I hung my head over my plate, not daring to look up. What would come of it now? What was Phillis doing? How was she looking? A moment of suspense—and then he spoke again. 'Why? what's this? Here are two visiting tickets with his name on, no writing at all. No! it's not his name on both. MRS. Holdsworth. The young man has gone and got married.* I lifted my

head at these words ; I could not help looking just for one instant at Phillis. It seemed to me as if she had been keeping watch over my face and ways. Her face was brilliantly flushed; her eyes were dry and glittering; but she did not speak ; her lips were set together almost as if she was pinching them tight to prevent words or sounds coming out. Cousin Holman's face expressed surprise and interest.

' Well!' said she, ' who'd ha' thought it ? He's made quick work of his wooing and wedding. I'm sure I wish him happy. Let me see '—counting on her fingers—' October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, June, July—at least we're at the 28th—it is nearly ten months after all, and reckon a month each way off '—

' Did you know of this news before ?' said the minister, turning sharp round on me, surprised, I suppose, at my silence—hardly suspicious, as yet.

' I knew—I had heard—something. It is to a French Canadian young lady,' I went on, forcing myself to talk. ' Her name is Ventadour '

' Lucille Ventadour !' said Phillis, in a sharp voice, out of tune.

' Then you knew too!' exclaimed the minister.

We both spoke at once. I said, ' I heard of the probability of—, and told Phillis.' She said, ' He is married to Lucille Ventadour, of French descent; one of a large family near St. Meurice ; am not I right ?' I nodded. ' Paul told me—that is all we know, is not it ? Did you see the Howsons, father, in Heathbridge ? ' and she forced herself to talk more than she had done for several days, asking many questions, trying, as I could see, to keep the conversation off the one raw surface, on which to touch was agony. I had less self-command ; but I followed her lead. I was not so much absorbed in the conversation but what I could see that the minister was puzzled and uneasy; though he seconded Phillis's efforts to prevent her mother from recurring to the great piece of news, and uttering continual exclamations of wonder and surprise. But

with that one exception we were all disturbed out of our natural equanimity, more or less. Every day, every hour, I was reproaching myself more and more for my blundering officiousness. If only I had held my foolish tongue for that one half-hour ; if only I had not been in such impatient haste to do something to relieve pain ! I could have knocked my stupid head against the wall in my remorse. Yet all I could do now was to second the brave girl in her efforts to conceal her disappointment and keep her maidenly secret. But I thought that dinner would never, never come to an end. I suffered for her, even more than for myself. Until now everything which I had heard spoken in that happy household were simple words of true meaning. If we had aught to say, we said it ; and if any one preferred silence, nay, if all did so, there would have been no spasmodic, forced efforts to talk for the sake of talking, or to keep off intrusive thoughts or suspicions.

At length we got up from our places, and prepared to disperse ; but two or three of us had lost our zest and interest in the daily labour. The minister stood looking out of the window in silence, and when he roused himself to go out to the fields where his labourers were working, it was with a sigh ; and he tried to avert his troubled face as he passed us on his way to the door. When he had left us, I caught sight of Phillis's face, as, thinking herself unobserved, her countenance relaxed for a moment or two into sad, woeful weariness. She started into briskness again when her mother spoke, and hurried away to do some little errand at her bidding. When we two were alone, cousin Holman recurred to Holdsworth's marriage. She was one of those people who like to view an event from every side of probability, or even possibility ; and she had been cut short from indulging herself in this way during dinner.

' To think of Mr. Holdsworth's being married ! I can't get over it, Paul. Not but what he was a very nice young man ! I don't like her name, though ; it sounds foreign. Say it again, my dear. I hope she'll know

how to take care of him, English fashion. He is not strong, and if she does not see that his things are well aired, I should be afraid of the old cough.'

'He always said he was stronger than he had ever been before, after that fever.'

* He might think so, but I have my doubts. He was a very pleasant young man, but he did not stand nursing very well. He got tired of being coddled, as he called it. I hope they'll soon come back to England, and then he'll have a chance for his health. I wonder now, if she speaks English ; but, to be sure, he can speak foreign tongues like anything, as I've heard the minister say.'

And so we went on for some time, till she became drowsy over her knitting, on the sultry summer afternoon ; and I stole away for a walk, for I wanted some solitude in which to think over things, and, alas ! to blame myself with poignant stabs of remorse.

I lounged lazily as soon as I got to the wood. Here and there the bubbling, brawling brook circled round a great stone, or a root of an old tree, and made a pool 5 otherwise it coursed brightly over the gravel and stones. I stood by one of these for more than half an hour, or, indeed, longer, throwing bits of wood or pebbles into the water, and wondering what I could do to remedy the present state of things. Of course all my meditation was of no use ; and at length the distant sound of the horn employed to tell the men far afield to leave off work, warned me that it was six o'clock, and time for me to go home. Then I caught wafts of the loud-voiced singing of the evening psalm. As I was crossing the ash-field, I saw the minister at some distance talking to a man. I could not hear what they were saying, but I saw an impatient or dissentient (I could not tell which) gesture on the part of the former, who walked quickly away, and was apparently absorbed in his thoughts, for though he passed within twenty yards of me, as both our paths converged towards home, he took no notice of me. He passed the evening in a way which was even worse than dinner-time. The minister was silent,

depressed, even irritable. Poor cousin Holman was utterly perplexed by this unusual frame of mind and temper in her husband; she was not well herself, and was suffering from the extreme and sultry heat, which made her less talkative than usual. Phillis, usually so reverently tender to her parents, so soft, so gentle, seemed now to take no notice of the unusual state of things, but talked to me—to any one—on indifferent subjects, regardless of her father's gravity, of her mother's piteous looks of bewilderment. But once my eyes fell upon her hands, concealed under the table, arid I could see the passionate, convulsive manner in which she laced and interlaced her fingers perpetually, wringing them together from time to time, wringing till the compressed flesh became perfectly white. What could I do? I talked with her, as I saw she wished; her grey eyes had dark circles round them, and a strange kind of dark light in them; her cheeks were flushed, but her lips were white and wan. I wondered that others did not read these signs as clearly as I did. But perhaps they did; I think, from what came afterwards, the minister did.

Poor cousin Holman! she worshipped her husband; and the outward signs of his uneasiness were more patent to her simple heart than were her daughter's. After a while she could bear it no longer. She got up, and, softly laying her hand on his broad, stooping shoulder, she said—

* What is the matter, minister? Has anything gone wrong?'

He started as if from a dream. Phillis hung her head, and caught her breath in terror at the answer she feared. But he, looking round with a sweeping glance, turned his broad, wise face up to his anxious wife, and forced a smile, and took her hand in a reassuring manner.

'I am blaming myself, dear. I have been overcome with anger this afternoon. I scarcely knew what I was doing, but I turned away Timothy Cooper. He has killed the Ribstone pippin at the corner of the orchard; gone and piled the quicklime for the mortar for the

new stable wall against the trunk of the tree—stupid fellow! killed the tree outright—and it loaded with apples!’

And Ribstone pippins are so scarce,’ said sympathetic cousin Holman.

‘Aye ! But Timothy is but a half-wit; and he has a wife and children. He had often put me to it sore, with his slothful ways, but I had laid it before the Lord, and striven to bear with him. But I will not stand it any longer, it’s past my patience. And he has notice to find another place. Wife, we won’t talk more about it.’ He took her hand gently off his shoulder, touched it with his lips; but relapsed into a silence as profound, if not quite so morose in appearance, as before. I could not tell why, but this bit of talk between her father and mother seemed to take all the factitious spirits out of Phillis. She did not speak now, but looked out of the open casement at the calm, large moon, slowly moving through the twilight sky. Once I thought her eyes were filling with tears; but, if so, she shook them off, and arose with alacrity when her mother, tired and dispirited, proposed to go to bed immediately after prayers. We all said good night in our separate ways to the minister, who still sat at the table with the great Bible open before him, not much looking up at any of our salutations, but returning them kindly. But when I, last of all, was on the point of leaving the room, he said, still scarcely looking up—

*Paul, you will oblige me by staying here a few minutes. I would fain have some talk with you.’

I knew what was coming, all in a moment. I carefully shut-to the door, put out my candle, and sat down to my fate. He seemed to find some difficulty in beginning, for, if I had not heard that he wanted to speak to me, I should never have guessed it, he seemed so much absorbed in reading a chapter to the end. Suddenly he lifted his head up and said—

*It is about that friend of yours, Holdsworth ! Paul, have you any reason for thinking he has played tricks upon Phillis ? ’

I saw that his eyes were blazing with such a fire of anger at the bare idea, that I lost all my presence of mind, and only repeated—

' Played tricks on Phillis !'

' Aye ! you know what I mean : made love to her, courted her, made her think that he loved her, and then gone away and left her. Put it as you will, only give me an answer of some kind or another—a true answer, I mean—and don't repeat my words, Paul.'

He was shaking all over as he said this. I did not delay a moment in answering him—

* I do not believe that Edward Holdsworth ever played tricks on Phillis, ever made love to her; he never, to my knowledge, made her believe that he loved her.'

I stopped; I wanted to nerve up my courage for a confession, yet I wished to save the secret of Phillis's love for Holdsworth as much as I could; that secret which she had so striven to keep sacred and safe ; and I had need of some reflection before I went on with what I had to say.

He began again before I had quite arranged my manner of speech. It was almost as if to himself—
' She is my only child; my little daughter! She is hardly out of childhood: I have thought to gather her under my wings for years to come ; her mother and I would lay down our lives to keep her from harm and grief.' Then raising his voice, and looking at me, he said, ' Something has gone wrong with the child; and it seems to me to date from the time she heard of that marriage. It is hard to think that you may know more of her secret cares and sorrows than I do—but perhaps you do, Paul, perhaps you do—only, if it be not a sin, tell me what I can do to make her happy again; tell me.'

* It will not do much good, I am afraid,' said I, ' but I will own how wrong I did; I don't mean wrong in the way of sin, but in the way of judgement. Holdsworth told me just before he went that he loved Phillis, and hoped to make her his wife, and I told her.'

There ! it was out; all my part in it, at least; and I set my lips tight together, and waited for the words to come. I did not see his face ; I looked straight at the wall opposite; but I heard him once begin to speak, and then turn over the leaves in the book before him. How awfully still that room was ! The air outside, how still it was ! The open window let in no rustle of leaves, no twitter or movement of birds—no sound whatever. The clock on the stairs—the minister's hard breathing—was it to go on for ever ? Impatient beyond bearing at the deep quiet, I spoke again—

' I did it for the best, as I thought.'

The minister shut the book to nastily, and stood up. Then I saw how angry he was.

' For the best, do you say ? It was best, was it, to go and tell a young girl what you never told a word of to her parents, who trusted you like a son of their own ? '

He began walking about, up and down the room close under the open windows, churning up his bitter thoughts of me.

' To put such thoughts into the child's head,' continued he ; * to spoil her peaceful maidenhood with talk about another man's love; and such love, too,' he spoke scornfully now—' a love that is ready for any young woman ! Oh, the misery in my poor little daughter's face to-day at dinner—the misery, Paul ! I thought you were one to be trusted—your father's son, too, to go and put such thoughts into the child's mind ; you two talking together about that man wishing to marry her.'

I could not help remembering the pinafore, the childish garment which Phillis wore so long, as if her parents were unaware of her progress towards womanhood. Just in the same way the minister spoke and thought of her now, as a child, whose innocent peace I had spoiled by vain and foolish talk. I knew that the truth was different, though I could hardly have told it now; but, indeed, I never thought of trying to tell; it was far from my mind to add one iota to the sorrow which I had caused. The minister went on walking, occasionally

stopping to move things on the table, or articles of furniture, in a sharp, impatient, meaningless way, then he began again—

'So young, so pure from the world ! how could you go and talk to such a child, raising hopes, exciting feelings—all to end thus; and best so, even though I saw her poor piteous face look as it did ? I can't forgive you, Paul; it was more than wrong—it was wicked—to go and repeat that man's words.'

His back was now to the door, and, in listening to his low, angry tones, he did not hear it slowly open, nor did he see Phillis, standing just within the room, until he turned round ; then he stood still. She must have been half undressed ; but she had covered herself with a dark winter cloak, which fell in long folds to her white, naked, noiseless feet. Her face was strangely pale: her eyes heavy in the black circles round them. She came up to the table very slowly, and leant her hand upon it, saying mournfully—

'Father, you must not blame Paul. I could not help hearing a great deal of what you were saying. He did tell me, and perhaps it would have been wiser not, dear Paul! But—oh, dear ! oh, dear ! I am so sick with shame ! He told me out of his kind heart, because he saw—that I was so very unhappy at *his* going away.'

She hung her head, and leant more heavily than before on her supporting hand.

'I don't understand,' said her father; but he was beginning to understand. Phillis did not answer till he asked her again. I could have struck him now for his cruelty; but then I knew all.

'I loved him, father!' she said at length, raising her eyes to the minister's face.

'Had he ever spoken of love to you ? Paul says not!'

'Never.' She let fall her eyes, and drooped more than ever. I almost thought she would fall.

'I could not have believed it,' said he, in a hard voice, yet sighing the moment he **had** spoken. A dead silence for a moment. 'Paul! I was unjust to you. **Yon**

deserved blame, but not all that I said/ Then again a silence. I thought I saw Phillis's white lips moving, but it might be the flickering of the candlelight—a moth had flown in through the open casement, and was fluttering round the flame; I might have saved it, but I did not care to do so, my heart was too full of other things. At any rate, no sound was heard for long, endless minutes. Then he said—* Phillis ! did we not make you happy here? Have we not loved you enough?'

She did not seem to understand the drift of this question; she looked up as if bewildered, and her beautiful eyes dilated with a painful, tortured expression. He went on without noticing the look on her face; he did not see it, I am sure.

'And yet you would have left us, left your home, left your father and your mother, and gone away with this stranger, wandering over the world.'

He suffered, too; there were tones of pain in the voice in which he uttered this reproach. Probably the father and daughter were never so far apart in their lives, so unsympathetic. Yet some new terror came over her, and it was to him she turned for help. A shadow came over her face, and she tottered towards her father; falling down, her arms across his knees, and moaning out—

* Father, my head ! my head !' and then she slipped through his quick-enfolding arms, and lay on the ground at his feet.

I shall never forget his sudden look of agony while I live; never ! We raised her up; her colour had strangely darkened; she was insensible. I ran through the back-kitchen to the yard pump, and brought back water. The minister had her on his knees, her head against his breast, almost as though she were a sleeping child. He was trying to rise up with his poor precious burden, but the momentary terror had robbed the strong man of his strength, and he sank back in his chair with sobbing breath.

'She is not dead, Paul! is she ?' he whispered, hoarse, as I came near him.

I, too, could not speak, but I pointed to the quivering of the muscles round her mouth. Just then cousin Holman, attracted by some unwonted sound, came down. I remember I was surprised at the time at her presence of mind, she seemed to know so much better what to do than the minister, in the midst of the sick a/fright which blanched her countenance, and made her tremble all over. I think now that it was the recollection of what had gone before; the miserable thought that possibly his words had brought on this attack, whatever it might be, that so unmanned the minister. We carried her upstairs, and while the women were putting her to bed, still unconscious, still slightly convulsed, I slipped out, and saddled one of the horses, and rode as fast as the heavy-trotting beast could go, to Hornby, to find the doctor there, and bring him back. He was out, might be detained the whole night. I remember saying, 'God help us all!' as I sat on my horse, under the window, through which the apprentice's head had appeared to answer my furious tugs at the night-bell. He was a good-natured fellow. He said—

'He may be home in half an hour, there's no knowing; but I dare say he will. I'll send him out to the Hope Farm directly he comes in. It's that good-looking young woman, Holman's daughter, that's ill, isn't it?'

'Yes.'

'It would be a pity if she was to go. She's an only child, isn't she? I'll get up, and smoke a pipe in the surgery, ready for the governor's coming home. I might go to sleep if I went to bed again.'

'Thank you, you're a good fellow!' and I rode back almost as quickly as I came.

It was a brain fever. The doctor said so, when he came in the early summer morning. I believe we had come to know the nature of the illness in the night-watches that had gone before. As to hope of ultimate recovery, or even evil prophecy of the probable end, the cautious doctor would be entrapped into neither. He gave his directions, and promised to come again ;

BO soon, that this one thing showed his opinion of the gravity of the case.

By God's mercy she recovered, but it was a long, weary time first. According to previously made plans, I was to have gone home at the beginning of August. But all such ideas were put aside now, without a word being spoken. I really think that I was necessary in the house, and especially necessary to the minister at this time; my father was the last man in the world, under such circumstances, to expect me home.

I say I think I was necessary in the house. Every person (I had almost said every creature, for all the dumb beasts seemed to know and love Phillis) about the place went grieving and sad, as though a cloud was over the sun. They did their work, each striving to steer clear of the temptation to eye-service, in fulfilment of the trust reposed in them by the minister. For the day after Phillis had been taken ill, he had called all the men employed on the farm into the empty barn; and there he had entreated their prayers for his only child; and then and there he had told them of his present incapacity for thought about any other thing in this world but his little daughter, lying nigh unto death, and he had asked them to go on with their daily labours as best they could, without his direction. So, as I say, these honest men did their work to the best of their ability, but they slouched along with sad and careful faces, coming one by one in the dim mornings to ask news of the sorrow that overshadowed the house; and receiving Betty's intelligence, always rather darkened by passing through her mind, with slow shakes of the head, and a dull wistfulness of sympathy. But, poor fellows, they were hardly fit to be trusted with hasty messages, and here my poor services came in. One time I was to ride hard to Sir William Bentinck's, and petition for ice out of his ice-house, to put on Phillis's head. Another, it was to Eltham I must go, by train, horse, anyhow, and bid the doctor there come for a consultation; for fresh symptoms had appeared, which Mr. Brown, of Hornby, considered unfavourable. Many

an hour have I sat on the window-seat, half-way up the stairs, close by the old clock, listening in the hot stillness of the house for the sounds in the sick-room. The minister and I met often, but spoke together seldom. He looked so old—so old! He shared the nursing with his wife; the strength that was needed seemed to be given to them both in that day. They required no one else about their child. Every office about her was sacred to them; even Betty only went into the room for the most necessary purposes. Once I saw Phillis through the open door; her pretty golden hair had been cut off long before; her head was covered with wet cloths, and she was moving it backwards and forwards on the pillow, with weary, never-ending motion, her poor eyes shut, trying in the old accustomed way to croon out a hymn-tune, but perpetually breaking it up into moans of pain. Her mother sat by her, tearless, changing the cloths upon her head with patient solicitude. I did not see the minister at first, but there he was in a dark corner, down upon his knees, his hands clasped together in passionate prayer. Then the door shut, and I saw no more.

One day he was wanted; and I had to summon him. Brother Robinson and another minister, hearing of his 'trial', had come to see him. I told him this upon the stair-landing in a whisper. He was strangely troubled.

'They will want me to lay bare my heart. I cannot do it. Paul, stay with me. They mean well; but as for spiritual help at such a time—it is God only, God only, who can give it.'

So I went in with him. They were two ministers from the neighbourhood; both older than Ebenezer Holman; but evidently inferior to him in education and worldly position. I thought they looked at me as if I were an intruder, but remembering the minister's words I held my ground, and took up one of poor Phill's books (of which I could not read a word) to have an ostensible occupation. Presently I was asked to 'engage in prayer', and we all knelt down, Brother Robinson 'leading', and quoting largely, as I remember,

from the Book of Job. He seemed to take for his text, if texts are ever taken for prayers, 'Behold, thou hast instructed many; but now it is come upon thee, and thou faintest; it toucheth thee, and thou art troubled.' When we others rose up, the minister continued for some minutes on his knees. Then he too got up, and stood facing us, for a moment, before we all sat down in conclave. After a pause Robinson began—

* We grieve for you, Brother Holman, for your trouble is great. But we would fain have you remember you are as a light set on a hill; and the congregations are looking at you with watchful eyes. We have been talking as we came along on the two duties required of you in this strait; Brother Hodgson and me. And we have resolved to exhort you on these two points. First, God has given you the opportunity of showing forth an example of resignation.' Poor Mr. Holman visibly winced at this word. I could fancy how he had tossed aside such brotherly preachings in his happier moments; but now his whole system was unstrung, and * resignation' seemed a term which presupposed that the dreaded misery of losing Phillis was inevitable. But good, stupid Mr. Robinson went on, 'We hear on all sides that there are scarce any hopes of your child's recovery; and it may be well to bring you to mind of Abraham; and how he was willing to kill his only child when the Lord commanded. Take example by him, Brother Holman. Let us hear you say, "The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord!"'

There was a pause of expectancy. I verily believe the minister tried to feel it; but he could not. Heart of flesh was too strong. Heart of stone he had not.

'I will say it to my God, when He gives me strength—when the day comes,' he spoke at last.

The other two looked at each other, and shook their heads. I think the reluctance to answer as they wished was not quite unexpected. The minister went on: *There are hopes yet,' he said, as if to himself. 'God has given me a great heart for hoping, and I will not

look forward beyond the hour.' Then turning more to them, and speaking louder, he added: ' Brethren, God will strengthen me when the time comes, when such resignation as you speak of is needed. Till then I cannot feel it; and what I do not feel I will not express, using words as if they were a charm.' He was getting chafed, I could see.

He had rather put them out by these speeches of his ; but after a short time, and some more shakes of the head, Robinson began again—

' Secondly, we would have you listen to the voice of the rod, and ask yourself for what sins this trial has been laid upon you ; whether you may not have been too much given up to your farm and your cattle; whether this world's learning has not puffed you up to vain conceit and neglect of the things of God; whether you have not made an idol of your daughter ? '

' I cannot answer—I will not answer !' exclaimed the minister. ' My sins I confess to God. But if they were scarlet—and they are so in His sight,' he added humbly—* I hold with Christ that afflictions are not sent by God in wrath as penalties for sin.'

' Is that orthodox, Brother Robinson ? ' asked the third minister, in a deferential tone of inquiry.

Despite the minister's injunction not to leave him, I thought matters were getting so serious that a little homely interruption would be more to the purpose than my continued presence, and I went round to the kitchen to ask for Betty's help.

¹⁷ 'Od rot 'em !' said she ; ' they're always a-coming at illconvenient times; and they have such hearty appetites, they'll make nothing of what would have served master and you since our poor lass has been ill. I've but a bit of cold beef in th' house ; but I'll do some ham and eggs, and that'll rout 'em from worrying the minister. They're a deal quieter after they've had their victual. Last time as old Robinson came, he was very reprehensible upon master's learning, which he couldn't compass to save his life, so he needn't have been afeared of that temptation, and used words long enough to have

knocked a body down ; but after me and missus bad given him his fill of victual, and he'd had some good ale and a pipe, he spoke just like any other man, and could crack a joke with me.'

Their visit was the only break in the long weary days and nights. I do not mean that no other inquiries were made. I believe that all the neighbours hung about the place daily till they could learn from some out-comer how Phillis Holman was. But they knew better than to come up to the house, for the August weather was so hot that every door and window was kept constantly open, and the least sound outside penetrated all through. I am sure the cocks and hens had a sad time of it ; for Betty drove them all into an empty barn, and kept them fastened up in the dark for several days, with very little effect as regarded their crowing and clacking. At length came a sleep which was the crisis, and from which she wakened up with a new faint life. Her slumber had lasted many, many hours. We scarcely dared to breathe or move during the time ; we had striven to hope so long, that we were sick at heart, and durst not trust in the favourable signs: the even breathing, the moistened skin, the slight return of delicate colour into the pale, wan lips. I recollect stealing out that evening in the dusk, and wandering down the grassy lane, under the shadow of the over-arching elms to the little bridge at the foot of the hill, where the lane to the Hope Farm joined another road to Hornby. On the low parapet of that bridge I found Timothy Cooper, the stupid, half-witted labourer, sitting, idly throwing bits of mortar into the brook below. He just looked up at me as I came near, but gave me no greeting, either by word or gesture. He had generally made some sign of recognition to me, but this time I thought he was sullen at being dismissed. Nevertheless I felt as if it would be a relief to talk a little to some one, and I sat down by him. While I was thinking how to begin, he yawned wearily.

'Yon are tired, Tim,' said I.

'Aye/' said he. 'But I reckon I may go home now.'

' Have you been sitting here long ? '
' Welly all day long. Leastways sin' seven i' th' morning.'

* Why, what in the world have you been doing ? '

' Naught.'

' Why have you been sitting here, then ? '

' T' keep carts off.' He was up now, stretching himself, and shaking his lubberly limbs.

' Carts ! what carts ? '

' Carts as might ha* wakened yon wench ! It's Hornby market-day. I reckon yo're no better nor a half-wit yourser.' He cocked his eye at me as if he were gauging my intellect.

' And have you been sitting here all day to keep the lane quiet ? '

' Aye. I've naught else to do. Th' minister has turned me adrift. Have yo' heard how th' lass is faring to-night ?'

' They hope she'll waken better for this long sleep. Good night to you, and God bless you, Timothy,' said I.

He scarcely took any notice of my words, as he lumbered across a stile that led to his cottage. Presently I went home to the farm. Phillis had stirred, had spoken two or three faint words. Her mother was with her, dropping nourishment into her scarce conscious mouth. The rest of the household were summoned to evening prayer for the first time for many days. It was a return to the daily habits of happiness and health. But in these silent days our very lives had been an unspoken prayer. Now we met in the house-place, and looked at each other with strange recognition of the thankfulness on all our faces. We knelt down; we waited for the minister's voice. He did not begin as usual. He could not; he was choking. Presently we heard the strong man's sob. Then old John turned round on his knees, and said—

* Minister, I reckon we have blessed the Lord wi' all our souls, though we've ne'er talked about it; and maybe He'll not need spoken words this night. God

bless us all, and keep our Phillis safe from harm! Amen.'

Old John's impromptu prayer was all we had that night.

'Our Phillis,' as he had called her, grew better day by day from that time. Not quickly; I sometimes grew desponding, and feared that she would never be what she had been before; no more she has, in some ways.

I seized an early opportunity to tell the minister about Timothy Cooper's unsolicited watch on the bridge during the long summer's day.

'God forgive me !' said the minister. 'I have been too proud in my own conceit. The first steps I take out of this house shall be to Cooper's cottage.'

I need hardly say Timothy was reinstated in his place on the farm ; and I have often since admired the patience with which his master tried to teach him how to do the easy work which was henceforward carefully adjusted to his capacity.

Phillis was carried downstairs, and lay for hour after hour quite silent on the great sofa, drawn up under the windows of the house-place. She seemed always the same—gentle, quiet, and sad. Her energy did not return with her bodily strength. It was sometimes pitiful to see her parents' vain endeavours to rouse her to interest. One day the minister brought her a set of blue ribbons, reminding her with a tender smile of a former conversation in which she had owned to a love of such feminine vanities. She spoke gratefully to him, but when he was gone she laid them on one side, and languidly shut her eyes. Another time I saw her mother bring her the Latin and Italian books that she had been so fond of before her illness—or, rather, before Holdsworth had gone away. That was worst of all. She turned her face to the wall, and cried as soon as her mother's back was turned. Betty was laying the cloth for the early dinner. Her sharp eyes saw the state of the case.

'Now, Phillis !' said she, coming up to the sofa; •we ha' done a' we can for you, and th' doctors has

done a' they can for you, and I think the Lord has done a' He can for you, and more than you deserve, too, if you don't do something for yourself. If I were you, I'd rise up and snuff the moon, sooner than break your father's and your mother's hearts wi' watching and waiting till it pleases you to fight your own way back to cheerfulness. There, I never favoured long preachings, and I've said my say.'

A day or two after Phillis asked me, when we were alone, if I thought my father and mother would allow her to go and stay with them for a couple of months. She blushed a little as she faltered out her wish for a change of thought and scene.

'Only for a short time, Paul. Then—we will go back to the peace of the old days. I know we shall; I can, and I will!'

II

MR. HARRISON'S CONFESSIONS

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MR. HARRISONS CONFESSIONS

CHAPTER I

THE fire was burning gaily. My wife had just gone upstairs to put baby to bed. Charles sat opposite to me, looking very brown and handsome. It was pleasant enough that we should feel sure of spending some weeks under the same roof, a thing which we had never done since we were mere boys. I felt too lazy to talk, so I ate walnuts and looked into the fire. But Charles grew restless.

'Now that your wife is gone upstairs, Will, you must tell me what I've wanted to ask you ever since I saw her this morning. Tell me all about the wooing and winning. I want to have the receipt for getting such a charming little wife of my own. Your letters only gave the barest details. So set to, man, and tell me every particular.'

* If I tell you all, it will be a long story.'

'Never fear. If I get tired, I can go to sleep, **and** dream that I am back again, a lonely bachelor, in Ceylon, and I can waken up when you have done, to know that I am under your roof. Dash away, man ! " Once upon a time, a gallant young bachelor"—There's a beginning for you !'

Well, then, " Once upon a time, a gallant **young** bachelor " was sorely puzzled where to settle, **when he** had completed his education as a surgeon—I must **speak in** the first person; I cannot go on as a gallant young bachelor. I had just finished walking the hospitals when you went to Ceylon, and, if you remember, I wanted to go abroad like you, and thought of offering myself as a ship-surgeon; but I found I should rather lose caste in my profession ; so I hesitated, **and** while

I was hesitating, I received a letter from my father's cousin, Mr. Morgan—that old gentleman who used to write such long letters of good advice to my mother, and who tipped me a five-pound note when I agreed to be bound apprentice to Mr. Howard, instead of going to sea. Well, it seems the old gentleman had all along thought of taking me as his partner, if I turned out pretty well; and as he heard a good account of me from an old friend of his, who was a surgeon at Guy's, he wrote to propose this arrangement: I was to have a third of the profits for five years; after that, half; and eventually I was to succeed to the whole. It was no bad offer for a penniless man like me, as Mr. Morgan had a capital country practice, and, though I did not know him personally, I had formed a pretty good idea of him, as an honourable, kind-hearted, fidgety, meddlesome old bachelor; and a very correct notion it was, as I found out in the very first half-hour of seeing him. I had had some idea that I was to live in his house, as he was a bachelor and a kind of family friend; and I think he was afraid that I should expect this arrangement, for when I walked up to his door, with the porter carrying my portmanteau, he met me on the steps, and while he held my hand and shook it, he said to the porter, "Jerry, if you'll wait a moment, Mr. Harrison will be ready to go with you to his lodgings, at Jocelyn's, you know"; and then turning to me, he addressed his first words of welcome. I was a little inclined to think him inhospitable, but I got to understand him better afterwards. "Jocelyn's," said he, "is the best place I have been able to hit upon in a hurry, and there is a good deal of fever about, which made me desirous that you should come this month—a low kind of typhoid, in the oldest part of the town. I think you'll be comfortable there for a week or two. I have taken the liberty of desiring my housekeeper to send *flown* one or two things which give the place a little more of a home aspect—an easy-chair, a beautiful case of preparations, and one or two little matters in the way of eatables; but if you'll take my advice, I've a plan in my

head which we will talk about to-morrow morning. At present, I don't like to keep you standing out on the steps here, so I'll not detain you from your lodgings, where I rather think my housekeeper is gone to get tea ready for you."

' I thought I understood the old gentleman's anxiety for his own health, which he put upon care for mine, for he had on a kind of loose grey coat, and no hat on his head. But I wondered that he did not ask me indoors, instead of keeping me on the steps. I believe, after all, I made a mistake in supposing he was afraid of taking cold; he was only afraid of being seen in *deshabille*. And for his apparent inhospitality, I had not been long in Duncombe before I understood the comfort of having one's house considered as a castle into which no one might intrude, and saw good reason for the practice Mr. Morgan had established of coming to his door to speak to every one. It was only the effect of habit that made him receive me so. Before long, I had the free run of his house.

' There was every sign of kind attention and forethought on the part of some one, whom I could not doubt to be Mr. Morgan, in my lodgings. I was too lazy to do much that evening, and sat in the little bow-window which projected over Jocelyn's shop, looking up and down the street. Duncombe calls itself a town, but I should call it a village. Really, looking from Jocelyn's, it is a very picturesque place. The houses are anything but regular; they may be mean in their details; but altogether they look well; they have not that flat, unrelieved front, which many towns of far more pretensions present. Here and there a **bow**-window—every now and then a gable, cutting up against the sky—occasionally a projecting upper story—throws good effect of light and shadow along the street; and they have a queer fashion of their own of colouring the whitewash of some of the houses with a sort of pink blotting-paper tinge, more like the stone of which Mayence is built than anything else. It may be very bad taste, but to my mind it gives a rich warmth to the

colouring. Then, here and there a dwelling-house has a court in front, with a grass-plot on each side of the flagged walk, and a large tree or two—limes or horse chestnuts—which send their great, projecting upper branches over into the street, making round dry places of shelter on the pavement in the times of summer showers.

' While I was sitting in the bow-window, thinking of the contrast between this place and the lodgings in the heart of London, which I had left only twelve hours before—the window open here, and, although in the centre of the town, admitting only scents from the mignonette boxes on the sill, instead of the dust and smoke of——Street—the only sound heard in this, the principal street, being the voices of mothers calling their playing children home to bed, and the eight o'clock bell of the old parish church bim-bomming in remembrance of the curfew; while I was sitting thus idly, the door opened, and the little maid-servant, dropping a curtsy, said—

' " Please, sir, Mrs. Munton's compliments, and she would be glad to know how you are after your journey."

' There ! was not that hearty and kind ? Would even the dearest chum I had at Guy's have thought of doing such a thing ? while Mrs. Munton, whose name I had never heard of before, was doubtless suffering anxiety till I could relieve her mind by sending back word that I was pretty well.

' " My compliments to Mrs. Munton, and I am pretty well: much obliged to her." It was as well to say only " pretty well", for " very well" would have destroyed the interest Mrs. Munton evidently felt in me. Good Mrs. Munton ! Kind Mrs. Munton ! Perhaps, also, young—handsome—rich—widowed Mrs. Munton ! I rubbed my hands with delight and amusement, and, resuming my post of observation, began to wonder at which house Mrs. Munton lived.

' Again the little tap, and the little maid-servant—

' " Please, sir, the Miss Tomkinsons' compliments, and they would be glad to know how you feel yourself after your journey.

' I don't know why, but the Miss Tomkinsons' name had not such a halo about it as Mrs. Munton's. Still it was very pretty in the Miss Tomkinsons to send and inquire. I only wished I did not feel so perfectly robust. I was almost ashamed that I could not send word I was quite exhausted by fatigue, and had fainted twice since my arrival. If I had but had a headache, at least! I heaved a deep breath : my chest was in perfect order; I had caught no cold ; so I answered again—

' " Much obliged to the Miss Tomkinsons ; I am not much fatigued ; tolerably well: my compliments."

' Little Sally could hardly have got downstairs, before she returned, bright and breathless—

' " Mr. and Mrs. Bullock's compliments, sir, and they hope you are pretty well after your journey."

' Who would have expected such kindness from such an unpromising name ? Mr. and Mrs. Bullock were less interesting, it is true, than their predecessors; but I graciously replied—

' " My compliments; a night's rest will perfectly recruit me."

* The same message was presently brought up from one or two more unknown kind hearts. I really wished I were not so ruddy-looking. I was afraid I should disappoint the tender-hearted town when they saw what a hale young fellow I was. And I was almost ashamed of confessing to a great appetite for supper when Sally came up to inquire what I would have. Beefsteaks were so tempting; but perhaps I ought rather to have water-gruel, and go to bed. The beefsteak carried the day, however. I need not have felt such a gentle elation of spirits, as this mark of the town's attention is paid to every one when they arrive after a journey. Many of the same people have sent to inquire after you—great, hulking, brown fellow as you are—only Sally spared you the infliction of devising interesting answers.

CHAPTER II

'THE next morning Mr. Morgan came before I had finished breakfast. He was the most dapper little man I ever met. I see the affection with which people cling to the style of dress that was in vogue when they were beaux and belles, and received the most admiration. They are unwilling to believe that their youth and beauty are gone, and think that the prevailing mode is unbecoming. Mr. Morgan will inveigh by the hour together against frock-coats, for instance, and whiskers. He keeps his chin close shaven, wears a black dress-coat, and dark-grey pantaloons; and in his morning round to his town patients, he invariably wears the brightest and blackest of Hessian boots, with dangling silk tassels on each side. When he goes home, about ten o'clock, to prepare for his ride to see his country patients, he puts on the most dandy top-boots I ever saw, which he gets from some wonderful bootmaker a hundred miles off. His appearance is what one calls "jemmy"; there is no other word that will do for it. He was evidently a little discomfited when he saw me in my breakfast costume, with the habits which I brought with me from the fellows at Guy's; my feet against the fireplace, my chair balanced on its hind legs (a habit of sitting which I afterwards discovered he particularly abhorred); slippers on my feet (which, also, he considered a most ungentlemanly piece of untidiness "out of a bedroom"); in short, from what I afterwards learned, every prejudice he had was outraged by my appearance on this first visit of his. I put my book down, and sprang up to receive him. He stood, hat and cane in hand.

' "I came to inquire if it would be convenient for you to accompany me on my morning's round, and to be introduced to a few of our friends." I quite detected the little tone of coldness, induced by his disappointment at my appearance, though he never imagined that it

was in any way perceptible. "I will be ready directly, sir," said I; and bolted into my bedroom, only too happy to escape his scrutinizing eye.

•When I returned, I was made aware, by sundry indescribable little coughs and hesitating noises, that my dress did not satisfy him. I stood ready, hat and gloves in hand; but still he did not offer to set off on our round. I grew very red and hot. At length he said—

"Excuse me, my dear young friend, but may I ask if you have no other coat besides that—*cut-away', I believe you call them? We are rather sticklers for propriety, I believe, in Duncombe; and much depends on a first impression. Let it be professional, my dear sir. Black is the garb of our profession. Forgive my speaking so plainly, but I consider myself *in loco parentis*."

He was so kind, so bland, and, in truth, so friendly, that I felt it would be most childish to take offence; but I had a little resentment in my heart at this way of being treated. However, I mumbled, "Oh, certainly, sir, if you wish it"; and returned once more to change my coat—my poor cut-away.

"Those coats, sir, give a man rather too much of a sporting appearance, not quite befitting the learned professions; more as if you came down here to hunt than to be the Galen or Hippocrates of the neighbourhood." He smiled graciously, so I smothered a sigh; for, to tell you the truth, I had rather anticipated—and, in fact, had boasted at Guy's of—the runs I hoped to have with the hounds; for Duncombe was in a famous hunting district. But all these ideas were quite dispersed when Mr. Morgan led me to the inn-yard, where there was a horse-dealer on his way to a neighbouring fair, and "strongly advised me"—which in our relative circumstances was equivalent to an injunction—to purchase a little, useful, fast-trotting, brown cob, instead of a fine, showy horse, "who would take any fence I put him to," as the horse-dealer assured me. Mr. Morgan was evidently pleased when I bowed to his decision, and gave up all hopes of an occasional hunt.

He opened out a great deal more after this purchase.

He told me his plan of establishing me in a house of my own, which looked more respectable, not to say professional, than being in lodgings ; and then he went on to say that he had lately lost a friend, a brother surgeon in a neighbouring town, who had left a widow with a small income, who would be very glad to live with me, and act as mistress to my establishment; thus lessening the expense.

" She is a lady-like woman," said Mr. Morgan, " to judge from the little I have seen of her ; about forty-five or so; and may really be of some help to you in the little etiquettes of our profession; the slight, delicate attentions which every man has to learn, if he wishes to get on in life. This is Mrs. Munton's, sir," said he, stopping short at a very unromantic-looking green door, with a brass knocker.

" I had no time to say, " Who is Mrs. Munton ? " before we had heard Mrs. Munton was at home, and were following the tidy elderly servant up the narrow carpeted stairs into the drawing-room. Mrs. Munton was the widow of a former vicar, upwards of sixty, rather deaf; but, like all the deaf people I have ever seen, very fond of talking; perhaps because she then knew the subject, which passed out of her grasp when another began to speak. She was ill of a chronic complaint, which often incapacitated her from going out; and the kind people of the town were in the habit of coming to see her and sit with her, and of bringing her the newest, freshest, tit-bits of news; so that her room was the centre of the gossip of Duncombe—not of scandal, mind; for I make a distinction between gossip and scandal. Now you can fancy the discrepancy between the ideal and the real Mrs. Munton. Instead of any foolish notion of a beautiful, blooming widow, tenderly anxious about the health of the stranger, I saw a homely, talkative, elderly person, with a keen, observant eye, and marks of suffering on her face; plain in manner and dress, but still unmistakably a lady. She talked to Mr. Morgan, but she looked at me ; and I saw that nothing I did escaped her notice. Mr. Mor-

gan annoyed me by his anxiety to show me off; but he was kindly anxious to bring out every circumstance to my credit in Mrs. Munton's hearing, knowing well that the town-crier had not more opportunities to publish all about me than she had.

* "What was that remark you repeated to me of Sir Astley Cooper's?" asked he. It had been the most trivial speech in the world that I had named as we walked along, and I felt ashamed of having to repeat it: but it answered Mr. Morgan's purpose, and before night all the town had heard that I was a favourite pupil of Sir Astley's (I had never seen him but twice in my life); and Mr. Morgan was afraid that as soon as he knew my full value I should be retained by Sir Astley to assist him in his duties as surgeon to the Royal Family. Every little circumstance was pressed into the conversation which could add to my importance.

"As I once heard Sir Robert Peel remark to Mr. Harrison, the father of our young friend here—The moons in August are remarkably full and bright."—If you remember, Charles, my father was always proud of having sold a pair of gloves to Sir Robert, when he was staying at the Grange, near Biddicombe, and I suppose good Mr. Morgan had paid his only visit to my father at the time; but Mrs. Munton evidently looked at me with double respect after this incidental remark, which I was amused to meet with, a few months afterwards, disguised in the statement that my father was an intimate friend of the Premier's, and had, in fact, been the adviser of most of the measures taken by him in public life. I sat by, half indignant and half amused. Mr. Morgan looked so complacently pleased at the whole effect of the conversation, that I did not care to mar it by explanations; and, indeed, I had little idea at the time how small sayings were the seeds of great events in the town of Duncombe. When we left Mrs. Munton's, he was in a blandly communicative mood.

"You will find it a curious statistical fact, but five-sixths of our householders of a certain rank in Duncombe are women. We have widows and old maids in rich

abundance. In fact, my dear sir, I believe that you and I are almost the only gentlemen in the place—Mr. Bullock, of course, excepted. By gentlemen, I mean professional men. It behoves us to remember, sir, that so many of the female sex rely upon us for the kindness and protection which every man who is worthy of the name is always so happy to render."

* Miss Tomkinson, on whom we next called, did not strike me as remarkably requiring protection from any man. She was a tall, gaunt, masculine-looking woman, with an air of defiance about her, naturally; this, however, she softened and mitigated, as far as she was able, in favour of Mr. Morgan. He, it seemed to me, stood a little in awe of the lady, who was very *brusque* and plain-spoken, and evidently piqued herself on her decision of character and sincerity of speech.

' " So, this is the Mr. Harrison we have heard so much of from you, Mr. Morgan ? I must say, from what I had heard, that I had expected something a little more—hum—hum ! But he's young yet; he's young. We have been all anticipating an Apollo, Mr. Harrison, from Mr. Morgan's description, and an Aesculapius combined in one; or, perhaps, I might confine myself to saying Apollo, as he, I believe, was the god of medicine ! "

' How could Mr. Morgan have described me without seeing me ? I asked myself.

' Miss Tomkinson put on her spectacles, and adjusted them on her Roman nose. Suddenly relaxing from her severity of inspection, she said to Mr. Morgan—" But you must see Caroline. I had nearly forgotten it; she is busy with the girls, but I will send for her. She had a bad headache yesterday, and looked very pale; it made me very uncomfortable."

* She rang the bell, and desired the servant to fetch Miss Caroline.

* Miss Caroline was the younger sister—younger by twenty years; and so considered as a child by Miss Tomkinson, who was fifty-five, at the very least. If she was considered as a child, she was also petted and caressed, and cared for as a child; for she had been

left as a baby to the charge of her elder sister; and when the father died, and they had to set up a school, Miss Tomkinson took upon herself every difficult arrangement, and denied herself every pleasure, and made every sacrifice in order that " Carry " might not feel the change in their circumstances. My wife tells me she once knew the sisters purchase a piece of silk, enough, with management, to have made two gowns; but Carry wished for flounces, or some such fal-lals; and, without a word, Miss Tomkinson gave up her gown to have the whole made up as Carry wished, into one handsome one ; and wore an old, shabby affair herself as cheerfully as if it were Genoa velvet. That tells the sort of relationship between the sisters as well as anything, and I consider myself very good to name it thus early, for it was long before I found out Miss Tomkinson's real goodness; and we had a great quarrel first. Miss Caroline looked very delicate and die-away when she came in; she was as soft and sentimental as Miss Tomkinson was hard and masculine; and had a way of saying, " Oh, sister, how can you ? " at Miss Tomkinson's startling speeches, which I never liked—especially as it was accompanied by a sort of protesting look at the company present, as if she wished to have it understood that she was shocked at her sister's *outré* manners. Now, that was not faithful between sisters. A remonstrance in private might have done good—though, for my own part, I have grown to like Miss Tomkinson's speeches and ways; but I don't like the way some people have of separating themselves from what may be unpopular in their relations. I know I spoke rather shortly to Miss Caroline when she asked me whether I could bear the change from " the great metropolis " to a little country village. In the first place, why could not she call it " London ", or " town ", and have done with it ? And in the next place, why should she not love the place that was her home well enough to fancy that every one would like it when they came to know it as well as she did ?

*I was conscious I was rather abrupt in my

conversation with her, and I saw that Mr. Morgan was watching me, though he pretended to be listening to Miss Tomkinson's whispered account of her sister's symptoms. But when we were once more in the street, he began, "My dear young friend"—

'I winced; for all the morning I had noticed that when he was going to give a little unpalatable advice, he always began with "My dear young friend". He had done so about the horse.

' "My dear young friend, there are one or two hints I should like to give you about your manner. The great Sir Everard Home used to say, "A general practitioner should either have a very good manner, or a very bad one." Now, in the latter case, he must be possessed of talents and acquirements sufficient to ensure his being sought after, whatever his manner might be. But the rudeness will give notoriety to these qualifications. Abernethy is a case in point. I rather, myself, question the taste of bad manners. I, therefore, have studied to acquire an attentive, anxious politeness, which combines ease and grace with a tender regard and interest. I am not aware whether I have succeeded (few men do) in coming up to my ideal; but I recommend you to strive after this manner, peculiarly befitting our profession. Identify yourself with your patients, my dear sir. You have sympathy in your good heart, I am sure, to really feel pain when listening to their account of their sufferings, and it soothes them to see the expression of this feeling in your manner. It is, in fact, sir, manners that make the man in our profession. I don't set myself up as an example—far from it; but——This is Mr. Hutton's, our vicar; one of the servants is indisposed, and I shall be glad of the opportunity of introducing you. We can resume our conversation at another time."

'I had not been aware that we had been holding a conversation, in which, I believe, the assistance of two persons is required. Why had not Mr. Hutton sent to **ask** after my health the evening before, according to **the** custom of the place? I felt rather offended.

CHAPTER III

* THE vicarage was on the north side of the street, at the end opening towards the hills. It was a long low house, receding behind its neighbours; a court was between the door and the street, with a flag-walk and an old stone cistern on the right-hand side of the door; Solomon's seal growing under the windows. Some one was watching from behind the window-curtain; for the door opened, as if by magic, as soon as we reached it; and we entered a low room, which served as hall, and was matted all over, with deep, old-fashioned window-seats, and Dutch tiles in the fireplace; altogether it was very cool and refreshing, after the hot sun in the white and red street.

' " Bessie is not so well, Mr. Morgan," said the sweet little girl of eleven or so, who had opened the door. " Sophy wanted to send for you; but papa said he was sure you would come soon this morning, and we were to remember that there were other sick people wanting you."

' " Here's Mr. Morgan, Sophy," said she, opening the door into an inner room, to which we descended a step, as I remember well; for I was nearly falling down it, I was so caught by the picture within. It was like a picture—at least, seen through the door-frame. A sort of mixture of crimson and sea-green in the room, and a sunny garden beyond, a very low casement window, open to the amber air; clusters of white roses peeping in, and Sophy sitting on a cushion on the ground, the light coming from above on her head, and a little, sturdy, round-eyed brother kneeling by her, to whom she was teaching the alphabet. It was a mighty relief to him when we came in, as I could see; and I am much mistaken if he was easily caught again to say his lesson, when he was once sent off to find papa. Sophy rose quietly, and of course we were just introduced, **and** that was **all**, before she took Mr. Morgan

upstairs to see her sick servant. I was left to myself in the room. It looked so like a home, that it at once made me know the full charm of the word. There were books and work about, and tokens of employment; there was a child's plaything on the floor; and against the sea-green walls there hung a likeness or two, done in water-colours; one, I was sure, was that of Sophy's mother. The chairs and sofa were covered with chintz, the same as the curtains—a little pretty red rose on a white ground. I don't know where the crimson came from, but I am sure there was crimson somewhere; perhaps in the carpet. There was a glass door besides the window, and you went up a step into the garden. This was, first, a grass plot, just under the windows, and beyond that, straight gravel walks, with box-borders and narrow flower-beds on each side, most brilliant and gay at the end of August, as it was then; and behind the flower-borders were fruit-trees trained over woodwork, so as to shut out the beds of kitchen-garden within.

* While I was looking round, a gentleman came in, who, I was sure, was the Vicar. It was rather awkward, for I had to account for my presence there.

"I came with Mr. Morgan; my name is Harrison," said I, bowing. I could see he was not much enlightened by this explanation, but we sat down and talked about the time of year, or some such matter, till Sophy and Mr. Morgan came back. Then I saw Mr. Morgan to advantage. With a man whom he respected, as he did the Vicar, he lost the prim, artificial manner he had in general, and was calm and dignified; but not so dignified as the Vicar. I never saw any one like him. He was very quiet and reserved, almost absent at times; his personal appearance was not striking; but he was altogether a man you would talk to with your hat off whenever you met him. It was his character that produced this effect—character that he never thought about, but that appeared in every word, and look, and motion.

"Sophy," said he, "Mr. Morgan looks very warm;

could you not gather a few jargonelle pears off the south wall ? I fancy there are some ripe there. Our jargonelle pears are remarkably early this year."

' Sophy went into the sunny garden, and I saw her take a rake and tilt at the pears, which were above her reach, apparently. The parlour had become chilly (I found out afterwards it had a flag floor, which accounts for its coldness), and I thought I should like to go into the warm sun. I said I would go and help the young lady; and without waiting for an answer, I went into the warm, scented garden, where the bees were rifling the flowers, and making a continual, busy sound. I think Sophy had begun to despair of getting the fruit, and was glad of my assistance. I thought I was very senseless to have knocked them down so soon, when I found we were to go in as soon as they were gathered. I should have liked to have walked round the garden, but Sophy walked straight off with the pears, and I could do nothing but follow her. She took up her needlework while we ate them : they were very soon finished, and when the Vicar had ended his conversation with Mr. Morgan about some poor people, we rose up to come away. I was thankful that Mr. Morgan had said so little about me. I could not have endured that he should have introduced Sir Astley Cooper or Sir Robert Peel at the vicarage; nor yet could I have brooked much mention of my "great opportunities for acquiring a thorough knowledge of my profession", which I had heard him describe to Miss Tomkinson, while her sister was talking to me. Luckily, however, he spared me all this at the Vicar's. When we left, it **was** time to mount our horses and go the country **rounds**, and I was **glad** of it.

CHAPTER IV

* BY and by the inhabitants of Duncombe began to have parties in my honour. Mr. Morgan told me it was on my account, or I don't think I should have found it out. But he was pleased at every fresh invitation, and rubbed his hands, and chuckled, as if it was a compliment to himself, as in truth it was.

' Meanwhile, the arrangement with Mrs. Rose had been brought to a conclusion. She was to bring her furniture, and place it in a house, of which I was to pay the rent. She was to be the mistress, and, in return, she was not to pay anything for her board. Mr. Morgan took the house, and delighted in advising and settling all my affairs. I was partly indolent, and partly amused, and was altogether passive. The house he took for me was near his own : it had two sitting-rooms downstairs, opening into each other by folding-doors, which were, however, kept shut in general. The back room was my consulting room (" the library," he advised me to call it), and he gave me a skull to put on the top of my bookcase, in which the medical books were all ranged on the conspicuous shelves; while Miss Austen, Dickens, and Thackeray were, by Mr. Morgan himself, skilfully placed in a careless way, upside down or with their backs turned to the wall. The front parlour was to be the dining-room, and the room above was furnished with Mrs. Rose's drawing-room chairs and table, though I found she preferred sitting downstairs in the dining-room close to the window, where, between every stitch, she could look up and see what was going on in the street. I felt rather queer to be the master of this house, filled with another person's furniture, before I had even seen the lady whose property it was.

' Presently she arrived. Mr. Morgan met her at the inn where the coach stopped, and accompanied her to my house. I could see them out of the drawing-room

window, the little gentleman stepping daintily along, flourishing his cane, and evidently talking away. She was a little taller than he was, and in deep widow's mourning; such veils and falls, and capes and cloaks, that she looked like a black crape haycock. When we were introduced, she put up her thick veil, and looked around and sighed.

' " Your appearance and circumstances, Mr. Harrison, remind me forcibly of the time when I was married to my dear husband, now at rest. He was then, like you, commencing practice as a surgeon. For twenty years I sympathized with him, and assisted him by every means in my power, even to making up pills when the young man was out. May we live together in like harmony for an equal length of time ! May the regard between us be equally sincere, although, instead of being conjugal, it is to be maternal and filial ! "

' I am sure she had been concocting this speech in the coach, for she afterwards told me she was the only passenger. When she had ended, I felt as if I ought to have had a glass of wine in my hand, to drink, after the manner of toasts. And yet I doubt if I should have done it heartily, for I did not hope to live with her for twenty years ; it had rather a dreary sound. However, I only bowed and kept my thoughts to myself. I asked Mr. Morgan, while Mr. Rose was upstairs taking off her things, to stay to tea; to which he agreed, and kept rubbing his hands with satisfaction, saying—

" Very fine woman, sir; very fine woman ! And what a manner ! How she will receive patients, who may wish to leave a message during your absence. Such a flow of words to be sure ! "

' Mr. Morgan could not stay long after tea, as there were one or two cases to be seen. I would willingly have gone, and had my hat on, indeed, for the purpose, when he said it would not be respectful, " not the thing," to leave Mrs. Rose the first evening of her arrival,

" Tender deference to the sex—to a widow in the first months of her loneliness—requires a little consideration, my dear sir. I will leave that case at

Miss Tomkinson's for you; you will perhaps call early to-morrow morning. Miss Tomkinson is rather particular, and is apt to speak plainly if she does not think herself properly attended to."

' I had often noticed that he shuffled off the visits to Miss Tomkinson's on me, and I suspect he was a little afraid of the lady.

' It was rather a long evening with Mrs. Rose. She had nothing to do, thinking it civil, I suppose, to stop in the parlour, and not go upstairs and unpack. I begged I might be no restraint upon her if she wished to do so; but (rather to my disappointment) she smiled in a measured, subdued way, and said it would be a pleasure to her to become better acquainted with me. She went upstairs once, and my heart misgave me when I saw her come down with a clean folded pocket-handkerchief. Oh, my prophetic soul!—she was no sooner seated, than she began to give me an account of her late husband's illness, and symptoms, and death. It was a very common case, but she evidently seemed to think it had been peculiar. She had just a smattering of medical knowledge, and used the technical terms so very malapropos that I could hardly keep from smiling; but I would not have done it for the world, she was evidently in such deep and sincere distress. At last she said—

' " I have the ' dognoses' of my dear husband's complaint in my desk, Mr. Harrison, if you would like to draw up the case for the *Lancet*. I think he would have felt gratified, poor fellow, if he had been told such a compliment would be paid to his remains, and that his case should appear in those distinguished columns."

' It was rather awkward; for the case was of the very commonest, as I said before. However, I had not been even this short time in practice without having learnt a few of those noises which do not compromise one, and yet may bear a very significant construction if the listener chooses to exert a little imagination.

' Before the end of the evening, we were such Mends that she brought me down the late Mr. Rose's picture to look at. She told me she could not bear herself to

gaze upon the beloved features; but that if I would look upon the miniature, she would avert her face. I offered to take it into my own hands, but she seemed wounded at the proposal, and said she never, never could trust such a treasure out of her own possession; so she turned her head very much over her left shoulder, while I examined the likeness held by her extended right arm.

' The late Mr. Rose must have been rather a good-looking, jolly man; and the artist had given him such a broad smile, and such a twinkle about the eyes, that it really was hard to help smiling back at him. However, I restrained myself.

' At first Mrs. Rose objected to accepting any of the invitations which were sent her to accompany me to the tea-parties in the town. She was so good and simple, that I was sure she had no other reason than the one which she alleged—the short time that had elapsed since her husband's death ; or else, now that I had had some experience of the entertainments which she declined so pertinaciously, I might have suspected that she was glad of the excuse. I used sometimes to wish that I was a widow. I came home tired from a hard day's riding, and if I had but felt sure that Mr. Morgan would not come in, I should certainly have put on my slippers and my loose morning coat, and have indulged in a cigar in the garden. It seemed a cruel sacrifice to society to dress myself in tight boots, and a stiff coat, and go to a five-o'clock tea. But Mr. Morgan read me such lectures upon the necessity of cultivating the goodwill of the people among whom I was settled, and seemed so sorry, and almost hurt, when I once complained of the dullness of these parties, that I felt I could not be so selfish as to decline more than one out of three. Mr. Morgan, if he found that I had an invitation for the evening, would often take the longer round, and the more distant visits. I suspected him at first of the design, which I confess I often entertained, of shirking the parties ; but I soon found out he was really making a sacrifice of his inclinations for what he considered to be my advantage.

CHAPTER V

' THERE was one invitation which seemed to promise a good deal of pleasure. Mr. Bullock (who is the attorney of Duncombe) was married a second time to a lady from a large provincial town; she wished to lead the fashion—a thing very easy to do, for every one was willing to follow her. So instead of giving a tea-party in my honour, she proposed a picnic to some old hall in the neighbourhood; and really the arrangements sounded tempting enough. Every patient who had seemed full of the subject; both those who were invited and those who were not. There was a moat round the house, with a boat on it; and there was a gallery in the hall, from which music sounded delightfully. The family to whom the place belonged were abroad, and lived at a newer and grander mansion when they were at home; there were only a farmer and his wife in the old hall, and they were to have the charge of the preparations. The little, kind-hearted town was delighted when the sun shone bright on the October morning of our picnic; the shopkeepers and cottagers all looked pleased as they saw the cavalcade gathering at Mr. Bullock's door. We were somewhere about twenty in number; a "silent few", she called us; but I thought we were quite enough. There were the Miss Tomkinsons, and two of their young ladies—one of them belonged to a "county family", Mrs. Bullock told me in a whisper; then came Mr. and Mrs. and Miss Bullock, and a tribe of little children, the offspring of the present wife. Miss Bullock was only a step-daughter. Mrs. Munton had accepted the invitation to join our party, which was rather unexpected by the host and hostess, I imagine, from little remarks that I overheard; but they made her very welcome. Miss Horsman (a maiden lady who had been on a visit from home till last week) was another. And last, there were the Vicar and his children. These, with Mr.

Morgan and myself, made up the party. I was very much pleased to see something more of the Vicar's family. He had come in occasionally to the evening parties, it is true ; and spoken kindly to us all ; but it was not his habit to stay very long at thorn. And his daughter was, he said, too young to visit. She had had the charge of her little sisters and brother since her mother's death, which took up a good deal of her time, and she was glad of the evenings to pursue her own studies. But to-day the case was different ; and Sophy, and Helen, and Lizzie, and even little Walter, were all there, standing at Mrs. Bullock's door ; for we none of us could be patient enough to sit still in the parlour with Mrs. Munton and the elder ones, quietly waiting for the two chaises and the spring-cart, which were to have been there by two o'clock, and now it was nearly a quarter past. " Shameful ! the brightness of the day would be gone." The sympathetic shopkeepers, standing at their respective doors with their hands in their pockets, had, one and all, their heads turned in the direction from which the carriages (as Mrs. Bullock called them) were to come. There was a rumble along the paved street ; and the shopkeepers turned and smiled, and bowed their heads congratulatingly to us ; all the mothers and all the little children of the place stood clustering round the door to see us set off. I had my horse waiting ; and, meanwhile, I assisted people into their vehicles. One sees a good deal of management on such occasions. Mrs. Munton was handed first into one of the chaises ; then there was a little hanging back, for most of the young people wished to go in the cart—I don't know why. My horseman, however, came forward, and as she was known to be the intimate friend of Mrs. Munton, so far was satisfactory. But who was to be third—bodkin with two old ladies, who liked the windows shut ? I saw Sophy speaking to Helen ; and then she came forward and offered to be the third. The two old ladies looked pleased and glad (as every one did near Sophy) ; so that chaise-full was arranged. Just as it was going off,

however, the servant from the vicarage came running with a note for her master. When he had read it, he went to the chaise door, and I suppose told Sophy, what I afterwards heard him say to Mrs. Bullock, that the clergyman of a neighbouring parish was ill, and unable to read the funeral service for one of his parishioners, who was to be buried that afternoon. The Vicar was, of course, obliged to go, and said he should not return home that night. It seemed a relief to some, I perceived, to be without the little restraint of his dignified presence. Mr. Morgan came up just at the moment, having ridden hard all the morning to be in time to join our party; so we were resigned, on the whole, to the Vicar's absence. His own family regretted him the most, I noticed, and I liked them all the better for it. I believe that I came next in being sorry for his departure; but I respected and admired him, and felt always the better for having been in his company. Miss Tomkinson, Mrs. Bullock, and the "county" young lady, were in the next chaise. I think the last would rather have been in the cart with the younger and merrier set, but I imagine that was considered *infra dig*. The remainder of the party were to ride and tie; and a most riotous, laughing set they were. Mr. Morgan and I were on horseback; at least I led my horse, with little Walter riding on him; his fat, sturdy legs standing stiff out on each side of my cob's broad back. He was a little darling, and chattered all the way, his sister Sophy being the heroine of all his stories. I found he owed this day's excursion entirely to her begging papa to let him come; nurse was strongly against it—"cross old nurse!" he called her once, and then said, "No, not cross; kind nurse; Sophy tells Walter not to say cross nurse." I never saw so young a child so brave. The horse shied at a log of wood. Walter looked very red, and grasped the mane, but sat upright like a little man, and never spoke all the time the horse was dancing. When it was over he looked at me, and smiled—

"You would not let me be hurt, Mr. Harrison,

would you ? " He was the most winning little fellow I ever saw.

' There were frequent cries to me from the cart, " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! do get us that branch of blackberries ; you can reach it with your whip handle." " Oh, Mr. Harrison ! there were such splendid nuts on the other side of that hedge ; would you just turn back for them ? " Miss Caroline Tomkinson was once or twice rather faint with the motion of the cart, and asked me for my smelling bottle, as she had forgotten hers. I was amused at the idea of my carrying such articles about with me. Then she thought she should like to walk, and got out, and came on my side of the road ; but I found little Walter the pleasanter companion, and soon set the horse off into a trot, with which pace her tender constitution could not keep up.

' The road to the old hall was along a sandy lane, with high hedge-banks ; the wych-elms almost met overhead. " Shocking farming ! " Mr. Bullock called out ; and so it might be, but it was very pleasant and picturesque-looking. The trees were gorgeous, in their orange and crimson hues, varied by great, dark-green holly-bushes, glistening in the autumn sun. I should have thought the colours too vivid, if I had seen them in a picture, especially when we wound up the brow, after crossing the little bridge over the brook (what laughing and screaming there was as the cart splashed through the sparkling water !)—and I caught the purple hills beyond. We could see the old hall, too, from that point, with its warm rich woods billowing up behind, and the blue waters of the moat lying still under the sunlight,

' Laughing and talking is very hungry work, and there was a universal petition for dinner when we arrived at the lawn before the hall, where it had been arranged that we were to dine. I saw Miss Carry take Miss Tomkinson aside, and whisper to her ; and presently the elder sister came up to me, where I was busy, rather apart, making a seat of hay, which I had fetched

from the farmer's loft for my little friend Walter, who, I had noticed, was rather hoarse, and for whom I was afraid of a seat on the glass, dry as it appeared to be.

' " Mr. Harrison, Caroline tells me she has been feeling very faint, and she is afraid of a return of one of her attacks. She says she has more confidence in your medical powers than in Mr. Morgan's. I should not be sincere if I did not say that I differ from her; but as it is so, may I beg you to keep an eye upon her ? I tell her she had better not have come if she did not feel well; but, poor girl, she had set her heart upon this day's pleasure. I have offered to go home with her; but she says, if she can only feel sure you are at hand, she would rather stay."

' Of course I bowed, and promised all due attendance on Miss Caroline; and in the meantime, until she did require my services, I thought I might as well go and help the Vicar's daughter, who looked so fresh and pretty in her white muslin dress, here, there, and everywhere, now in the sunshine, now in the green shade, helping every one to be comfortable, and thinking of every one but herself.

' Presently, Mr. Morgan came up.

' " Miss Caroline does not feel quite well. I have promised your services to her sister."

' " So have I, sir. But Miss Sophy cannot carry this heavy basket."

' I did not mean her to have heard this excuse; but she caught it up and said—

' " Oh, yes, I can ! I can take the things out one by one. Go to poor Miss Caroline, pray, Mr. Harrison.

' I went; but very unwillingly, I must say. When I had once seated myself by her, I think she must have felt better. It was, probably, only a nervous fear, which was relieved when she knew she had assistance near at hand; for she made a capital dinner. I thought she would never end her modest requests for " just a little more pigeon-pie, or a merry-thought of chicken ". Such a hearty meal would, I hope, effectually revive

her; and so it did; for she told me she thought she could manage to walk round the garden, and see the old peacock yews, if I would kindly give her my arm. It was very provoking; I had so set my heart upon being with the Vicar's children. I advised Miss Caroline strongly to lie down a little, and rest before tea, on the sofa in the farmer's kitchen; you cannot think how persuasively I begged her to take care of herself. At last she consented, thanking me for my tender interest; she should never forget my kind attention to her. She little knew what was in my mind at the time. However, she was safely consigned to the farmer's wife, and I was rushing out in search of a white gown and a waving figure, when I encountered Mrs. Bullock at the door of the hall. She was a fine, fierce-looking woman. I thought she had appeared a little displeased at my (unwilling) attentions to Miss Caroline at dinner-time; but now, seeing me alone, she was all smiles.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison, all alone ! How is that ? What are the young ladies about to allow such churlishness ? And, by the way, I have left a young lady who will be very glad of your assistance, I am sure—my daughter, Jemima' (her step-daughter, she meant). * Mr. Bullock is so particular, and so tender a father, that he would be frightened to death at the idea of her going into the boat on the moat unless she was with some one who could swim. He is gone to discuss the new wheel-plough with the farmer (you know agriculture is his hobby, although law, horrid law, is his business). But the poor girl is pining on the bank, longing for my permission to join the others, which I dare not give unless you will kindly accompany her, and promise, if any accident happens, to preserve her safe."

Oh, Sophy, why was no one anxious about you ?

CHAPTER VI

'Miss BULLOCK was standing by the waterside, looking wistfully, as I thought, at the water party ; the sound of whose merry laughter came pleasantly enough from the boat, which lay off (for, indeed, no one knew how to row, and she was of a clumsy, fiat-bottomed build) about a hundred yards, " weatherbound," as they shouted out, among the long stalks of the water-lilies.

' Miss Bullock did not look up till I came close to her ; and then, when I told her my errand, she lifted up her great, heavy, sad eyes, and looked at me for a moment. It struck me, at the time, that she expected to find some expression on my face which was not there, and that its absence was a relief to her. She was a very pale, unhappy-looking girl, but very quiet, and, if not agreeable in manner, at any rate not forward or offensive. I called to the party in the boat, and they came slowly enough through the large, cool, green lily-leaves towards us. When they got near, we saw there was no room for us, and Miss Bullock said she would rather stay in the meadow and saunter about, if I would go into the boat; and I am certain from the look on her countenance that she spoke the truth; but Miss Horsman called out, in a sharp voice, while she smiled in a very disagreeable, knowing way—

' " Oh, mamma will be displeased if you don't come in, Miss Bullock, after all her trouble in making such a nice arrangement."

* At this speech the poor girl hesitated, and at last, in an undecided way, as if she was not sure whether she was doing right, she took Sophy's place in the boat. Helen and Lizzie landed with their sister, so that there was plenty of room for Miss Tomkinson, Miss Horsman, and all the little Bullocks ; and the three vicarage girls went off strolling along the meadow side, and playing with Walter, who was in a high state of excitement.

The sun was getting low, but the declining light was beautiful upon the water; and, to add to the charm of the time, Sophy and her sisters, standing on the green lawn in front of the hall, struck up the little German canon, which I had never heard before—

Oh wie wohl ist mir am abend, &c.

At last we were summoned to tug the boat to the landing-steps on the lawn, tea and a blazing wood fire being ready for us in the hall. I was offering my arm to Miss Horsman, as she was a little lame, when she said again, in her peculiar disagreeable way, '* Had you not better take Miss Bullock, Mr. Harrison ? It will be more satisfactory."

'I helped Miss Horsman up the steps, however, and then she repeated her advice; so, remembering that Miss Bullock was in fact the daughter of my entertainers, I went to her; but though she accepted my arm, I could perceive she was sorry that I had offered it.

'The hall was lighted by the glorious wood fire in the wide old grate; the daylight was dying away in the west; and the large windows admitted but little of what was left, through their small leaded frames, with coats of arms emblazoned upon them. The farmer's wife had set out a great long table, which was piled with good things; and a huge black kettle sang on the glowing fire, which sent a cheerful warmth through the room as it crackled and blazed. Mr. Morgan (who I found had been taking a little round in the neighbourhood among his patients) was there, smiling and rubbing his hands as usual. Mr. Bullock was holding a conversation with the farmer at the garden-door on the nature of different manures, in which it struck me that if Mr. Bullock had the fine names and the theories on his side, the farmer had all the practical knowledge and the experience, and I know which I would have trusted. I think Mr. Bullock rather liked to talk about Liebig in my hearing; it sounded well, and was knowing. Mrs. Bullock was not particularly placid in her mood. In the first place, I wanted to sit by the Vicar's daughter,

and Miss Caroline as decidedly wanted to sit on my other side, being afraid of her fainting fits, I imagine. But Mrs. Bullock called me to a place near her daughter. Now I thought I had done enough civility to a girl who was evidently annoyed rather than pleased by my attentions, and I pretended to be busy stooping under the table for Miss Caroline's gloves, which were missing ; but it was of no avail; Mrs. Bullock's fine, severe eyea were awaiting my reappearance, and she summoned me again.

' " I am keeping this place on my right hand for you, Mr. Harrison. Jemima, sit still! "

* I went up to the post of honour and tried to busy myself with pouring out coffee to hide my chagrin; but after forgetting to empty the water put in ("to warm the cups ", Mrs. Bullock said), and omitting to add any sugar, the lady told me she would dispense with my services, and turn me over to my neiglibour on the other side.

' " Talking to the younger lady was, no doubt, more Mr. Harrison's vocation than assisting the elder one." I dare say it was only the manner that made the words seem offensive. Miss Horsman sat opposite to mo, smiling away. Miss Bullock did not speak, but seemed more depressed than ever. At length, Miss Horsman and Mrs. Bullock got to a war of innuendoes, which were completely unintelligible to me, and I was very much displeased with my situation ; while, at the bottom of the table, Mr. Morgan and Mr. Bullock were making the young ones laugh most heartily. Part of the joke was Mr. Morgan insisting upon making tea at that end ; and Sophy and Helen were busy contriving every possible mistake for him. I thought honour was a very good thing, but merriment a better. Here was I in the place of distinction, hearing nothing but cross words. At last the time came for us to go home. As the evening was damp, the seats in the chaises were the best and most to be desired. And now Sophy offered to go in the cart; only she seemed anxious, and so was I, that Walter should be secured from the effects of the

white wreaths of fog rolling up from the valley; but the little violent affectionate fellow would not be separated from Sophy. She made a nest for him on her knee in one corner of the cart, and covered him with her own shawl; and I hoped that he would take no harm. Miss Tomkinson, Mr. Bullock, and some of the young ones walked; but I seemed chained to the windows of the chaise, for Miss Caroline begged me not to leave her, as she was dreadfully afraid of robbers; and Mrs. Bullock implored me to see that the man did not overturn them in the bad roads, as he had certainly had too much to drink.

' I became so irritable before I reached home, that I thought it was the most disagreeable day of pleasure I had ever had, and could hardly bear to answer Mrs. Rose's never-ending questions. She told me, however, that from my account the day was so charming that she thought she should relax in the rigour of her seclusion, and mingle a little more in the society of which I gave so tempting a description. She really thought her dear Mr. Rose would have wished it; and his will should be law to her after his death, as it had ever been during his life. In compliance, therefore, with his wishes, she would even do a little violence to her own feelings.

' She was very good and kind; not merely attentive to everything which she thought could conduce to my comfort, but willing to take any trouble in providing the broths and nourishing food which I often found it convenient to order, under the name of kitchen-physic, for my poorer patients; and I really did not see the use of her shutting herself up, in mere compliance with an etiquette, when she began to wish to mix in the little quiet society of Duncombe. Accordingly I urged her to begin to visit, and even when applied to as to what I imagined the late Mr. Rose's wishes on that subject would have been, answered for that worthy gentleman, and assured his widow that I was convinced he would have regretted deeply her giving way to immoderate grief, and would have been rather grateful than other-

wise at seeing her endeavour to divert her thoughts by a few quiet visits. She cheered up, and said, "As I really thought so, she would sacrifice her own inclinations, and accept the very next invitation that came."

CHAPTER VII

' I WAS roused from my sleep in the middle of the night by a messenger from the vicarage. Little Walter had got the croup, and Mr. Morgan had been sent for into the country. I dressed myself hastily, and went through the quiet little street. There was a light burning upstairs at the vicarage. It was in the nursery. The servant, who opened the door the instant I knocked, was crying sadly, and could hardly answer my inquiries as I went upstairs, two steps at a time, to see my little favourite.

* The nursery was a great large room. At the farther end it was lighted by a common candle, which left the other end, where the door was, in shade, so I suppose the nurse did not see me come in, for she was speaking very crossly.

' " Miss Sophy !" said she, " I told you over and over again it was not fit for him to go, with the hoarseness that he had, and you would take him. It will break your papa's heart, I know ; but it's none of my doing."

' Whatever Sophy felt, she did not speak in answer to this. She was on her knees by the warm bath, in which the little fellow was struggling to get his breath, with a look of terror on his face that I have often noticed in young children when smitten by a sudden and violent illness. It seems as if they recognized something infinite and invisible, at whose bidding the pain and the anguish come, from which no love can shield them. It is a very heart-rending look to observe, because it comes on the faces of those who are too young to receive comfort from the words of faith, or the

romises of religion. Walter had his arms tight round Sophy's neck, as if she, hitherto his paradise-angel, could save him from the dread shadow of Death. Yes ! of Death ! I knelt down by him on the other side, and examined him. The very robustness of his little frame gave violence to the disease, which is always one of the most fearful by which children of his age can be attacked.

' " Don't tremble, Watty," said Sophy, in a soothing tone ; " it's Mr. Harrison, darling, who let you ride on his horse." I could detect the quivering in the voice, which she tried to make so calm and soft to quiet the little fellow's fears. We took him out of the bath, and I went for leeches. While I was away, Mr. Morgan came. He loved the vicarage children as if he were their uncle ; but he stood still and aghast at the sight of Walter—so lately bright and strong—and now hurrying alone to the awful change—to the silent mysterious land, where, tended and cared for as he had been on earth, he must go—alone. The little fellow ! the darling !

* We applied the leeches to his throat. He resisted at first; but Sophy, God bless her! put the agony of her grief on one side, and thought only of him, and began to sing the little songs he loved. We were all still. The gardener had gone to fetch the Vicar ; but he was twelve miles off, and we doubted if he would come in time. I don't know if they had any hope; but the first moment Mr. Morgan's eyes met mine, I saw that he, like me, had none. The ticking of the house-clock sounded through the dark, quiet house. Walter was sleeping now, with the black leeches yet hanging to his fair, white throat. Still Sophy went on singing little lullabies, which she had sung under far different and happier circumstances. I remember one verse, because it struck me at the time as strangely applicable.

" Sleep, baby, sleep !
Thy rest shall angels keep;
While on the grass the lamb shall feed,
And never suffer want or need.
Sleep, baby, sleep."

The tears were in Mr. Morgan's eyes. I do not think either he or I could have spoken in our natural tones ; but the brave girl went on, clear though low. She stopped at last, and looked up.

' " He is better, is he not, Mr. Morgan ? "

' " No, my dear. He is—ahem—he could not speak all at once. Then he said—'* My dear ! he will be better soon. Think of your mamma, my dear Miss Sophy. She will be very thankful to have one of her darlings safe with her, where she is."

' Still she did not cry. But she bent her head down on the little face, and kissed it long and tenderly.

' " I will go for Helen and Lizzie. They will be sorry not to see him again." She rose up and went for them. Poor girls, they came in, in their dressing-gowns, with eyes dilated with sudden emotion, pale with terror, stealing softly along, as if sound could disturb him. Sophy comforted them by gentle caresses. It was over soon.

' Mr. Morgan was fairly crying like a child. But he thought it necessary to apologize to me, for what I honoured him for. '* I am a little overdone by yesterday's work, sir. I have had one or two bad nights, and they rather upset me. When I was your age I was as strong and manly as any one, and would have scorned to shed tears."

' Sophy came up to where we stood.

' " Mr. Morgan ! I am so sorry for papa. How shall I tell him ? " She was struggling against her own grief for her father's sake. Mr. Morgan offered to await his coming home ; and she seemed thankful for the proposal. I, new friend, almost stranger, might stay no longer. The street was as quiet as ever ; not a shadow was changed ; for it was not yet four o'clock. But during the night a soul had departed.

' From all I could see, and all I could learn, the Vicar and his daughter strove which should comfort the other the most. Each thought of the other's grief—each prayed for the other rather than for themselves. We **saw** them walking out, countrywards ; and we

hoard of them in the cottages of the poor. But it was some time before I happened to meet either of them again. And then I felt, from something indescribable in their manner towards me, that I was one of the

" Peculiar people, whom Death had made dear."

That one day at the old hall had done this. I was, perhaps, the last person who had given the little fellow any unusual pleasure. Poor Walter ! I wish I could have done more to make his short life happy !

CHAPTER VIII

' THERE was a little lull, out of respect to the Vicar's grief, in the visiting. It gave time to Mrs. Rose to soften down the anguish of her weeds.

' At Christmas, Miss Tomkinson sent out invitations for a party. Miss Caroline had once or twice apologized to me because such an event had not taken place before ; but, as she said, "the avocations of their daily life prevented their having such little *reunions* except in the vacations." And, sure enough, as soon as the holidays began, came the civil little note—

" The Misses Tomkinson request the pleasure of Mrs. Rose's and Mr. Harrison's company at tea, on the evening of Monday, the 23rd inst. Tea at five o'clock."

' Mrs. Rose's spirit roused, like a war-horse at the sound of the trumpet, at this. She was not of a repining disposition, but I do think she believed the party-giving population of Duncombe had given up inviting her, as soon as she had determined to relent, and accept the invitations, in compliance with the late Mr. Rose's wishes.

' Such snippings of white love-ribbon us I found everywhere, making the carpet untidy ! One day, too, unluckily, a small box was brought to me by mistake. I did not look at the direction, for I never doubted it was some hyoscyamus which I was expecting from London; so I tore it open, and **saw** inside a piece of

paper, with "No more grey hair*", in large letters, upon it. I folded it up in a hurry, and sealed it afresh, and gave it to Mrs. Rose ; but I could not refrain from asking her, soon after, if she could recommend me anything to keep my hair from turning grey, adding that I thought prevention was better than cure. I think she made out the impression of my seal on the paper after that; for I learned that she had been crying, and that she talked about there being no sympathy left in the world for her since Mr. Rose's death ; and that she counted the days until she could rejoin him in the better world. I think she counted the days to Miss Tomkinson's party, too ; she talked so much about it.

* The covers were taken off Miss Tomkinson's chairs, and curtains, and sofas; and a great jar full of artificial flowers was placed in the centre of the table, which, as Miss Caroline told me, was all her doing, as she doted on the beautiful and artistic in life. Miss Tomkinson stood, erect as a grenadier, close to the door, receiving her friends, and heartily shaking them by the hands as they entered: she said she was truly glad to see them. And so she really was.

'We had just finished tea, and Miss Caroline had brought out a little pack of conversation cards—sheaves of slips of cardboard, with intellectual or sentimental questions on one set, and equally intellectual and sentimental answers on the other; and as the answers were fit to any and all the questions, you may think they were a characterless and "wersh" set of things. I had just been asked by Miss Caroline—

' *Can you tell what those dearest to you think of you at this present time f* " and had answered—

' "*How can you expect me to reveal such a secret to the present company /* " when the servant announced that a gentleman, a friend of mine, wished to speak to me downstairs.

' "Oh, show him up, Martha ; show him up !" said Miss Tomkinson, in her hospitality.

"Any friend of our friend's is welcome," said Miss Caroline, in an insinuating tone.

* I jumped up, however, thinking it might be some one on business; but I was so penned in by the spider-legged tables, stuck out on every side, that I could not make the haste I wished; and before I could prevent it, Martha had shown up Jack Marshland, who was on his road home for a day or two at Christmas.

' He came up in a hearty way, bowing to Miss Tomkinson, and explaining that he had found himself in my neighbourhood, and had come over to pass a night with me, and that my servant had directed him where I was.

' His voice, loud at all times, sounded like Stentor's in that little room, where we all spoke in a kind of purring way. He had no swell in his tones; they were *forte* from the beginning. At first it seemed like the days of my youth come back again, to hear full, manly speaking; I felt proud of my friend, as he thanked Miss Tomkinson for her kindness in asking him to stay the evening. By and by he came up to me, and I dare say he thought he had lowered his voice, for he looked as if speaking confidentially, while in fact the whole room might have heard him.

' " Frank, my boy, when shall we have dinner at this good old lady's ? I'm deuced hungry."

' Dinner! Why, we had had tea an hour ago. While he yet spoke, Martha came in with a little tray, on which was a single cup of coffee and three slices of wafer bread-and-butter. His dismay, and his evident submission to the decrees of Fate, tickled me so much, that I thought he should have a further taste of the life I led from month's end to month's end, and I gave up my plan of taking him home at once, and enjoyed the anticipation of the hearty laugh we should have together at the end of the evening. I was famously punished for my determination.

" Shall we continue our game ?" asked Miss Caroline, who had never relinquished her sheaf of questions.

' We went on questioning and answering, with little gain of information to either party.

" No such thing as heavy betting in this game, eh,

Frank I " asked Jack, who had been watching us. " You don't lose ten pounds at a sitting, I guess, as you used to do at Short's. Playing for love, I suppose you call it ? "

* Miss Caroline simpered, and looked down. Jack was not thinking of her. He was thinking of the days we had had at the " Mermaid ". Suddenly he said, " Where were you this day last year, Frank ? "

' " I don't remember ! " said I.

' " Then I'll tell you. It's the 23rd—the day you were taken up for knocking down the fellow in Long Acre, and that I had to bail you out ready for Christmas Day. You are in more agreeable quarters to-night."

* He did not intend this reminiscence to be heard, but was not in the least put out when Miss Tomkinson, with a face of dire surprise, asked—

' " Mr. Harrison taken up, sir ? "

' " Oh, yes, ma'am ; and you see it was so common an affair with him to be locked up that he can't remember the dates of his different imprisonments."

' He laughed heartily ; and so should I, but that I saw the impression it made. The thing was, in fact, simple enough, and capable of easy explanation. I had been made angry by seeing a great hulking fellow, out of mere wantonness, break the crutch from under a cripple ; and I struck the man more violently than I intended, and down he went, yelling out for the police, and I had to go before the magistrate to be released. I disdained giving this explanation at the time. It was no business of theirs what I had been doing a year ago ; but still Jack might have held his tongue. However, that unruly member of his was set a-going, and he told me afterwards he was resolved to let the old ladies into a little of life ; and accordingly he remembered every practical joke we had ever had, and talked and laughed, and roared again. I tried to converse with Miss Caroline—Mrs. Munton—any one ; but Jack was the hero of the evening, and every one was listening to him.

' " Then he has never sent any hoaxing letters since

he came here, has he ? Good boy ! He has turned over a new leaf. He was the deepest dog at that I ever met with. Such anonymous letters as he used to send ! Do you remember that to Mrs. Walbrook, eh, Frank ? That was too bad I " (the wretch was laughing all the time). " No ; I won't tell about it—don't be afraid. Such a shameful hoax " (laughing again).

' " Pray do tell," I called out; for he made it seem far worse than it was.

' " Oh no, no ; you've established a better character—I would not for the world nip your budding efforts. We'll bury the past in oblivion."

' I tried to tell my neighbours the story to which he alluded ; but they were attracted by the merriment of Jack's manner, and did not care to hear the plain matter of fact.

' Then came a pause; Jack was talking almost quietly to Miss Horsman. Suddenly he called across the room—" How many times have you been out with the hounds ? The hedges were blind very late this year, but you must have had some good mild days since."

' " I have never been out," said I shortly.

' " Never !—whew !——Why, I thought that was the great attraction to Duncombe."

' Now was not he provoking ? He would condole with me, and fixed the subject in the minds of every one present.

' The supper trays were brought in, and there was a shuffling of situations. He and I were close together again.

' " I say, Frank, what will you lay me that I don't clear that tray before people are ready for their second helping ? I'm as hungry as a hound."

' " You shall have a round of beef and a raw leg of mutton when you get home. Only do behave yourself here."

' " Well, for your sake ; but keep me away from those trays, or I'll not answer for myself. ' Hould me, or I'll fight,' as the Irishman said I'll go and talk to that little old lady in blue, and sit with my back to those ghosts of eatables."

' He sat down by Miss Caroline, who would not have liked his description of her; and began an earnest, tolerably quiet conversation. I tried to be as agreeable as I could, to do away with the impression he had given of me; but I found that every one drew up a little stiffly at my approach, and did not encourage me to make any remarks.

* In the middle of my attempts, I heard Miss Caroline beg Jack to take a glass of wine, and I saw him help himself to what appeared to be port; but in an instant he set it down from his lips, exclaiming, " Vinegar, by Jove! " He made the most horribly wry face: and Miss Tomkinson came up in a severe hurry to investigate the affair. It turned out it was some black-currant wine, on which she particularly piqued herself; I drank two glasses of it to ingratiate myself with her, and can testify to its sourness. I don't think she noticed my exertions, she was so much engrossed in listening to Jack's excuses for his malapropos observation. He told her, with the gravest face, that he had been a teetotalter so long that he had but a confused recollection of the distinction between wine and vinegar, particularly eschewing the latter, because it had been twice fermented; and that he had imagined Miss Caroline had asked him to take toast-and-water, or he should never have touched the decanter.

CHAPTER IX

' As we were walking home, Jack said, " Lord, Frank ! I've had such fun with the little lady in blue. I told her you wrote to me every Saturday, telling me the events of the week. She took all in." He stopped to laugh; for he bubbled and chuckled so that he could not laugh and walk. " And I told her you were deeply in love " (another laugh); " and that I could not get yon to tell me the name of the lady, but that she had light brown hair—in short, I drew from life, and gave

her an exact description of herself; and that I was most anxious to see her, and implore her to be merciful to you, for that you were a most timid, faint-hearted fellow with women." He laughed till I thought he would have fallen down. "I begged her, if she could guess who it was from my description—I'll answer for it she did—I took care of that; for I said you described a mole on the left cheek in the most poetical way, saying Venus had pinched it out of envy at seeing any one more lovely—oh, hold me up, or I shall fall—laughing and hunger make me so weak;—well, I say, I begged her, if she knew who your fair one could be, to implore her to save you. I said I knew one of your lungs had gone after a former unfortunate love-affair, and that I could not answer for the other if the lady here were cruel. She spoke of a respirator; but I told her that might do very well for the odd lung; but would it minister to a heart diseased? I really did talk fine. I have found out the secret of eloquence—it's believing what you've got to say; and I worked myself well up with fancying you married to the little lady in blue."

' I got to laughing at last, angry as I had been; his impudence was irresistible. Mrs. Rose had come home in the sedan, and gone to bed; and he and I sat up over the round of beef and brandy-and-water till two o'clock in the morning.

' He told me I had got quite into the professional way of mousing about a room, and mewing and purring according as my patients were ill or well. He mimicked me, and made me laugh at myself. He left early the next morning.

' Mr. Morgan came at his usual hour; he and Marshland would never have agreed, and I should have been uncomfortable to see two friends of mine disliking and despising each other.

' Mr. Morgan was ruffled; but with his deferential manner to women, he smoothed himself down before Mrs. Rose—regretted that he had not been able to come to Miss Tomkinson's the evening before, and consequently had not seen her in the society she was so well

calculated to adorn. But when we were by ourselves, he said—

' " I was sent for to Mrs. Munton's this morning—the old spasms. May I ask what is this story she tells me about—about prison, in fact ? I trust, sir, she has made some little mistake, and that you never were;——that it is an unfounded report." He could not get it out—" that you were in Newgate for three months ! " I burst out laughing; the story had grown like a mushroom indeed. Mr. Morgan looked grave. I told him the truth. Still he looked grave. " I've no doubt, sir, that you acted rightly ; but it has an awkward sound. I imagined from your hilarity just now that there was no foundation whatever for the story. Unfortunately, there is."

' " I was only a night at the police-station. I would go there again for the same cause, sir."

' " Very fine spirit, sir—quite like Don Quixote ; but don't you see you might as well have been to the hulks at once ? "

' " No, sir ; I don't."

' " Take my word, before long the story will have grown to that. However, we won't anticipate evil. *Mens conscia recti*, you remember, is the great thing. The part I regret is, that it may require some short time to overcome a little prejudice which the story may excite against you. However, we won't dwell on it. *Mens conscia recti* / Don't think about it, sir."

* It was clear he was thinking a good deal about it.

CHAPTER X

' Two or three days before this time, I had had an invitation from the Bullocks to dine with them on Christmas Day. Mrs. Rose was going to spend the week with friends in the town where she formerly lived ; and I had been pleased at the notion of being received into a family, and of being a little with Mr. Bullock, who struck me as a bluff, good-hearted fellow.

' But this Tuesday before Christmas Day, there came an invitation from the Vicar to dine there ; there were to be only their own family and Mr. Morgan. " Only their own family." It was getting to be all the world to me. I was in a passion with myself for having been BO ready to accept Mr. Bullock's invitation—coarse and ungentlemanly as he was; with his wife's airs of pretension and Miss Bullock's stupidity. I turned it over in my mind. No ! I could not have a bad headache, which should prevent me going to the place I did not care for, and yet leave me at liberty to go where I wished. All I could do was to join the vicarage girls after church, and walk by their side in a long country ramble. They were quiet; not sad, exactly; but it was evident that the thought of Walter was in their minds on this day. We went through a copse where there were a good number of evergreens planted as covers for game. The snow was on the ground; but the sky was clear and bright, and the sun glittered on the smooth holly-leaves. Lizzie asked me to gather her some of the very bright red berries, and she was beginning a sentence with—

' " Do you remember,"——when Helen said "*Hush*", and looked towards Sophy, who was walking a little apart, and crying softly to herself. There was evidently some connexion between Walter and the holly-berries, for Lizzie threw them away at once when she saw Sophy's tears. Soon we came to a stile which led to an open, breezy common, half covered with gorse. I helped the little girls over it, and set them to run down the slope; but I took Sophy's arm in mine, and though I could not speak, I think she knew how I was feeling for her. I could hardly bear to bid her good-bye at the vicarage gate ; it seemed as if I ought to go in and spend the day with her.

CHAPTER XI

' I VENTED my ill humour in being late for the Bullocks' dinner. There were one or two clerks, towards whom Mr. Bullock was patronizing and pressing. Mrs. Bullock was decked out in extraordinary finery. Miss Bullock looked plainer than ever; but she had on some old gown or other, I think, for I heard Mrs. Bullock tell her she was always making a figure of herself. I began to-day to suspect that the mother would not be sorry if I took a fancy to the step-daughter. I was again placed near her at dinner, and when the little ones came in to dessert I was made to notice how fond of children she was, and indeed when one of them nestled to her, her face did brighten; but the moment she caught this loud-whispered remark the gloom came back again, with something even of anger in her look; and she was quite sullen and obstinate when urged to sing in the drawing-room. Mrs. Bullock turned to me—

" Some young ladies won't sing unless they are asked by gentlemen." She spoke very crossly. " If you ask Jemima, she will probably sing. To oblige me, it is evident she will not."

' I thought the singing, when we got it, would probably be a great bore; however, I did as I was bid, and went with my request to the young lady, who was sitting a little apart. She looked up at me with eyes full of tears, and said, in a decided tone (which, if I had not seen her eyes, I should have said was as cross as her mamma's), " No, sir, I will not." She got up, and left the room. I expected to hear Mrs. Bullock abuse her for her obstinacy. Instead of that, she began to tell me of the money that had been spent on her education; of what each separate accomplishment had cost. " She was timid," she said, " but very musical. Wherever her future home might be, there would be no want of music." She went on praising her till I hated her. If they thought I was going to marry that great lubberly

girl, they were mistaken. Mr. Bullock and the clerks came up. He brought out Liebig, and called me to him.

"I can understand a good deal of this agricultural chemistry," said he, "and have put it in practice—without much success, hitherto, I confess. But these unconnected letters puzzle me a little. I suppose they have some meaning, or else I should say it was mere book-making to put them in."

"I think they give the page a very ragged appearance," said Mrs. Bullock, who had joined us. "I inherit a little of my late father's taste for books, and must say I like to see a good type, a broad margin, and an elegant binding. My father despised variety; how lie would have held up his hands aghast at the cheap literature of these times! He did not require many books, but he would have twenty editions of those that he had; and he paid more for binding than he did for the books themselves. But elegance was everything with him. He would not have admitted your Liebig, Mr. Bullock; neither the nature of the subject, nor the common type, nor the common way in which your book is got up, would have suited him."

"Go and make tea, my dear, and leave Mr. Harrison and me to talk over a few of these manures."

"We settled to it; I explained the meaning of the symbols, and the doctrine of chemical equivalents. At last he said, "Doctor! you're giving me too strong a dose of it at one time. Let's have a small quantity taken 'hodie'; that's professional, as Mr. Morgan would call it. Come in and call when you have leisure, and give me a lesson in my alphabet. Of all you've been telling me I can only remember that C means carbon and O oxygen; and I see one must know the meaning of all these confounded letters before one can do much good with Liebig."

"We dine at three," said Mrs. Bullock. "There will always be a knife and fork for Mr. Harrison. Bullock! don't confine your invitation to the evening!"

"Why, you see, I've a nap always after dinner, so I could not be learning chemistry then."

' " Don't be so selfish, Mr. B. Think of the pleasure Jemima and I shall have in Mr. Harrison's society."

* I put a stop to the discussion by saying I would come in in the evenings occasionally, and give Mr. Bullock a lesson, but that my professional duties occupied me invariably until that time.

' I liked Mr. Bullock. He was simple, and shrewd; and to be with a man was a relief, after all the feminine society I went through every day.

CHAPTER XII

' T H E next morning I met Miss Horsman.

' " So you dined at Mr. Bullock's yesterday, Mr. Harrison? Quite a family party, I hear. They are quite charmed with you, and your knowledgo of chemistry. Mr. Bullock told me so, in Hodgson's shop, just now. Miss Bullock is a nice girl, eh, Mr. Harrison? " She looked sharply at me. Of course, whatever I thought, I could do nothing but assent. " A nice little fortune, too—three thousand pounds, Consols, from her own mother."

' What did I care? She might have three millions for me. I had begun to think a good deal about money, though, but not in connexion with her. I had been doing up our books ready to send out our Christmas bills, and had been wondering how far the Vicar would consider three hundred a year, with a prospect of increase, would justify me in thinking of Sophy. Think of her I could not help; and the more I thought of how good, and sweet, and pretty she was, the more I felt that she ought to have far more than I could offer. Besides, my father was a shopkeeper, and I saw the Vicar had a sort of respect for family. I determined to try and be very attentive to my profession. I was as civil as could be to every one; and wore the nap off the brim of my hat by taking it off so often.

' I had my eyes open to every glimpse of Sophy. I am

overstocked with gloves now that I bought at that time, by way of making errands into the shops where I saw her black gown. I bought pounds upon pounds of arrowroot, till I was tired of the eternal arrowroot puddings Mrs. Rose gave me. I asked her if she could not make bread of it, but she seemed to think that would be expensive; so I took to soap as a safe purchase. I believe soap improves by keeping.

CHAPTER XIII

' THE more I knew of Mrs. Rose, the better I liked her. She was sweet, and kind, and motherly, and we never had any rubs. I hurt her once or twice, I think, by cutting her short in her long stories about Mr. Rose. But I found out that when she had plenty to do she did not think of him quite so much; so I expressed a wish for Corazza shirts, and in the puzzle of devising how they were to be cut out she forgot Mr. Rose for some time. I was still more pleased by her way about some legacy her elder brother left her. I don't know the amount, but it was something handsome, and she might have set up housekeeping for herself: but, instead, she told Mr. Morgan (who repeated it to me), that she should continue with me, as she had quite an elder sister's interest in me.

' The " county young lady ", Miss Tyrrell, returned to Miss Tomkinson's after the holidays. She had an enlargement of the tonsils, which required to be frequently touched with caustic, so I often called to see her. Miss Caroline always received me, and kept me talking in her washed-out style, after I had seen my patient. One day she told me she thought she had a weakness about the heart, and would be glad if I would bring my stethoscope the next time, which I accordingly did; and while I was on my knees listening to the pulsations, one of the young ladies came in. She said—

' " Oh, dear ! I never ! I beg your pardon, ma'am," and scuttled out. There was not much the matter with Miss Caroline's heart: a little feeble in action or so, a mere matter of weakness and general languor. When I went down I saw two or three of the girls peeping out of the half-closed schoolroom door, but they shut it immediately, and I heard them laughing. The next time I called, Miss Tomkinson was sitting in state to receive me.

' " Miss Tyrrell's throat does not seem to make much progress. Do you understand the case, Mr. Harrison, or should we have further advice ? I think Mr. Morgan would probably know more about it."

' I assured her it was the simplest thing in the world ; that it always implied a little torpor in the constitution, and that we preferred working through the system, which of course was a slow process, and that the medicine the young lady was taking (iodide of iron) was sure to be successful, although the progress would not be rapid. She bent her head and said, " It might be so ; but she confessed she had more confidence in medicines which had some effect."

' She seemed to expect me to tell her something; but I had nothing to say, and accordingly I bade good-bye. Somehow, Miss Tomkinson always managed to make me feel very small, by a succession of snubbings ; and whenever I left her I had always to comfort myself under her contradictions by saying to myself, " Her saying it is so, does not make it so." Or I invented good retorts which I might have made to her brusque speeches if I had but thought of them at the right time. But it was provoking that I had not had the presence of mind to recollect them just when they were wanted*

CHAPTER XIV

' ON the whole, things went on smoothly. Mr. Holden's legacy came in just about this time; and I felt quite rich. Five hundred pounds would furnish the house, I thought, when Mrs. Rose left and Sophy came. I was delighted, too, to imagine that Sophy perceived the difference of my manner to her from what it was to any one else, and that she was embarrassed and shy in consequence, but not displeased with me for it. All was so flourishing that I went about on wings instead of feet. We were very busy, without having anxious cares. My legacy was paid into Mr. Bullock's hands, who united a little banking business to his profession of law. In return for his advice about investments (which I never meant to take, having a more charming, if less profitable, mode in my head), I went pretty frequently to teach him his agricultural chemistry. I was so happy in Sophy's blushes that I was universally benevolent, and desirous of giving pleasure to every one. I went, at Mrs. Bullock's general invitation, to dinner there one day unexpectedly : but there was such a fuss of ill-concealed preparation consequent upon my coming, that I never went again. Her little boy came in, with an audibly given message from the cook, to ask—

' " If this was the gentleman as she was to send in the best dinner-service and dessert for ? "

' I looked deaf, but determined never to go again.

' Miss Bullock and I, meanwhile, became rather friendly. We found out that we mutually disliked each other; and were contented with the discovery. If people are worth anything, this sort of non-liking is a very good beginning of friendship. Every good quality is revealed naturally and slowly, and is a pleasant surprise. I found out that Miss Bullock was sensible, and even sweet-tempered, when not irritated by her stepmother's endeavours to show her off. But she would sulk for hours after Mrs. Bullock's offensive

praise of her good points. And I never saw such a black passion as she went into when she suddenly came into the room when Mrs. Bullock was telling me of all the offers she had had.

'My legacy made me feel up to extravagance. I scoured the country for a glorious nosegay of camellias, which I sent to Sophy on Valentine's Day. I durst not add a line, but I wished the flowers could speak, and tell her how I loved her.

'I called on Miss Tyrrell that day. Miss Caroline was more simpering and affected than ever; and full of allusions to the day.

' "Do you affix much sincerity of meaning to the little gallantries of this day, Mr. Harrison?" asked she, in a languishing tone. I thought of my camellias, and how my heart had gone with them into Sophy's keeping; and I told her I thought one might often take advantage of such a time to hint at feelings one dared not fully express.

'I remembered afterwards the forced display she made, after Miss Tyrrell left the room, of a valentine. But I took no notice at the time; my head was full of Sophy.

'It was on that very day that John Brouncker, the gardener to all of us who had small gardens to keep in order, fell down and injured his wrist severely (I don't give you the details of the case, because they would not interest you, being too technical; if you've any curiosity, you will find them in the *Lancet* of August in that year). We all liked John, and this accident was felt like a town's misfortune. The gardens, too, just wanted doing up. Both Mr. Morgan and I went directly to him. It was a very awkward case, and his wife and children were crying sadly. He himself was in great distress at being thrown out of work. He begged us to do something that would cure him Speedily, as he could not afford to be laid up, with six children depending on him for bread. We did not say much before him, but we both thought the arm would have to come off, and it was his right arm. We talked it over when we

came out of the cottage. Mr. Morgan had no doubt of the necessity. I went back at dinner-time to see the poor fellow. He was feverish and anxious. He had caught up some expression of Mr. Morgan's in the morning, **and** had guessed the measure we had in contemplation. He bade his wife leave the room, and spoke to me by myself.

' " If you please, sir, I'd rather be done for at once than have my arm taken off, and be a burden to my family. I'm not afraid of dying, but I could not stand being a cripple for life, eating bread, and not able to earn it. "

* The tears were in his eyes with earnestness. I had all along been more doubtful about the necessity of the amputation than Mr. Morgan. I knew the improved treatment in such cases. In his days there was much more of the rough and ready in surgical practice; so I gave the poor fellow some hope.

' In the afternoon I met Mr. Bullock.

' " So you're to try your hand at an amputation to-morrow, I hear. Poor John Brouncker ! I used to tell him he was not careful enough about his ladders. Mr. Morgan is quite excited about it. He asked me to be present, and see how well a man from Guy's could operate; he says he is sure you'll do it beautifully. Pah ! no such sights for me, thank you. "

* Ruddy Mr. Bullock went a shade or two paler at the thought.

* " Curious ! how professionally a man views these things. Here's Mr. Morgan, who has been all along as proud of you as if you were his own son, absolutely rubbing his hands at the idea of this crowning glory, this feather in your cap ! He told me just now he knew **he** had always been too nervous to be a good operator ; **and** had therefore preferred sending for White from Chesterton. But now any one might have a serious accident who liked, for you would be always at hand. "

* I told Mr. Bullock, I really thought we might avoid **the** amputation; but his mind was preoccupied with the idea of it, and he did not care to listen to me.

The whole town was full of it. That is a charm in a little town, everybody is so sympathetically full of the same events. Even Miss Horsman stopped me to ask after John Brouncker with interest; but she threw cold water upon my intention of saving the arm.

' "As for the wife and family, we'll take care of them. Think what a fine opportunity you have of showing off, Mr. Harrison !"

' That was just like her. Always ready with her suggestions of ill-natured or interested motives.

' Mr. Morgan heard my proposal of a mode of treatment by which I thought it possible that the arm might be saved.

' "I differ from you, Mr. Harrison," said he. "I regret it, but I differ *in toto* from you. Your kind heart deceives you in this instance. There is no doubt that amputation must take place—not later than to-morrow morning, I should say. I have made myself at liberty to attend upon you, sir; I shall be happy to officiate as your assistant. Time was when I should have been proud to be principal, but a little trembling in my arm incapacitates me."

' I urged my reasons upon him again ; but he was obstinate. He had, in fact, boasted so much of my acquirements as an operator, that he was unwilling I should lose this opportunity of displaying my skill. He could not see that there would be greater skill evinced in saving the arm ; nor did I think of this at the time. I grew angry at his old-fashioned narrow-mindedness, as I thought it ; and I became dogged in my resolution to adhere to my own course. We parted very coolly ; and I went straight off to John Brouncker to tell him I believed that I could save the arm, if he would refuse to have it amputated. When I calmed myself a little, before going in and speaking to him, I could not help acknowledging that we should run some risk of locked jaw ; but, on the whole, and after giving most earnest, conscientious thought to the case, I was sure that my mode of treatment would be best.

' He **was** a sensible man. I told him **the** difference of opinion that existed between Mr. Morgan and myself.

I said that there might be some little risk attending the non-amputation; but that I should guard against it, and I trusted that I should be able to preserve his arm.

' " Under God's blessing," said he reverently. I bowed my head. I don't like to talk too frequently of the dependence which I always felt on that holy blessing, as to the result of my efforts ; but I was glad to hear that speech of John's, because it showed a calm and faithful heart; and I had almost certain hopes of him from that time.

' We agreed that he should tell Mr. Morgan the reason of his objections to the amputation, and his reliance on my opinion. I determined to recur to every book I had relating to such cases, and to convince Mr. Morgan, if I could, of my wisdom. Unluckily, I found out afterwards that he had met Miss Horsman in the time that intervened before I saw him again at his own house that evening; and she had more than hinted that I shrank from performing the operation, "for very good reasons, no doubt. She had heard that the medical students in London were a bad set, and were not remarkable for regular attendance in the hospitals. She might be mistaken ; but she thought it was, perhaps, quite as well poor John Brouncker had not his arm cut off by———Was there not such a thing as mortification coming on after a clumsy operation ? It was, perhaps, only a choice of deaths ! "

' Mr. Morgan had been stung at all this. Perhaps I did not speak quite respectfully enough ; I was a good deal excited. We only got more and more angry with each other; though he, to do him justice, was as civil as could be all the time, thinking that thereby he concealed his vexation and disappointment. He did not try to conceal his anxiety about poor John. I went home weary and dispirited. I made up and took the necessary applications to John; and, promising to return with the dawn of day (I would fain have stayed, but I did not wish him to be alarmed about himself), I went home, and resolved to sit up and study the treatment of similar cases.

' Mrs. Rose knocked at the door.

' " Come in ! " said I sharply.

' She said she had seen I had something on my mind all day, and she could not go to bed without asking if there was nothing she could do. She was good and kind; and I could not help telling her a little of the truth. She listened pleasantly ; and I shook her warmly by the hand, thinking that though she might not be very wise, her good heart made her worth a dozen keen, sharp, hard people, like Miss Horsman.

' When I went at daybreak, I saw John's wife for a few minutes outside of the door. She seemed to wish her husband had been in Mr. Morgan's hands rather than mine; but she gave me as good an account as I dared to hope for of the manner in which her husband had passed the night. This was confirmed by my own examination.

' When Mr. Morgan and I visited him together later on in the day, John said what we had agreed upon the day before ; and I told Mr. Morgan openly that it was by my advice that amputation was declined. He did not speak to me till we had left the house. Then he said—" Now, sir, from this time, I consider this case entirely in your hands. Only remember the poor fellow has a wife and six children. In case you come round to my opinion, remember that Mr. White could come over, as he has done before, for the operation."

' So! Mr. Morgan believed I declined operating because I felt myself incapable. Very well! I was much mortified.

' An hour after we parted, I received a note to this effect—

' " DEAR SIR,—I will take the long round to-day, to leave you at liberty to attend to Brouncker's case, which I feel to be a very responsible one.

" ' J. MORGAN."

' This was kindly done. I went back, as soon as I could, to John's cottage. While I was in the inner room with him, I heard the Miss Tomkinsons' voices

outside. They had called to inquire. Miss Tomkinson came in, and evidently was poking and snuffing about. (Mrs. Brouncker told her that I was within; and within I resolved to be till they had gone.)

' "What is this close smell?" asked she. "I am afraid you are not cleanly. Cheese!—cheese in this cupboard I No wonder there is an unpleasant smell. Don't you know how particular you should be about being clean when there is illness about?"

* Mrs. Brouncker was exquisitely clean in general, and was piqued at these remarks.

' "If you please, ma'am, I could not leave John yasterday to do any house-work, and Jenny put the dinner-things away. She is but eight years old."

' But this did not satisfy Miss Tomkinson, who was evidently pursuing the course of her observations.

' "Fresh butter, I declare! Well now, Mrs. Brouncker, do you know I don't allow myself fresh butter at this time of the year? How can you save, indeed, with such extravagance!"

' "Please, ma'am," answered Mrs. Brouncker, "you'd think it strange, if I was to take such liberties in your house as you're taking here."

* I expected to hear a sharp answer. No! Miss Tomkinson liked true plain-speaking. The only person in whom she would tolerate round-about ways of talking was her sister.

' "Well, that's true," she said. "Still, you must not be above taking advice. Fresh butter is extravagant at this time of the year. However, you're a good kind of woman, and I've a great respect for John. Send Jenny for some broth as soon as he can take it. Come, Caroline, we have got to go on to Williams's."

' But Miss Caroline said that she was tired, and would rest where she was till Miss Tomkinson came back. I was a prisoner for some time, I found. When she was alone with Mrs. Brouncker, she said—

' "You must not be hurt by my sister's abrupt manner. She means well. She has not much imagination or sympathy, and cannot understand the distrao-

tion of mind produced by the illness of a worshipped husband." I could hear the loud sigh of commiseration which followed this speech. Mrs. Brouncker said—

" Please, ma'am, I don't worship my husband. I would not be so wicked."

" Goodness ! You don't think it wicked, do you ? For my part, if . . . I should worship, I should adore him." I thought she need not imagine such improbable cases. But sturdy Mrs. Brouncker said again—

" I hope I know my duty better. I've not learned my Commandments for nothing. I know whom I ought to worship."

' Just then the children came in, dirty and unwashed, I have no doubt. And now Miss Caroline's real nature peeped out. She spoke sharply to them, and asked them if they had no manners, little pigs as they were, to come brushing against her silk gown in that way ? She sweetened herself again, and was as sugary as love when Miss Tomkinson returned for her, accompanied by one whose voice, " like winds in summer sighing," I knew to be my dear Sophy's.

' She did not say much ; but what she did say, and the manner in which she spoke, was tender and compassionate in the highest degree ; and she came to take the four little ones back with her to the Vicarage, in order that they might be out of their mother's way ; the older two might help at home. She offered to wash their hands and faces; and when I emerged from my inner chamber, after the Miss Tomkinsons had left, I found her with a chubby child on her knees, bubbling and spluttering against her white wet hand, with a face bright, rosy, and merry under the operation. Just as I came in, she said to him, " There, Jemmy, now I can kiss you with this nice clean face."

' She coloured when she saw me. I liked her speaking, and I liked her silence. She was silent now, and I ' ' lo'ed a' the better ". I gave my directions to Mrs. Brouncker, and hastened to overtake Sophy and the children; but they had gone round by the lanes, I suppose, for I saw nothing of them.

* I was very anxious about the case. At night I went again. Miss Horsman had been there ; I believe she was really kind among the poor, but she could not help leaving a sting behind her everywhere. She had been frightening Mrs. Brouncker about her husband; and been, I have no doubt, expressing her doubts of my skill; for Mrs. Brouncker began—

' " Oh, please, sir, if you'll only let Mr. Morgan take off his arm, I will never think the worse of you for not being able to do it. '

' I told her it was from no doubt of my own competency to perform the operation that I wished to save the arm; but that he himself was anxious to have it spared.

' " Aye, bless him ! he frets about not earning enough to keep us, if he's crippled ; but, sir, I don't care about that. I would work my fingers to the bone, and so would the children ; I'm sure we'd be proud to do for him, and keep him; God bless him ! it would be far better to have him only with one arm, than to have him in the churchyard, Miss Horsman says "——

' " Confound Miss Horsman ! " said I.

' " Thank you, Mr. Harrison," said her well-known voice behind me. She had come out, dark as it was, to bring some old linen to Mrs. Brouncker ; for, as I said before, she was very kind to all the poor people of Duncombe.

' " I beg your pardon ; " for I really was sorry for my speech, or rather, that she had heard it.

' " There is no occasion for any apology," she replied, drawing herself up, and pinching her lips into a very venomous shape.

' John was doing pretty well; but of course the danger of locked jaw was not over. Before I left, his wife entreated me to take off the arm ; she wrung her hands in her passionate entreaty. " Spare him to me, Mr. Harrison," she implored. Miss Horsman stood by. It was mortifying enough ; but I thought of the power which was in my hands, as I firmly believed, of saving the limb; and I was inflexible.

* You cannot think how pleasantly Mrs. Rose's sympathy came in on my return. To be sure, she did not understand one word of the case, which I detailed to her ; but she listened with interest, and as long as she held her tongue I thought she was really taking it in ; but her first remark was as malapropos as could be.

' " You are anxious to save the tibia—I see completely how difficult that will be. My late husband had a case exactly similar, and I remember his anxiety ; but you must not distress yourself too much, my dear Mr. Harrison ; I have no doubt it will end well."

* I knew she had no grounds for this assurance, and yet it comforted me.

' However, as it happened, John did fully as well as I could hope ; of course, he was long in rallying his strength : and, indeed, sea-air was evidently so necessary for his complete restoration, that I accepted with gratitude Mrs. Rose's proposal of sending him to Highport for a fortnight or three weeks. Her kind generosity in this matter made me more desirous than ever of paying her every mark of respect and attention.

CHAPTER XV

' ABOUT this time there was a sale at Ashmeadow, a pretty house in the neighbourhood of Duncombe. It was likewise an easy walk, and the spring days tempted many people thither who had no intention of buying anything, but who liked the idea of rambling through the woods, gay with early primroses and wild daffodils, and of seeing the gardens and house, which till now had been shut up from the ingress of the townspeople. Mrs. Rose had planned to go, but an unlucky cold prevented her. She begged me to bring her a very particular account, saying she delighted in details, and always questioned the late Mr. Rose as to the side dishes of the dinners to which he went. The late Mr. Rose's conduct was always held up as a model to me, by the way. I walked to Ashmeadow, pausing or loitering

with different parties of townspeople, all bound in the same direction. At last I found the Vicar and Sophy, and with them I stayed. I sat by Sophy and talked and listened. A sale is a very pleasant gathering after all. The auctioneer, in a country place, is privileged to joke from his rostrum ; and having a personal knowledge of most of the people, can sometimes make a very keen hit at their circumstances, and turn the laugh against them. For instance, on the present occasion, there was a farmer present, with his wife, who was notoriously the grey mare. The auctioneer was selling some horse-cloths, and called out to recommend the article to her, telling her, with a knowing look at the company, that they would make her a dashing pair of trousers, if she was in want of such an article. She drew herself up with dignity, and said, "Come, John, we've had enough of these." Whereupon there was a burst of laughter, and in the midst of it John meekly followed his wife out of the place. The furniture in the sitting-rooms was, I believe, very beautiful, but I did not notice it much. Suddenly I heard the auctioneer speaking to me, "Mr. Harrison, won't you give me a bid for this table ? "

' It was a very pretty little table of walnut-wood. I thought it would go into my study very well, so I gave him a bid. I saw Miss Horsman bidding against me, so I went off with full force, and at last it was knocked down to me. The auctioneer smiled, and congratulated me.

' "A most useful present for Mrs. Harrison, when that lady comes."

'Everybody laughed. They like a joke about marriage; it is so easy of comprehension. But the table which I had thought was for writing, turned out to be a work-table, scissors and thimble complete. No wonder I looked foolish. Sophy was not looking at me, that was one comfort. She was busy arranging a nosegay of wood-anemone and wild sorrel.

'Miss Horsman came up, with her curious eyes.

' "I had no idea things were far enough advanced for you to be purchasing a work-table, Mr. Harrison."

' I laughed off my awkwardness.

' " Did not you, Miss Horsman ? You are very much behindhand. You have not heard of my piano, then ? "

' " No, indeed," she said, half uncertain whether I was serious or not. " Then it seems there is nothing wanting but the lady."

' " Perhaps she may not be wanting either," said I, for I wished to perplex her keen curiosity.

CHAPTER XVI

' WHEN I got home from my round, I found Mrs. Rose in some sorrow.

' " Miss Horsman called after you left," said she. " Have you heard how John Brouncker is at Highport ? "

' " Very well," replied I. " I called on his wife just now, and she had just got a letter from him. She had been anxious about him, for she had not heard for a week. However, all's right now ; and she has pretty well of work, at Mrs. Munton's, as her servant is ill. Oh, they'll do, never fear."

* " At Mrs. Munton's ? Oh, that accounts for it, then. She is so deaf, and makes such blunders."

' " Accounts for what ? " asked I.

' " Oh, perhaps I had better not tell you," hesitated Mrs. Rose.

* " Yes, tell me at once. I beg your pardon, but I hate mysteries."

* " You are so like my poor dear Mr. Rose. He used to speak to me just in that sharp, cross way. It is only that Miss Horsman called. She had been making a collection for John Brouncker's widow and "——

' " But the man's alive ! " said I.

' " So it seems. But Mrs. Munton had told her that he was dead. And she has got Mr. Morgan's name down at the head of the list, and Mr. Bullock's."

' Mr. Morgan and I had got into a short, cool way of speaking to each other ever since we had differed so

much about the treatment of Brouncker's arm ; and I had heard once or twice of his shakes of the head over John's case. He would not have spoken against my method for the world, and fancied that he concealed his fears.

' "Miss Horsman is very ill-natured, I think," sighed forth Mrs. Rose.

* I saw that something had been said of which I had not heard, for the mere fact of collectmg money for the widow was good-natured, whoever did it; so I asked, quietly, what she had said.

' " Oh, I don't know if I should tell you. I only know she made me cry ; for I'm not well, and I can't bear to hear any one that I live with abused."

' Come ! this was pretty plain.

' " What did Miss Horsman say of me ? " asked I, half laughing, for I knew there was no love lost between us.

' " Oh, she only said she wondered you could go to sales, and spend your money there, when your ignorance had made Jane Brouncker a widow, and her children fatherless."

' " Pooh ! pooh ! John's alive, and likely to live as long as you or I, thanks to you, Mrs. Rose."

' When my work-table came home, Mrs. Rose was so struck with its beauty and completeness, and I was so much obliged to her for her identification of my interests with hers, and the kindness of her whole conduct about John, that I begged her to accept of it. She seemed very much pleased; and, after a few apologies, she consented to take it, and placed it in the most conspicuous part of the front parlour, where she usually sat. There was a good deal of morning calling in Buncombe after the sale, and during this time the fact of John's being alive was established to the conviction of all except Miss Horsman, who, I believe, still doubted. I myself told Mr. Morgan, who immediately went to reclaim his money; saying to me, that he was thankful of the information ; he was truly glad to hear it ; and he shook me warmly by the hand for the first time for a month.

CHAPTER XVII

' A FEW days after the sale, I was in the consulting-room. The servant must have left the folding-doors a little ajar, I think. Mrs. Munton came to call on Mrs. Rose ; and the former being deaf, I heard all the speeches of the latter lady, as she was obliged to speak very loud in order to be heard. She began—

' " This is a great pleasure, Mrs. Munton, so seldom as you are well enough to go out."

* Mumble, mumble, mumble, through the door.

' " Oh, very well, thank you. Take this seat, and then you can admire my new work-table, ma'am; a present from Mr. Harrison."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Who could have told you, ma'am ? Miss Horsman ? Oh, yes, I showed it Miss Horsman."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I don't quite understand you, ma'am."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm not blushing, I believe. I really am quite in the dark as to what you mean."

* Mumble, mumble.

' " Oh, yes, Mr. Harrison and I are most comfortable together. He reminds me so of my dear Mr. Rose—just as fidgety and anxious in his profession."

' Mumble, mumble.

' " I'm sure you are joking now, ma'am." Then I heard a pretty loud—

' "' Oh, no "; mumble, mumble, mumble, for a long time.

' " Did he really? Well, I'm sure I don't know. I should be sorry to think he was doomed to be unfortunate in so serious an affair; but you know my undying regard for the late Mr. Rose."

' Another long mumble.

' " You're very kind, I'm sure. Mr. Rose always thought more of my happiness than his own"—a little crying—"but the turtle-dove has always been my ideal, ma'am."

'Mumble, mumble.

' " No one could have been happier than L As you say, it is a compliment to matrimony."

' Mumble.

"" Oh, but you must not repeat such a thing. Mr. Harrison would not like it. He can't bear to have his affairs spoken about."

' Then there was a change of subject; an inquiry after some poor person, I imagine. I heard Mrs. Rose say—

' " She has got a mucous membrane, I'm afraid, ma'am."

' A commiserating mumble.

' " Not always fatal. I believe Mr. Rose knew some cases that lived for years after it was discovered that they had a mucous membrane." A pause. Then Mrs. Rose spoke in a different tone.

' " Are you sure, ma'am, there is no mistake about what he said ? "

* Mumble.

' " Pray don't be so observant, Mrs. Munton ; you find out too much. One can have no little secrets."

' The call broke up ; and I heard Mrs. Munton say in the passage, " I wish you joy, ma'am, with all my heart. There 's no use denying it ; for I've seen all along what would happen."

' When I went in to dinner, I said to Mrs. Rose—

' " You've had Mrs. Munton here, I think. Did she bring any news ? " To my surprise, she bridled and Bimpered, and replied, " Oh, you must not ask, Mr. Harrison: such foolish reports."

' I did not ask, as she seemed to wish me not, and I knew there were silly reports always about. Then I think she was vexed that I did not ask. Altogether she went on so strangely that I could not help looking at her ; and then she took up a hand-screen, and held it between me and her. I really felt rather anxious.

' " Are you not feeling well ? " said I innocently.

' " Oh, thank you, I believe Fra quite well; only the room is rather warm, is it not ? "

' " Let me put the blinds down for you ? the sun begins to have a good deal of power." I drew down the blinds.

' " You are so attentive, Mr. Harrison. Mr. Rose himself never did more for my little wishes than you do."

' " I wish I could do more—I wish I could show you how much I feel "——her kindness to John Brouncker, I was going on to say ; but I was just then called out to a patient. Before I went I turned back, and said——

' " Take care of yourself, my dear Mrs. Rose ; you had better rest a little."

' " For your sake, I will," said she tenderly.

' I did not care for whose sake she did it. Only I really thought she was not quite well, and required rest. I thought she was more affected than usual at tea-time; and could have been angry with her nonsensical ways once or twice, but that I knew the real goodness of her heart. She said she wished she had the power to sweeten my life as she could my tea. I told her what a comfort she had been all during my Jate time of anxiety, and then I stole out to try if I could hear the evening singing at the Vicarage, by standing close to the garden-wall.

CHAPTER XVIII

' THE next morning I met Mr. Bullock by appointment, to talk a little about the legacy which was paid into his hands. As I was leaving his office, feeling full of my riches, I met Miss Horsman. She smiled rather grimly, and said——

' " Oh ! Mr. Harrison, I must congratulate I believe. I don't know whether I ought to have known, but as I do, I must wish you joy. A very nice little sum, too. I always said you would have money."

* So she had found out my legacy, had she ? Well, it was no secret, and one likes the reputation of being a person of property. Accordingly I smiled, and said

I was much obliged to her, and if I could alter the figures to my liking, she might congratulate me still more.

' She said, " Oh, Mr. Harrison, you can't have everything. It would be better the other way, certainly. Money is the great thing, as you've found out. The relation died most opportunely, I must say."

' " He was no relative," said I; " only an intimate friend."

' " Dear-ah-me ! I thought it had been a brother ! Well, at any rate, the legacy is safe."

' I wished her good morning, and passed on. Before long I was sent for to Miss Tomkinson's.

' Miss Tomkinson sat in severe state to receive me. I went in with an air of ease, because I always felt so uncomfortable.

' " Is this true that I hear ? " asked she, in an inquisitorial manner.

' I thought she alluded to my five hundred pounds ; so I smiled, and said that I believed it was.

' " Can money be so great an object with you, Mr. Harrison ? " she asked again.

' I said I had never cared much for money, except as an assistance to any plan of settling in life ; and then, as I did not like her severe way of treating the subject, I said that I hoped every one was well ; though of course I expected some one was ill, or I should not have been sent for.

' Miss Tomkinson looked very grave and sad. Then she answered : " Caroline is very poorly—the old palpitations at the heart; but of course that is nothing to you."

' I said I was very sorry. She had a weakness there, I knew. Could I see her ? I might be able to order something for her.

' I thought I heard Miss Tomkinson say something in a low voice about my being a heartless deceiver. Then she spoke up. " I was always distrustful of you, Mr. Harrison. I never liked your looks. I begged Caroline again and again not to confide in you. I foresaw how it would end. And now I fear her precious life will be a sacrifice."

' I begged her not to distress herself, for in all probability there was very little the matter with her sister. Might I see her ?

' " No ! " she said shortly, standing up as if to dismiss me. " There has been too much of this seeing and calling. By my consent, you shall never see her again."¹

' I bowed. I was annoyed, of course. Such a dismissal might injure my practice just when I was most anxious to increase it.

' " Have you no apology, no excuse to offer ? "

' I said I had done my best; I did not feel that there was any reason to offer an apology. I wished her good morning. Suddenly she came forwards.

' " Oh, Mr. Harrison," said she, ' if you have really loved Caroline, do not let a little paltry money make you desert her for another."

' I was struck dumb. Loved Miss Caroline ! I loved Miss Tomkinson a great deal better, and yet I disliked her. She went on—

' " I have saved nearly three thousand pounds. If you think you are too poor to marry without money, I will give it all to Caroline. I am strong, and can go on working ; but she is weak, and this disappointment will kill her." She sat down suddenly, and covered her face with her hands. Then she looked up.

' " You are unwilling, I see. Don't suppose I would have urged you if it had been for myself ; but she has had so much sorrow." And now she fairly cried aloud. I tried to explain ; but she would not listen, but kept saying, " Leave the house, sir I leave the house ! " But I would be heard.

' " I have never had any feeling warmer than respect for Miss Caroline, and I have never Bhown any different feeling. I never for an instant thought of making her my wife, and she has had no cause in my behaviour to imagine I entertained any such intention."

' " This is adding insult to injury," said she. " Leave the house, sir, this instant !"

CHAPTER XIX

' I WENT, and sadly enough. In a small town such an occurrence is sure to be talked about, and to make a great deal of mischief. When I went home to dinner I was so full of it, and foresaw so clearly that I should need some advocate soon to set the case in its right light, that I determined on making a confidante of good Mrs. Rose. I could not eat. She watched me tenderly, and sighed when she saw my want of appetite.

' " I am sure you have something on your mind, Mr. Harrison. Would it be—would it not be—a relief to impart it to some sympathizing friend ? "

' It was just what I wanted to do.

' " My dear kind Mrs. Rose," said I, " I must tell you, if you will listen."

' She took up the fire-screen, and held it, as yesterday, between me and her.

' " The most unfortunate misunderstanding has taken place. Miss Tomkinson thinks that I have been paying attentions to Miss Caroline ; when, in fact—may I tell you, Mrs. Rose ?—my affections are placed elsewhere. Perhaps you have found it out already ? " for indeed I thought I had been too much in love to conceal my attachment to Sophy from any one who knew my movements as well as Mrs. Rose.

* She hung down her head, and said she believed she had found out my secret.

' " Then only think how miserably I am situated. If I have any hope—oh, Mrs. Rose, do you think I have any hope "——

' She put the hand-screen still more before her face, and after some hesitation she said she thought " if I persevered—in time—I might have hope ". And then she suddenly got up and left the room.

CHAPTER XX

' THAT afternoon I met Mr. Bullock in the street. My mind was so full of the affair with Miss Tomkinson that I should have passed him without notice, if he had not stopped me short, and said that he must speak to me ; about my wonderful five hundred pounds, I supposed. But I did not care for that now.

' " What is this I hear," said he severely, " about your engagement with Mrs. Rose ? "

' " With Mrs. Rose ! " said I, almost laughing, although my heart was heavy enough.

' " Yes ! with Mrs. Rose ! " said he sternly.

' " I'm not engaged to Mrs. Rose," I replied. " There is some mistake."

' " I'm glad to hear it, sir," he answered, ^{4<} very glad. It requires some explanation, however. Mrs. Rose has been congratulated, and has acknowledged the truth of the report. It is confirmed by many facts. The work-table you bought, confessing your intention of giving it to your future wife, is given to her. How do you account for these things, sir ? "

* I said I did not pretend to account for them. At present, a good deal was inexplicable ; and when I could give an explanation, I did not think that I should feel myself called upon to give it to him.

' " Very well, sir ; very well," replied he, growing very red. " I shall take care and let Mr. Morgan know the opinion I entertain of you. What do you think that man deserves to be called who enters a family under the plea of friendship, and takes advantage of his intimacy to win the affections of the daughter, and then engages himself to another woman ? "

' I thought he referred to Miss Caroline. I simply said I could only say that I was not engaged ; and that Miss Tomkinson had been quite mistaken in supposing I had been paying any attentions to her sister beyond those dictated by mere civility.

' " Miss Tomkinson ! Miss Caroline ! I don't under-

stand to what you refer. Is there another victim to your perfidy ? What I allude to are the attentions you have paid to my daughter, Miss Bullock."

' Another ! I could but disclaim, as I had done in the case of Miss Caroline; but I began to be in despair. Would Miss Horsman, too, come forward as a victim to my tender affections ? It was all Mr. Morgan's doing, who had lectured me into this tenderly deferential manner. But on the score of Miss Bullock, I was brave in my innocence. I had positively disliked her ; and so I told her father, though in more civil and measured terms, adding that I was sure the feeling was reciprocal.

' He looked as if he would like to horsewhip me. I longed to call him out.

' " I hope my daughter has had sense enough to despise you; I hope she has, that's all. I trust my wife may be mistaken as to her feelings."

* So, he had heard all through the medium of his wife. That explained something, and rather calmed me. I begged he would ask Miss Bullock if she had ever thought I had any ulterior object in my intercourse with her, beyond mere friendliness (and not so much of that, I might have added). I would refer it to her.

' " Girls," said Mr. Bullock, a little more quietly, " do not like to acknowledge that they have been deceived and disappointed. I consider my wife's testimony as likely to be nearer the truth than my daughter's, for that reason. And she tells me she never doubted but that, if not absolutely engaged, you understood each other perfectly. She is sure *Jemima* is deeply wounded by your engagement to Mrs. Rose."

' " Once for all, I am not engaged to anybody. Till you have seen your daughter, and learnt the truth from her, I will wish you farewell."

' I bowed in a stiff, haughty manner, and walked off homewards. But when I got to my own door, I remembered Mrs. Rose, and all that Mr. Bullock had said about her acknowledging the truth of the report of my engage-

ment to her. Where could I go to be safe ? Mrs. Rose, Miss Bullock, Miss Caroline—they lived as it were at the three points of an equilateral triangle; here was I in the centre. I would go to Mr. Morgan's, and drink tea with him. There, at any rate, I was secure from any one wanting to marry me; and I might be as professionally bland as I liked, without being misunderstood. But there, too, a *contretemps* awaited me.

CHAPTER XXI

'MR. MORGAN was looking grave. After a minute or two of humming and hawing, he said—

' "I have been sent for to Miss Caroline Tomkinson, Mr. Harrison. I am sorry to hear of this. I am grieved to find that there seems to have been some trifling with the affections of a very worthy lady. Miss Tomkinson, who is in sad distress, tells me that they had every reason to believe that you were attached to her sister. May I ask if you do not intend to marry her ?'

* I said, nothing was farther from my thoughts.

' "My dear sir," said Mr. Morgan, rather agitated, "do not express yourself so strongly and vehemently. It is derogatory to the sex to speak so. It is more respectful to say, in these cases, that you do not venture to entertain a hope; such a manner is generally understood, and does not sound like such positive objection."

' "I cannot help it, sir; I must talk in my own natural manner. I would not speak disrespectfully of any woman; but nothing should induce me to marry Miss Caroline Tomkinson; not if she were Venus herself, and Queen of England into the bargain. I cannot understand what has given rise to the idea."

' "Indeed, sir; I think that is very plain. You have a trifling case to attend to in the house, and you invariably make it a pretext for seeing **and** conversing **with the lady.**"

' " That was her doing, not mine !" said I vehemently.

' " Allow me to go on. You are discovered on your knees before her—a positive injury to the establishment, as Miss Tomkinson observes; a most passionate valentine is sent; and when questioned, you acknowledge the sincerity of meaning which you affix to such things." Ho stopped, for in his earnestness he had been talking more quickly than usual, and was out of breath. I burst in with my explanations—

' " The valentine I know nothing about."

' " It is in your handwriting," said he coldly. " I should be most deeply grieved to—in fact, I will not think it possible of your father's son. But I must say, it is in your handwriting."

' I tried again, and at last succeeded in convincing him that I had been only unfortunate, not intentionally guilty of winning Miss Caroline's affections. I said that I had been endeavouring, it was true, to practise the manner he had recommended, of universal sympathy, and recalled to his mind some of the advice he had given me. He was a good deal hurried.

' " But, my dear sir, I had no idea that you would carry it out to such consequences. * Philandering,' Miss Tomkinson called it. That is a hard word, sir. My manner has been always tender and sympathetic; but I am not aware that I ever excited any hopes; there never was any report about me. I believe no lady was ever attached to me. You must strive after this happy medium, sir."

' I was still distressed. Mr. Morgan had only heard of one, but there were three ladies (including Miss Bullock) hoping to marry me. He saw my annoyance.

' " Don't be too much distressed about it, my dear sir; I was sure you were too honourable a man, from the first. With a conscience like yours, I would defy the world."

' He became anxious to console me, and I was hesitating whether I would not tell him all my three

dilemmas, when a note was brought in to him. It was from Mrs. Munton. He threw it to me, with a face of dismay.

' " MY DEAR MR. MORGAN,—I most sincerely congratulate you on the happy matrimonial engagement I hear you have formed with Miss Tomkinson. All previous circumstances, as I have just been remarking to Miss Horsman, combine to promise you felicity. And I wish that every blessing may attend your married life.—Most sincerely yours,

' " JANE MUNTON."

* I could not help laughing, he had been so lately congratulating himself that no report of the kind had ever been circulated about himself. He said—

' " Sir ! this is no laughing matter ; I assure you it is not."

' I could not resist asking, if I was to conclude that there was no truth in the report.

' " Truth, sir ! it's a lie from beginning to end. I don't like to speak too decidedly about any lady ; and I've a great respect for Miss Tomkinson ; but I do assure you, sir, I'd as soon marry one of Her Majesty's Life Guards. I would rather ; it would be more suitable. Miss Tomkinson is a very worthy lady ; but she's a perfect grenadier."

' He grew very nervous. He was evidently insecure. He thought it not impossible that Miss Tomkinson might come and marry him, *vi et armis*. I am sure he had some dim idea of abduction in his mind. Still, he was better off than I was ; for he was in his own house, and report had only engaged him to one lady ; while I stood, like Paris, among three contending beauties. Truly, an apple of discord had been thrown into our little town. I suspected at the time, what I know now, that it was Miss Horsman's doing ; not intentionally, I will do her the justice to say. But she had shouted out the story of my behaviour to Miss Caroline up Mrs. Munton's trumpet ; and that lady, possessed with the idea that I was engaged to Mrs. Rose, had imagined

the masculine pronoun to relate to Mr. Morgan, whom she had seen only that afternoon *tete a tete* with Miss Tomkinson, condoling with her in some tender deferential manner, I'll be bound

CHAPTER XXII

' I WAS very cowardly. I positively dared not go home ; but at length I was obliged to. I had done all I could to console Mr. Morgan, but he refused to be comforted. I went at last. I rang at the bell. I don't know who opened the door, but I think it was Mrs. Rose. I kept a handkerchief to my face, and muttering something about having a dreadful toothache, I flew up to my room and bolted the door. I had no candle ; but what did that signify. I was safe. I could not sleep; and when I did fall into a sort of doze, it was ten times worse waking up. I could not remember whether I was engaged or not. If I was engaged, who was the lady ? I had always considered myself as rather plain than otherwise; but surely I had made a mistake. Fascinating I certainly must be; but perhaps I was handsome. As soon as day dawned, I got up to ascertain the fact at the looking-glass. Even with the best disposition to be convinced, I could not see any striking beauty in my round face, with an unshaven beard and a nightcap like a fool's cap at the top. No ! I must be content to be plain, but agreeable. All this I tell you in confidence. I would not have my little bit of vanity known for the world. I fell asleep towards morning. I was awakened by a tap at my door. It was Peggy: she put in a hand with a note. I took it.

' " It is not from Miss Horsman ? " said I, half in joke, half in very earnest fright.

" No, sir ; Air. Morgan's man brought it."

' I opened it. It ran thus—

' " MY DEAR SIR,—It is now nearly twenty years since I have had a little relaxation, and I find that my health

requires it. I have also the utmost confidence in you, and I am sure this feeling is shared by our patients. I have, therefore, no scruple in putting in execution a hastily formed plan, and going to Chesterton to catch the early tram on my way to Paris. If your accounts are good, I shall remain away probably a fortnight. Direct to Meurice's.—Yours, most truly,

" ' J. MORGAN.

" " PS.—Perhaps it may be as well not to name where I am gone, especially to Miss Tomkmson."

' He had deserted me. He—with only one report—had left me to stand my ground with three.

' " Mrs. Rose's kind regards, sir, and it's nearly nine o'clock. Breakfast has been ready this hour, sir."

' " Tell Mrs. Rose I don't want any breakfast. Or stay " (for I was very hungry), " I will take a cup of tea and some toast up here."

' Peggy brought the tray to the door.

' " I hope you're not ill, sir ? " said she kindly.

' " Not very. I shall be better when I get into the air.

' " Mrs. Rose seems sadly put about," said she; " she seems so grieved like."

' I watched my opportunity, and went out by the side door in the garden.

CHAPTER XXIII

' I HAD intended to ask Mr. Morgan to call at the vicarage, and give his parting explanation before they could hear the report. Now, I thought that if I could see Sophy, I would speak to her myself; but I did not wish to encounter the Vicar. I went along the lane at the back of the vicarage, and came suddenly upon Miss Bullock. She coloured, and asked me if I would allow her to speak to me. I could only be resigned; but I thought I could probably set one report at rest by this conversation.

She was almost crying.

" I must tell you, Mr. Harrison, I have watched you here in order to speak to you. I heard with the greatest regret of papa's conversation with you yesterday." She was fairly crying. " I believe Mrs. Bullock finds me in her way, and wants to have me married. It is the only way in which I can account for such a complete misrepresentation as she had told papa. I don't care for you in the least, sir. You never paid me any attentions. You've been almost rude to me ; and I have liked you the better. That's to say, I never have liked you."

' " I am truly glad to hear what you say," answered I. " Don't distress yourself. I was sure there was some mistake."

' But she cried bitterly.

' " It is so hard to feel that my marriage—my absence—is desired so earnestly at home. I dread every new acquaintance we form with any gentleman. It is sure to be the beginning of a series of attacks on him, of which everybody must be aware, and to which they may think I am a willing party. But I should not much mind if it were not for the conviction that she wishes me so earnestly away. Oh, my own dear mamma, you would never "——

' She cried more than ever. I was truly sorry for her, and had just taken her hand, and began—"My dear Miss Bullock "——when the door in the wall of the vicarage garden opened. It was the Vicar letting out Miss Tomkinson, whose face was all swelled with crying. He saw me ; but he did not bow, or make any sign. On the contrary, he looked down as from a severe eminence, and shut the door hastily. I turned to Miss Bullock.

" I am afraid the Vicar has been hearing something to my disadvantage from Miss Tomkinson, and it is very awkward "——She finished my sentence—" To have found us here together. Yes, but as long as we understand that we do not care for each other, it does not signify what people say."

' " Oh, but to me it does," said I. " I may, perhaps, tell you—but do not mention it to a creature—I am attached to Miss Hutton."

' " To Sophy ! Oh, Mr. Harrison, I am so glad; she is such a sweet creature. Oh, I wish you joy."

' " Not yet; I have never spoken about it."

* " Oh, but it is certain to happen." She jumped with a woman's rapidity to a conclusion. And then she began to praise Sophy. Never was a man yet who did not like to hear the praises of his mistress. I walked by her side; we came past the front of the vicarage together. I looked up, and saw Sophy there, and she saw me.

' That afternoon she was sent away ; sent to visit her aunt ostensibly ; in reality, because of the reports of my conduct, which were showered down upon the Vicar, and one of which he saw confirmed by his own eyes.

CHAPTER XXIV

¹ I HEARD of Sophy's departure as one heard of everything, soon after it had taken place. I did not care for the awkwardness of my situation, which had so perplexed and amused me in the morning. I felt that something was wrong; that Sophy was taken away from me. I sank into despair. If anybody liked to marry me they might. I was willing to be sacrificed. I did not speak to Mrs. Rose. She wondered at me, and grieved over my coldness, I saw; but I had left off feeling anything. Miss Tomkinson cut me in the street; and it did not break my heart. Sophy was gone away ; that was all I cared for. Where had they sent her to ? Who was her aunt, that she should go and visit her ? One day I met Lizzie, who looked as though she had been told not to speak to me, but could not help doing so.

' " Have you heard from your sister ? " said I.

' " Yes."

' " Where is she ? I hope she is well."

' " She is at the Leoms " — I was not much wiser. " Oh yes, she is very well. Fanny says she was at the Assembly last Wednesday, and danced all night with the officers."

' I thought I would enter myself a member of the Peace Society at once. She was a little flirt, and a hard-hearted creature. I don't think I wished Lizzie good-bye.

CHAPTER XXV

' WHAT most people would have considered a more serious evil than Sophy's absence, befell me. I found that my practice was falling off. The prejudice of the town ran strongly against me. Mrs. Munton told me all that was said. She heard it through Miss Horsman. It was said—cruel little town—that my negligence or ignorance had been the cause of Walter's death ; that Miss Tyrrell had become worse under my treatment; and that John Brouncker was all but dead, if he was not quite, from my mismanagement. All Jack Marshland's jokes and revelations, which had, I thought, gone to oblivion, were raked up to my discredit. He himself, formerly, to my astonishment, rather a favourite with the good people of Duncombe, was spoken of as one of my disreputable friends.

' In short, so prejudiced were the good people of Duncombe that I believe a very little would have made them suspect me of a brutal highway robbery, which took place in the neighbourhood about this time. Mrs. Munton told me, apropos of the robbery, that she had never yet understood the cause of my year's imprisonment in Newgate; she had no doubt, from what Mr. Morgan had told her, there was some good reason for it ; but if I would tell her the particulars, she should like to know them.

' Miss Tomkinson sent for Mr. White, from Chesterton, to see Miss Caroline; and, as he was coming over, all

our old patients seemed to take advantage of it, and send for him too.

' But the worst of all was the Vicar's manner to me. If he had cut me, I could have asked him why he did so. But the freezing change in his behaviour was indescribable, though bitterly felt. I heard of Sophy's gaiety from Lizzie. I thought of writing to her. Just then Mr. Morgan's fortnight of absence expired. I was wearied out by Mrs. Rose's tender vagaries, and took no comfort from her sympathy, which indeed I rather avoided. Her tears irritated, instead of grieving me.

wished I could tell her at once that I had no intention of marrying her.

CHAPTER XXVI

' MR. MORGAN had not been at home above two hours before he was sent for to the Vicarage. Sophy had come back, and I had never heard of it. She had come home ill and weary, and longing for rest: and the *rest* seemed approaching with awful strides. Mr. Morgan forgot all his Parisian adventures, and all his terror of Miss Tomkinson, when he was sent for to see her. She was ill of a fever, which made fearful progress. When he told me, I wished to force the Vicarage door, if I might but see her. But I controlled myself; and only cursed my weak indecision, which had prevented my writing to her. It was well I had no patients: they would have had but a poor chance of attention. I hung about Mr. Morgan, who might see her, and did see her. But from what he told me, I perceived that the measures he was adopting were powerless to check so sudden and violent an illness. Oh! if they would but let me see her. But that **was** out of the question. It was not merely **that** the Vicar had heard of my character as a gay Lothario, but that doubts had been thrown out of my medical skill. The accounts grew worse. Suddenly my resolution was taken. Mr. Morgan's very regard for Sophy made him more than usually timid in

his practice. I had my horse saddled, and galloped to Chesterton. I took the express train to town. I went to Dr.——. I told him every particular of the case. He listened ; but shook his head. He wrote down a prescription; and recommended a new preparation, not yet in full use ; a preparation of a poison, in fact.

' " It may save her," said he. " It is a chance, in such a state of things as you describe. It must be given on the fifth day, if the pulse will bear it. Crabbe makes up the preparation most skilfully. Let me hear from you, I beg."

' I went to Crabbe's ; I begged to make it up myself ; but my hands trembled, so that I could not weigh the quantities. I asked the young man to do it for me. I went, without touching food, to the station, with my medicine and my prescription in my pocket. Back we flew through the country. I sprang on Bay Maldon, which my groom had in waiting, and galloped across the country to Duncombe.

' But I drew bridle when I came to the top of the hill—the hill above the old hall, from which we catch the first glimpse of the town, for I thought within myself that she might be dead; and I dreaded to come near certainty. The hawthorns were out in the woods, the young lambs were in the meadows, the song of the thrushes filled the air ; but it only made the thought the more terrible.

' " What, if in this world of hope and life she lies dead ! " I heard the church bells soft and clear. I sickened to listen. Was it the passing bell ? No ! it was ringing eight o'clock. I put spurs to my horse, down hill as it was. We dashed into the town. I turned him, saddle and bridle, into the stable-yard, and went off to Mr. Morgan's.

' " Is she——? " said I. " How is she ? "

' " Very ill. My poor fellow, I see how it is with you. She may live—but I fear. My dear sir, I am very much afraid.

' I told him of my journey **and consultation with Dr.——, and showed him the** prescription. His hands trembled as he put on his spectacles to read it.

' "(This is a very dangerous medicine, sir,)" said he, with his finger under the name of the poison.

' " It is a new preparation," said I. " Dr.——relies much upon it."

' " I dare not administer it," he replied. " I have never tried it. It must be very powerful. I dare not play tricks in this case."

' I believe I stamped with impatience ; but it was all of no use. My journey had been in vain. The more I urged the imminent danger of the case requiring some powerful remedy, the more nervous he became.

' I told him I would throw up the partnership. I threatened him with that, though, in fact, it was only what I felt I ought to do, and had resolved upon before Sophy's illness, as I had lost the confidence of his patients. He only said— i

' " I cannot help it, sir. I shall regret it for your father's sake ; but I must do my duty. I dare not run the risk of giving Miss Sophy this violent medicine—a preparation of a deadly poison."

' I left him without a word. He was quite right in adhering to his own views, as I can see now ; but at the time I thought him brutal and obstinate.

CHAPTER XXVII

' I WENT home. I spoke rudely to Mrs. Rose, who awaited my return at the door. I rushed past, and locked myself in my room. I could not go to bed.

' The morning sun came pouring in, and enraged me, as everything did since Mr. Morgan refused. I pulled the blind down so violently that the string broke. What did it signify ? The light might come in. What was the sun to me ? And then I remembered that that sun might be shining on her—dead.

' I sat down and covered my face. Mrs. Rose knocked at the door. I opened it. She had never been in bed, and had been crying too.

' " Mr. Morgan wants to speak to you, sir."

' I rushed back for my medicine, and went to him. He stood at the door, pale and anxious.

"She's alive, sir," said he, "but that's all. We have sent for Dr. Hamilton. I'm afraid he will not come in time. Do you know, sir, I think we should venture—with Dr.——'s sanction—to give her that medicine. It is but a chance ; but it is the only one, I'm afraid." He fairly cried before he had ended.

' " I've got it here," said I, setting off to walk ; but he could not go so fast.

' " I beg your pardon, sir," said he, " for my abrupt refusal last night."

' " Indeed, sir," said I; " I ought much rather to beg your pardon. I was very violent."

' " Oh ! never mind ! never mind ! Will you repeat what Dr.——said ? "

' I did so; and then I asked, with a meekness that astonished myself, if I might not go in and administer it.

' "No, sir," said he, "I'm afraid not. I am sure your good heart would not wish to give pain. Besides, it might agitate her, if she has any consciousness before death. In her delirium she has often mentioned your name ; and, sir, I'm sure you won't name it again, as it may, in fact, be considered a professional secret; but I did hear our good Vicar speak a little strongly about you ; in fact, sir, I did hear him curse you. You see the mischief it might make in the parish, I'm sure, if this were known."

' I gave him the medicine, and watched him in, and saw the door shut. I hung about the place all day. Poor and rich all came to inquire. The county people drove up in their carriages—the halt and the lame came on their crutches. Their anxiety did my heart good. Mr. Morgan told me that she slept, and I watched Dr. Hamilton into the house. The night came on. She slept. I watched round the house. I saw the light high up, burning still and steady. Then I saw it moved. It was the crisis, in one way or other.

CHAPTER XXVIII

* MR. MORGAN came out. Good old man ! The tears were running down his cheeks: he could not speak; but kept shaking my hands. I did not want words. I understood that she was better.

' " Dr. Hamilton says, it was the only medicine that could have saved her. I was an old fool, sir. I beg your pardon. The Vicar shall know all. I beg your pardon, sir, if I was abrupt."

' Everything went on brilliantly from this time.

' Mr. Bullock called to apologize for his mistake, and consequent upbraiding. John Brouncker came home, brave and well.

' There was still Miss Tomkinson in the ranks of the enemy ; and Mrs. Rose too much, I feared, in the ranks of the friends.

CHAPTER XXIX

' ONE night she had gone to bed, and I was thinking of going. I had been studying in the back room, where I went for refuge from her in the present position of affairs (I read a good number of surgical books about this time, and also *Vanity Fair*)—when I heard a loud, long-continued knocking at the door, enough to waken the whole street. Before I could get to open it, I heard that well-known bass of Jack Marshland's, once heard never to be forgotten, pipe up the negro song—

Who's dat knocking at de door?

* Though it was raining hard at the time, and I stood waiting to let him in, he would finish his melody in the open air; loud and clear along the street it sounded. I saw Miss Tomkinson's night-capped head emerge from a window. She called out " Police ! police ! "

' Now there were no police, only a rheumatic constable in the town ; but it was the custom of the ladies,

when alarmed at night, to call an imaginary police, which had, they thought, an intimidating effect; but as every one knew the real state of the unwatched town, we did not much mind it in general. Just now, however, I wanted to regain my character. So I pulled Jack in, quavering as he entered.

' " You've spoilt a good shake," said he, " that's what you have. I'm nearly up to Jenny Lind; and you see I'm a nightingale, like her."

' We sat up late; and I don't know how it was, but I told him all my matrimonial misadventures.

' " I thought I could imitate your hand pretty well," said he. " My word ! it was a flaming valentine ! No wonder she thought you loved her ! "

' " So that was your doing, was it ? Now I'll tell you what you shall do to make up for it. You shall write me a letter confessing your hoax—a letter that I can show."

' " Give me pen and paper, my boy ! you shall dictate. ' With a deeply penitent heart'——Will that do for a beginning ? "

' I told him what to write ; a simple, straightforward confession of his practical joke. I enclosed it in a few lines of regret that, unknown to me, any of my friends should have so acted.

CHAPTER XXX

' ALL this time I knew that Sophy was slowly recovering. One day I met Miss Bullock, who had seen her.

' " We have been talking about you," said she, with a bright smile; for since she knew I disliked her, she felt quite at her ease, and could smile very pleasantly. I understood that she had been explaining the misunderstanding about herself to Sophy; so that when Jack Marshland's note had been sent to Miss Tomkinson's, I thought myself in a fair way to have my character established in two quarters. But the third was my dilemma. Mrs. Rose had really so much of my true

regard for her good qualities, that I disliked the idea of a formal explanation, in which a good deal must be said on my side to wound her. We had become very much estranged ever since I had heard of this report of my engagement to her. I saw that she grieved over it. While Jack Marshland stayed with us, I felt at my ease in the presence of a third person. But he told me confidentially he durst not stay long, for fear some of the ladies should snap him up, and marry him. Indeed I myself did not think it unlikely that he would snap one of them up if he could. For when we met Miss Bullock one day, and heard her hopeful, joyous account of Sophy's progress (to whom she was a daily visitor), he asked me who that bright-looking girl was? And when I told him she was the Miss Bullock of whom I had spoken to him, he was pleased to observe that he thought I had been a great fool, and asked me if Sophy had anything like such splendid eyes. He made me repeat about Miss Bullock's unhappy circumstances at home, and then became very thoughtful—a most unusual and morbid symptom in his case.

'Soon after he went, by Mr. Morgan's kind offices and explanations, I was permitted to see Sophy. I might not speak much; it was prohibited, for fear of agitating her. We talked of the weather and the flowers; and we were silent. But her little white thin hand lay in mine; and we understood each other without words. I had a long interview with the Vicar afterwards; and came away glad and satisfied.

'Mr. Morgan called in the afternoon, evidently anxious, though he made no direct inquiries (he was too polite for that), to hear the result of my visit at the vicarage. I told him to give me joy. He shook me warmly by the hand; and then rubbed his own together. I thought I would consult him about my dilemma with Mrs. Rose, who, I was afraid, would be deeply affected by my engagement.

' "There is only one awkward circumstance," said I—"about Mrs. Rose." I hesitated how to word the fact of her having received congratulations on her supposed

engagement with me, and her manifest attachment; but, before I could speak, he broke in—

'My dear sir, you need not trouble yourself about that; she will have a home. In fact, sir," said he, reddening a little, "I thought it would, perhaps, put a stop to those reports connecting my name with Miss Tomkinson's, if I married some one else. I hoped it might prove an efficacious contradiction. And I was struck with admiration for Mrs. Rose's undying memory of her late husband. Not to be prolix, I have this morning obtained Mrs. Rose's consent to—to marry her, in fact, sir!" said he, jerking out the climax.

'Here was an event! Then Mr. Morgan had never heard the report about Mrs. Rose and me. (To this day, I think she would have taken me, if I had proposed.) So much the better.

'Marriages were in the fashion that year. Mr. Bullock met me one morning, as I was going to ride with Sophy. He and I had quite got over our misunderstanding, thanks to Jemima, and were as friendly as ever. This morning he was chuckling aloud as he walked.

' "Stop, Mr. Harnson!" he said, as I went quickly past. "Have you heard the news? Miss Horsman has just told me Miss Caroline has eloped with young Hoggins! She is ten years older than he is! How can her gentility like being married to a tallow-chandler? It is a very good thing for her, though," he added, in a more serious manner; "old Hoggins is very rich; and though he's angry just now, he will soon be reconciled."

•Any vanity I might have entertained on the score of the three ladies who were, at one time, said to be captivated by my charms, was being rapidly dispersed. Soon after Mr. Hoggins's marriage, I met Miss Tomkinson face to face, for the first time since our memorable conversation. She stopped me, and said—

' "Don't refuse to receive my congratulations, Mr. Harrison, on your most happy engagement to Miss Hutton. I owe you an apology, too, for my behaviour when I last saw you at our house. I really did think Caroline was attached to you then; and it

irritated me, I confess, in a very wrong and unjustifiable way. But I heard her telling Mr. Hoggins only yesterday that she had been attached to him for years ; ever since he was in pinafores, she dated it from ; and when I asked her afterwards how she could say so, after her distress on hearing that false report about you and Mrs. Rose, she cried, and said I never had understood her ; and that the hysterics which alarmed me so much were simply caused by eating pickled cucumber. I am very sorry for my stupidity, and improper way of speaking ; but I hope we are friends now, Mr. Harrison, for I should wish to be liked by Sophy's husband."

* Good Miss Tomkinson ! to believe the substitution of indigestion for disappointed affection. I shook her warmly by the hand ; and we have been all right ever since. I think I told you she is baby's godmother.

CHAPTER XXXI

'I HAD some difficulty in persuading Jack Marshland to be groomsman ; but when he heard all the arrangements, he came. Miss Bullock was bridesmaid. He liked us all so well, that he came again at Christmas, and was far better behaved than he had been the year before. He won golden opinions indeed. Miss Tomkinson said he was a reformed young man. We dined all together at Mr. Morgan's (the Vicar wanted us to go there ; but, from what Sophy told me, Helen was not confident of the mincemeat, and rather dreaded so large a party). We had a jolly day of it. Mrs. Morgan was as kind and motherly as ever. Miss Horsman certainly did set out a story that the Vicar was thinking of Miss Tomkinson for his second ; or else, I think, we had no other report circulated in consequence of our happy, merry Christmas Day ; and it is a wonder, considering how Jack Marshland went on with Jemima.'

Here Sophy came back from putting baby to bed ; and Charles wakened up.

III

THE SEXTON'S HERO

First published in *Howitt's Journal* in 1847 Reprinted with 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras' and 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' under the title of 'Life in Manchester by Cotton Mather Mills Esq.' in 1848, and with 'Christmas Storms and Sunshine' in 1850. First appeared in book form in 'Lizzie Leigh and Other Stories' 1855 and in 'Cousin Phillis and Other Tales' in 1865.

THE SEXTON'S HERO

THE afternoon sun shed down his glorious rays on the grassy churchyard, making the shadow, cast by the old yew-tree under which we sat, seem deeper and deeper by contrast. The everlasting hum of myriads of summer insects made luxurious lullaby.

Of the view that lay beneath our gaze, I cannot speak adequately. The foreground was the grey-stone wall of the Vicarage garden; rich in the colouring made by innumerable lichens, ferns, ivy of most tender green and most delicate tracery, and the vivid scarlet of the crane's-bill, which found a home in every nook and crevice—and at the summit of that old wall flaunted some unpruned tendrils of the vine, and long flower-laden branches of the climbing rose-tree, trained against the inner side. Beyond, lay meadow green and mountain grey, and the blue dazzle of Morecambe Bay, as it sparkled between us and the more distant view.

For a while we were silent, living in sight and murmuring sound. Then Jeremy took up our conversation where, suddenly feeling weariness, as we saw that deep green shadowy resting-place, we had ceased speaking a quarter of an hour before.

It is one of the luxuries of holiday-time that thoughts are not rudely shaken from us by outward violence of hurry and busy impatience, but fall maturely from our lips in the sunny leisure of our days. The stock may be bad, but the fruit is ripe.

'How would you then define a hero?' I asked.

There was a long pause, and I had almost forgotten my question in watching a cloud-shadow floating over the far-away hills, when Jeremy made answer—

'My idea of a hero is one who acts up to the highest idea of duty he has been able to form, no matter at

what sacrifice. I think that by this definition we may include all phases of character, even to the heroes of old, whose sole (and to us, low) idea of duty consisted in personal prowess.'

'Then you would even admit the military heroes?' asked I.

'I would; with a certain kind of pity for the circumstances which had given them no higher ideas of duty. Still, if they sacrificed self to do what they sincerely believed to be right, I do not think I could deny them the title of hero.'

'A poor, unchristian heroism, whose manifestation consists in injury to others!' I said.

We were both startled by a third voice.

* If I might make so bold, sir '—and then the speaker stopped.

It was the Sexton, whom, when we first arrived, we had noticed, as an accessory to the scene, but whom we had forgotten, as much as though he were as inanimate as one of the moss-covered headstones.

'If I might be so bold,' said he again, waiting leave to speak. Jeremy bowed in deference to his white, uncovered head. And so encouraged, he went on.

'What that gentleman' (alluding to my last speech) 'has just now said, brings to my mind one who is dead and gone this many a year ago. I, may be, have not rightly understood your meaning, gentlemen, but as far as I could gather it, I think you'd both have given in to thinking poor Gilbert Dawson a hero. At any rate,' said he, heaving a long, quivering sigh, * I have reason to think him so.'

'Will you take a seat, sir, and tell us about him?' said Jeremy, standing up until the old man was seated. I confess I felt impatient at the interruption.

'It will be forty-five year come Martinmas,' said the Sexton, sitting down on a grassy mound at our feet, 'since I finished my 'prenticeship, and settled down at Lindal. You can see Lindal, sir, at evenings and mornings across the bay; a little to the right of Grange; at least, I used to see it, many a time and oft,

afore my sight grew so dark : and I have spent many a quarter of an hour a-gazing at it far away, and thinking of the days I lived there, till the tears came so thick to my eyes, I could gaze no longer. I shall never look upon it again, either far off or near, but you may see it, both ways, and a terrible bonny spot it is. In my young days, when I went to settle there, it was full of as wild a set of young fellows as ever were clapped eyes on; all for fighting, poaching, quarrelling, and suchlike work. I were startled myself when I first found what a set I were among, but soon I began to fall into their ways, and I ended by being as rough a chap as any on 'em. I'd been there a matter of two year, and were reckoned by most the cock of the village, when Gilbert Dawson, as I was speaking of, came to Lindal. He were about as strapping a chap as I was (I used to be six feet high, though now I'm so shrunk and doubled up), and, as we were like in the same trade (both used to prepare osiers and wood for the Liverpool coopers, who get a deal of stuff from the cospes round the bay, sir), we were thrown together, and took mightily to each other. I put my best leg foremost to be equal with Gilbert, for I'd had some schooling, though since I'd been at Lindal I'd lost a good part of what I'd learnt; and I kept my rough ways out of sight for a time, I felt so ashamed of his getting to know them. But that did not last long. I began to think he fancied a girl I dearly loved, but who had always held off from me. Eh ! but she was a pretty one in those days ! There's none like her, now. I think I see her going along the road with her dancing tread, and shaking back her long yellow curls, to give me or any other young fellow a saucy word ; no wonder Gilbert was taken with her, for all he was grave, and she so merry and light. But I began to think she liked him again ; and then my blood was all afire. I got to hate him for everything he did. Aforetime I had stood by, admiring to see him, how he leapt, and what a quoiter and cricketer he was. And now I ground my teeth with hatred whene'er he did a thing which caught Letty's eye. I could read it in

her look that she liked him, for all she held herself just as high with him as with all the rest. Lord God forgive me ! how I hated that man.'

He spoke as if the hatred were a thing of yesterday, so clear within his memory were shown the actions and feelings of his youth. And then he dropped his voice and said—

' Well ! I began to look out to pick a quarrel with him, for my blood was up to fight him. If I beat him (and I were a rare boxer in those days), I thought Letty would cool towards him. So one evening at quoits (I'm sure I don't know how or why, but large doings grow out of small words) I fell out with him, and challenged him to fight. I could see he were very wroth by his colour coming and going—and, as I said before, he were a fine active young fellow. But all at once he drew in, and said he would not fight. Such a yell as the Lindal lads, who were watching us, set up ! I hear it yet. I could na' help but feel sorry for him, to be so scorned, and I thought he'd not rightly taken my meaning, and I'd give him another chance ; so I said it again, and dared him, as plain as words could speak, to fight out the quarrel. He told me then, he had no quarrel against me; that he might have said something to put me up ; he did not know that he had, but that if he had, he asked pardon; but that he would not fight no-how.

* I was so full of scorn at his cowardliness, that I was vexed I'd given him the second chance, and I joined in the yell that was set up, twice as bad as before. He stood it out, his teeth set, and looking very white, and when we were silent for want of breath, he said out loud, but in a hoarse voice, quite different from his own—

' " I cannot fight, because I think it is wrong to quarrel, and use violence."

' Then he turned to go away; I were so beside myself with scorn and hate, that I called out—

' " Tell truth, lad, at least; if thou dare not fight, dunnot go and tell a lie about it. Mother's moppet is

afraid of a black eye, pretty dear, It shannot be hurt, but it munnot tell lies."

' Well, they laughed, but I could not laugh. It seemed such a thing for a stout young chap to be a coward, and afraid !

' Before the sun had set, it was talked of all over Lindal, how I had challenged Gilbert to fight, and how he'd denied me; and the folks stood at their doors, and looked at him going up the hill to his home, as if he'd been a monkey or a foreigner—but no one wished him good e'en. Such a thing as refusing to fight had never been heard of afore at Lindal. Next day, however, they had found voice. The men muttered the woid " coward " in his hearing, and kept aloof ; the women tittered as he passed, and the little impudent lads and lasses shouted out, " How long is it sin' thou turned Quaker ? " " Good-bye, Jonathan Broad-brim," and suchlike jests.

' That evening I met him, with Letty by his side, coming up from the shore. She was almost crying as I came upon them at the turn of the lane ; and looking up in his face, as if begging him something. And so she was, she told me it after. For she did really like him ; and could not abide to hear him scorned by every one for being a coward; and she, coy as she was, all but told him that very night that she loved him, and begged him not to disgrace himself, but fight me as I'd dared him to. When he still stuck to it he could not, for that it was wrong, she was so vexed and mad-like at the way she'd spoken, and the feelings she'd let out to coax him, that she said more stinging things about his being a coward than all the rest put together (according to what she told me, sir, afterwards), and ended by saying she'd never speak to him again, as long as she lived; she did once again, though—her blessing was the last human speech that reached his ear in his wild death-struggle.

' But much happened afore that time. From the day I met them walking, Letty turned towards me; I could see a part of it was to spite Gilbert, for she'd be

twice as kind when he was near, or likely to hear of it % but by and by she got to like me for my own sake, and it was all settled for our marriage. Gilbert kept aloof from every one, and fell into a sad, careless way. His very gait was changed ; his step used to be brisk and sounding, and now his foot lingered heavily on the ground. I used to try and daunt him with my eye, but he would always meet my look in a steady, quiet way, for all so much about him was altered ; the lads would not play with him ; and as soon as he found he was to be slighted by them whenever he came to quoiting or cricket, he just left off coming.

' The old clerk was the only one he kept company with ; or perhaps, rightly to speak, the only one who would keep company with him. They got so thick at last, that old Jonas would say, Gilbert had gospel on las side, and did no more than gospel told him to do ; but we none of us gave much credit to what he said, more by token our vicar had a brother, a colonel in the army ; and as we threeped it many a time to Jonas, would he set himself up to know the gospel better than the vicar ? that would be putting the cart afore th[^] horse, like the French radicals. And if the vicar had thought quarrelling and fighting wicked, and again the Bible, would he have made so much work about all the victories, that were as plenty as blackberries at that time of day, and kept the little bell of Lindal church for ever ringing ; or would he have thought so much of " my brother the colonel ", as he was always talking on?

' After I was married to Letty I left off hating Gilbert, leven kind of pitied him—he was so scorned and slighted ; and for all he d a bold look about him, as if he were not ashamed, he seemed pining and shrunk. It's a wearying thing to be kept at arm's length by one's kind ; and so Gilbert found it, poor fellow. The little children took to him, though ; they'd be round about him like a swarm of bees—them as was too young to know what a coward was, and only felt that he was ever ready to love and to help them, and was never loud or cross, however naughty they might be. After a while we

had our little one, too ; such a blessed darling she was, and dearly did we love her; Letty in especial, who seemed to get all the thought I used to think sometimes she wanted, after she had her baby to care for.

' All my kin lived on this side the bay, up above Kellet. Jane (that's her that lies buried near yon white rose-tree) was to be married, and naught would serve her but that Letty and I must come to the wedding ; for all my sisters loved Letty, she had such winning ways with her. Letty did not like to leave her baby, nor yet did I want her to take it: so, after a talk, we fixed to leave it with Letty's mother for the afternoon. I could see her heart ached a bit, for she'd never left it till then, and she seemed to fear all manner of evil, even to the French coming and taking it away. Well! we borrowed a shandry, and harnessed my old grey mare, as I used in th' cart, and set off as grand as King George across the sands about three o'clock, for you see it were high-water about twelve, and we'd to go and come back same tide, as Letty could not leave her baby for long. It were a merry afternoon, were that; last time I ever saw Letty laugh heartily; and, for that matter, last time I ever laughed downright hearty myself. The latest crossing-time fell about nine o'clock, and we were late at starting. Clocks were wrong ; and we'd a piece of work chasing a pig father had given Letty to take home ; we bagged him at last, and he screeched and screeched in the back part o' th' shandry, and we laughed and they laughed ; and in the midst of all the merriment the sun set, and that sobered us a bit, for then we knew what time it was. I whipped the old mare, but she was a deal beener than she was in the morning, and would neither go quick up nor down the brows, and they're not a few 'twixt Kellet and the shore. On the sands it were worse. They were very heavy, for the fresh had come down after the rains we'd had. Lord ! how I did whip the poor mare, to make the most of the red light as yet lasted. You, maybe, don't know the sands, gentlemen. From Bolton side, where we started from, it is better than six mile to Cart

Lane, and two channels to cross, let alone holes and quicksands. At the second channel from us the guide waits, all during crossing-time from sunrise to sunset; but for the three hours on each side high-water he's not there, in course. He stays after sunset if he's forespoken, not else. So now you know where we were that awful night. For we'd crossed the first channel about two mile, and it were growing darker and darker above and around us, all but one red line of light above the hills, when we came to a hollow (for all the sands look so flat, there's many a hollow in them where you lose all sight of the shore). We were longer than we should ha' been in crossing the hollow, the sand was so quick; and when we came up again, there, again the blackness, was the white line of the rushing tide coming up the bay! It looked not a mile from us; and when the wind blows up the bay it comes swifter than a galloping horse. "Lord help us!" said I; and then I were sorry I'd spoken, to frighten Letty; but the words were crushed out of my heart by the terror. I felt her shiver up by my side, and clutch my coat. And as if the pig (as had screeched himself hoarse some time ago) had found out the danger we were all in, he took to squealing again, enough to bewilder any man. I cursed him between my teeth for his noise; and yet it was God's answer to my prayer, blind sinner as I was. Aye! you may smile, sir, but God can work through many a scornful thing, if need be.

* By this time the mare was all in a lather, and trembling and panting, as if in mortal fright; for though we were on the last bank afore the second channel, the water was gathering up her legs; and she so tired out! When we came close to the channel she stood still, and not all my flogging could get her to stir; she fairly groaned aloud, and shook in a terrible quaking way. Till now Letty had not spoken; only held my coat tightly. I heard her say something, and bent down my head.

"I think, John—I think—I shall never see baby again!"

* And then she sent up such a cry—so loud, and shrill, and pitiful! It fairly maddened me. I pulled out my knife to spur on the old mare, that it might end one way or the other, for the water was stealing sullenly up to the very axle-tree, let alone the white waves that knew no mercy in their steady advance. That one quarter of an hour, sir, seemed as long as all my life since. Thoughts, and fancies, and dreams, and memory ran into each other. The mist, the heavy mist, that was like a ghastly curtain, shutting us in for death, seemed to bring with it the scents of the flowers that grew around our own threshold; it might be, for it was falling on them like blessed dew, though to us it was a shroud. Letty told me at after, she heard her baby crying for her, above the gurgling of the rising waters, as plain as ever she heard anything; but the sea-birds were skirling, and the pig shrieking; I never caught it; it was miles away, at any rate.

' Just as I'd gotten my knife out, another sound was close upon us, blending with the gurgle of the near waters, and the roar of the distant (not so distant though); we could hardly see, but we thought we saw something black against the deep lead colour of wave, and mist, and sky. It neared and neared: with slow, steady motion, it came across the channel right to where we were.

' Oh, God! it was Gilbert Dawson on his strong bay horse.

' Few words did we speak, and little time had we to say them in. I had no knowledge at that moment of past or future—only of one present thought—how to save Letty, and, if I could, myself. I only remembered afterwards that Gilbert said he had been guided by an animal's shriek of terror; I only heard, when all was over, that he had been uneasy about our return, because of the depth of fresh, and had borrowed a pillion, and saddled his horse early in the evening, and ridden down to Cart Lane to watch for us. If all had gone well, we should ne'er have heard of it. As it was, old Jonas told it, the tears down-dropping from his withered cheeks.

' We fastened his horse to the shandry. We lifted Letty to the pillion. The waters rose every instant with sullen sound. They were all but in the shandry. Letty clung to the pillion handles, but drooped her head as if she had yet no hope of life. Swifter than thought (and yet he might have had time for thought and for temptation, sir—if he had ridden off with Letty, he would have been saved, not me), Gilbert was in the shandry by my side.

' " Quick ! " said he, clear and firm. " You must ride before her, and keep her up. The horse can swim. By God's mercy I will follow. I can cut the traces, and if the mare is not hampered with the shandry, she'll carry me safely through. At any rate, you are a husband and a father. No one cares for me."

' Do not hate me, gentlemen. I often wish that night was a dream. It has haunted my sleep ever since like a dream, and yet it was no dream. I took his place on the saddle, and put Letty's arms around me, and felt her head rest on my shoulder. I trust in God I spoke some word of thanks ; but I can't remember. I only recollect Letty raising her head, and calling out—

' " God bless you, Gilbert Dawson, for saving my baby from being an orphan this night." And then she fell against me, as if unconscious.

' I bore her through; or, rather, the strong horse swam bravely through the gathering waves. We were dripping wet when we reached the banks in-shore ; but we could have but one thought—where was Gilbert ? Thick mists and heaving waters compassed us round. Where was he ? We shouted. Letty, faint as she was, raised her voice and shouted clear and shrill. No answer came, the sea boomed on with ceaseless sullen beat. I rode to the guide's house. He was a-bed, and would not get up, though I offered him more than I was worth. Perhaps he knew it, the cursed old villain ! At any rate, I'd have paid it if I'd toiled my life long. He said I might take his horn and welcome. I did, and blew such a blast through the still, black night, the echoes came back upon the heavy air: but no human voice or

sound was heard—that wild blast could not awaken the dead !

'I took Letty home to her baby, over whom she wept the livelong night. I rode back to the shore about Cart Lane ; and to and fro, with weary march, did I pace along the brink of the waters, now and then shouting out into the silence a vain cry for Gilbert. The waters went back and left no trace. Two days afterwards he was washed ashore near Flukeborough. The shandry and poor old mare were found half-buried in a heap of sand by Arnside Knot. As far as we could guess, he had dropped his knife while trying to cut the traces, and so had lost all chance of life. Any rate, the knife was found in a cleft of the shaft.

' His friends came over from Garstang to his funeral. I wanted to go chief mourner, but it was not my right, and I might not; though I've never done mourning him to this day. When his sister packed up his things, I begged hard for something that had been his. She would give me none of his clothes (she was a right-down having woman), as she had boys of her own, who might grow up into them. But she threw me his Bible, as she said they'd gotten one already, and his were but a poor used-up thing. It was his, and so I cared for it. It were a black leather one, with pockets at the sides, old-fashioned-wise ; and in one were a bunch of wild flowers, Letty said she could almost be sure were some she had once given him.

' There were many a text in the Gospel, marked broad with his carpenter's pencil, which more than bore him out in his refusal to fight. Of a surety, sir, there 's call enough for bravery in the service of God, and to show love to man, without quarrelling and fighting.

' Thank you, gentlemen, for listening to me. Your words called up the thoughts of him, and my heart was full to speaking. But I must make up; I've to dig a grave for a little child, who is to be buried to-morrow morning, just when his playmates are trooping off to

' But tell us of Letty; is she yet alive ? ' asked Jeremy.

The old man shook his head, and struggled against a choking sigh. After a minute's pause he said—

' She died in less than two year at after that night. She was never like the same again. She would sit thinking, on Gilbert, I guessed: but I could not blame her. We had a boy, and we named it Gilbert Dawson Knipe ; he that's stoker on the London railway. Our girl was carried off in teething ; and Letty just quietly drooped, and died in less than a six week. They were buried here; so I came to be near them, and away from Lindal, a place I could never abide after Letty was gone.'

He turned to his work, and we, having rested sufficiently, rose up, and came away.

iv

CLOPTON HOUSE

First written as a private letter to William Howitt and then incorporated by him in his chapter on Stratford-on-Avon in 'Visits to Remarkable Places', 1840.

CLOPTON HOUSE

' I WONDER if you know Clopton Hall, about a mile from Stratford-on-Avon. Will you allow me to tell you of a very happy day I once spent there. I was at school in the neighbourhood, and one of my school-fellows was the daughter of a Mr. W——, who then lived at Clopton. Mrs. W——asked a party of the girls to go and spend a long afternoon, and we set off one beautiful autumn day, full of delight and wonder respecting the place we were going to see. We passed through desolate half-cultivated fields, till we came within sight of the house—a large, heavy, compact, square brick building, of that deep, dead red almost approaching to purple. In front was a large formal court, with the massy pillars surmounted with two grim monsters ; but the walls of the court were broken down, and the grass grew as rank and wild within the enclosure as in the raised avenue walk down which we had come. The flowers were tangled with nettles, and it was only as we approached the house that we saw the single yellow rose and the Austrian brier trained into something like order round the deep-set diamond-paned windows. We trooped into the hall, with its tessellated marble floor, hung round with strange portraits of people who had been in their graves two hundred years at least; yet the colours were so fresh, and in some instances they were so life-like, that looking merely at the faces, I almost fancied the originals might be sitting in the parlour beyond. More completely to carry us back, as it were, to the days of the civil wars, there was a sort of military map hung up, well finished with pen and ink, showing the stations of the respective armies, and with old-fashioned writing beneath, the names of the principal towns, setting forth the strength

of the garrison, &c. In this hall we were met by our kind hostess, and told we might ramble where we liked, in the house or out of the house, taking care to be in the "recessed parlour" by tea-time. I preferred to wander up the wide shelving oak staircase, with its massy balustrade all crumbling and worm-eaten. The family then residing at the hall did not occupy one-half,—no, not one-third of the rooms; and the old-fashioned furniture was undisturbed in the greater part of them. In one of the bed-rooms (said to be haunted), and which, with its close pent-up atmosphere and the long shadows of evening creeping on, gave me an "eirie" feeling, hung a portrait so singularly beautiful! a sweet-looking girl, with paly gold hair combed back from her forehead and falling in wavy ringlets on her neck, and with eyes that "looked like violets filled with dew", for there was the glittering of unshed tears before their deep dark blue—and that was the likeness of Charlotte Clopton, about whom there was so fearful a legend told at Stratford church. In the time of some epidemic, the sweating-sickness or the plague, this young girl had sickened, and to all appearance died. She was buried with fearful haste in the vaults of Clopton chapel, attached to Stratford church, but the sickness was not stayed. In a few days another of the Cloptons died, and him they bore to the ancestral vault; but as they descended the gloomy stairs, they saw by the torchlight, Charlotte Clopton in her grave-clothes leaning against the wall; and when they looked nearer, she was indeed dead, but not before, in the agonies of despair and hunger, she had bitten a piece from her white round shoulder! Of course, she had *walked* ever since. This was "Charlotte's chamber", and beyond Charlotte's chamber was a state-chamber carpeted with the dust of many years, and darkened by the creepers which had covered up the windows, and even forced themselves in luxuriant daring through the broken panes. Beyond, again, there was an old Catholic chapel, with a chaplain's room, which had been walled up and forgotten till within the last few years. I went

in on my hands and knees, for the entrance was very low. I recollect little in the chapel; but in the chaplain's room were old, and I should think rare editions of many books, mostly folios. A large yellow-paper copy of Dryden's *All for Love, or the World Well Lost*, date 1686, caught my eye, and is the only one I particularly remember. Every here and there, as I wandered, I came upon a fresh branch of a staircase, and so numerous were the crooked, half-lighted passages, that I wondered if I could find my way back again; There was a curious carved old chest in one of these passages, and with girlish curiosity I tried to open it; but the lid was too heavy, till I persuaded one of my companions to help me, and when it was opened, what do you think we saw—BONES !—but whether human, whether the remains of the lost bride, we did not stay to see, but ran off in partly feigned, and partly real terror.

' The last of these deserted rooms that I remember, the last, the most deserted, and the saddest, was the Nursery,—a nursery without children, without singing voices, without merry chiming footsteps ! A nursery hung round with its once inhabitants, bold, gallant boys, and fair, arch-looking girls, and one or two nurses with round, fat babies in their arms. Who were they all ? What was their lot in life ? Sunshine, or storm ? or had they been "loved by the gods, and died young" ? The very echoes knew not. Behind the house, in a hollow now wild, damp, and overgrown with elder-bushes, was a well called Margaret's Well, for there had a maiden of the house of that name drowned herself.

' I tried to obtain any information I could as to the family of Clopton of Clopton. They had been decaying ever since the civil wars ; had for a generation or two been unable to live in the old house of their fathers, but had toiled in London, or abroad, for a livelihood; and the last of the old family, a bachelor, eccentric, miserly, old, and of most filthy habits, if report said true, had died at Clopton Hall but a few months before, a sort of boarder in Mr. W——'s family. He was

buried in the gorgeous chapel of the doptions in Stratford church, where you see the banners waving, and the armour hung over one or two splendid monuments. Mr. W——had been the old man's solicitor, and completely in his confidence, and to him he left the estate, encumbered and in bad condition. A year or two afterwards, the heir-at-law, a very distant relation living in Ireland, claimed and obtained the estate, on the plea of undue influence, if not of forgery, on Mr. W——'s part; and the last I heard of our kind entertainers on that day, was that they were outlawed, and living at Brussels.'

V

COMPANY MANNERS

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COMPANY MANNERS

VICTOR COUSIN, the French philosopher, has undertaken a new task within the last few years. Whether as a relaxation from, or a continuation of, his study of metaphysics, I do not know, but he has begun to write the biographies of some of the celebrated French women of the seventeenth century. In making out his list, he is careful to distinguish between authoresses and *femmes d'esprit*, ranking the latter infinitely the higher in every point of view. The first of his series is Jacqueline Pascal, the sister of Blaise, known at Port Royal as the Sister Euphemia—a holy, pure, and sainted woman. The second whom the grave philosopher has chosen as a subject for his biography is that beautiful, splendid sinner of the Fronde, the fair-haired Duchess de Longueville. He draws the pure and perfect outlines of Jacqueline Pascal's character with a severe and correct pencil; he paints the lovely Duchess with the fond, admiring exaggeration of a lover. The wits of Paris, in consequence, have written the following epitaph for him: 'Here lies Victor Cousin, the great philosopher, in love with the Duchess de Longueville, who died a century and a half before he was born.'

Even the friends of this Duchess, insignificant in themselves, become dear and illustrious to Cousin for her fair sake. It is not long since he contributed an article on Madame de Sablé to the *Revue des Deux Mowles*, which has since been published separately, and which has suggested the thoughts and fancies that I am now going to lay before the patient public. This Madame de Sablé was, in her prime, an habitual guest at the Hotel Rambouillet, the superb habitation which

was the centre of the witty and learned as well as the pompous and pedantic society of Paris, in the days of Louis the Thirteenth. When these gatherings had come to an end after Madame de Rambouillet's death, and before Moliere had turned the tradition thereof into exquisite ridicule, there were several attempts to form circles that should preserve some of the stately refinement of the Hotel Rambouillet. Mademoiselle Scudery had her Saturdays; but, an authoress herself, and collecting around her merely clever people, without regard to birth or breeding, M. Cousin does not hold the idea of her Saturdays in high esteem. Madame de Sable, a gentlewoman by birth: intelligent enough doubtless from having been an associate of Menage, Voiture, Madame de Sevigne, and others in the grand hotel (whose meetings must have been delightful enough at the time, though that wicked Moliere has stepped between us and them, and we can only see them as he chooses us to do): Madame de Sabli, friend of the resplendent fair-haired Duchess de Longueville, had weekly meetings which M. Cousin ranks far above the more pretentious Saturdays of Mademoiselle Scudery. In short, the last page of his memoir of Madame de Sable—where we matter-of-fact English people are apt to put in praise of the morals and religion of the person whose life we have been writing—is devoted to this acme of praise. Madame de Sabli had all the requisites which enabled her *tenir un salon* with honour to herself and pleasure to her friends.

Apart from this crowning accomplishment, the good French lady seems to have been commonplace enough. She was well-born, well-bred, and the company she kept must have made her tolerably intelligent. She was married to a dull husband, and doubtless had her small flirtations after she early became a widow; M. Cousin hints at them, but they were never scandalous or prominently before the public. Past middle life, she took to the process of *making her salvation', and inclined to the Port Royalists. She was given to liking dainty things to eat, in spite of her Jansenism. She had

a female friend that she quarrelled with, off and on, during her life. And (to wind up something like Lady O'Looney, of famous memory) she knew how *tenir un salon*. M. Cousin tells us that she was remarkable in no one thing or quality, and attributes to that single, simple fact the success of her life.

Now, since I have read these memoirs of Madame de Sable, I have thought much and deeply thereupon. At first, I was inclined to laugh at the extreme importance which was attached to this art of 'receiving company'—no, that translation will not do!—'holding a drawing-room' is even worse, because that implies the state and reserve of royalty;—shall we call it the art of 'Sableing'? But when I thought of my experience in English society—of the evenings dreaded before they came, and sighed over in recollection, because they were so ineffably dull—I saw that, to Sable well, did require, as M. Cousin implied, the union of many excellent qualities and not-to-be-disputed little graces. I asked some French people if they could give me the recipe, for it seemed most likely to be traditional, if not still extant in their nation. I offer to you their ideas, fragmentary though they be; and then I will tell you some of my own; at last, perhaps, with the addition of yours, oh most worthy readers! we may discover the lost art of Sableing.

Said the French lady: 'A woman to be successful in Sableing must be past youth, yet not past the power of attracting. She must do this by her sweet and gracious manners, and quick, ready tact in perceiving those who have not had their share of attention, or leading the conversation away from any subject which may give pain to any one present.' 'Those rules hold good in England,' said I. My friend went on: 'She should never be prominent in anything; she should keep silence as long as any one else will talk; but when conversation flags, she should throw herself into the breach with the same spirit with which I notice that the young ladies of the house, where a ball is given, stand quietly by till the dancers are tired, and then spring into the

arena to carry on the spirit and the music till the others are ready to begin again.'

'But,' said the French gentleman, * even at this time, when subjects for conversation are wanted, she should rather suggest than enlarge—ask questions rather than give her own opinions.'

'To be sure,' said the lady. 'Madame Recamier, whose salons were the most perfect of this century, always withheld her opinions on books, or men, or measures, until all around her had given theirs ; then she, as it were, collected and harmonized them, saying a kind thing here, and a gentle thing there, and speaking ever with her own quiet sense, till people the most opposed learnt to understand each other's point of view, which it is a great thing for opponents to do.'

'Then the number of the people whom you receive is another consideration. I should say not less than twelve, or more than twenty,' continued the gentleman. 'The evenings should be appointed—say weekly—fortnightly at the beginning of January, which is our season. Fix an early hour for opening the room. People are caught then in their freshness, before they become exhausted by other parties.*

The lady spoke, 'For my part, I prefer catching my friends after they have left the grander balls or receptions. One hears then the remarks, the wit, the reason, and the satire which they had been storing up during their evening of imposed silence or of ceremonious speaking.'

'A little good-humoured satire is a very agreeable sauce,' replied the gentleman, 'but it must be good-humoured, and the listeners must be good-humoured ; above all, the conversation must be general, and not the chat, chat, chat up in a corner, by which the English so often distinguish themselves. You do not go into society to exchange secrets with your intimate friends ; you go to render yourselves agreeable to every one present, and to help all to pass a happy evening.'

* Strangers should not be admitted,' said the lady, taking up the strain. 'They would not start fair with

the others; they would be ignorant of the allusions that refer to conversations on the previous evenings; they would not understand the—what shall I call it—slang ? I mean those expressions having relation to past occurrences, or bygone witticisms common to all those who are in the habit of meeting.'

'Madame de Duras and Madame Recamier never made advances to any stranger. Their salons were the best that Paris has known in this generation. All who wished to be admitted, had to wait and prove their litness by being agreeable elsewhere ; to earn their diploma, as it were, among the circle of these ladies' acquaintances ; and, at last, it was a high favour to be received by them.'

'They missed the society of many celebrities by adhering so strictly to this unspoken rule,' said the gentleman.

'Bah !' said the lady. ' Celebrities ! what has one to do with them in society ? As celebrities, they are simply bores. Because a man has discovered a planet, it does not follow that he can converse agreeably, even on his own subjects ; often people are drained dry by one action or expression of their lives—drained dry for all the purposes of a " salon ". The writer of books, for instance, cannot afford to talk twenty pages for nothing, so he is either profoundly silent, or else he gives you the mere rinsings of his mind. I am speaking now of him as a mere celebrity, and justifying the wisdom of the ladies we were speaking of, in not seeking after such people ; indeed, in being rather shy of them. Some of their friends were the most celebrated people of their day, but they were received in their old capacity of agreeable men ; a higher character, by far. Then,' said she, turning to me, * I believe that you English spoil the perfection of conversation by having your rooms as brilliantly lighted for an evening the charm of which depends on what one hears, as for an evening when youth and beauty are to display themselves among flowers and festoons, and every kind of pretty ornament. I would never have a room affect people as being dark

on their first entrance into it; but there is a kind of moonlight as compared to sunlight, in which people talk more freely and naturally; where shy people will enter upon a conversation without a dread of every change of colour or involuntary movement being seen—just as we are always more confidential over a fire than anywhere else—as women talk most openly in the dimly-lighted bedroom at curling-time.'

'Away with your shy people,' said the gentleman. 'Persons who are self-conscious, thinking of an involuntary redness or paleness, an unbecoming movement of the countenance, more than the subject of which they are talking, should not go into society at all. But, because women are so much more liable to this nervous weakness than men, the preponderance of people in a salon should always be on the side of the men.'

I do not think I gained more hints as to the lost art from my French friends. Let us see if my own experience in England can furnish any more ideas.

First, let us take the preparations to be made before our house, our room, or our lodgings can be made to receive society. Of course I am not meaning the preparations needed for dancing or musical evenings. I am taking those parties which have pleasant conversation and happy social intercourse for their affirmed intention. They may be dinners, suppers, tea—I don't care what they are called, provided their end is defined. If your friends have not dined, and it suits you to give them a dinner, in the name of Lucullus, let them dine; but take care that there shall be something besides the mere food and wine to make their fattening agreeable at the time and pleasant to remember, otherwise you had better pack up for each his portions of the dainty dish, and send it separately, in hot-water trays, so that he can eat comfortably behind a door, like Sancho Panza, and have done with it. And yet I don't see why we should be like ascetics; I fancy there is a grace of preparation, a sort of festive trumpet-call, that is right and proper to distinguish the day on which we receive our friends from common days, unmarked by such

white stones. The thought and care we take for them to set before them of our best, may imply some self-denial on our less fortunate days. I have been in houses where all, from the scullion-maid upward, worked double tides gladly, because 'Master's friends' were coming; and everything must be nice, and good, and all the rooms must look bright, and clean, and pretty. And, as 'a merry heart goes all the way', preparations made in this welcoming, hospitable spirit never seem to tire anyone half so much as where servants instinctively feel that it has been said in the parlour, 'We must have so-and-so,' or, 'Oh, dear! we have never had the so-and-so's.' Yes, I like a little pomp, and luxury, and stateliness, to mark our happy days of receiving friends as a festival; but I do not think I would throw my power of procuring luxuries solely into the eating and drinking line.

My friends would probably be surprised (some wear caps, and some wigs) if I provided them with garlanda of flowers, after the manner of the ancient Greeks; but, put flowers on the table (none of your shams, wax or otherwise; I prefer an honest wayside root of primroses, in a common vase of white ware, to the grandest bunch of stiff-rustling artificial rarities in a silver epergne). A flower or two by the side of each person's plate would not be out of the way, as to expense, and would be a very agreeable pretty piece of mute welcome. Cooks and scullion-maids, acting in the sympathetic spirit I have described, would do their very best, from boiling the potatoes well, to sending in all the dishes in the best possible order. I think I would have every imaginary dinner sent up on the 'Original' Mr. Walker's plan; each dish separately, hot and hot. I have an idea that when I go to live in Utopia (not before next Christmas), I will have a kind of hot-water side-board, such as I think I have seen in great houses, and that nothing shall appear on the table but what is pleasant to the eye. However simple the food, I would do it and my friends (and may I not add the Giver?) the respect of presenting it at table as well cooked, as

eatable, as wholesome as my poor means allowed ; and to this end, rather than to a variety of dishes, would I direct my care. We have no associations with beef and mutton ; geese may remind us of the Capitol; and peacocks of Juno; a pigeon-pie of * the simplicity of Venus' doves'; but who thinks of the leafy covert which has been her home in life, when he sees a roasted hare ? Now, flowers as an ornament do lead our thoughts away from their present beauty and fragrance. I am almost sure Madame de Sable had flowers in her salon, and, as she was fond of dainties herself, I can fancy her smooth benevolence of character, taking delight in some personal preparations made in the morning for the anticipated friends of the evening. I can fancy her stewing sweetbreads in a silver saucepan, or dressing salad with her delicate, plump, white hands;—not that I ever saw a silver saucepan. I was formerly ignorant enough to think that they were only used in the Sleeping Beauty's kitchen, or in the preparations for the marriage of Riquet-with-the-Tuft; but I have been assured that there are such things, and that they impart a most delicate flavour, or no flavour, to the victuals cooked therein; so I assert again, Madame de Sable cooked sweetbreads for her friends in a silver saucepan; but never to fatigue herself with those previous labours. She knew the true taste of her friends too well; they cared for her firstly, as an element in their agreeable evening—the silver saucepan in which they were all to meet: the oil in which their several ingredients were to be softened of what was harsh or discordant—very secondary would be their interest in her sweetbreads.

Of sweetbreads they'll get mony an ane,
Of Sable ne'er anither.

But part of my care beforehand should go to the homely article of waiting. I should not mind having none at all; a dumb waiter, pepper, salt, bread, and condiments within the reach or by the side of all. Little kindly attentions from one guest to another tend to take off the selfish character of the mere act of eating;

and, besides, the guests would (or should) be too well educated, too delicate of tact, to interrupt a burst of wit, or feeling, or eloquence, as a mere footman often does with the perpetual 'Sherry, or Madeira?' or with the names of those mysterious entremets that always remind me of a white kid glove that I once ate with bechamel sauce, and found very tender and good, under the name of Oreilles de Veau a-la-something, but which experiment I never wish to repeat. There is something graceful and kindly in the little attention by which one guest silently puts by his neighbour all that he may require. I consider it a better opening to ultimate friendship, if my unknown neighbour mutely passes me the salt, or silently understands that I like sugar to my soup, than if he had been introduced by his full name and title, and labelled with the one distinguishing action or book of his life, after the manner of some who are rather showmen than hosts.

But to return to the subject of waiting. I have always believed that the charm of those little suppers, famous from time immemorial as the delightful PS. to operas, was that there was no formal waiting, or over-careful arrangement of the table; a certain sweet neglect pervaded all, very compatible with true elegance. The perfection of waiting is named in the story of the White Cat, where, if you remember, the hero prince is waited upon by hands without bodies, as he sits at table with the White Cat, and is served with that delicate fricassee of mice. By hands without bodies, I am very far from meaning hands without heads. Some people prefer female waiters; foot-women, as it were. I have weighed both sides of the subject well in my mind, before sitting down to write this paper, and my verdict goes in favour of men; for, all other things being equal, their superior strength gives them the power of doing things without effort, and consequently with less noise than any woman. The quiet ease and solemn soundless movement of some men-servants is wonderful to watch. Last summer I was staying in a house served by such list-shod, soft-spoken, velvet-handed domestics. One

day, the butler touched a spoon with a fork—the master of the house looked at him as Jupiter may have looked at Hebe, when she made that clumsy step. 'No noise, sir, if you please;' and we, as well as the servant, were hushed into the solemn stillness of the room, and were graced and genteel, if not merry and sociable. Still, bursts and clashes, and clatters at the side-table, do disturb conversation; and I maintain that, for avoiding these, men-servants are better than women. Women have to add an effort to the natural exercise of what strength they possess before they can lift heavy things—sirloins of beef, saddles of mutton, and the like; and they cannot calculate the additional force of such an effort, so down comes the dish and the mutton and all, with a sound and a splash that surprises us even more than the Phillis, who is neat-handed only when she has to do with things that require delicacy and lightness of touch, not struggle of arm.

And, now I think of it, Madame de Sable must have taken the White Cat for her model; there must evidently have been the same noiseless ease and grace about the movements of both; the same purring, happy, inarticulate moments of satisfaction, when surrounded by pleasant circumstances, must have been uttered by both. My own mouth has watered before now at the account of that fricassee of mice prepared especially for the White Cat; and M. Cousin alludes more than once to Madame de Sable's love for 'friandises'. Madame de Sable avoided the society of literary women, and so, I am sure, did the White Cat. Both had an instinctive sense of what was comfortable; both loved home with tenacious affection; and yet I am mistaken if each had not their own little private love of adventure—touches of the gipsy.

The reason why I think Madame de Sable had this touch in her is because she knew how *tenir un salon*. You do not see the connexion between gipsyism and the art of being a good hostess—of receiving pleasantly. I do, but I am not sure if I can explain it. In the first place, gipsies must be people of quick impulse and

ready wit; entering into fresh ideas and new modes of life with joyous ardour and energy, and fertile in expedients for extricating themselves from the various difficulties into which their wandering life leads them. They must have a lofty disregard for *convenances*, and yet a power of graceful adaptation. They evidently have a vivid sense of the picturesque, and a love of adventure, which, if it does not show itself in action, must show itself in sympathy with others' doings. Now, which of these qualities would be out of place in Madame de Sable ? From what we read of the life of her contemporary, Madame de Sevigne, we see that impromptu expedients were necessary in those times, when the thought of the morning made the pleasure of the evening, and when people snatched their enjoyments from hand to mouth, as it were, while yet six-weeks-invitations were not. Now, I have noticed that in some parties where we were all precise and sensible, ice-bound under some indefinable stiff restraint, some little domestic contretemps, if frankly acknowledged by the hostess, has suddenly unloosed tongues and hearts in a supernatural manner ;

The upper air bursts into life,

more especially if some unusual expedient had to be resorted to, giving the whole the flavour and zest of a picnic. Toasting bread in a drawing-room, coaxing up a half-extinguished fire by dint of brown sugar, newspapers, and pretty, good-for-nothing bellows, turning a packing-case upside down for a seat, and covering in with a stray piece of velvet; these are, I am afraid, the only things that can call upon us for unexpected exertion, now that all is arranged and re-arranged for every party a month beforehand. But I have lived in other times and other places; I have been in the very heart and depth of Wales, within three miles of the house of the high sheriff of the county, who was giving a state dinner on a certain day, to which the gentleman with whom I was staying was invited. He was on the point of leaving his house in his little

Norwegian carriage, and we were on the point of sitting down to dinner, when a man rode up in hot haste—a servant from the high sheriff's came to beg for our joint off the spit. Fish, game, poultry—they had all the delicacies of their own land; but the butcher from the nearest market-town had failed them, and at the last moment they had to send off a groom a-begging to their neighbours. My relation departed ignorant of our dinnerless state; but he came back in great delight with his party. After the soup and fish had been removed, there had been a long pause (the joint had got cold on its ride, and had to be re-warmed); a message was brought to the host, who had immediately confided his perplexity to his guests, and put it to the vote whether they would wait for the joint, or have the order of the courses changed, and eat the third before the second. Every one had enjoyed the merry dilemma; the ice was broken, and all went on pleasantly and easily in a party where there was rather a heterogeneous mixture of politics and opinions. Dinner-parties in those days and in that part of Wales were somewhat regulated by the arrival of the little sailing-vessels, which, having discharged their cargo at Bristol or Liverpool, brought back commissioned purchases for the different families. A chest of oranges for Mr. Williams or Mr. Wynn was a sure signal that, before many days were over, Mr. Williams or Mr. Wynn would give a dinner-party; strike while the iron was hot; eat while the oranges were fresh. A man rode round to all the different houses when any farmer planned such a mighty event as killing a cow, to ask what part each family would take. Visiting acquaintances lived ten or twelve miles from each other, separated by bad and hilly roads; the moon had always to be consulted before issuing invitations; and then the mode of proceeding was usually something like this: The invited friends came to dinner at half-past five or six; these were always those from the greatest distance—the nearer neighbours came later on in the evening. After the gentlemen had left the dining-room, it was cleared

for dancing. The fragments of the dinner, prepared by ready cooks, served for supper; tea was ready some time towards one or two, and the dancers went merrily on till a seven or eight o'clock breakfast, after which they rode or drove home by broad daylight. I was never at one of these meetings, although staying in a house from which many went; I was considered too young; but from what I heard, they were really excessively pleasant, sociable gatherings, although not quite entitled to be classed with Madame de Sable's salons.

To return to the fact that a slightly gipsy and impromptu character, either in the hostess, or in the arrangements, or in the amusements, adds a piquancy to the charm: let any one remember the agreeable private teas that go on in many houses about five o'clock. I remember those in one house particularly, as remarkably illustrating what I am trying to prove. These teas were held in a large dismantled schoolroom: and a superannuated schoolroom is usually the most doleful chamber imaginable. I never saw this by full daylight; I only know that it was lofty and large, that we went to it through a long gallery library, through which we never passed at any other time, the schoolroom having been accessible to the children in former days by a private staircase—that great branches of trees swept against the windows with a long, plaintive moan, as if tortured by the wind—that below in the stable-yard two Irish staghounds set up their musical bays to mingle with the outlandish Spanish which a parrot in the room continually talked out of the darkness in which its perch was placed—that the walls of the room seemed to recede as in a dream, and, instead of them, the flickering firelight painted tropical forests or Norwegian fiords, according to the will of our talkers. I know this tea was nominally private to the ladies, but that all the gentlemen strayed in most punctually by accident—that the fire was always in that state when somebody had to poke with the hard blows of despair, and somebody else to fetch in logs of wood

from the basket outside, and somebody else to unload his pockets of fir-bobs, which last were always efficacious, and threw beautiful dancing lights far and wide. And then there was a black kettle, long ago too old for kitchen use, that leaked and ran, and sputtered against the blue and sulphur-coloured flames, and did everything that was improper, but the water out of which made the best tea in the world, which we drank out of unmatched cups, the relics of several schoolroom sets. We ate thick bread-and-butter in the darkness with a vigour of appetite which had quite disappeared at the well-lighted eight o'clock dinner. Who ate it I don't know, for we stole from our places round the fireside to the tea-table, in comparative darkness, in the twilight, near the window, and helped ourselves, and came back on tiptoe to hear one of the party tell of wild enchanted spicy islands in the Eastern Archipelago, or buried cities in farthest Mexico; he used to look into the fire and draw and paint with words in a manner perfectly marvellous, and with an art which he had quite lost at the formal dinner-time. Our host was scientific; a name of high repute; he, too, told us of wonderful discoveries, strange surmises, glimpses into something far away and utterly dream-like. His son had been in Norway, fishing; then, when he sat all splashed with hunting, he, too, could tell of adventures in a natural, racy way. The girls, busy with their heavy kettle, and with their tea-making, put in a joyous word now and then. At dinner the host talked of nothing more intelligible than French mathematics; the heir drawled out an infinite deal of nothing about the 'Shakespeare and musical glasses' of the day; the traveller gave us latitudes and longitudes, and rates of population, exports and imports, with the greatest precision; and the girls were as pretty, helpless, inane fine ladies as you would wish to see.

Speaking of wood fires reminds me of Madame de Sabfe's fires. Of course they were of wood, being in Paris; but I believe that even if she had lived in a coal country, she would have burned wood by instinctive

preference, as a lady I once knew always ordered a lump of cannel coal to be brought up if ever her friends seemed silent and dull. A wood fire has a kind of spiritual, dancing, glancing life about it. It is an elfish companion, crackling, hissing, bubbling: throwing out beautiful jets of vivid, many-coloured flame. The best wood fires I know are those at Keswick. Making lead pencils is the business of the place; and the cedar chips for scent, and the thinnings of the larch and fir plantations thereabouts for warm and brilliant light, make such a fire as Madame de Sable would have delighted in.

Depend upon it, too, every seat in her salon was easy and comfortable of its kind. They might not be made of any rare kind of wood, nor covered very magnificently, but the bodies of her friends could rest and repose in them in easy, unconstrained attitudes. No one can be agreeable, perched on a chair which does not afford space for proper support. I defy the most accomplished professional wit to go on uttering *mots* in a chair with a stiff, hard, upright back, or with his legs miserably dangling. No! Madame de Sables seats were commodious, and probably varied to suit all tastes; nor was there anything in the shape of a large and cumbrous article of furniture placed right in the middle of her room, so as to prevent her visitors from changing their places, or drawing near to each other, or to the fire, if they so willed it. I imagine, likewise, that she had that placid, kindly manner which would never show any loss of self-possession. I fancy that there was a welcome ready for all, even though some came a little earlier than they were expected.

I was once very much struck by the perfect breeding of an old Welsh herb-woman, with whom I drank tea—a tea which was not tea, after all—an infusion of balm and black-currant leaves, with a pinch of lime blossom to give it a Pekoe flavour. She had boasted of the delicacy of this beverage to me on the previous day, and I had begged to be allowed to come and drink a cup with her. The only drawback was that she had but one

cup, but she immediately bethought her that she had two saucers, one of which would do just as well, indeed better, than any cup. I was anxious to be in time, and so I was too early. She had not done dusting and rubbing when I arrived, but she made no fuss; she was glad to see me, and quietly bade me welcome, though I had come before all was as she could have wished. She gave me a dusted chair, sat down herself with her kilted petticoats and working apron, and talked to me as if she had not a care or a thought on her mind but the enjoyment of the present time. By and by, in moving about the room, she slipped behind the bed-curtain, still conversing. I heard the splash of water, and a drawer open and shut; and then my hostess emerged spruce, and clean, and graced, but not one whit more agreeable or at her ease than she had been for the previous half-hour in her working dress.

There are a set of people who put on their agreeableness with their gowns. Here, again, I have studied the subject, and the result is, that I find people of this description are more pleasant in society in their second-best than in their very best dresses. These last are new; and the persons I am speaking of never feel thoroughly at home in them, never lose their consciousness of unusual finery until the first stain has been made. With their best gowns they put on an unusual fineness of language; they say 'commence' instead of 'begin'; they inquire if they may 'assist', instead of asking if they may 'help' you to anything. And yet there are some, very far from vain or self-conscious, who are never so agreeable as when they have a dim, half-defined idea that they are looking their best—not in finery, -but in air, arrangement, or complexion. I have a notion that Madame de Sable, with her fine instincts, was aware of this, and that there were one or two secrets about the furniture and disposition of light in her salon which are lost in these degenerate days. I heard, or read, lately, that we make a great mistake in furnishing our reception-rooms with all the light **and** delicate colours, the profusion of ornament, and

flecked and spotted chintzes, if we wish to show off the human face and figure; that our ancestors and the great painters knew better, with their somewhat sombre and heavy-tinted backgrounds, relieving, or throwing out into full relief, the rounded figure and the delicate, peach-like complexion.

I fancy Madame de Sable's salon was furnished with deep warm soberness of tone; lighted up by flowers, and happy animated people, in a brilliancy of dress which would be lost nowadays against our satin walls, and flower-bestrewn carpets, and gilding, gilding everywhere. Then, somehow, conversation must have flowed naturally into sense or nonsense, as the case might be. People must have gone to her house well prepared for either lot. It might be that wit would come uppermost, sparkling, crackling, leaping, calling out echoes all around; or the same people might talk with all their might and wisdom, on some grave and important subject of the day, in that manner which we have got into the way of calling 'earnest', but which term has struck me as being slightly flavoured by cant, ever since I heard of an 'earnest uncle'. At any rate, whether grave or gay, people did not go up to Madame de Sable's salons with a set purpose of being either the one or the other. They were carried away by the subject of the conversation, by the humour of the moment. I have visited a good deal among a set of people who piqued themselves on being rational. We have talked what they called sense, but what I call platitudes, till I have longed, like Southey, in the *Doctor*, to come out with some interminable nonsensical word (Aballibogibouganorribo was his, I think) as a relief for my despair at not being able to think of anything more that was sensible. It would have done me good to have said it, and I could have started afresh on the rational tack. But I never did. I sank into inane silence, which I hope was taken for wisdom. One of this set paid a relation of mine a profound compliment, for so she meant it to be: 'Oh, Miss F.; you are so trite!' But as it is not in every one's power

to be rational, and 'trite,' at all times and in all places, discharging our sense at a given place, like water from a fireman's hose; and as some of us are cisterns rather than fountains, and may have our stores exhausted, why is it not more general to call in other aids to conversation, in order to enable us to pass an agreeable evening?

But I will come back to this presently. Only let me say that there is but one thing more tiresome than an evening when everybody tries to be profound and sensible, and that is an evening when everybody tries to be witty. I have a disagreeable sense of effort and unnaturalness at both times; but the everlasting attempt, even when it succeeds, to be clever and amusing, is the worse of the two. People try to say brilliant rather than true things; they not only catch eager hold of the superficial and ridiculous in other persons and in events generally, but, from constantly looking out for subjects for jokes, and *mots*, and satire, they become possessed of a kind of sore susceptibility themselves, and are afraid of their own working selves, and dare not give way to any expression of feeling, or any noble indignation or enthusiasm. This kind of wearying wit is far different from humour, which wells up and forces its way out irrepressibly, and calls forth smiles and laughter, but not very far apart from tears. Depend upon it, some of Madame de Sable's friends had been moved in a most abundant and genial measure. They knew how to narrate, too. Very simple, say you? I say, no! I believe the art of telling a story is born with some people, and these have it to perfection; but all might acquire some expertness in it, and ought to do so, before launching out into the muddled, complex, hesitating, broken, disjointed, poor, bald accounts of events which have neither unity, nor colour, nor life, nor end in them, that one sometimes hears.

But as to the rational parties that are in truth so irrational, when all talk up to an assumed character, instead of showing themselves what they really are,

and so extending each other's knowledge of the infinite and beautiful capacities of human nature—whenever I see the grave, sedate faces, with their good but anxious expression, I remember how I was once, long ago, at a party like this ; every one had brought out his or her wisdom, and aired it for the good of the company; one or two had, from a sense of duty, and without any special living interest in the matter, improved us by telling us of some new scientific discovery, the details of which were all and each of them wrong, as I learnt afterwards ; if they had been right, we should not have been any the wiser—and just at the pitch when any more useful information might have brought on congestion of the brain, a stranger to the town—a beautiful, audacious, but most feminine romp—proposed a game, and such a game, for us wise men of Gotham ! But she (now long still and quiet after her bright life, so full of pretty pranks) was a creature whom all who looked on loved; and with grave, hesitating astonishment we knelt round a circular table at her word of command. She made one of the circle, and producing a feather out of some sofa pillow, she told us she should blow it up into the air, and whichever of us it floated near, must puff away to keep it from falling on the table. I suspect we all looked like Keeley in the *Camp at Chdbham*, and were surprised at our own obedience to this ridiculous, senseless mandate, given with a graceful imperiousness, as if it were too royal to be disputed. We knelt on, puffing away with the utmost intentness, looking like a set of elderly——

'Fools I' No, my dear sir. I was going to say elderly cherubim. But making fools of ourselves was better than making owls, as we had been doing.

I will mention another party, where a game of some kind would have been a blessing. It was at a very respectable tradesman's house. We went at half-past four, and found a well-warmed, handsome sitting-room, with block upon block of unburnt coal behind the fire; on the table there was a tray with wine and cake, oranges and almonds and raisins, of which we were

urged to partake. In half an hour came tea ; none of your flimsy meals, with wafer bread and butter, and three biscuits and a half. This was a grave and serious proceeding—tea, coffee, bread of all kinds, cold fowl, tongue, ham, potted meats—I don't know what. Tea lasted about an hour, and then the cake and wine-tray was restored to its former place. The stock of subjects of common interest was getting low, and, in spite of our goodwill, long stretches of silence occurred, producing a stillness, which made our host nervously attack the fire, and stir it up to a yet greater glow of intense heat; and the hostess invariably rose at such times, and urged us to ' eat another maccaroon \ The first I revelled in, the second I enjoyed, the third I got through, the fourth I sighed over, the fifth reminded me uncomfortably of that part of Sterne's *Sentimental Journey* where he feeds a donkey with macoaroons—and when, at the sight of the sixth, I rose to come away, a burst of imploring, indignant surprise greeted me: ' You are surely never going before supper !' I stopped. I ate that supper. Hot jugged hare, hot roast turkey, hot boiled ham, hot apple-tart, hot toasted cheese. No wonder I am old before my time. Now these good people were really striving, and taking pains, and laying out money, to make the evening pass agreeably, but the only way they could think of to amuse their guests was, giving them plenty to eat. If they had asked one of their children they could doubtless have suggested half a dozen games, which we could all have played at when our subjects of common interest failed, and which would have carried us over the evening quietly and simply, if not brilliantly. But in many a small assemblage of people, where the persons collected are incongruous, where talking cannot go on through so many hours, without becoming flat or laboured, why have we not oftener recourse to games of some kind ?

Wit, Advice, Bouts-rimes, Lights, Spanish Merchant, Twenty Questions—every one knows these, and many more, if they would only not think it beneath them to be called upon by a despairing hostess to play at them.

Of course to play them well requires a little more exertion of intellect than quoting other people's sense and wisdom, or misquoting science. But I do not think it takes as much thought and memory and consideration, as it does to be 'up' in the science of good eating and drinking. A profound knowledge of this branch of learning seems in general to have absorbed all the faculties before it could be brought to anything like perfection. So I do not consider games as entailing so much mental fatigue as a man must undergo before he is qualified to decide upon dishes. I once noticed the worn and anxious look of a famous diner-out, when called upon by his no less anxious host to decide upon the merits of a salad, mixed by no hands, as you may guess, but those of the host in question. The guest, doctor of the art of good living, tasted, paused, tasted again—and then, with gentle solemnity, gave forth his condemnatory opinion. I happened to be his next neighbour, and slowly turning his meditative full-moon face round to me, he gave me the valuable information that to eat a salad in perfection some one should be racing from lettuce to shalot, from shalot to endive, and so on, all the time that soup and fish were being eaten; that the vegetables should be gathered, washed, sliced, blended, eaten, all in a quarter of an hour. I bowed as in the presence of a master; and felt, no wonder his head was bald, and his face heavily wrinkled.

I have said nothing of books. Yet I am sure that if Madame de Sable lived now, they would be seen in her salon as part of its natural indispensable furniture; not brought out, and strewed here and there when 'company was coming', but as habitual presences in her room, wanting which, she would want a sense of warmth and comfort and companionship. Putting out books as a sort of preparation for an evening, as a means for making it pass agreeably, is running a great risk. In the first place, books are by such people, and on such occasions, chosen more for their outside than their inside. And in the next, they are the 'mere material with which wisdom (or wit) builds'; and if

persons don't know how to use the material, they will suggest nothing. I imagine Madame de Sablé would have the volumes she herself was reading, or those which, being new, contained any matter of present interest, left about, as they would naturally be. I could also fancy that her guests would not feel bound to talk continually, whether they had anything to say or not, but that there might be pauses of not unpleasant silence—a quiet darkness out of which they might be certain that the little stars would glimmer soon. I can believe that in such pauses of repose, some one might open a book, and catch on a suggestive sentence, might dash off again into a full flow of conversation. But I cannot fancy any grand preparations for what was to be said among people, each of whom brought the best dish in bringing himself; and whose own store of living, individual thought and feeling, and mother-wit, would be infinitely better than any cut-and-dry determination to devote the evening to mutual improvement. If people are really good and wise, their goodness and their wisdom flow out unconsciously, and benefit like sunlight. So, books for reference, books for impromptu suggestion, but never books to serve for texts to a lecture. Engravings fall under something like the same rules. To some they say everything; to ignorant and unprepared minds, nothing. I remember noticing this in watching how people looked at a very valuable portfolio belonging to an acquaintance of mine, which contained engraved and authentic portraits of almost every possible person; from king and kaiser down to notorious beggars and criminals; including all the celebrated men, women, and actors whose likenesses could be obtained. To some, this portfolio gave food for observation, meditation, and conversation. It brought before them every kind of human tragedy—every variety of scenery and costume and grouping in the background, thronged with figures called up by their imagination. Others took them up and laid them down, simply saying, 'This is a pretty face!' 'Oh, what a pair of eyebrows!' * Look at this queer dress !'

Yet, after all, having something to take up and to look at is a relief and of use to persons who, without being self-conscious, are nervous from not being accustomed to society. O Cassandra ! Remember when you, with your rich gold coins of thought, with your noble power of choice expression, were set down, and were thankful to be set down, to look at some paltry engravings, just because people did not know how to get at your ore, and you did not care a button whether they did or not, and were rather bored by their attempts, the end of which you never found out. While I, with my rattling, tinselly rubbish, was thought 'agreeable and an acquisition !' You would have been valued at Madame de Sable's, where the sympathetic and intellectual stream of conversation would have borne you and your golden fragments away with it, by its soft, resistless, gentle force.

VI
FRENCH LIFE

Being three essays that appeared in *Fraser's Magazine*
April, May, and June, 1864.

FRENCH LIFE

I

Paris, February, 1862.

WE went to-day along the Boulevard Sevastopol, Rive Gauche, to pay a call. I knew the district well about six years ago, when it was a network of narrow tortuous streets; the houses high, irregular, picturesque, historical, dirty, and unhealthy. I used to have much difficulty in winding my way to certain points in the Quartier Latin from the Faubourg St. Germain, where I was staying. Now, the Hotel Cluny is enclosed in a neat garden, the railings of which run alongside of the Boulevard Sevastopol; a little farther on the same side to the left, the Sorbonne Church is well exposed to view; and the broad artery of the new Boulevard runs up to the Luxembourg gardens, making a clear passage for air and light through the densely populated quartier. It is a great gain in all material points; a great loss to memory and to that kind of imagination which loves to repeople places. The street in which our friend lived was old and narrow; the trottoir was barely wide enough for one uncrinolined person to walk on; and it was impossible to help being splashed by the passing carriages, which indeed threw dirt upon the walls of the houses till there was a sort of dado of mud all along the street. In the grander streets of former days this narrowness did not signify; the houses were of the kind called 'entre cour et jardin' (of which there are specimens in Piccadilly), with the porter's lodge, the offices, and stables abutting on the street; the grand court intervening between the noise and bustle and the high dwelling-house of the family, which out-topped the low buildings in front. But in the humbler street to which we were bound there were few houses 'entre cour et jardin'; and I could not help wondering how people

bore to live in the perpetual noise, and heavy closeness of atmosphere. The friend we were going to see, Madame A——, had lived in this street for many years. Her rooms were lofty and tolerably large. The gloomy outlook of the long narrow windows was concealed by the closed muslin curtains, which were of an irreproachable whiteness. I knew the rooms of old. We had to pass through the *salle-a-manger* to the *salon* ; and from thence we, being intimate friends, went on into her bedroom. The *salle-a-manger* had an inlaid floor, very slippery, and without a carpet; the requisite chairs and tables were the only furniture. The pile of clean dinner-plates was placed on the top of a china stove; a fire would be lighted in it, half-an-hour before dinner, which would warm the plates as well as the room. The *salon* was graced with the handsome furniture of thirty or forty years ago ; but it was a room to be looked at rather than used. Indeed, the family only sit in it on Sunday evenings, when they receive. The floor was *parquete* in this room, but here and there it was covered with small brilliantly-coloured Persian carpets : before the sofa, underneath the central table, and before the fire. There were the regular pieces of furniture which were *de rigueur* in a French household of respectability when Madame A——was married: the gilt vases of artificial flowers, each under a glass shade ; the clock, with a figure of a naked hero, supposed to represent Achilles, leaning on his shield (the face of the clock); and the '*gueridon*' (round, marble-topped table), which was so long the one indispensable article in a French drawing-room. But, altogether, Madame A——'s *salon* does not look very habitable, and we pass on into the bedroom, which has little enough of daylight coming through the high narrow windows, but is bright and home-like from the brilliant blaze and flicker of the wood-fire on the hearth. In the far corner is the bed: a grand four-post, with looped-up draperies of some warm colour, which I dare say would prove to be faded if one were to see them close in full country daylight; but which look like a pictorial background to the rest

of the room. On each side of the fire is a great arm-chair ; in front is a really comfortable sofa: not elegant, nor hard, nor gilded like the sofas in the drawing-room, but broad, low, clean, fit to serve, as I dare say it has done before now, for a bed on occasion. Parallel to this, but farther from the fire, is a table with Madame's work-box; her two pots of flowers, looking as fresh as if the plants were growing in a country garden; the miniatures of her children, set up on little wooden easels; and her books of devotion. But Madame reads more than books of devotion. She is up in the best modern literature of more than one country. To-day we were exceedingly struck with her great powers of narration. She seizes the points of a story and reproduces them in the most effective simple language. She is certainly aided in this by her noble expressive face, still bearing traces of remarkable beauty in the severe and classical style. Her gesticulation, too, is unlike what we commonly call French; there is no rapid action of the graceful hands and arms, but a gentle and slow movement from time to time, as if they sympathized with the varying expression of her face. She sat by her fireside, dressed in black, her constant colour; which she wears as appropriate to her age rather than to her condition, for she is not a widow. Every now and then she addressed a few tender words to an invalid of the family; showing that with all her lively interest in the histories she was telling us, her eye and ear were watchful for the slightest signs of discomfort in another. . . . Our conversation drifted along to the old French custom of receiving in bed. It was so highly correct, that the newly-made wife of the Due de St. Simon went to bed, after the early dinner of those days, in order to receive her wedding-visits. The Duchesse de Maine, of the same date, used to have a bed in the ball-room at Sceaux, and to lie (or half-sit) there, watching the dancers. I asked if there was not some difference in dress between the day and the night occupation of the bed. But Madame A——seemed to think there was very little.

The custom was put an end to by the Revolution ; but one or two great ladies preserved the habit until their death. Madame A——had often seen Madame de Villette receiving in bed; she always wore white gloves, which Madame A——imagined was the only difference between the toilette of day and night. Madame de Villette was the adopted daughter of Voltaire, and, as such, all the daring innovators upon the ancient modes of thought and behaviour came to see her, and pay her their respects. She was also the widow of the Marquis de Villette, and as such she received the homage of the ladies and gentlemen of the ancien regime. Altogether her weekly receptions must have been very amusing, from Madame A——'s account. The old Marquise lay in bed; around her sat the company; and, at the crisis of the visit, she would desire her *femme de chambre* to hand round the heart of Voltaire, which he had bequeathed to her, and which she preserved in a little golden case. Then she would begin and tell anecdotes about the great man; great to her, and with some justice. For he had been travelling in the South of France, and had stopped to pass the night in a friend's house, where he was very much struck by the deep sadness on the face of a girl of seventeen, one of his friend's daughters; and, on inquiring the cause he found out that, in order to increase the portions of the others, this young woman was to be sent into a convent—a destination which she extremely disliked. Voltaire saved her from it by adopting her, and promising to give her a * dot ' sufficient to insure her a respectable marriage. She had lived with him for some time at Ferney before she became Marquise de Villette. (You will remember the connexion existing between her husband's family and Madame de Maintenon, as well as with Bolingbroke's second wife.)

Madame de Villette must have been an exceedingly inconsequente person, to judge from Madame A——'s very amusing description of her conversation. Her sentences generally began with an assertion which was

disproved by what followed. Such as, 'It was wonderful with what ease Voltaire uttered witty impromptus. He would shut himself up in his library all the morning, and in the evening he would gracefully lead the conversation to the point he desired, and then bring out the verse or the epigram he had composed for the occasion, in the most unpremeditated and easy manner!' Or, 'He was the most modest of men. When a stranger arrived at Ferney, his first care was to take him round the village, and to show him all the improvements he had made, the good he had done, the church he had built. And he was never easy until he had given the newcomer the opportunity of hearing his most recent compositions.' Then she would show an old grandfather's high-backed, leather arm-chair, in which she said he wrote his *Henriade*, forgetting that he was at that time quite a young man.

Madame A——said that Madame de Villette's receptions were worth attending, because they conveyed an idea of the ways of society before the Revolution. There was one old French marquis, a contemporary of Madame de Villette's, who regularly came with his chapeau-bras under his arm, to pay her his respects, and to talk over the good old times when both were young. Voltaire had called her 'Belle et bonne', and by these epithets her friend the Marquis saluted her to her dying day.

'Belle et bonne Marquise' (and she had long ceased to be 'belle'; even the other adjective was a matter of doubt), 'do you know why I preserve this old hat with so much care,—with reverence I may say?' said this friend to her one day. 'Years ago it had the privilege of saving your lovely cheek from being cut by the glass of your carriage-window, when by some maladroitness you were on the point of being overturned, ma belle et bonne Marquise.'

February.—We are staying with a French family of the middle class; and I cannot help noticing the ways of daily life here, so different from those of England. We are a party of seven; and we live on the fourth

floor, which is extensive enough to comprise the two sitting-rooms, the bedrooms, the kitchen, and the chamber for the two maids. I do not dislike this plan of living on a flat, especially as it is managed in Paris. I have seen the same mode adopted in Edinburgh and Rome, besides other continental towns; but, as in these towns there is no concierge, I have never liked it so much as in Paris. Here it seems to me to save one servant's work, at the least: and besides this, there is the moral advantage of uniting mistresses and maids in a more complete family bond. I remember a very charming young married lady, who had been brought by her husband from the country to share his home in Ashley Buildings, Victoria Street, saying that she had two of her former Sunday scholars as servants; but that, if they had had to live in the depths of a London kitchen, she should not have tried to have brought them out of their primitive country homes; as it was, she could have them under her own eye without any appearance of watching them; and, besides this, she could hear of their joys and sorrows, and, by taking an interest in their interests, induce them to care for hers. French people appear to me to live in this pleasant kind of familiarity with their servants—a familiarity which does not breed contempt, in spite of proverbs. The concierge here receives letters and parcels for the different families in the house, which he generally brings up himself, or sends by one of his family. Sometimes they are kept in the compartments appropriated to each family in the conciergerie; and any one of the inhabitants who may return to the house looks in, and seldom fails to have the complaisance to bring up letters, cards, or parcels for any family living below his etage. The concierge is paid by the landlord for these services, in which is included the carrying up or down of a moderate quantity of luggage. A certain portion of every load of wood or coal belongs to the concierge as payment for carrying it up to the respective apartments for which it is destined. If he cleans the shoes and knives for any family, they pay him separately. He also expects

an etrenne from each of the locataires on New Year's Day; say a napoleon from each family, and half that sum from any bachelors lodging in the house. Very often he knows how to wait at table, and his services are available for a consideration to any one living in the house. But he must always provide a deputy in case of absence from his post. As the concierges are, however, generally married, this does not press very hard upon him. In the house where we are staying the custom is for every one going out at night to lock up their apartment, desiring the servants to go to bed at the usual time; to hide the key in some well-known and customary place (under the door-mat for instance), and to take a bed-candle down to the conciergerie. When we return from our party, or whatever it may be, we ring the bell, and the concierge,—perhaps asleep in bed in his little 'cabinet',—pulls the string, and the latch flies up, as in the days of Little Red Riding-hood; we come in, shut the great porte-cochere, open the ever-unfastened door of the conciergerie, light our own particular bed-candles at the dim little lamp, pick out any letters, &c, belonging to us which may have come in by the late post, and go quietly upstairs. This sounds unsafe to our English ears, as it would seem that any one might come in; but I believe there is a small window of inspection in all conciergeries which may be used in cases of suspicion. The French at any rate esteem it more safe than our self-contained houses: and French servants in a modest household, where no personal attendants are kept, would be very indignant if they had to sit up for their mistresses' gaieties. For, as a rule, French servants are up earlier than English ones.

In this house is a *salle-a-manger* with a fire-place and a parquetted floor without a carpet. The shape is an oblong, with the two corners near the door of entrance cut off to form cupboards. The walls are wainscoted with deal, that is afterwards painted oak. The **window-curtains** and portieres are made of handsome **dark** Algerine stripe. As far as I can see, carpets are

not considered a necessary article of furniture in France, but portieres are. And certainly the rich folds of the latter, and the polished floors, off which every crumb or drop of grease is cleansed immediately, take my fancy very much. A door on one side of the windows opens into Madame's room; on the opposite side, another leads into the drawing-room. If we were French we should have a cup of *café au lait* and piece of bread brought into our bedrooms every morning; but *in* deference to us as strangers, a tray (without a napkin) with sugar, a copper pan containing the boiling milk just taken off the kitchen fire, and the white covered jug of bright strong coffee, is put on the dining-room table. Also, in deference to our English luxury, there is a plate of butter: our French friends never take butter and not always bread at this early breakfast. But where is the bread? I look round, and at last see a basket about a yard high standing on the ground near the fire-place; it is of dimensions just sufficient to hold a roll of bread a yard long and more, and about as thick as a man's wrist. It looks like a veritable staff of life. None of our French friends think of completing their toilette for this early breakfast, which, indeed, as I have said, they would have taken in their bedrooms if we had not been here. Nor, indeed, is it any family gathering. I sometimes see the old black skirts of our hostess quickly vanishing into her bedroom at the sound of my approach; and perhaps I find Nanette, the youngest daughter, in a coloured petticoat and white camisole, her thick black hair put neatly away under a cap which is on the full-dress side of a nightcap. She reddens a little as she wishes me 'Bon jour', as she knows that hers is not the finished morning toilette of an English young lady. But two hours hence, who so neat as Nanette in her clean print gown of some delicate pattern, her black hair all brushed and plaited, and waved, and creped? for now she has done her household work: perhaps she has helped Julie to make her own bed; she has certainly dusted her room, with all its knick-knacks and ornaments.

Madame, too, has been out to market; half across Paris, it may be, in her old black gown, to some shop she knows of, where she fancies such and such an article can be had better or cheaper. She has gone by the omnibus, taking advantage of the 'correspondance', by which, on payment of thirty centimes, and declaring her wish for a 'correspondance' ticket to the conducteur of that which passes her door, she is conveyed in it to the general omnibus office, close to the Place des Victoires, where she may have to wait for a few minutes for an omnibus going in the direction for which her 'correspondance' ticket is taken. If she has to return by any of the midway stations at which omnibuses stop, she has to purchase a ticket with a number upon it at the 'bureau', and await her turn, at busy times of the day—say at five o'clock, at the Place Palais Royal. Her number may be eighty-seven, while the next grenelle omnibus is filling with twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-five, and so on, as the conducteur calls the numbers. But in the morning they are not so crowded, and Madame is always at home and dressed with delicate neatness by eleven o'clock, the time of our 'second dejeuner', or what we should call lunch in England. This breakfast consists generally of cold meat, a rechauffe of some entree or dressed vegetables of the day before, an omelette, bread, wine, and a pot of confitures. For us our kind hostess has tea, but I can see that this is not their ordinary custom. It is curious to see how little butter is eaten in a French family; they, however, make up for this by the much greater use of it in cookery; for vegetables form a dish by themselves, always requiring either gravy, butter, or oil, in their preparation. After lunch is over, we all sit down to work; perhaps Nanette practises a little, and perhaps some of us go out for a walk, but always with some object, either of pleasure or business. A Frenchwoman never takes a walk in the English constitutional sense. There are books about in the salon, but not so many as in England. They have nothing equivalent to 'Mudie' in Paris, and the books at their circulating libraries are of so very

mixed a character, that no careful mother likes to have them lying about on the table. Indeed 'novels and romances' are under much the same ban as they were in England seventy or eighty years ago. There is the last *Revue des Deux Mondea*, and a pamphlet or two besides, lying by Madame's work-basket, and there are the standard French authors in the bookcase in the cupboard. Yet somehow my friends always know what is going on in the literary world of Paris. The newspapers here are so doctored that they are deprived of much of the interest which usually attaches to political news; but I generally see *La Presse* lying about.

Once a week Madame 'receives'. Then the covers are taken off the furniture in the salon, a fresh nosegay is put in the vase, Madame and Mademoiselle and Nanette put off their final dressing for the day till after the second breakfast, and then appear in the gowns they wear on jours de fetes. Monsieur keeps out of the way, but nevertheless is much disappointed if when we all meet together at dinner we have not accumulated a little stock of news and gossip to amuse him with. Madame's day of reception is well known to all her friends and acquaintances, who make a point of calling on her two or three times a season. But sometimes no one comes at all on the Thursdays, and it is rather flat to sit from two to five or thereabouts in our company dresses, and company faces, all for no use. Then again, on other Thursdays, the room is quite full, and I sit and admire Madame's tact. A new arrival comes up to her, and without appearing to displace any one, the last comer invariably finds an empty chair by the lady of the house. The hostess also accompanies every departing guest to the room-door, and they part with pretty speeches of affection and good-will, sincere enough I do not doubt, but expressive of just those feelings which the English usually keep in the background.

On Thursdays we have generally much the same sort of dinner that in England we associate with the idea of washing-days, for both Julie and Gabrielle have been

busy admitting or letting out visitors ; or at any rate Madame anticipated this probability when she ordered dinner.

The dinner-hour is six o'clock ; real, sharp six. And here I may warn my English friends of the necessity of punctuality to the hour specified in a French dinner invitation. In England, a quarter of an hour beyond the time is considered as nothing, and half an hour's grace is generally acceded. But it is not so in France ; and it is considered very ill-breeding to be behind the time. And this remark applies not merely to the middle-class life I have been describing, but to the highest circles. Indeed, the French have an idea that punctuality is a virtue unknown among the English ; and numerous were the stories of annoyance from English unpunctuality which the French officers brought home from the Crimea. But to return to our day at Madame——'s. We do not dress for dinner, as we should do in England ; that ceremony, as they consider it—refreshment, as we should call it—is reserved for the days when we go into society, and then it takes place after dinner.

We have soup—always good. On Fridays we have fish ; not from any religious feeling, but because that is the day when the best fish is brought into Paris, and it is not very fresh even then. Then we have a made dish, or two or three times a week the bouilli from which the stock for the soup is made—a tender, substantial, little hunch of boiled beef of no known joint. Then come the vegetables, cooked with thick rich gravy, which raises them to the rank they hold in a French dinner, instead of being merely an accessory to the meat, as they are in England. The roti and the salad follow. The mixing of the salad is too important an operation to be trusted to a servant. As we are here, Madame does not like to leave her visitors ; but I see Gabrielle peep from behind the portieres, and make a sign to Mademoiselle, about five minutes before dinner, and Mademoiselle goes into the *salle-a-manger*, and Madame rather loses the thread of her discourse, and

looks wistfully after her daughter; for if Monsieur is particular about anything, it is about his salads. Strictly speaking, Madame tells me, the vegetables ought to be gathered while the soup is on the table, washed and cleansed while we are eating the bouilli, ana sliced and dressed with the proper accompaniments while the roti is being brought in. Madame's mother always mixed it at the table, she says, and I have no doubt Madame follows the hereditary precedent herself when she has no foreign visitors staying with her. After this, a chocolate custard, or a sweet omelette, a puree of apples, perhaps ; and then dessert is put on the table—a bit of gruyere cheese under a glass, and the ' Quatre Mendiants', i. e. nuts, almonds, raisins, figs, called after the four begging orders of friars, because these fruits are so cheap that any beggar can have them.

We have a little cup of black coffee all round when we return to the salon, and if we were not here our friends would have nothing more that night; but out of compliment to us there is tea at nine o'clock, that is to say, there is hot water with a spoonful of tea soaked in it. They look upon this mixture in much the same light as we consider *sal volatile*—not quite a dram, but as something that ought to be used medicinally, and not as a beverage.

March 10th.—Madame and I have had a long talk about prices, expenditure, &c. As far as I can make out, provisions are to the full as dear as in London; house-rent is dearer, servants' wages are much the same. She pays her cook and housemaid four hundred and fifty and four hundred francs respectively. But the household work is differently arranged to what it is in England. The cook takes the entire charge of a certain portion of the apartment, bedrooms included; the housemaid attends to the rest, waits at table, helps one of the daughters of the house to get up the fine linen, and renders them any little services they may require in dressing. The cook is enabled to take part of the household work because it is the custom in Paris to prepare provisions in the shops where they are sold, so

that the cook can buy a sweetbread, or small joint, or poultry, ready larded, the spinach ready boiled and pulped for a puree, vegetables all cut into shapes for her soup, and so on. The milk, which I had remarked upon as so remarkably good, is, it appears, subjected to the supervision of inspectors armed with lactometres, delicately weighted glass tubes marked with degrees : this ought to sink up to a particular number in good unadulterated milk, and all that is brought into Paris is tested in this and other ways at the various barriers. It is very difficult, however, to obtain milk in the afternoons or evenings, even at the cremeries, without ordering it beforehand. The Government regulates the price of bread, which is lower in Paris than in the neighbouring towns; the legal tariff is exposed in every baker's shop, and false weights and measures severely punished. As to dress, from what I can gather, I think that good articles bear the same price as in England ; but in our shops it is difficult to meet with an inferior article in even moderately good taste, while in France those who are obliged to consider expense can find cheap materials of the most elegant design. Then French ladies give up so much more thought and time to dress than the English do ; I mean in such ways as changing a gown repeatedly in the course of a day if occasion requires, taking care never to wear a better dress when an inferior one will do, no, not even for five unnecessary minutes. And when handsome articles are taken off, they are put by with as much care as if they were sleeping babies laid down in a cot. Silver paper is put between every fold of velvet or of silk; cushions of paper are placed so as to keep the right sit of any part; ribbons are rolled up; soiled spots are taken out immediately; and thus the freshness of dress which we so much admire in Frenchwomen is preserved; but, as I said, at a considerable expense of time and thought in the case of people of moderate means. Madame——declares that she knows many a young French couple who have reduced their table to the lowest degree of meagreness, in order

that the wife (especially) might be well dressed. She says that dress is the only expenditure for which a Frenchwoman will go in debt. I remember some years ago hearing a letter from the Prince de la Ligne read at Lord E——'s. He gave an account in it of the then recent coronation at Moscow, and went on to speak of the French Emperor's politics. As one of his engines of influence, the Prince gravely named 'la luxe de la toilette', as an acknowledged political means. At the time, I remember, I wondered in silence, but things have come to my knowledge since then which make me understand what was then meant. Six years ago a friend took me to call on Madame de——. It was a raw, splashy, February day, and as we walked through the slushy streets, half-covered with melting snow, my friend told me something about the lady we were going to see. Madame de——was married to the eldest son of a Frenchman of rank; she herself belonged to an old family. Her husband was a distinguished member of one of the Academies, and held a high position among those who had devoted themselves to his particular branch of recondite knowledge. Madame de——was one of the 'lionnes' of Paris, and as a specimen of her class we were now going to see her. She and her husband had somewhere about seven thousand a year, but for economy's sake they lived in an apartment rather than a house. They had, I think, two or three children. I recollect feeling how out of place my substantial winter dress and my splashed boots were, the moment I entered the little hall or ante-room to her apartment. The floor was covered with delicate Indian matting, and round the walls ran a bordering of snowdrops, crocuses, violets, and primroses, as fresh and flowering as if they were growing in a wood, but all planted by some Paris gardener in boxes of soil, and renewed perpetually. Then we went into the lady's own boudoir. She was about thirty, of a very peculiar style of beauty, which grew upon me every moment I looked. She had black hair, long black curling eyelashes, long soft grey eyes, a smooth olive skin, a dimple, and most beautiful teeth.

She was in mourning ; her thick hair fastened up with great pins of pearls and amethyst, her ear-rings, brooch, bracelets, all the same. Her gown was of black watered silk, lined with violet silk (wherever a lining could be seen), her boots black watered silk, her petticoat of stiff white silk, with a wreath of violet-coloured embroidery just above the hem. Her manners were soft and caressing to the last degree ; and when she was told that I had come to see her as a specimen of her class, she was prettily amused, and took pains to show me all her arrangements and ' coquetteries '. In her boudoir there was not a speck of gilding ; that would have been bad taste, she said. Around the mirrors, framed in white polished wood, creeping plants were trained so that the tropical flowers fell over and were reflected in the glass. There was a fire, fed with cedar-wood chips ; and the crimson velvet curtains on each side of the grate had perfumes quilted within their white silk linings. The window-curtains were trimmed with point lace. We went through a little antechamber to Madame de——'s bedroom—an oblong room, with her bed filling up half the space on one side ; the other all wardrobe, with six or seven doors, covered with looking-glass, and opening into as many closets. After we had admired the rare Palissy ware, the lace draperies of the mirror, the ornaments on the toilette-table, and the pink silk curtains of the bed, she laughed her little soft laugh, and told me that now I should see how she amused herself as she lay in bed of a morning : and pulling something like a bell-rope which hung at the head of her bed, the closet doors flew open, and displayed gowns hung on wire frames (such as you may see at any milliner's) : gowns for the evening, and gowns for the morning, with the appropriate head-dresses, chausses, and gloves, lying by them.

' I have not many gowns,' said she. ' I do not like having too many, for I never wear them after they are a month old ; I give them to my maid then, for I never wear anything that is old-fashioned.'

I was quite satisfied with my ' lionne . ' She was

quite as much out of the way of anything I had ever seen before as I had expected. But to go on with the bearing she had upon the Prince de la Ligne's letter, I must not forget to say that Madame de——expressed very strong political opinions, and all distinctly anti-Bonapartean. Among other things she mentioned, was the fact that when her husband went to pay his respects, as a member of the Academy of——, to the Emperor at the Tuileries, she would not allow him to use their carriage (nor indeed was he willing to do it, but went in a hackney coach), saying that the arms of the de——s should never be seen in the courts of a usurper. Two years afterwards I came to Paris, and I inquired after M. and Madame de——. To my infinite surprise, I heard that he had become a senator, one of that body who receive about a thousand pounds a year from Government, and who are admitted to that dignity by the express will of the Emperor. How in the world could it have come about? And Madame, too, at all the balls and receptions at the Tuileries. The arms of the de——were no longer invisible in the courts of a usurper. What was the reason of this change? Madame's extravagance. Their income would not suffice for her 'luxe de la toilette', and the senator's salary was a very acceptable addition.

April 24th.—We were asked to go in some evening, 'pour dire le petit bon soir,' at a neighbour's house. Accordingly we walked thither about eight o'clock. M. E——'s house is one of the most magnificent in this quartier: it is on the newly-built Boulevard de Sevastopol. M. E——himself is a leading man in his particular branch of trade, which, in fact, he has made himself; and he is now a French millionaire, as different from an English one as francs are different from pounds. I remember when I first knew monsieur and madame, they lived in an apartment over the shop, and this was situated in one of the narrow old streets of the Quartier Latin. I was asked there to dinner, and I had to make my way through bales of goods, that were piled as high as walls on each side of the narrow passage

through the shop. I went through madame's bedroom, furnished with purple velvet and amber satin, to the room where we assembled before dinner. It was a weekly dinner, at which all M. E——'s family came, as a matter of course; and any one connected with him in business was also sure of finding a place there. The table was spread with every luxury, and there was almost an ostentatious evidence of wealth, which contrasted oddly and simply with the hard signs of business and trade down below. I fancy their way of living at that time must have been like that of the great old city families of the last century. And there was another resemblance. Two generations ago it was customary for our own London merchants to retain their married children under the paternal roof, for the first year at least; and so it was at M. E——'s. His own child, his wife's children—for they had each been married before—lived in the same house as he did, both in winter and summer, in town and country. Yet the younger generation were all married, and had families. All the grandchildren, little and big, were assembled at these weekly dinners; if there was not room for them at the principal table, there were nurses and servants ready to attend upon them at side-tables. And now, when increasing and well-deserved prosperity has enabled M. E——to remove into the large hotel to which we have been to-night, to 'say our little good evening', I find that his sons and his daughters, his maid-servants and his men-servants, have all migrated with him in truly patriarchal fashion. We did not see them all to-night, for some have already gone into the country, whither the others are going to follow in a day or two. Out of compliment to us, tea was brought in—tea at a guinea the pound, as Madame E——informed us. I saw that the family did not like the drink well enough to wish to join us. There was a little telegraphing as to who was to be the victim, and keep us in company; and the young lady singled out as the tea-drinker for the family took care to put in so much sugar that I doubt if she could recognize the flavour of any-

thing else. The others excused themselves from partaking by saying—one, that she had been so feverish all day; another said that he felt himself a good deal excited, and so on. Sugar is considered by the French as fitted to soothe the nerves, and to induce sleep. I really am becoming a convert to this idea, and can take my glass of eau sucrée as well as any one before going to bed; indeed, we have a little tray in our bedroom, on which is a Bohemian glass carafe of water, a goblet with a gold spoon, and a bowl of powdered sugar. But I think it is a drink for society, not for solitude. Inspired by the example of others, I relish it; but I never tipple at it in private.

Somehow to-night we began to talk upon the custom of different families of relations living together. I said it would never do in England. They asked me, why not? And, after some reflection, I was obliged to confess we all liked our own ways too much to be willing to give them up at the will of others—were too independent, too great lovers of our domestic privacy. I am afraid I gave the impression that we English were too ill-tempered and unaccommodating, for I drew down upon myself a vehement attack upon the difficulties thrown in the way of young people's marrying in England.

'Even when there is a great large house, and a table well-spread enough to fill many additional mouths, they tell me that in England the parents will go on letting their sons and daughters waste the best years of their lives in long engagements,' said Madame E——.

'That does not sound to me amiable.'

'It is not the custom in France,' put in her husband.

* You English are apt to think us bad-tempered, because we talk loud, and use a good deal of gesticulation; but I believe we are one of the most good-tempered nations going, in spite of the noise we make.'

By and by some one began to speak of *Les Misérables*; and M. E——, like a prosperous merchant as he is, objected to the socialist tendency of the book. From that we went on to talking about a greve (or strike)

which had lately taken place among the builders in Paris. They had obtained their point, whatever it was, because it was the supreme aim of the Government to keep the 'blouses'—the Faubourg St. Antoine—in good humour; and 'Government,' in fact, has the regulation of everything in France. Monsieur E—— said that the carpenters were now about to strike, encouraged by the success of the builders, and that he heard from his own carpenter that the object they were going to aim at was that skilled and unskilled labour should be paid at the same rate—viz. five francs a day. He added that the carpenter, his informant, looked upon this project with disfavour, saying it might be all very well as long as there was enough of work for all; but when it grew scarce, none but the best workmen would have any employment, as no one would send for an inferior craftsman when he could have a first-rate one for the same money.

May 4th.—It is becoming intolerably hot in Paris. I almost wish the builders would strike, for my part, for the carnages scarcely cease rumbling past my open windows before two; and at five the men are clapping and hammering at the buildings of the new boulevard opposite. I have had to go into the narrow streets of the older parts of Paris lately; and the smells there are insufferable—a mixture of drains and cookery, which makes one loathe one's food. Yet how interesting these old streets are! and the people inhabiting them are quite different to those of the more fashionable quarters: they have so much more originality of character about them; and yet one sees that they are the descendants of the Dames de la Halle, who went out to Versailles on the memorable fifth of October. I see curious little customs too in these more primitive parts of the town. Every morning a certain number of Sisters of Charity put themselves at the disposition of the Mairie of the Arrondissements. There were formerly only twelve arrondissements; but now, owing to the extension of the city of Paris, there are twenty. In the former days, before the annexation of the suburbs

to the city in 1859, by which the number of the arrondissements was increased to twenty, it was 'slang' to speak of any disreputable person as belonging to the 'treizieme', an arrondissement not recognized by any law. Every such division has a 'maire' and two 'adjoints', who are responsible for the well-doing and well-being of the district in their charge. I see the 'Sisters' leaving the Mairie on their errands of mercy early every morning. About the same time the chiffonier comes his rounds, eagerly raking out the heaps of dust and rubbish before the doors, lien by and by—generally, however, after eleven, that universal meal-hour—I meet an old woman busily trotting along towards the Luxembourg Gardens, surrounded by fifteen or twenty little children, aged from two or three years to seven or eight. Their parents pay the old lady about ten centimes an hour to take their children out, and give them a walk or a game of play in the gardens. It is pretty to see her convoy her little regiment over a crossing: it reminds me of the old puzzle of the fox, the goose, and the bag of corn. The elder children are left in charge on one side while the very little ones are carried over; then one of the oldest is beckoned across and lectured on her care of them while the old woman trots back for the rest; and I notice she is much more despotic during her short reign of power than the old woman herself. At length they are past all dangers, and safe in the gardens, where they may make dirt-pies to their hearts' content, while their chaperone takes out her knitting and seats herself on a bench in their midst. Say she has fifteen children, and keeps them out for two hours, it makes her a little income of half-a-crown a day; and many a busy mother is glad that her child should have happy play and exercise, while she goes a-shopping, or does some other piece of house-keeping work, which would prevent her from attending properly to her child. Each 'mairie' has its *salle d'asile* (or infant school) and its *creche* (or public nursery), under the superintendence of the *sisters'; but perhaps these are for a lower class than my little

Luxembourg friends. Their mothers are, for the most part, tolerably well off, only not rich enough to keep a servant expressly for the children.

Then the shop-placards in these old-fashioned parts of the town are often amusing enough. For instance: the other day I saw a crowd in a by-street, near the Rue l'Ecole de Medecine, all intent upon a great piece of written paper put out of the window of a shop, where almost every article of woman's dress was to be sold. It was headed, in letters almost a quarter of a yard long,

MA FEMME EST FOLLE.

A person, of whom I asked the meaning, laughed a little as he said—

' Oh ! it is only a contrivance for attracting custom. He goes on to state, lower down in the paper, that his wife, being mad, offered certain gown-pieces for sale yesterday at a ruinous price (they are really only about half a franc lower than what you can get them for at any other shop); that he is miserable in the conflict he is undergoing between his honour and the prospect of the sacrifice he will have to make if he sells them at the price his wife offered them for; but, "Honour above all," they shall be sold at that price, and therefore every one had better rush in and buy.'

May 7th.—Seeing an apartment to let in the Place Royale, we went over it yesterday. I have always liked the looks of this stately old place: so full of historical associations too. Then, again, the quietness of it charms me ; it is almost like a cloister, for no carriages can come in; and the sheltered walks under the arcades must be very pleasant to the inhabitants on rainy days. The houses are built of very handsome red bricks with stone facings, and all after the same plan, designed by an architect of the time of Henry IV—about our Queen Elizabeth's reign; but if the Place Royale was in England we should date it, judging from the style of the architecture, a century later at least. It is more like the later additions to Hampton Court. There is

a pleasant square **in** the centre, with a fountain, shady chestnut trees, and gay flower-beds, and a statue of Louis XIII in the midst. Tradition says that it was either on this piece of ground or very near it that the famous mask took place in the old Palace des Tournelles, when, the dresses of the masquer scatching fire, King Charles VI, who was one of them, became mad in consequence of the fright, and to soothe his madness, our present playing-cards were invented. When first the present place was built, all the fashionable world rushed to secure houses in it. This was the old hotel of the De Rohans, that was Cardinal de Richelieu's before his Palais Cardinal—the present Palais Royal—was completed; in this house Madame de SeVign6 was born—and so on. Now the ground floor, which was formerly occupied by the offices of the great houses above, is turned into shops, warehouses, and cafes of a modest and substantial kind ; and the upper floors are inhabited by respectable and well-to-do people, who do not make the least pretension to fashion. The apartment we went over consisted of five handsome and very lofty reception-rooms opening out of one another, and lighted by many high narrow windows opening on to a wide balcony at the top of the arcade. One or two of these rooms were panelled with looking-glass, but old-fashioned, in many pieces, not like our modern plates in size. Possibly it was Venetian, and dated from the times of the early proprietors. The great height of the rooms, as compared to their area, struck me much. Only two or three of the rooms had fire-places, and these were vast and cavernous. Besides the doors of communication between the rooms, there was, in each, one papered like the walls, opening into a passage which ran the whole length of the apartment. On the opposite side of this passage there were doors opening into the kitchens, storerooms, servants' bedrooms, &c.—so small, so close, so unhealthy. Yet in those days there were many servants and splendid **dinners**. Perhaps, however, some of the lacqueys slept on the upper floor, to which there is now no access from

the apartments au premier. At the end of the passage was the bedroom of the late proprietress, with a closet opening out of it for her maid. The bedroom was spacious and grand enough; but the closet—well, I suppose she *could* lie full length in it if she was not tall. The only provision for light and air was a window opening on to the passage. We inquired the rent of this apartment: 3,000 francs—£120. But perhaps Monsieur, le propriétaire, might reduce it to 2,500 francs—£100. The front rooms were charming, in their old-fashioned stateliness; but if I lived there, I should be sorely perplexed as to where my servants were to sleep.

May 10th.—Utterly weary of the noise and heat of Paris, we went out to St. Germain yesterday. I had never been there before; and now, once having been, I want to go agam. It is only half an hour from Paris by railroad. We could just see Malmaison as we went along, past pretty villas with small gardens brilliant with flowers, as French gardens always are. All the plants seem to go into flower; the mass of bloom almost over-balances the leaves. I believe this is done by skilful pruning and cutting-in. For instance, they take up their rose-trees at the beginning of February, and cut off the coarse red suckers and the superfluous growth of root. The hedges to these little suburban gardens are principally made of acacia, and pollard trees of the same species border nearly all the roads near Paris. In the far distance, on the left, almost against the horizon, we saw the famous Aqueduct de Marly, formerly used to conduct a part of the water to Versailles. I do not know what it is in the long line of aqueducts and viaducts which charms one. Is it the vanishing perspective which seems to lead the eye, and through it the mind, to some distant invisible country? or is it merely the association with other aqueducts, with the broken arches of the Claudian aqueduct, stretching across the Campagna, with Nismes, Ac. ? By means of some skilfully adjusted atmospherio power, the trains have of late years been conducted up to nearly the level

of **the** terrace at St. Germain's by a pretty steep inclined **plane**. We went up **a** few steps on leaving the station, **and** then we were on the plateau, the castle on our left, **and** a 'Place' at the entrance to the town on the right.

Nothing could be more desolate-looking than the Chateau; the dull red bricks of which it is built are painted dark-lead colour round the many tiers of windows—the glass in which is broken in numerous places, and its place here and there supplied by iron bars. Somehow, the epithet that rose to our lips on first seeing the colouring of the whole place, was *livid \ Nor is the present occupation of the grim old chateau one to suggest cheerful thoughts. After being a palace, it was degraded to a 'caserne' or barracks, and from that it has come down to a penitentiary. All round the building there is a deep dry area, railed round ; and now I have said all I can against St. Germain and recorded a faithful impression at first sight. But two minutes afterwards, there came **a** lovely slant of sunlight ; the sun had been behind a fine thunderous cloud, and emerged just at the right moment, causing all the projections in the chateau to throw deep shadows, brightening the tints in all the other parts, calling out the vivid colours in the flower-beds that surround the railing on the park side of the chateau, and half compelling us with its hot brilliancy, half luring us by the full fresh green it gave to the foliage, to seek the shelter of the woods not two hundred yards beyond the entrance to the park. We did not know where we were going to, we only knew that it was shadowed ground ; while the *English garden ' we passed over was all one blaze of sunlight and scarlet geraniums, and intensely blue lobelias, yellow calceolarias, and other hot-looking flowers. The space below the ancient mighty oaks **and** chestnut-trees was gravelled over, and given up to nursery-maids **and** children, with here and there an **invalid sitting on** the benches. Mary and Irene were **bent** upon sketching, so we wandered on to find the impossible point of view which is to combine **all** the **excellences desired by two** eager sketchers. So we

loitered over another hundred yards in the cool shade of the trees. And suddenly we were on the terrace, looking down over a plain steeped in sunlight, and extending for twenty miles and more. We all exclaimed with delight at its unexpectedness, and yet we had heard of the terrace at St. Germain, and associated it with James II and Maria d'Este all our lives. The terrace is a walk as broad as a street, on the edge of the bluff overhanging the silver tortuous Seine. It is bounded by a wall just the right height for one to lean upon and gaze and muse upon the landscape below. The mellow mist of a lovely day enveloped the more distant objects then, but we came again in the evening, when all the gay world of St. Germain was out and abroad on the terrace listening to the music of the band ; and we could then distinguish the aqueduct of Marly on our right, before us the old woods of Vesinet—that ill-omened relic of the ancient forest that covered the lie de France ; and here in the very centre is the star-shaped space called La Table de la Trahison ; here it was that Ganelan de Hauteville planned to betray Roland the Brave and the twelve peers of France, at Roncevaux ; and on the very spot the traitors were burnt to death by the order of Charlemagne. Beyond Vesinet rise the fortified heights of Mont Valerien and Montmartre ; so we know that the great city of Pans, with its perpetual noise and bustle, must be the cause of that thickening of the golden air just beyond the rising ground in the mid-distance. And some one found out—far away again—as far as eye could see, the spire of the Cathedral of St. Denis, and Irene fell to moralizing and comparing. The palace, she said, was ever present—an every-day fact to the great old kings who had inhabited it—and fertile life and busy pomp were the golden interspace which all but concealed from them the inevitable grave at St. Denis. But sermons always make me hungry ; and Irene's moralizing seemed to have the same effect on herself as well as on us, or else it was the ' nimble ' air—for that epithet of Shakespeare's exactly fits the clear brisk

air of St. Germain. They sat down to sketch, and I was sent in search of provender. I could not find a confectioner's, nor, indeed, would it have been of much use, for French confectioners only sell sugary or creamy nothings, extremely unsatisfactory to hungry people. So I went boldly into the restaurant to the right of the station—the Cafe Galle, I think it was called—and told the Dame du Comptoir my errand. I was in hopes that she would have allowed one of the garçons to accompany me with a basket of provisions, and some plates, and knives and forks ; perhaps some glasses, and a bottle of wine. But it seems that this was against the rules ; and all I could do was, to have the loan of a basket for a short time. Madame split up some oval rolls of delicious bread, buttered them, and placed some shoes of raw ham between the praces; and with these, and some fresh strawberries, I returned to my merry hungry sketchers, who were beginning to find that a seat on the hard gravel was not quite so agreeable as sitting on (comparatively) soft English turf. Yet the benches were too high for their purpose. After eating their lunch they relapsed into silence and hard work. It was rather dull for me, so I rambled about, struck up an acquaintanceship with one of the gardeners, and with a hackney-coachman, who tried to tempt me into engaging him for a 'course' to Versailles by Marly-le-Roi—the Marly, the famous Marly of Louis XIV, of which the faint vestiges alone remain in the marks of the old garden plots. I was tempted. I remembered what St. Simon says; how the king, weary of noise and of grandeur, found out a little narrow valley within a few miles of his magnificent and sumptuous Versailles ; there was a village near this hollow—for it really was nothing more—and this village was called Marly, whence the name of the palace or 'hermitage' which the king chose to have built. He thought that he went there to lead a simple and primitive life, away from the flattery of his courtiers. But it is not so easy for a king to avoid flattery. His architect built one great pavilion, which was to repre-

sent the sun; in it dwelt Louis XIV. There were twelve smaller pavilions surrounding this large one ; in them dwelt the planets, that is to say, the favourite courtiers of the time being. Every morning the king set out to visit his satellites ; there were six on one side of the parterre, six on the other; and their pavilions communicated with each other by means of close avenues of lime-trees. It was etiquette for these courtiers to salute the king, who had taken the sun for his device, by placing their right hand so as to shade their eyes from his brilliancy ; hence, some people say, our own military salute. Each courtier, as he was visited, followed the king in his round. At first, the king only came to Marly two or three times a year, staying from Wednesday to Saturday ; he only brought a comparatively moderate train; but in time he grew weary of his so-called simplicity, and the surrounding hills were scooped out to make gardens, and woods, and waterworks; and statues and courtiers thronged the place. Still, as no one could come here without express invitation from the king, to be of the parties to Marly was an object to be longed for, and asked for, and intrigued for. Indeed, it was the highest favour that could be obtained from royalty. At the last moment of awful suspense as to who was to go, the king's valet de chambre, Bontemps, went round with the invitations. There was no need of preparation, for in each pavilion there was a store of all things needed for masculine and feminine toilettes. Only two could inhabit a pavilion ; and, if a married lady was asked, her husband was included in the invitation, though not in the compliment. But to the end of his reign, the days for Marly were invariable. Sunday the King spent, as became the eldest son of the Church, at his parish of Versailles; Monday and Tuesday he allowed himself to be worshipped by the whole court at Versailles ; on Wednesday he went to Marly with the selected few. The amusements at Marly were high play, or, as it might be called, gambling; and a kind of bazaar, where the ladies dressed themselves up as Syrians, Japanese,

Greeks, what not, and played at keeping shop; the king furnishing the infinite variety of things sold. Louis XV and his unfortunate suocessor went to Marly occasionally; but the great days of Marly were over when Louis XIV died. After that, the Governor of St. Germain kept the keys of Marly, and occasionally lent the use of the pavilions to his private friends. But the Convention did not approve of this appropriation of national property, and the old statues, the remains of magnificent furniture, the marbles, and the mirrors, were sold for the good of the people. Some one bought the buildings and turned them into a spinning-mill; but it was not a profitable speculation, and by and by the whole place was pulled down; but I believe you may yet trace out the foundations of the Palace of the Sun. So that was why I wanted to see Marly—a place once so famous and so populous gone to ruin, nay, the very ruins themselves covered up by nature with her soft harmony of grass and flowers. How much would it cost, how long would it take, to go by Marly to Versailles in time to catch the last tram thence to Paris? It would take an hour, not including any stopping at Marly, and it would cost fifteen francs, also not including any stoppage at Marly. I was vexed at the man for thinking I could be so grossly imposed upon. Why, two francs an hour, with a decent *pour-boire*, was on the tariff of every carriage; so I turned away in silent indignation, heedless of his cries of * *Dix francs, madame. Tenez! huit, cinq, ce que vous vouiez, madame.* ' And immediately afterwards I was glad I had not planned to leave St. Germain an hour earlier than was necessary—the place looked so bright and cheerful, with all the gaily-dressed people streaming over the Place du Chateau to go to the Terrace and hear the band. I went into the restaurant, and ordered coffee to be ready at six, and had a little more gossip with the Dame du Comptoir. She told me that no one was admitted to see the interior of the castle, although it was no longer a penitentiary; that the air at St. Germain was better and purer than at any other plaœ

within twenty miles of Paris ; and that I ought to come and see the forest of St. Germain at the time of the Fete des Loges—a sort of open-air festival held in the forest on the 30th of August; and all the waiters at liberty came forward to make a chorus in praise of the merry-go-rounds, mountebanks, wine, stoves cooking viands, spits turning joints, and general merriment, which seemed to go on at this fair, which took its rise in the pilgrimages made to a certain hermitage built by a devout seigneur of the time of Louis XIII.

Then I went back to Mary and Irene, and told them my adventures; and we all, attracted by the good music of the military band, went on to the crowded terrace and leant over the wall, and saw the view I have described, and gazed down into the green depths of the far-stretching forest, and wondered if we should not have done wiser to have gone thither and spent our day there. And so to our excellent coffee and bread, and then back to Paris.

II

Chartres, May 10th, 1862.

WE were quite worn out with the ever increasing noise of Paris ; or, perhaps, I should rather say, as the heat became greater, so our necessity for open windows by day and by night increased; and the masons opposite rose to their work with the early morning light. So we determined to go off to Brittany for our few remaining days, having a sort of happy mixture of the ideas of sea, heath, rocks, ferns, and Madame de Sevigne in our heads. The one and first destined point in our plans being to see the cathedral at Chartres.

We left Paris about three o'clock, and went past several stations, the names of which reminded us of Madame de Sevigne's time—Rambouillet, perhaps, the most of all. The station is some distance from the town of Chartres, which, like so many French provincial towns, consists of a ' Place ,' and a few appendent streets. The magnificent cathedral stands a little

aloof; we left it on one side as we came in an omnibus up to our hotel, which looked on to the Place. But, alas for my hopes of a quiet night! The space before the house is filled with booths—dancing booths, acting booths, wild-beast shows, music booths, each and all making their own separate and distinct noises; the 'touter' to one booth sitting in front of it and blowing a trumpet as hard as any angel in the old pictures; the hero of the theatrical booth walking backwards and forwards in front of his stage, and ranting away in King Cambyse's vein; the lions and tigers are raging with hunger, to judge from their roars; and the musicians are in the full burst of the overture to *OuUlaume Tell*. Mary and Irene have gone out, in spite of it all, to have a peep at the cathedral before it is too dark; and I have chosen our bedrooms. If the lion only knew it, he could easily make a spring into our balcony; but I hope, as he is great, he will be stupid. I have rung the bell, and rung the bell, and gone out in the corridor and called; and, at last, I shall have to go downstairs to try and find some one to bring up the meal which I have promised the others they shall find ready on their return, I have been and found Madame, and laid my complaint before her. She says the servants are all gone out to see the shows in the Place, which is very wicked in them; but I suspect, from her breathless way of speaking, she has only just rushed in herself to see that I am not running away with the house. I fancy I am the only person in it. She assures me, with true French volubility, that she will send up some coffee and bread directly, and will scold Jeannette well.

May 11th.—Mary and Irene returned from the cathedral last night before anything was ready, and were too full of the extraordinary architectural magnificence they had seen to care about my Martha-like troubles. But I had not seen the cathedral, and I was hungry if they were not. I went down again, and this time I found Madame in full tilt against an unfortunate woman, who looked as if she had been captured, *vi et armis*, out of the open-air gaiety and the pleasant

company of friends in the Place. She brought us up our meal with sullen speed, giving me occasionally such scowls of anger that I almost grew afraid at the feeling I had provoked. Yet she refused to be soothed by our little expressions of admiration for the fair, and our questions as to what was to be seen. Her only attempt at an apology was a sort of grumbling soliloquy to the effect that ladies who knew what was *comme il faut* would never have gone out so late in the evening of a *jour de fete* to walk about the town; and that, as Mary and Irene had done this improper thing, there was no knowing when, if ever, they would return. I wish she had let us try to comfort her, for I really was very sorry to have dragged a poor creature back from what was, perhaps, the great enjoyment of the year. After our coffee we went to bed; and I am not at all sure if we were not, for some hours, the only occupants of the hotel. But the lion did not take advantage of his opportunity, though we were obliged to leave the windows open for the heat. This morning we went to see the cathedral. It is so wonderfully beautiful that no words can describe it. I am thoroughly glad we came by Chartres.

May 12th.—*Vitre*—We came on here yesterday afternoon. Irene, who is the most wide-awake person I know, sat upright in the railway carriage, looking out of the window with eager intelligent eyes, and noting all she saw. It was a *fete* day; and at all the little cabarets, with their wayside gardens, there were groups of peasants in their holiday dress, drinking what appeared to be cider, from its being in large stone bottles, and eating *galette*—a sort of flat cake of puff-paste, dusted over with powdered sugar, with which we had become well acquainted in Paris. The eating and drinking seemed, however, to be rather an excuse for sitting round well-scoured tables in the open air, than an object in itself. I sank back in my seat in a lazy, unobservant frame of mind, when Irene called out, 'Oh, look! there is a peasant in the goat-skin dress one reads about; we must be in Brittany now, look,

look !' I had to sit up again and be on the alert; all the time thinking how bad for the brain it was to be straining one's attention perpetually after the fast-flitting objects to be seen through a railway carriage window. This is a very good theory; but it did not quite hold water in practice. Irene was as bright as ever when we stopped at Vitro"; I was tired and stupid. Perhaps the secret was, that I did unwillingly what she did with pleasure. The station at Vitre is a little outside the town, and is smart and new and in apple-pie order, as a station on a line that has to make its character ought to be. The town, on the contrary, is ancient, picturesque, and deserted. There have been fortified walls all round it, but these are now broken down in many places, and small hovels have been built of the debris wherever this is the case, giving one the impression of a town stuffed too full, which has burst its confines and run over. Yet inside the walls there are many empty houses, and many grand fortified dwellings, with coats of arms emblazoned over the doorway, which are only half-occupied. All the little world of the town seemed to be at the railway station, and everybody welcomed us with noise and advice. The inn down in our ten-years-old Murray no longer existed ; so we were glad to be told of the Hotel Sevigne, although we suspected it to be a mere trick of a name. Not at all. We are really veritably lodged in the very house she occupied when she left Les Rochers to come and do the honours of Vitre to the Governor of Brittany—the Due de Chaulnes. Our hotel is the Tour de SeVign6 of her letters. On being told this, I asked for the tower itself. It had been pulled down only a year or two before in order to make the great rambling mansion more compact as an hotel. As it was, they had changed the main entrance from back to front; and to arrive at it, we had to go over a great piece of vacant irregular ground, the inequalities of which were caused by the debris of the tower. The place belongs to the Marquis de Nethumieres, a descendant of the de Sevignes, so our host said. At any rate, he lives at Les Rochers, and

owns our hotel. It seems as though our landlord had not had capital enough to furnish the whole of this immense, far-stretching house, which is entered in the middle of the building with long corridors to the right and to the left, both upstairs and downstairs—corridors so wide and well lighted by the numerous windows looking to the back (or town-side), that they are used as store-rooms and sculleries. Here there are great sacks of corn and unpacked boxes of possible groceries ; there a girl sits and sings as she mends the house-linen by a window, apparently diligent enough, but perfectly aware, all the time, that the ostler in the yard below is trying to attract her attention; and there, again, a woman is standing, shoulders square, to an open window, ' topping and tailing ' a basket of gooseberries, and shouting out her part of a conversation with some one unseen in the yard below. Yet the great corridor looks empty and strangely deserted. Somehow, I suppose that as soon as I heard the name of Tour de Seigne, I expected to see a fair, plump lady, in hanging sleeves and long light-brown ringlets, walking before me wherever I went, half-turning her pretty profile over her white shoulder to say something bright and playful; and instead, we follow our rather spruce landlord into the bedrooms at the end of the corridor, and coolly order our dinner for this day of May, 1862. The rooms in this house are not large, but so very lofty, that I suspect that the panelled partition walls are but later wooden divisions of larger rooms, and so, on tapping, we find to be the case. My window looks out on the country outside the town ; Irene's is just on the opposite side, and she sees roofs of deeply furrowed tiles—roofs of every possible angle and shape, but mostly high pitched; they are covered with golden and grey lichens which tone down the old original red. There are broad gutters round the verge of every one, regular cats' Pall Malls. And see, there is an old black grimalkin coming round yonder corner, with meek and sleepy gait, of course entirely unconscious of the flock of pigeons towards which she is advancing with her

velvet steps. They strut and pout and ruffle themselves up, turning their pretty soft plumage to the sun till they catch the rainbow tints ; and whiff—they are all off in mid-air, and the hypocritical cat has to go on walking in the gutter as if pigeons had been the last thing in her thoughts when she made that playful spring round the corner. How picturesque the old town looks beyond, though, to be sure, we see little besides roofs—the streets must be so narrow. Let us make haste and have our meal, and go out before the sun sets. Pigeons for dinner ! Ah, Pussy, we begin to have a fellow-feeling for you.

May 13th.—We have had a busy day, but a very pleasant one. In the first place, we had a long talk with our landlord about the possibility of seeing Les Rochers. The Marquis was very strict about not letting it be shown without his permission, and he and Madame were known to be at Rennes ; so we thought of giving it up. Then our landlord turned round in his opinions, and said that doubtless the Marquis and Madame would be very sorry for any foreigners to come so far on a bootless errand ; and so—after a good many pro's and con's, we always following our landlord's lead, and agreeing to all that he said, in hopes of getting to the end of the discussion—we made a bargain for a little conveyance—half Irish car, half market cart, which was to take us to Les Rochers, and to stay there as long as we liked. Who so merry as we this bright dewy May morning, cramped up in our jolting, rattling carriage, the fourth place occupied by sketch-books and drawing materials ? First, we rattled along the narrow streets of Vitre ; the first floors of the houses are propped up upon black beams of wood, making a rude sort of colonnade, under which people walk ; something like Chester—and then we passed out of the old turretted gate of the town, into the full and pleasant light of early morning. We began to climb a hill, the road winding round Vitre, till we peeped down upon the irregular roofs and stacks of chimneys pent in the circular walls ; and we saw the remains of the old

castle, inhabited by the Due and Duchesse de Chaulnes, in the days when Madame de Sevigne came to stay at the 'Tour' and show hospitality to her Paris friends in that barbarous region. And now we were on a high level, driving along pretty wooded lanes, with here and there a country chateau or manor house, surrounded by orchards on either side of us. Towards one of these our driver pointed. It was low and gabled; I have seen a hundred such in England. 'That is the old house of the de la Tremouilles,' said he. And then we began to think of a daughter of that house who had been transplanted by marriage into England, and was known in English history and romance, as Charlotte, the heroic Countess of Derby. By this time we had made great friends with our driver, by admiring his brisk little Breton pony, and asking him various questions about Breton cows. Suddenly he turned into a field-road on our left; and in three minutes we were in full sight of Les Rochers. We got down, and looked about us. We were on the narrow side of an oblong of fine delicate grass; on our right were peaked-roofed farm buildings, granaries, barns, stables, and cow-houses; opposite to us, a thick wood, showing dark in the sunlight; in the corner to our left was the house, with tourelles and towers, and bits of high-roof, and small irregular doors; a much larger and grander building than I had expected; very like the larger castles in Scotland. Then quite on our right was the low wall, and ha-ha of the gardens, and the bridge over the ha-ha, and the richly-worked iron gates. We turned round; we were at the edge of the rising ground which fell rather abruptly from this point into a rich smiling plain—the Bocage country, in fact. We could see far away for miles and miles, till it all melted into the blue haze of distance. Our driver took out his horse, and went to make friends with the farm-servants, who had turned out with lazy curiosity to look at the strangers. We sat down on the ground; the turf **was** fine and delicate, and the little flowerets interspersed were all of such kinds as tell of a lime soil and of pure air.

There were larks up above, right in the depth of the blue sky, singing as if they would crack their throats for **joy**; the sort of open farmyard before us was full of busy, prosperous poultry of all kinds—hens clucking up their large broods of chickens, cocks triumphantly summoning their wives to the feast before the barn door, fussy turkeys strutting and gobbling, and flocks of pigeons now basking on the roof, now fluttering down to the ground. There were dogs baying in **the** unseen background to add to the various noises. I never saw **a** place so suggestive of the ideas of peace and plenty. There were cows, too, tethered in the dusky shadows of the open cow-houses, with heaps of cut green food before them. Our plan was to sketch first, and then to try to see the house. Now and then a servant in rather clumsy livery, or a maid in the country dress of Brittany, went across the space, to have a little talk with the farm-servants, and a side-long look at us. At last an old man in a blue blouse came out from the group near the barn door, and slowly approaching, sat himself down on a hillock near. Of course we began to talk, seeing his sociable intentions; and he told us he was a de la Roux, and had relations * in London '. I fancied he might mean the de la Rues, but he corrected my misspelling with some indignation, and again asked me if I did not know his relations in London—the de la Roux. Ah yes! they were noble, he was noble; his ancestors had been as great as the ancestors of the Marquis yonder, but they had taken the wrong side in the wars; and here was he, their grandchild, obliged to work for his daily bread. We sighed out of sympathy with his sighs, and amplified the text, * Sic transit,' &c. Then he offered us a pinch of snuff, which **we** took, and sneezed accordingly; and this afforded our old friend much amusement. To wind up this little story all at once—when we were going **away**, we demurred as to whether we could venture to offer **a de la Roux a couple of francs**, or whether it would not seem like an insult to his noble **blood**. **The wisdom of age carried the day** against

the romance of youth, and was justified in seeing the eager eyes in the worn sharp face watching the first initiatory sign of a forthcoming gift with trembling satisfaction. How pleasant the long, quiet morning was ! A cloud-shadow passing over us, a horse coming too near with its loud champing of the sweet herbage, our only disturbance; while before us the evident leisure for gossip, and signs of plenty to eat, filled up the idea of rural happiness. Then we went and saw the house, and the portraits, and passed out of the window into the garden—like all French gardens—with neglected grass, and stone fountains, and cut yews and cypresses, and a profusion of lovely flowers, roses especially. We were all very sorry to come away.

Early this evening, Mary and Irene went out to sketch, and planted themselves down in a street already occupied by picturesque booths and open-air shops for pottery, men's clothes, and the really serviceable articles for country use. It seems it was the market-day at Vitre; and it was very pretty to watch the young housewives in their best attire, bargaining and hesitating over their purchases. Their dress was invariably a gown of some bright-coloured cotton, a handkerchief of the same material, but a different colour, crossed over the breast *à la Marie Antoinette*, and a large apron, with a bib of a third hue almost covering the petticoat, and confining and defining the bust. They rang the changes on turkey red, bright golden brown, and full dark blue. Indeed, the dark narrow streets, with their colonnades, black with the coming shadows, needed this relief of colour. The little boys of Vitre, let loose from school, came clustering round about our sketchers. It was certainly a great temptation to the lads ; but they came too close, and entirely obstructed the view, and only laughed, at first shyly, afterwards a little rudely, at my remonstrances. I applied to a *gendarme*, slowly coming down the street, but he only shrugged his shoulders with the hopeless beginning of '*Que voulez-vous, Madame!* I am not here to impede the concourse of children,' and

passed on. Just at this moment a stout woman selling men's clothes in the open street close by, observed the dilemma, and came to the rescue. She wielded a pair of good strong fustian trousers, and scolded in right down earnest—and also in right down good humour, casting her weapon about her with considerable dexterity, so as to make it answer the purpose of a cat-o'-nine-tails. And thus she cleared a circle for us; and whenever she saw us too much crowded she came again; and the lads laughed, and wo laughed, and we all ended capital friends. By and by she began to pack up her stock of clothes: she had a cart brought to her by her husband, and first she took down the poles of her booth, and then the awning, then the impromptu counter came to pieces, and lastly the coats and trousers, the blouses and jackets, were packed into great sacks. And she was on the point of departure—being, as we afterwards heard, a pedlaress who made the circuit of the markets in the district with her wares—when I thought that the only civility I could offer her was to show her the drawings that Mary and Irene had made, thanks to her well-timed interposition. She swore many a good round oath to enforce her admiration of the sketches, and called her little obedient husband to look at them; but on his failing to recognize some object, she gave him a good cuff on the ear, apologizing to us for his stupidity. I do not think he liked her a bit the less for this conduct.

May 4th.—We have decided to return to England to see the Exhibition. We are going by Fougères, Pont Orson, Mont St. Michel, Avranches, Caen, and Rouen; and by that time we shall have made an agreeable 'loop' of a little journey, full of objects of interest.

February 16th, 1863.—Again in Paris! and, as I remember a young English girl saying with great delight, 'we need never be an evening at home!' But her visions were of balls; our possibilities are the very pleasant ones of being allowed to go in on certain evenings of the week to the houses of different friends,

sure to find them at home ready to welcome any who may come in. Thus, on Mondays, Madame de Circourt receives; Tuesdays, Madame——; Wednesdays, Madame de M——; Thursdays, Monsieur G——, and so on. There is no preparation of entertainment; a few more lights, perhaps a Baba, or cake savouring strongly of rum, and a little more tea is provided. Every one is welcome, and no one is expected. The visitors may come dressed just as they would be at home; or in full toilette, on their way to balls and other gaieties. They go without any formal farewell; whence, I suppose, our expression, 'French leave.' Of course the agreeableness of these informal receptions depends on many varying circumstances, and I doubt if they would answer in England. A certain talent is required in the hostess; and this talent is not kindness of heart, or courtesy, or wit, or cleverness, but that wonderful union of all these qualities, with a dash of intuition besides, which we call tact. Madame R^{ac}amier had it in perfection. Her wit or cleverness was of the passive or receptive order; she appreciated much, and originated little. But she had the sixth sense, which taught her when to speak, and when to be silent. She drew out other people's powers by her judicious interest in what they said; she came in with sweet words before the shadow of a coming discord was perceived. It could not have been all art; it certainly was not all nature. As I have said, invitations are not given for these evenings. Madame receives on Tuesdays. Any one may go. But there are temptations for special persons which can be skilfully thrown out. You may say in the hearing of one whom you wish to attract, 'I expect M. Guizot will be with us on Tuesday, he is just come back to Paris,'—and the bait is pretty sure to take: and of course you can vary your fly with your fish. Yet, in spite of all experience and all chances, some houses are invariably dull. The people who would be dreary at home, go to be dreary there. The gay, bright spirits are always elsewhere; or perhaps come in, make their bows to the hostess, glance round

the room, and quietly vanish. I cannot make out why this is; but so it is.

But a delightful reception, which will never take place again—a more than charming hostess, whose virtues, which were the real source of her charms, have ere this 'been planted in our Lord's garden,'—awaited us to-night. In this one case I must be allowed to chronicle a name—that of Madame de Circourt—so well known, so fondly loved, and so deeply respected. Of her accomplished husband, still among us, I will for that reason say nothing, excepting that it was, to all appearances, the most happy and congenial marriage I have ever seen. Madame de Circourt was a Russian by birth, and possessed that gift for languages which is almost a national possession. This was the immediate means of her obtaining the strong regard and steady friendship of so many distinguished men and women of different countries. You will find her mentioned as a dear and valued friend in several memoirs of the great men of the time. I have heard an observant Englishman, well qualified to speak, say she was the cleverest woman he ever knew. And I have also heard one, who is a saint for goodness, speak of Madame de Circourt's piety and benevolence and tender kindness, as unequalled among any women she had ever known. I think it is Dekker who speaks of our Saviour as 'the first true gentleman that ever lived.' We may choose to be shocked at the freedom of expression used by the old dramatist: but is it not true? Is not Christianity the very core of the heart of all gracious courtesy? I am sure it was so with Madame de Circourt. There never was a house where the weak and dull and humble got such kind and unobtrusive attention, or felt so happy and at home. There never was a place that I heard of, where learning and genius and worth were more truly appreciated, and felt more sure of being understood. I have said that I will not speak of the living; but of course every one must perceive that this state could not have existed without the realization of the old epithet—

They were so one, it never could be said
Which of them ruled, and which of them obeyed.
There was between them but this one dispute,
'Twas which the other's will should execute.

In the prime of life, in the midst of her healthy relish for all social and intellectual pleasures, Madame de Circourt met with a terrible accident; her dress caught fire, she was fearfully burnt, lingered long and long on a sick-bed, and only arose from it with nerves and constitution shattered for life. Such a trial was enough, both mentally and physically, to cause that form of egotism which too often takes possession of chronic invalids, and which depresses not only their spirits, but the spirits of all who come near them. Madame de Circourt was none of these folks. Her sweet smile was perhaps a shade less bright; but it was quite as ready. She could not go about to serve those who needed her; but, unable to move without much assistance, she sat at her writing-table, thinking and working for others still. She could never again seek out the shy or the slow or the awkward; but, with a pretty beckoning movement of her hand, she could draw them near her, and make them happy with her gentle sensible words. She would no more be seen in gay brilliant society; but she had a very active sympathy with the young and the joyful who mingled in it; could plan their dresses for them; would take pains to obtain a supply of pleasant partners at a ball to which a young foreigner was going; and only two or three days before her unexpected death—for she had suffered patiently for so long that no one knew how near the end was—she took much pains to give a great pleasure to a young girl of whom she knew very little, but who, I trust, will never forget her.

I could not help interrupting the course of my diary to pay this tribute to Madame de Circourt's memory. At the end of February, 1863, many were startled with a sudden pang of grief. 'Have you heard? Madame de Circourt is dead!' 'Dead!—why, we were at her house not a week ago!' * And I had a note from her

only two days ago, about a poor woman,' &c. And then the cry was ' Oh, her poor husband ! who has lived but for her, who has watched over her so constantly !'

We were at her house not a fortnight before, and met the pretty gay people all dressed out for a Carnival ball at the Russian Embassy. The whole thing looked unreal. They came and showed themselves in their brilliant costumes, exchanged a witticism or a compliment, and then flitted away to exhibit themselves elsewhere, and left the room to a few quiet, middle-aged, or quieter people. A lady was introduced to me, whose name I recognized, although I could not at the moment remember where I had heard it before. She looked, as she was, a French Marquise. I forget how much her dress was in full costume, but she had much the air of a picture of the date of Louis XV. After she was gone I recollected where I had heard the name. She was the present lady of Les Rochers, whose ancient manor-house we had visited in Brittany the year before. Instead of a Parisian drawing-room, full of scented air, brilliant with light, through which the gay company of high-born revellers had just passed, the bluff of land overlooking the Bocage rose before me, the short sweet turf on which we lay, fragrant with delicate flowers; the grey-turretted manor-house, with here and there a faint yellow splash of colour on the lichen-tinted walls ; the pigeons wheeling in the air above the high dovecot; the country servants in their loosely-fitting, much-belaced liveries; and old de la Roux in his blouse, shambling around us, with his horn snuff-box and story of ancestral grandeur. I told M. de Circourt of our visit to Brittany, and in return he gave me the following curious anecdote:—An uncle of his was the General commanding the Western district of France in or about 1816. He had a Montmorenci for his aide-de-camp ; and on one of his tours of inspection the General and aide were guests at Les Rochers. They were to have left their hospitable quarters the next day; but in the morning the General said to M. de Montmorenci

that their host **had** pressed him to remain there another night, which he found, on inquiry, would be perfectly convenient for his plans, and therefore he had determined to accept the invitation. M. de Montmorenci, however, to the General's surprise, begged to be allowed to go and sleep at Vitre; and, on the General's inquiring what could be his reason for making such a request, he said that he had not been properly lodged; that the bedroom assigned to him was not one befitting a Montmorenci. 'How so?' said the General. 'Did they put you in a garret? Bachelors have often to put up with rough quarters when a house is full of visitors.' 'No, sir; I was on the ground-floor. My room was spacious and good enough; but it was that which had once belonged to Madame de Sevigne.'

M. de Montmorenci after he had said this, looked as though he had given a full explanation; but the General was rather more perplexed than before.

'Well! and why should you object to sleeping in the room which once belonged to Madame Sevigne? From all accounts she was a very pretty, charming woman: and certainly she wrote delightful letters.'

'Pardon me, sir, but it appears to me that you forget that Madame de Sevigne was a Jansenist, and that I am a Montmorenci, of the family of the first Baron of Christendom.'

The young man was afraid of the contamination of heresy that might be lingering in the air of the room. There are old rooms in certain houses shut up since the days of the great plague, which are not to be opened for the world. I hope that certain Fellows' rooms in Balliol may be hermetically sealed, when their present occupants leave them, lest a worse thing than the plague may infect the place.

February 21st.—All this evening I have been listening to fragmentary recollections of the Reign of Terror, told us by two ladies of high distinction. One of them said that her remembrances of that time would have **a peculiar** value, as she was then **only a child** of five or six years of age; and could not have attempted at that

age to join her fragments together by any theory, however wild and improbable. She could simply recall what struck on her senses as extraordinary and unprecedented. I think the first thing she named was her indignation at seeing her mother assume a servant's dress, as she then thought. Evidently it had been considered advisable that Madame de——should set aside all outward sign of superior rank or riches, and put on the clothes of what we should now call a 'working-woman .' The next thing my friend remembered was the temporary absence of her father ; who must have been arrested on suspicion, and, strange to say, in those days, released, but kept under strict surveillance. During his absence from home all the servants were dismissed, excepting the child's *bonne*. They lived in an apartment in the Place Vendome, and there was grass in the centre of the Place ; what we, in England, should call a 'green', I should imagine. When her father returned home two men came with him. They were 'citizens' told off to keep a watch upon M. de ——'s movements. The little girl looked upon them as rude, vulgar men (she was a true little aristocrat, in fact), and wondered and chafed at her mother's trembling civility to these two fellows. They sat in the drawing-room, lolled in the best satin-cushioned chairs, smoked their pipes, and the dainty mother never upbraided them! It was very inexplicable. Madame cooked the family dinner; and probably did not do it remarkably well, even though she was a Frenchwoman. One day, one of the two citizen-guards, rinding the idleness of his life in the drawing-room wearisome, or seized with a fit of good nature, offered to turn cook. I think it was imagined he had been a cook somewhere under the old regime. And after he had found for himself this congenial appointment, his fellow-guard offered to knit stockings for the family, and to sit in the *salle-a-manger*, through which every one going in or out of the salon must pass. Either he or the cook left whatever they were about to accompany Monsieur le Suspect whenever he made any signs of wanting to go

out. But altogether, and considering the office they held, they were not disobliging inmates, after their first jealousy of neglect was soothed. Another circumstance which Madame de———had observed was her mother's silence and depression of spirits at a particular hour. As sure as eleven o'clock drew near, the poor lady ceased talking to her little girl, and listened. Then by and by came a horrid heavy rumble in the distant streets; clearer and clearer it sounded, advancing slowly, then turning, and dying away into a sudden stop. This ominous noise was the more recognizable because of the general silence of Paris streets at that time. The carriage of the Prosecutor General, Fouquier-Tinville, was the only one that rolled about pretty much as it did in former years; any other was put down for fear lest it might be considered a mark of *aristocracy*. But the diurnal heavy sound at which the poor lady grew pale and crossed herself and prayed, was the Charrette with its daily tale of forty or fifty victims, going to the Place Louis XV. From the Place Vendome a sort of lane between two dead walls led down to the gardens of the Tuileries. These walls bounded the respective gardens of the convents of the Feuillants and the Jacobins, which gave their names to the different political parties that met in the deserted buildings. Indeed, the iron gate leading into the Tuileries Gardens opposite to the end of the Rue Castiglione is still called the Porte des Feuillants. Along this dreary walled-in lane Madame de———was taken by her *bonne* for a daily walk in the Palace Gardens. I asked her how it was that her parents *in* sending their child for her exercise into these Gardens did not dread the chance of her being shocked by the sights and sounds in the adjoining Place Louis XV. She replied that in those days there was a row of irregular, unshapely buildings at the farther end of the Gardens, completely shutting out the Place. Every one about the court who fancied that **the** erection of any edifice would add to his convenience, ordered it to be built at the end of the Gardens, **at the national expense; and thus** there was a very **sufficient**

screen between the Gardens and the Place. Besides, added her friend, Madame de St. A——, it was terrible to think how soon people are familiarized with horror ; terrible in one sense—merciful in another; for otherwise how could persons have kept their senses in those days ? She said that her husband, M. de St. A——, when a boy of ten or twelve, was only saved from being shut up with his parents and all the rest of his family in the Abbaye by the faithful courage of an old servant, who carried the little fellow off to his garret in the Faubourg St. Antoine. Of course this was done at the risk of the man's life, harbouring a suspected aristocrat being almost as criminal as being an aristocrat yourself. The little lad pined in the necessary confinement of his refuge ; the close air, the difference of food, the anxiety about his father and mother, all told upon his health ; and the man, his protector, seeing this, began to cast about him for some amusement and relaxation for the boy. So once a week he took the boy, well disguised, out for a walk. Where to, do you think ? To the Place Louis XV to see the guillotine at work on the forty or fifty victims ! The delicate little boy shrank and sickened at the sight ; yet tried to conquer all signs of his terror and loathing, partly out of regard to the man who had run so much risk in saving him, partly out of an instinctive consciousness that in those times of excitement, and among that impulsive race, his very friend and protector might have a sudden irritation against him, if he saw the boy's repugnance to the fearful exhibition, and might there and then denounce him as a little enemy to the public safety. And again, and also to mark the apathy as to life, and the wild excitement which people took in witnessing the deadly terror and sufferings of others, Madame de St. A——went on to say that her husband's family, to the number of six, were imprisoned in the Abbaye, and made part of that strange sad company who lived there, and resigned themselves to their fate by keeping up that mockery of **the society they had** enjoyed in happier days: visiting **each other**, carrying on amusements and etiquette with

dignity and composure; and when the day's list of victims was read out by the gaoler, bidding farewell to those who still bided their time with quiet dignity and composure. **One** morning the gaoler's daughter, a bonny, good-tempered girl of fourteen or fifteen, who was a favourite with all that sad company, came instead of her father to read out the list of those for whom at that very minute the tumbril was waiting outside the gate. Every one of the six members of the St. A——family were named. It was well; no one would remain in bitter solitude awaiting their day. One after another rose up, and bade the remaining company their solemn, quiet farewell, and followed the girl out of the door into the corridor, through another door, and then she stopped; she had not the key of the next. She turned round and laughed at those who were following her with the glee of one who had performed a capital practical joke. * Have not you all been well taken in? Was it not a good trick? Look! it is only a blank sheet of paper. The list has not come yet. You may all go back again!' And their names, by some good fortune, were never placed on the lists; and the death of Robespierre set them free. The conversation then turned upon the marvel it was now to think upon the immunity which Robespierre seemed to enjoy from all chances of assassination. There was no appearance of precaution in either his dress or his movements. His hours of going out and coming in were punctiliously regular; his methodical habits known to any one who cared to inquire. At a certain time of day he might be seen by crowds issuing forth from his house in the Rue St. Honore, dressed with the utmost nicety, neither hurried in gait, nor casting any suspicious glances around him. His secretary, so said my friends, was alive not more than twenty years ago; living in an apartment in the Quartier Latin, which he seldom left for any purpose. He had learnt to avoid all public notice at the time of his master's death; **and long** after most of those were dead who **might have recognized** him, the old **man** lived on in the seclusion of

his rooms ; maintaining to the few who cared to visit him his belief that Robespierre was a conscientious if a mistaken man. Then my friend Madame de—— took up the tale of her childish remembrances, and told us that the next thing she remembered clearly was her terror when, one day, being at the window, she saw a wild mob come dancing and raging, shouting, laughing, and yelling into the Place Vendome, with red nightcaps on their heads, their shirt-sleeves stripped up above the elbows, their hands and arms discoloured and red. Her mother, shuddering, drew the child away before she saw more ; and the two cowered together in the farther corner of the room till the infernal din died away in the distance. The following summer, or so she thought it was—it was hot, bright weather at any rate—some order was given, or terrific hint whispered—she knew not what, but her parents and all the inhabitants of the houses in the Place had their tables spread in the open air, and took their meals *al fresco*, joined at pleasure by any of the Carmagnoles who chanced to be passing by, dressed much as those whom I have just mentioned as having so terrified the little girl and her mother. This enforced hospitality was considered a mark of good citizenship ; and woe be to those who shrank from such companionship at their board !

March 1st.—To-night, at home, the conversation turned upon English and French marriages. As several Frenchmen of note who had married English wives were present (and one especially, whose mother also was English, and who can use either tongue with equal eloquence), the discussion was based on tolerably correct knowledge. Most of those present objected strongly to the English way of bringing up the daughters of wealthy houses in all the luxurious habits of their fathers' homes. Their riding-horses, their maids, their affluence of amusement; when, if the question of marriage arose—say to a young man of equal birth and education, but who had his way to make in the world—the father of the young lady could rarely pay any money down. It was even doubtful if he could make

her an annual allowance; hardly ever one commensurate with the style in which she had been accustomed to live. In all probability a younger child's portion would be hers when her father died; when either the two lovers had given up all thoughts of uniting their fates, or when perhaps they no longer needed it, having had force of character enough to face poverty together, and had won their way upwards to competence. The tardy five or ten thousand pounds would have been invaluable once, that comes too late to many a one; so they said. They added that the luxurious habits of English girls, and the want of due provision for them on the part of their fathers, made both children and parents anxious and worldly in the matter of wedlock. The girls knew that as soon as their fathers died they must quit their splendid houses, and give up much of those habits and ways which had become necessary to them; and their parents knew this likewise; and hence the unwomanly search for rich husbands on the part of the mothers and daughters, which they maintained the existence of in England. Now, said our French friends, look at a household in our country; in every rank it is the custom to begin to put by a marriage portion for a girl as soon as she is born. A father would think he was neglecting a duty if he failed to do this, just as much as if he starved the little creature. Our girls are brought up simply; luxury and extravagance with us belong to the married women. When his daughter is eighteen or twenty, a good father begins to look about him, and inquire the characters of the different young men of his acquaintance. He observes them, or his wife does so still more efficiently; and when they have settled that such a youth will suit their daughter, they name the portion they can give their child to the young man's father or to some common friend. In reply, they are possibly informed that Monsieur Alphonse's education has cost so much; that he is now an avocat in a fair way to earn a considerable income, but at present unable to marry unless the young lady can contribute her share, not merely her pin-money, but a bona-fide share towards

the joint expenses of housekeeping. Or he is a son of a man of property—property somewhat involved at present, but could it be released from embarrassment by the payment of an immediate sum of money, his father would settle a certain present income upon **the** young people, and so on. My friends said that there was no doubt whatever that if, after these preliminary matters of business were arranged, either the young man or the girl did not entirely like each other on more intimate acquaintance, the proposed marriage would fall through in the majority of French families, and no undue influence would be employed to compel either party into what they disliked. But in general the girl has never been allowed to be on intimate terms with any one, till her parents' choice steps forward and is allowed by them to court her notice. And as for the young fellow, it has been easy for him to see enough of the young lady to know whether he can fancy her or not, before it comes to the point when it is necessary that he should take any individually active steps in the affair,

III

Paris, March 2nd, 1863.

STAYING here in a French family, I get glimpses of life for which I am not prepared by any previous reading of French romances, or even by former visits to Paris, when I remained in an hotel frequented by English, and close to the street which seems to belong almost exclusively to them. The prevalent English idea of French society is that it is very brilliant, thoughtless, and dissipated; that family life and domestic affections are almost unknown, and that the sense of religion is confined to mere formalities. Now I will give you two glimpses which I have had: one into the more serious side of Protestant, the other into the under-current of Roman Catholic life. The friend with whom I am staying belongs to a 'Dizaine', that is to say, she is one of ten Protestant ladies, who group themselves **into** this number in order to meet together at regular

intervals of time, and bring before each other's consideration any cases of distress they may have met with. There are numbers of these 'Dizaines' in Paris; and now as to what I saw of the working' of this plan. One of their principles is to give as little money as possible in the shape of 'raw material', but to husband their resources so as to provide employment by small outlays of capital in such cases as they find on inquiry to prove deserving. Thus women of very moderate incomes find it perfectly agreeable to belong to the same 'Dizaine' as the richest lady in the Faubourg St. Germain. But what all are expected to render is personal service of some kind; and in these services people of various degrees of health and strength can join: the invalid who cannot walk far, or even she who is principally confined to the sofa, can think and plan and write letters; the strong can walk, and use bodily exertion. They try to raise the condition of one or two families at a time—to raise their condition into self-supporting independence. For instance, the *Dizaine' I am acquainted with had brought before their notice the case of a sick shoemaker, and found him, upon inquiry, living in a room on the fifth floor of one of those high, dark, unclean houses which lie behind the eastern end of the Rue Jacob. Up the noisome, filthy staircase—badly lighted and frequented by most disreputable people—to the close, squalid room in which the man lay bed-ridden, did the visitors from the 'Dizaine' toil. He was irritable and savage. I think the English poor are generally depressed and sullen under starvation and neglect; but the French are too apt to become fierce even to those who would fain help them; or it might be illness in the case of this man. His wife was a poor patient creature, whose spirit and intelligence seemed pressed out of her by extreme sorrow, and who had neither strength of mind nor body to enable her to make more of an effort than to let on© of the 'Dizaine' know of the case. There were children, too, scrofulous from bad air and poor living. The medical men say, that the diseases arising from this

insidious taint are much more common **in Paris than in London.** Well, this case was grave matter of consideration for the 'Dizaine'; and the end of the deliberation was this:—One lady undertook to go and seek out a lodging in the same quarter as that in which the shoemaker lived at present, but with more air, more light, and a cleaner, sweeter approach. It was a bad neighbourhood; but it was that in which the family had taken root, and it would have occasioned too great a wrench from all their previous habits and few precious affections, to pull them up by force, and transplant them to an entirely different soil. Another lady undertook to seek out among her acquaintance for a subscriber to a certain sea-bathing charity at Dieppe, who could give an order to the poor little boy who was the worst victim to scrofula. An invalid said that while awaiting this order she would see that some old clothes of her own prosperous child should be altered and arranged so that the little cripple should go to Dieppe decently provided. Some one knew a leather merchant, and spoke of getting a small stock of leather at wholesale prices; while all these ladies declared they would give some employment to the shoemaker himself; and I *know* that they—great ladies as one or two of them were—toiled up the noisome staircase, **and** put their delicate little feet up on to the bed where he lay, in order to give him the cheerful comfort of employment again. I suppose this was disturbing the regular course of labour; but I do not fancy that cases of this kind are so common as to greatly affect the more prosperous tradespeople. The last I heard of this shoemaker was, that he was in a (comparatively) healthy lodging; his wife more cheerful, he himself slightly sarcastic instead of positively fierce, and (still bed-ridden) managing to earn a tolerable livelihood by making shoes to be sold ready-made in the American market; a piece of permanent employment procured for him through the instrumentality of the 'Dizaine'. Of course these **ladies, being human, have their foibles and faults. Their meetings are apt to become gossipy, and they**

require the firm handling of some superior woman to keep them to the subject and business in hand. Occasional bickerings as to the best way of managing a case, or as to the case most deserving of immediate assistance, will occur; and may be blamed or ridiculed by those who choose rather to see blemishes in execution than to feel righteousness of design. The worst that can be said is, that 'Dizaines' (like all ladies' committees I ever knew) are the better for having one or two men among them. And some of them at least are most happy and fortunate in being able to refer for counsel and advice to M. Jules Simon, whose deep study of the condition of the workwoman (*Pouvrière*) in France, and the best remedies to be applied to her besetting evils—whose general, wise, and loving knowledge of the life of the labouring classes, empower him to judge wisely on the various cases submitted to him.

Now as to my glimpse into Roman Catholic wisdom and goodness in Paris. Not long ago—it is probably still going on—there was a regular service held in the crypt under St. Sulpice for very poor workmen, immediately after the grand (high) mass. It was almost what we should call a 'ragged church.' They listened to no regular sermon on abstract virtues,* but among them stood the priest, with his crucifix, speaking to them in their own homely daily language—speaking of brotherly love, of self-sacrifice, like that of which he held the symbol in his hands—of the temptations to which they were exposed in their various trades and daily lives, using even the technical words, so that every man felt as if his own individual soul was being entreated. And by and by there was a quiet for those still poorer, still more helpless and desolate than themselves; many of them of course could not give even the sous, or the five-centime piece. But after that the priest went round, speaking low and softly to each individual, and asking each what effort, what sacrifice he could make' in the name of the Lord.' One said he could sit up with a sick neighbour who needed watching in the night; another offered a day's wages

for the keep of the family of the incapacitated man; the priest suggested to a third that he and his wife might take one of the noisy little children to play among their own children for the day; another offered to carry out the weekly burden of a poor widow. One could not hear all; it was better that such words should be spoken low; that the left hand should not know what the right hand did. But the priests seemed always ready with little suggestions which nothing but an intimate acquaintance with the lives of these poor men could have enabled them to give.

We are talking of leaving Paris, and going leisurely on to Rome. M. de Montalembert was here last night, and wrote me down a little detour which he said we could easily make, rejoining the railroad at Dijon.

March 5th. Avignon.—After all we were not able to follow out M. de Montalembert's instructions, but I shall keep his paper (written in English), as the places he desired us to visit sound full of interest, and would make a very pleasant week's excursion from Paris at some future time.

'Provide yourself with Ed. Joanne's *Guide du Voyageur*. *Est-et-Mur*.

'By the Lyons railway to Auxerre (a beautiful city with splendid churches).

'At Auxerre take the diligence (very bad) to Avallon, a very pretty place with fine churches. At Avallon hire a vehicle of some sort to Vezelay, only three leagues off; the most splendid Romance church in Europe; and to Chastellux, a fine old castle belonging to the family of that name, from the Crusade of 1147. Returning to Avallon, there is a very bad coach to Semur, another very pretty place, with a delightful church; seven or eight leagues off. From Semur by omnibus to Montbard, or Les Launes, which are both railroad stations. Stop at Dijon, a most interesting city, and be sure you see the Museum.'

When M. de Montalembert wrote out his little plan, I said something about the name 'Avallon,' 'the Isle of Avallon' being in France, instead of Bretagne; but

he reminded me of the fact that the fragments of the Arthurian romances were to be found in one shape or another all over the west of Europe, and claimed Avallon as *the* place

Where falls not hail, or rain, or any snow,
Nor ever wind blows loudly; but it lies
Deep-meadow'd, happy, fair with orchard-lawns
And bowery hollows crown'd with summer sea.

He said that there is also a Morvan, a Forêt de Morvan, in the same district. Speaking of the Crusades (a propos of the family of de Chastellux, alluded to in the sketch of a possible journey which he had drawn out for us), the company present fell to talking about the rapid disappearance of old French families within the last twenty or thirty years ; during which time the value for ' long pedigrees ' has greatly increased after the fifty years of comparative indifference in which they were held. The five ' Salles des Croisades ', at Versailles, were appropriated to the commemoration of the events from which they take their names, by Louis Philippe, in 1837 ; previously to which the right of the hundred and ninety-three families that claim to be directly descended from the Crusaders who went on the three first Crusades (from A. D. 1106 to 1191) was thoroughly examined into, and scrutinized by heralds and savants and lawyers acquainted with the difficulty of establishing descent, before the proud hundred and ninety-three could have their arms emblazoned in the first Salle des Croisades. Among them rank de Chastellux, de Biron, de Lamballe, de Guérin (any ancestor of Eugénie de Gué>in, I wonder ?), de la Gueche, de Rohan, de La Rochefoucauld, de Montalembert, &c. And now in 1864 not two-thirds of these families exist in the direct male line ! Yet such has become the value affixed to these old historical titles and names, that they are claimed by collateral relations, by descendants in the female line, nay, even by the purchasers of the lands from which the old Crusaders derived their appellations! **and** it has even become necessary to have an authorized court

to judge of the rights of those who assume new titles and designations. The Montmorencis, indeed, to this day hold a kind of 'parliament' of their own, and pluck off the plumage of any jay who dares to assume their name and armorial bearings. There is apparently no power of becoming a 'Norfolk Howard' at will in France. They spoke as if our English nobility was a very modern race in comparison with the French; but assigned the palm of antiquity to the great old Belgian families, even in preference to the Austrians, so vain of their many quarterings.

We could not manage to go by Avallon and Dijon, and so we came straight on here, and are spending a few days in this charming inn; the mistral howling and whistling without, till we get the idea that the great leafless acacia close to the windows of our salon has been convulsed into its present twisted form by the agony it must have suffered in its youth from the cruel sharpness of this wind. But inside, we are in a lofty salon, looking into the picturesque inn yard, sheltered by a folding screen from the knife-like draught of the door; a fire heaped up with blazing logs, resting on brass andirons; skins of wild beasts making the floor soft and warm for our feet; old military plans, and bird's-eye views of Avignon as it was two hundred years ago, hanging upon the walls, which are covered with an Indian paper; *Eugenie de Guerin* to read; and we do not care for the mistral, and are well content to be in our present quarters for a few days.

March 8th.—It was all very well to huddle ourselves up in in-doors comfort for a day or two; but, after that, we longed to go out in spite of the terrible mistral. We certainly found Avignon *cum vento fastidioso*; and began to wish that we had delayed our progress by stopping at Avallon, if that indeed was the place where never wind blows loudly. So on the day but one after our arrival here, we huddled and wrapped ourselves up tightly and well, and sallied out of the courtyard. We were taken and seized in a moment by the tyrant; all we could do was to shut our eyes, and keep our ground,

and wonder where our petticoats were. Going across the bridge was impossible ; even the passers-by warned us against the attempt ; but after we had caught our breath again, we turned and went slowly up the narrow streets, choosing those that offered us the most shelter, until we had reached the wide space in front of the Palace of the Popes. With slow perseverance we made our way from point to point, and at length came to a corner in the massive walls where we could rest and look about us. Up above our heads rose the enormous walls—the far-extending shadow of Rome ; for never did the French build such a mighty structure ; it seemed like a growth of the solid rock itself. The prettiness of the garden round the base of the Palace looked to us mean and out of place, with its tidy flower-beds and low shrubs. All entrance to the Palace was forbidden ; it is now a prison. We went into the cathedral, and the calm atmosphere was so soothing and delightful, that we were inclined to stop there till the mistral had ceased blowing ; but as that might not be for a month or six weeks, on second thoughts we believed it would be better to return to our hotel. We stood for a few minutes on the cathedral steps, looking at the magnificent view before us, and only regretting the clouds of fine dust which from time to time were whirled over the landscape. Close to us rose the colossal walls of the Palace ; before us, in the centre of the open space, there was a bronze statue of a man dressed in Eastern robes ; and we asked whom it represented—what saint ? what martyr ? It was that of the Persian Jean Althen, the Persian who first introduced the culture of madder into the South of France. His father had held high office under Thomas Koulikhan, but was involved in the fall of his master, and his son fled for protection to the French Consul at Smyrna. It was forbidden under penalty of death to carry the seed of the madder plant out of the district ; but Althen managed to bring some of it to Marseilles, and thus originated the cultivation of madder in le Comtat ; the profits of which to the inhabitants may be imagined from the fact that the

revenue from this source in one department alone (Vaucluse) amounts annually to more than fifteen millions of francs. Althen and his daughter died in poverty ; but of late years the statue which we saw in the Place Rocher des Doms, has been erected to the Persian unbeliever, right opposite to the cathedral, and the Palace of the Popes—where once John XXII (that most infamous believer) lived. I had often seen madder in England in the shape of a dirty brown powder—the roots ground down; it has a sweetish taste, and the workmen in print-works will not unfrequently take a little in their hands as they pass the large bales, and put it into their mouths. I had heard a young English philanthropist say that he had often entertained thoughts of buying a tract of land in Eastern Italy, and introducing the cultivation of madder there, as a means of raising the condition of the people ; but I had never heard of Jean Althen before; and tempestuous as it was, I made my way up to the statue, so that I could look up at the calm, sad face of the poor Persian. I suppose the newly discovered aniline dyes may uproot the commerce he established, at some future period; but he did a good work in his day, of which no man knew the value while he lived. Our kind landlady at the Hotel de l'Europe was at the hall-door to greet us on our return, and warned us with some anxiety against going out in the mistral; we were not acclimatized, she said ; the English families resident in Avignon did not suffer because they had been there so long. Of course we asked questions as to these English families, and heard that some had resided in the city for two or three generations; all engaged in the commerce de la garance; so they too had cause to bless the memory of Jean Althen.

March 12th.—I suppose our landlady thought she would keep us prudent and patient in-doors, until we receive the telegram from Marseilles announcing that it is safe for the boats to Civita Vecchia to start—hitherto they have been delayed by this horrid mistral—for she has brought us in a good number of books—most of them

topographical, but one or two relating to the legends or history of the district. We are very content to be in the house to-day ; the wind is blowing worse than ever ; Irene has a bad pain in her side, which we suppose must be a local complaint; for, after trying to cure it by mustard plaisters, she sent our maid out at last to get a blister of a particular size, but without naming what part required the application ; and the druggist immediately said, ' Ah, for the side ' it will last while the mistral lasts ; or till she leaves Avignon.' We are learning now to manage wood-fires; the man who waits upon us, and is chambermaid as well as footman, gave us a little lesson yesterday. Always rake the living ashes to the front, and lay on the fresh wood behind; those are his directions, and hitherto they have answered well. This old man is a Pole, and came, an exile, to be a servant in the hotel about thirty years ago. He likes talking to us ; but his language is very difficult to understand, though we can quite make out the soft, satiny patois of the South of France, the Provençal dialect, in which our questions are answered in the streets. To-night he has brought in our lamp and cleared away our ' the simple'. Mary is sitting by the fire, tempted sorely by the wood logs ; for every stroke of the sharp, thin poker brings out springing fountains of lovely sparkles. I, having a frugal mind, exclaim at her; for we pay heavily for our basketful of wood; but she, in a pleading, coaxing way, calls my attention to the brilliant effect of her work, and I cannot help watching the bright little lives which one by one vanish, till at length a poor solitary spark runs about vainly to find its companions, and then dies out itself. It reminds me of a story I heard long ago in Ramsay, in the Isle of Man ;—and here I think of it at Avignon. We were questioning a fisherman's wife at Ramsay about the Manthe Doog of Peel Castle, in which she had a firm belief; and from this talk we passed on to fairies. ' Are there any in the island now ?' I asked, gravely, of course, for it was a grave and serious subject with her. ' None now ; none now,' she replied. ' My

brother saw the last that ever was in the island. He was making a short cut in the hills above Kirk Maughold, and came down on a green hollow, such as there are on the hill-tops, just green all round, and the blue sky above, ana as still as still can be, but for the larks. He heard the larks singing up above; but this time he heard a little piping cry out of the ground; so he looked about him everywhere, and followed the sound of the cry, and at length he came to a dip in the grass, and there lay a fairy, ever so weak and small, crying sadly. ' Oh ! ' she said, when she saw him, ' you are none of my own people ; I thought perhaps they had come back for me: but they've left me here alone, and all gono away, and I am faint and weak, and could not go with them,' and she began to cry again. So he meant it well, and he thought he'd carry her home to be a play-thing to his children; it would have been better than lying there playing alone in the damp grass; so he tried to catch her, but somehow—he had big hands, had my brother, and an awkward horny way of holding things ; and fairies is as tickle to handle as butterflies ; and when he had caught her, and she lay very still, he thought he might open his hand after a time, and tell her he was doing it all for her own good ; but she was just crushed to death, poor thing ! So, as he said, there was no use bringing her home in that state; and he threw her away: and that was the end of the last fairy I ever heard of in the island' The last sparks in the wooden logs at Avignon were my last fairies.

Among our hostess's books was the authorized report of the trial for the murder of Madame la Marquise de Gange. It is so interesting, and has so strong a local flavour, that we are determind, blow high, blow low, to go over to Ville-Neuve to-morrow, and see her portrait by Mignard m the figlise de l'Hopital at Ville-Neuve. She lived in the seventeenth century, and was the daughter of a certain Sieur de Roseau, a gentleman of Avignon, who had married an heiress, the daughter of Joanis Sieur de Nooheres. Her father died when she **was** very young; and she and her mother went to live

with the *Sieur de Nocheres*, probably in one of the large gloomy houses in the narrow old streets we have passed through to-day, with no windows on the lower floor, only strongly-barred gratings; they are almost like fortified dwellings—which, indeed, the state of affairs at the time they were built required them to be. The little girl promised to be a great beauty, and had besides a dowry of 500,000 livres; and it was no great wonder that all the well-born young men of Provence (and some who were not young, too) came a-wooing to the granddaughter of the rich old burgess of Avignon. But where force was so often employed as a method of courtship, and at a time when obstacles to success (in the way of fathers or mothers or obstinate relations) were so easily got rid of by determined suitors, it was thought better to arrange an early marriage for the little girl, who was called *Mademoiselle de Chateaublanc*, after one of the estates of her grandfather; and accordingly, she was espoused in 1649, at the age of thirteen, by the *Marquis de Castellane*, grandson of the *Duc de Villars*. Her husband is described as being as charming as his bride. He was handsome and sweet-tempered, as well as being a scion of a great French house. He took his lovely little bride to Paris, where she was the admired of all beholders at the court of the young King *Louis XIV.* His boyish majesty was struck with her rare beauty, and conferred on her the honour of dancing with her in a court ballet; and the docile courtiers followed his lead, and christened her '*La belle Provencale*', by which name she was thereafter better known than by her legitimate title of *Marquise de Castellane*.

When first she came to town
They ca'd her *Jess MacFarlane*,
But now she's come and gone,
They ca' her *The Wandering Darling*.

Poor young *Belle Provencale*! admired by the King of France and all his men; living a bright, happy life of innocent pleasure in Paris; with a charming husband, by whom she was passionately beloved, and whose affec-

tion she fondly esteemed; rich, lovely, and of high rank—how little she could have anticipated her rapid descent from the pinnacle of good fortune ! Her first deep grief was the loss of her husband. He was drowned off the coast of Sicily; and she came back from the gay life of Paris to mourn him deeply in the austere home of her grandfather, in the city of Avignon. The only change she sought for in these years of mourning was to go into retreat in the convent at Ville-Neuve—the village we saw on the opposite side of the Rhone the other day when we stood on the cathedral steps. The account of her sorrow and regret at the death of her young husband is evidently so truthful and sincere that one almost wonders at her marrying again ; but I suppose in those days a bourgeois grandfather and a widowed mother were considered but poor protectors for a beautiful young woman of great wealth. At any rate, I read of her having at length selected from among many suitors the *Sieur de Lanide*, *Marquis de Gange*, *Baron du Languedoc*, *Gouverneur de St. Andre*, to be her second husband. She was married to him in 1658, when he was twenty, and she twenty-two years of age. He was as beautiful as she was, but of a violent and ferocious character. For the first few months after their marriage he appeared to be devoted to her, but, by and by, he grew both weary of her society and suspiciously jealous of all her former friends. It was rather a lonely life now for the poor lady, shut up in her husband's *Chateau de Gange*, while he went about enjoying himself in provincial society, and occasionally visiting Paris, where once she had been so sought after and cherished. Still there is no account of her ever having repined at this seclusion ; of course, the official reports of events begin at a much later period. Things went on in this way between the husband and wife for some time without any change. Then two of his brothers, the *Abbe* and the *Chevalier de Gange*, came to live at the *Chateau de Gange*; and a short time afterwards her old grandfather the *Sieur de Nocheres* died, leaving *Madame de Gange* his heiress. The

Marquis, her husband, was much occupied in looking after the various estates to which his wife had succeeded under her grandfather's will. Gange is seven leagues from Montpellier, and nineteen from Avignon, in a lonely wild district; the chateau the principal house in a small village, the inhabitants of which were dependants of the Marquis. But for some little time after the *Sieur de Nocheres'* death it was necessary for his heiress to be in Avignon; and whether it was, as the rumour went at the time, that she had reason to suspect that a cream, which her husband pressed her much to eat one day at her mother's table, was poisoned with arsenic, or whether she remembered the horoscope drawn for her in Paris which predicted that she should die a violent death, or whether, as is most likely, her seven or eight years' knowledge of her husband's character made her fearful and suspicious, it is certain that before leaving Avignon at this time, she made a singular will, which was attested with all possible legal forms, to this effect. Her mother was to be her sole heir, with power to leave all the property after her death to either of the children which *Madame de Gange* had had by her second husband; the boy was six, the girl five years old at this time, and they were living with their grandmother at Avignon. Although this will was executed in secret, she made a solemn declaration before the magistrates of Avignon to the effect that, though she might be compelled to make a subsequent will, this and this alone was valid. Poor lady! she had but too much reason to dread the time when she would be obliged to return to the lonely chateau far away from her friends, in the power of a cruel and negligent husband, who hungered after the uncontrolled and unincumbered possession of her fortune, and who might leave her again, as he had done before, exposed to the profligate and insolent solicitations of the *Abbe*, the cleverest of the three brothers, who had already traded on her misery at her husband's neglect and ill-concealed dislike of her, by saying that if his sister-in-law would accede to his wishes, he would bring her back her husband's affection. The *Chevalier* seems

to have been a brutal fool, under the influence of his clever brother, the Abbe. In the interval between her grandfather's death and her return to the Chateau de Gange, these three brothers veiled their designs under an appearance of the greatest complaisance to Madame de Gange. But all their seeming attention and consideration, all her husband's words and acts of lover-like devotion, ended in this question, How soon would she go back to the Chateau de Gange? Avignon was unhealthy in hot weather, while the autumn, the vintage season, was exquisite at the chateau. At length, wearied out with their urgency, and dreading the consequences of too persistent a refusal, she left Avignon for La Gange. But first she gave the sum of twenty pistoles to different convents, to say masses for her soul, in case of her dying suddenly without extreme unction. It gives one an awful idea of the state of society in those days (reign of Charles II in England), to think of this helpless young woman, possessed by a too well-founded dread, yet not knowing of any power to which she could appeal for protection, and obliged to leave the poor safety of a city to go to a lonely house where those who wished her evil would be able to work their will. At the Chateau de Gange she found the two brothers-in-law, who had returned from Avignon a few days previously, and her mother-in-law, a good kind woman, to whose presence one fancies the young Marquise must have clung. But the Dowager Marquise habitually lived at Montpellier, and she returned there soon after our Marquise's arrival. While the old lady had remained in the chateau all had gone on well; but on her departure the Marquis set off back to Avignon, leaving instructions to his brothers to coax his wife into making another will. They performed their work skilfully; they told her there could be no perfect reconciliation with her husband until she had shown full confidence in him by bequeathing him all her property in case of her death. For the sake of peace, and remembering her secret testament at Avignon, she agreed to their wishes, and a will, leaving all her property unconditionally to

her husband, was made at the Chateau de **Gange**. It was short-sighted of the poor lady, if she valued her life. They at any rate did not value it; and now, the sooner they got rid of her the better. So much is stated in the report of the trial, on authority which seems to have satisfied the judges at the time. For the further events, there is the direct testimony of the Marquise on her death-bed, and of other witnesses; and there are curious glimpses of the manners of the period, as well as of the state of society. The *dramatis personae* were disposed of as follows on the 17th of May, 1667: The mother of these three wicked sons—the Marquis, the Abbe, and the Chevalier de Gange—was at her house in Montpellier; the Marquis himself was tarrying in the neighbourhood of Avignon, ostensibly employed in looking after the estates of his wife; she was at the chateau in the lonely village, keeping up the farce of friendly politeness with her brothers-in-law, whom she dreaded inexpressibly. There was a chaplain in the house, who was their tool, as she well knew; and a few neighbours from the village came to see her from time to time, the wives of the Intendant and of the Huguenot minister; worthy and kind-hearted women, as will be proved, though not of the class of society to which she had been accustomed in the happy days in Paris. On this 17th of May, she required some medicine, and sent for a draught to the village doctor. When it came, it was so black and nasty that she took some physic which she had ready in her chamber instead, and threw the draught away. A pig which licked up the draught died that same day. She was not well, and stopped in bed for the whole morning; but in the afternoon, finding it rather dull, she sent for two or three of the good women of the neighbourhood to come and keep her company, and ordered a collation to be served to her friends in her bedroom. Her indisposition, whatever it was, does not seem to have affected her appetite, for she deposed that she ate a great deal, and to that fact she attributes her safety from one way of attacking her life.

The Abbe and the Chevalier, hearing of their eister-in-

law's party, **and** the entertainment that was going on, came into the chamber uninvited, and made themselves very agreeable. By and by the neighbours went away ; it was still early in the afternoon ; and the Abbe and Chevalier accompanied the good ladies to the great **hall**, and Madame was left alone in bed. Presently back came the Abbe, with a terrible face ; he brought **a** pistol, a sword, and a cup of poison—a greater choice of deaths than that offered to Fair Rosamond ; but, all the same, the Marquise must die by either fire, steel, or poison. With quick presence of mind she chose to drink the latter ; and after doing so, she turned round as in writhing agony, and spat out the contents of her mouth into the pillow. Her skin was blackened by the burning drops that fell upon it, and her mouth was horribly burnt ; and no wonder, for the deposition says that the drink was made of arsenic and corrosive sublimate, mixed up in aqua-fortis. There was evidently no idea of doing things by halves in those days. She left the thick part of the liquid in the bottom of the glass ; but the Chevalier, who by this time had come up to see if he could render himself useful in the business, stirred up the sediment and made her drink it. Then she begged hard to have a priest to shrive her soul ; and, as they felt pretty secure that no help could now avail her, they went away, and sent the household chaplain, le Pretre Perrette, who was also *cure** of the village, to give her what spiritual aid he could. He had lived in the family of de Gange for five-and-twenty years, and was ready to connive at any wickedness which they might plan. Now while they went to find this worthy chaplain, the poor lady was left alone in her bedchamber, and looked about for means of escape. There was none, except jumping from the window into the great enclosed courtyard, twenty feet below, and all paved with flags : but that risk was better than remaining where she was ; so she took courage, and was on the **point of** throwing herself out, when Perrette, the **chaplain**, came **in** with the viaticum. He ran to the **window**, **and** tried to pluck her back ; but the petticoat

which he caught hold of gave way, and only a fragment of it remained in his hand. She was down below, pushing her long black hair down her throat, and thus, with wonderful presence of mind, trying to make herself sick ; in which attempt she succeeded. Then she went round the courtyard, trying all the doors with trembling haste: but they were all locked; and that wicked chaplain in the chateau above, hastening to find the relentless brothers-in-law and to tell them of her escape. She ran round and round the enclosure, beating and striving at the doors ; and at length a groom came out of the stables, which were at one end of the yard, and she implored him to let her out by the stable-door into the street or road; saying she had swallowed some poison by mistake, and must find an antidote without loss of time. When she was once out of the accursed premises, she went to the house of the *Sieur des Prats*, who lived in the village. He was absent; but many of the good women of the place were assembled there on a visit to his wife. We may judge of the rank of the company by the fact that, in the depositions, all the married women are called 'Mademoiselle', e.g. * *Mademoiselle Brunei*, wife of the Huguenot minister/ &c; and in the *Traite sur la maniere d'Ecrire des Lettres*, par Grimarest, 1667, the rules for the addresses to letters are these : If a letter is to a lady of quality, she is to be called *Madame* on the direction, and the letter is to be tied up with silk, and sealed with three seals ; if the correspondent is only 'la femme d'un gentilhomme', her titles on the superscription must be 'Mademoiselle Mademoiselle', so and so ; but if she is merely the wife of a bourgeois, simple 'Mademoiselle' is all that is to be accorded to her.

Now all the ladies assembled at the *Sieur des Prats* were *Mademoiselles*; but they were brave women, as we shall see. In amongst this peaceful company, enjoying an afternoon's gossip, burst the lady of the *Chateau de Gange* ; her dress (that which she had worn in bed) torn and disordered; her hair hanging about her ; her face in all probability livid with mortal terror

and the effects of the fierce poison. She had hardly had time to give any explanation of her appearance, when the Chevalier de Gange rushed into the room in search of his half-killed victim; the Abbé remained below, guarding the door of the house. The Chevalier walked up and down the room, saying that Madame was mad; that she must return with him, and uttering angry menaces. While his back was turned, Mademoiselle Brunei, wife of the Huguenot minister of the village, gave Madame de Gange small pieces of orvietan out of a box which she carried in her pocket. Orvietan, be it remembered, was considered a sovereign remedy against all kinds of poisons; and the fact of the minister's wife carrying this antidote about in her pocket, wherever she went, tells a good deal of the insecurity of life at that period. Madame de Gange managed to swallow a number of pieces of orvietan, unperceived by the Chevalier; but when one of the ladies, pitying her burning thirst, went and brought her a glass of water, he perceived the kindness, and broke out afresh, dashing the glass from Madame's mouth, and bidding all present to leave the room instantly, as he did not like witnesses to his sister-in-law's madness. He drove them out, indeed, but they only went as far as the next room, where they huddled together in affright, wondering what they could do for the poor lady. She, meanwhile, begged for mercy in the most touching manner; she promised that she would forgive all if he would but spare her life: but at these words he ran at her with his sword; holding it short, so that it could serve him as a dagger and give the surer stabs. She ran to the door, and clung to it, crying out afresh for pity, for mercy, for help. He stabbed her five times before his weapon broke in her shoulder. Then the ladies burst in to the assistance of Madame, who was lying on the floor bathed in blood. Some ran to her help, others called through the window to the passers-by to fetch the surgeon quickly. Hearing their cry through the window, the Abbé came up, and finding his sister-in-law not yet dead, he began to hit

her with the butt-end of his pistol, till brave Mademoiselle Brunei caught hold of his arm, and hung all her weight upon it. He struck her over and over again to make her let go, but she would not; and all the women flew upon him 'like lionesses', and dragged him by main force out of the house, and turned him into the village-street. One of the ladies, who was skilled in surgery, returned to the room where Madame de Gange lay, and at her desire she put her knee against the wounded shoulder of Madame, and pulled out the broken point of the sword by main force. Then she staunched the blood, and bound up the wounds. The Chevalier had been in too blind a passion, apparently, to think of stabbing any vital part; and in spite of poison, and the heavy fall on the paved courtyard, and the five stabs, there seemed yet a chance for Madame de Gange's life. That long and terrible/May afternoon was now drawing to a close; and the Abbe" and the Chevalier thought it well to take advantage of the coming darkness to ride off to Auberas, an estate of their brother's, about a league from La Gange. There they quarrelled with each other, because their work was left incomplete; and were on the point of fighting, when it seems as if they thought it better to take again to flight. After the steed was stolen, every one bethought him of locking the stable door. The 'consuls', so the magistrates of the district were called, came to offer their services to Madame de Gange, who was lying between life and death. The neighbouring barons paid her visits of condolence; one of them was practical enough to think of seouring the assassins; but two or three days had then elapsed, and the Abbe and Chevalier had embarked at Ogde, a small port on the Mediterranean. Her husband, the Marquis, took the affair very coolly. He heard of it at Avignon one morning; but he did not mention it to any friends whom he met in the street, nor did he set off to see his wife till the afternoon of the following day. But he had the will, which his wife had been compelled to make at La Gange, safe with him at Avignon; and before he left the city,

he went to see the Vice-Legate, with a view to this document, by which his wife bequeathed him all in case of her death. The Vice-Legate refused to recognize it, and then first informed him of the will by which Madame de Gange had left her property to her mother, and which rendered null any testament made after that date. The Marquis was not induced by this information to be more tender towards his poor wounded wife. He found her lying at the house of the *Sieur des Prats*, in the most dangerous state. At first she reproached him a little for leaving her at the mercy of his brothers ; but almost directly she begged his pardon for what she had said, and was most tender and sweet in her conversation with him. He thought he could take advantage of her gentle frame of mind, and urged her to revoke her declaration about the perpetual legality of the *Avignon* will ; but his pertinacity on this point at such a time opened her eyes, and henceforward she had no hope of touching his stony heart. Her mother, Madame de Ropace, came to see her ; but she was so disgusted at seeing the Marquis's pretended affection and assumption of watchful care over his wife, that she left at the close of three days. It was evident now to all that the end was drawing near ; the wounds did not touch life, but enough of the poison had been swallowed to destroy any constitution. Madame de Gange begged to have the extreme unction administered ; but the monks in attendance said that before that could be done, she must forgive all her enemies. She was too gentle to harbour revenge ; but when *Perrette*, the chaplain, and the accomplice of her assassins, came in his sacred vestments to administer the last sacrament, it did cost her a severe struggle to receive the wafer from his hands. But she forgave him, too, as completely as the rest ; and fearing that her little son might at some future time think it his duty to avenge her death, she sent for him, and tried to make him understand the Christian duty of forgiveness. Meanwhile, the report of her assassination had spread far and wide, and the parliament of *Toulouse* dispatched Monsieur de Catelan to La Gange

to take her evidence as that of a dying woman. When he first came she was in a state of stupor; but the next day she rallied and saw him alone. A fresh terror had seized upon her, and she believed herself not safe at La Gange, and entreated him to take her to Montpellier; but it was too late then, and in the afternoon she died, nineteen days after the attack upon her life. Monsieur de Gange now became alarmed, and pretended to be in the deepest distress, and that his grief could only be alleviated by the discovery and punishment of the murderers of his dear wife. But the unmoved M. de Catelan arrested him, and took the charge of prosecution and punishment for the crime upon himself in the name of the parliament of Toulouse. The effects of the Marquis were sealed up, and he was to be conveyed to the prison at Montpellier: but he could not arrive there before night for some reason; and the inhabitants of the town illuminated it in order that the populace might see the face of the accused criminal as he came slowly up the street. The ladies of Avignon, and those of Montpellier, put on mourning for the murdered Madame de Gange, as if she had been a near relation. Her mother, of whom we hear very little until now, led the chorus of feminine indignation. She vowed vengeance against the Marquis, and swore that she would pursue him through every court of justice in the kingdom till her daughter was avenged. She published a pamphlet on the case, to which M. de Gange replied, saying that her statements were all based on presumption. But the stern hand of the law was upon him, and from it he could not so easily escape. M. de Catelan twice interrogated the Marquis, the last time for eleven hours; the basis on which he founded his questions being not 'presumptions', but the evidence which the lawyer had obtained from the dying Madame de Gange in that interview which they two had had alone. On the 21st of August, 1667, judgement was given through the mouth of the President of the Parliament of Toulouse. It was always supposed by the public that the powerful relations of the Marquis had used unfair

means to mitigate the severity of the sentence. But it was severe enough, if only it had been carried into execution. The Abbe and the Chevalier de Gange were to be broken alive upon the wheel. The Marquis was to be banished for life, to be degraded from his rank, and to have all his lands, goods, and property confiscated to the use of the king. The chaplain, Perrette, was to be deprived of ecclesiastical orders, and to become a galley-slave for life.

The ladies of Avignon and Montpellier were indignant that the Marquis de Gange was not to be broken on the wheel as well as his brothers. But where were these three guilty men ? The Abbe and the Chevalier had escaped by sea, months ago ; and now the Marquis had made his way out of the prison of Toulouse ; prison doors, in those days, had a fatal facility in opening before rank or wealth. The Marquis and the Chevalier met in Venice—escaped felons as they were. But they took service with the republic ; and, being good Christians, they went to fight the heathen Turks in Candia, where they met an honourable death in 1669. The Abbe, superior in intellect to the others, lived a longer and more eventful life. He fled into Holland, and after some wanderings about he met with an old acquaintance, who was unscrupulous, or perhaps was ignorant of his crime, and who introduced him to the Count de la Lippe, sovereign prince of Viane, about two leagues from Utrecht. To him the Abbe de Gange was presented as the *Sieur de la Martelliere*, a Frenchman of extraordinary learning and merit, of the Huguenot or Protestant religion, and who was consequently under social disadvantages in his own country. The Count was pleased with the appearance and manners of the so-called *Sieur de la Martelliere*, and appointed him governor, or tutor, to his son, a little boy of nine or ten years old. But by and by the persecution of the French Huguenots began, and hundreds of them were leaving France, some one of whom might recognize the former Abbe de Gange, in the Protestant *Sieur de la Martelliere* ; so he opposed the settlement of French refugees in the neighbourhood

of Viane on purely political reasons. He had been governor to the son of the Count de la Lippe for several years, when he fell desperately in love with a beautiful young girl, a distant relation of the Countess's, who lived with her. His poverty and his dependent position were no obstacles to his marriage with the lovely portionless maiden; but the obscurity of his supposed birth made a marriage between them impossible. He presumed on his services to the Count, and on the years of moral conduct which he had passed under the Count's own eyes. He wrote an eloquent letter, in which he confessed himself to be that Abbé de Gange for whom the kingdom of France had been ransacked in vain; pleading false witness, perjury, passion, whatever you will, in extenuation of the crime of which he was accused; but proving his sixteen quarterings through it all. He spoke of his many years' life of pure morality, such as the Count de la Lippe himself could bear witness to; of his conversion to the faith which the sovereign Prince of Viane held himself; and of his zeal in its interests: had he not advised the Huguenot refugees not to tarry where the long arm of France might reach them, but to fly further east?

His eloquence was all in vain. The Count de la Lippe seems to have been shocked beyond measure at finding out that in the tutor of his little boy—his growing lad—he had been harbouring the profligate, terrible, and infamous Abbé de Gange, with whose crimes all civilized Europe had been made acquainted. The Sieur de la Martelhere was ordered to leave the dominions of the Count de la Lippe without delay. He went to Amsterdam, and thither also, without delay, the young girl—the poor, pretty relation of Madame la Comtesse—followed him, and became his wife. His pupil, the young Count, now growing up to manhood, although told by his father what an infamous criminal he had had for tutor, persevered in sending help to the Sieur de la Martelhere and his wife at Amsterdam, until some unexpected fortune from one of Madame's relations put them at ease, as far as regarded money. M. de 1\$

Martelliere bore so high a character that he was admitted into the Consistory of Protestants at Amsterdam. But wherever he went—at church or at synod, in market or alone with his wife in their most humble secret privacy, he was haunted by the face of Madame de Gange. That was said at the time; that is believed now.

The poor lady's daughter did not do her much credit, and I will say nothing about her. The son, whom she had taught on her death-bed, became a captain of dragoons; and when at Metz, suppressing the Huguenots (perhaps he had never been told of Mademoiselle Brunei, and how she had helped and defended his mother in her great strait), he fell in love with the beautiful wife of a goldsmith. The dragoons were billeted at her house, and tried to force her, at the point of the bayonet, to go to mass. Apparently, her religion was dearer to her than her virtue; for she sent for the captain, and said to him: 'Monsieur, vous m'avez dit que vous m'aimez; voulez-vous me le prouver? donnez-moi les moyens de sortir du royaume; et pour recompense de ce service, que votre amour s' imagine le prix.' 'Non, Madame,' said the Marquis, 'je ne me preVaudrai point de votre situation; je serais au comble de mes vœux si vous accordiez a ma tendresse ce que je pourrais obtenir ou vous etes, mais je me reprocherais toute ma vie d'abuser de votre etat; je vais vous en d6livrer; je ne vous demande pour recompense que la grace de penser quelquefois a moL' After that, he sent her secretly across the frontier.

I shut up my landlady's books, and prepared to go to bed. I am alone in the lofty salon, which was perhaps in existence when Madame de Gange used to reside in Avignon; the fire is gone out, the lamp flickers. The ever-persistent wind is tearing round the house. Mary and Irene are fast asleep in the chambers beyond. The quietness of all things, the dead stillness of the hour, has made me realize all the facts deposed to, as if they had only happened to-day. To-morrow we will go to Ville-Neuve, and see the portrait of the murdered lady

*March 16*ft.*—Though the mistral has but little abated

we went across to Ville-Neuve this morning. Irene was not well enough to go ; so Mary and I, attended by Demetrius, our courier, made the expedition, Demetrius has no fancy for excursions off the common route, and only went with us because he thought himself bound in duty to humour our eccentricity. The suspension-bridge over the Rhone was shaking and trembling with the wind as we crossed it; and our struggle in that long exposure was so exhausting, that" when we were once in the comparative tranquillity of the other side, we stood still and looked about us for some time before going on. The colour of the landscape on each side of the rushing river was a warm grey ; rocks, soil, buildings, all the same. There was but little vegetation to be seen; a few olive-trees, of a moonlight green, grew in sheltered places. We thought it must be like the aspect of Palestine, from Stanley's account; and Demetrius, who had been several times in the Holy Land, confirmed this notion of ours; but then he was rather apt to confirm all our notions, provided they did not occasion him extra trouble. After we had crossed the bridge, we turned to the right, and went along a steep rocky road to the summit of the hill, above Ville-Neuve. Below us lay the town founded by Philippe le Bel, but completed by the Popes resident at Avignon, and fallen to comparative decay ever since the papal seat was re-established at Rome. We dropped down to the centre of the old town ; the buildings in it were of the same massive construction as the palace, three miles off, at Avignon ; the houses were very lofty, and built of solid blocks of rough yellow-grey stone. There were arcades beneath their lower stories ; and but little space between the two sides of the winding streets for carriages or horses. The way through the town was so tortuous that there was no bit of distance ever seen; and we felt as if we had fallen into a crevasse. Not a person was in the deserted streets. After trying at one or two porte-cocheres we at length hit upon the convent in which there was the portrait of Madame de Gange, painted by Mignard, her famous contemporary.

A nun, in attendance upon the hospital at the end of the courtyard, came to receive us, and was all surprise at our request to see the picture. Was it not the famous painting of the 'Last Judgement', done by the good King Rene, that we wished to look at ? At any rate, both pictures hung side by side in the ante-chapel to our right on entering. So we went in, and gazed at the face of the heroine of the tragical history we had been reading the night before. She was dressed, like our guide the nun, in a black and white conventual dress, such as I suppose she would assume when * *en retraite* * after her first husband's death; she held red and white roses in her hands, in her scapular; the lovely colour was needed by the painter, or perhaps la Belle Provencale was fond of the flowers. Her face was one of exquisite beauty and great peacefulness of expression—round rather than oval; dark hair, dark eyebrows, and blue eyes ; there was very little colour excepting in the lips. You would have called it a portrait of a sweet, happy, young woman, innocently glad in her possession of rare beauty.

After gratifying the nun by looking at the newly-painted and tawdry chapel beyond, and by doing our utmost to feel admiration for King Rene's picture, we left the convent. For a minute or two we were full of Madame de Gange ; then, I am sorry to say, the carnal feeling of hunger took possession of us, after our long walk ; and we sent Demetrius off in every direction to buy us a cake—bread—anything eatable. He came back to where we were sitting under the shelter of a rock. There was no shop for eatables, not even an hotel, or a restaurant, or a caf e, or an estaminet. So we came back to the Hotel de l Europe, Avignon, with very good appetites for the capital table d'hote.

March 11th.—A telegram from Marseilles. A boat starts to-day for Civita Vecchia.

VII

MODERN GREEK SONGS

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MODERN GREEK SONGS

I HAVE lately met with a French book which has interested me much ; and, as it is now out of print, and was never very extensively known, I imagine some account of it may not be displeasing to the readers of *Household Words*,

It is called ' Chants Populaires de la Grece Moderne, par C. Fauriel'. M. Fauriel is a Greek, in spite of his French name, and the language in which he writes. The plan on which he has collected these ' Chants Populaires resembles that of Sir Walter Scott, in his *Border Minstrelsy*'. In both cases there is a preliminary discourse explaining the manners and peculiar character of the people among whom these ballads circulate, and the history of whose ancestors and popular heroes they commemorate. This discourse and the explanatory notes give the principal interest to the book, as they tell of the habits and customs and traditions of a people whom we are apt to moan over, as having fallen low from the high estate of the civilization of their ancestors. But, as there are four millions of men who claim a direct descent from the most polished people the world has ever known, it becomes worth one's while to learn something of their present state.

M. Fauriel divides the poetry of modern Greece into two kinds ; works of literature, written down as composed, and corrected and revised in strict accordance with the rules of art, and the real ballads—poems springing out of the heart of the nation whenever it is deeply stirred, and circulating from man to man with the rapidity of flame: never written down, but never forgotten. Some of these songs relate to domestic, but the majority to popular, events.

Let us take the household songs. There are two feasts which are celebrated in every house. The first is on New Year's Day, the feast of St. Basil in the Greek Church. The account which M. Fauriel gives reminds me much of a Scottish New Year's Day. The young men pass from one house to another until all their friends have been visited ; bringing with them presents, and going, in glad procession, to salute all their acquaintances. But, instead of our ' I wish you a happy new year and many of them ', the young Greeks, on entering each house, sing some verses in honour of the master or head of the family ; others in honour of the mistress ; the sons of the house have each their song, nor are the daughters forgotten. Those who are absent or dead receive this compliment last of all. The key changes ; the remembrance of the lost is sung mournfully and sadly ; but none of the family are left out on the feast of St. Basil. As they go along the streets they sing in honour of the saint. I was once, in England, most kindly received by a Greek family, who allowed me to witness their Easter Day ceremonies ; which, in the expression of good wishes and the glad visits of congratulation paid by all the gentlemen to their friends, must have resembled a feast of St. Basil without the songs. The family consisted of a Greek mother, a most lovely daughter, and a son, who left his own home on this day to visit his friends.

In one corner of the small English drawing-room there was spread a table covered with mellow-looking sweetmeats, all as if the glow of sunset rested on their amber and crimson colours ; and there were decanters containing mysterious liquids to match. In came one Greek gentleman after another with some short sentence, which burst forth as if it contained the perfection of joy. It was the Greek for ' Christ is risen '. Then all shook hands ; the visitors tasted of the jewel-like sweetmeats, and rushed off to go somewhere else, and to have their places taken by other troops of friends. But we had no songs ; nor do I know if, in our cold northern climate, the Greeks keep up the feast of **the**

coming Spring. In Greece this is held on the first of March ; the first of May would often be early greeting to the spring in England. At this pretty holiday, the children in their spring of human life join the young men, and go singing about the streets, and asking for small presents in honour of the soft and budding time ; and every one gives them an egg, or some cheese, or some other simple produce of the country. The song they sing is one which, for its grace and the breath of spring and flowers which perfumes it, is known in many countries, as well as in Greece, under the name of the 'Song of the Swallow .' The children carry about with them the figure of a swallow rudely cut in wood, and fastened to a kind of little windmill, which is turned by a piece of string fastened to a cylinder.

The modern Greeks are an essentially commercial people. I have heard a saying which shows the popular opinion of their bargaining talents: ' It takes two Englishmen to cheat a Scotchman ; two Scotchmen to cheat a Jew ; two Jews to cheat a Greek.' This turn for commerce, added to the poverty of their own country, and the uncertain tenure of property there, causes numbers of Greeks to become merchants in other countries ; but they suffer acutely on first leaving their homes; the nearer to the mountains the more they mourn; and their sadness as well as their joy is expressed by song.

When any one is leaving his home to go into a strange land, his friends and companions meet together at his house to share with him one final meal; and, after that, they accompany him on a part of his way, as Orpah and Ruth accompanied Naomi; as Raphael's companions, for the great love they bore him, went with him when he left the studio of Perugino. And as they walk along they sing. There are songs set apart from time immemorial for the sad occasion of a Greek's departure from Greece; and others are made on the spot, out of the excited feelings of the moment. There is a story told of a youth—the youngest of three brothers—but little beloved by his mother: the poor

fellow endeavoured in vain to win some scanty sprinkling of the affection that was showered on his elder brothers; and at last he determined to become an exile from that home which was no home to him. So he set forth, accompanied by his young companions, his brothers, his sisters, and, as a matter of form, by his mother herself. Four or five miles from his birth-place there was a small gorge through which the narrow road wound. This was the determined point of separation; and here, among the rocky echoes, were sung the most doleful farewell songs. Suddenly the young man mounted upon a rock, and improvised a poem on the sufferings he had experienced from the indifference of his mother. He cried to her to bless him once, before he went away for ever, with something of the wild entreaty of Esau when he adjured Isaac to 'Bless me, also, O my father !' Nor was this strange poetic appeal in vain: 'the mother, with a sudden Eastern change of feeling, could hardly wait until the improvised song was finished (I have sometimes felt as impatient over an improvised sermon), before she *in her turn* sang her repentance; and promised, if he would remain at home, that she would be a better mother for the future.' M. Fauriel says no more. I should not have been sorry to have had the old fairy-tale ending affixed to this true story, * And they lived together very happily for ever after.'

Now let us hear about the marriage-songs. Life seems like an opera amongst the modern Greeks; all emotions, all events, require the relief of singing. But a marriage is a singing time among human beings as well as birds. Among the Greeks the youth of both sexes are kept apart, and do not meet excepting on the occasion of some public feast, when the young Greek makes choice of his bride, and asks her parents for their consent. If they give it, all is arranged for the betrothal; but the young people are not allowed to see each other again until that event. There are parts of Greece where the young man is allowed to declare his passion himself to the object of it. Not in words, however,

does he breathe his tender suit. He tries to meet with her in some path, or other place in which he may throw her an apple or a flower. If the former missile be chosen, one can only hope that the young lady is apt at catching, as a blow from a moderately hard apple is rather too violent a token of love. After this apple or flower throwing, his only chance of meeting with his love is at the fountain ; to which all Greek maidens go to draw water, as Rebekah went, of old, to the well.

The ceremony of betrothal is very simple. On an appointed evening, the relations of the lovers meet together in the presence of a priest, either at the house of the father of the future husband, or at that of the parents of the bride elect. After the marriage contract is signed, two young girls bring in the affianced maiden—who is covered all over with a veil—and present her to her lover, who takes her by the hand, and leads her up to the priest. They exchange rings before him, and he gives them his blessing. The bride then retires; but all the rest of the company remain, and spend the day in merry-making and drinking the health of the young couple. The interval between the betrothal and the marriage may be but a few hours ; it may be months, and it may be years ; but, whatever the length of time, the lovers must never meet again until the wedding day comes. Three or four days before that time, the father and mother of the bride send round their notes of invitation ; each of which is accompanied by the present of a bottle of wine. The answers come in with even more substantial accompaniments. Those who have great pleasure in accepting, send a present with their reply; the most frequent is a ram or lamb dressed up with ribands and flowers ; but the poorest send their quarter of mutton as their contribution to the wedding-feast.

The eve of the marriage, or rather during the night, the friends on each side go to deck out the bride and groom for the approaching ceremony. The bridegroom is shaved by his paranymp or groom's man, in a very grave and dignified manner, in the presence of all the

young ladies invited. Fancy the attitude of the bridegroom, anxious and motionless under the hands of his unpractised barber, his nose held lightly up between a finger and thumb, while a crowd of young girls look gravely on at the graceful operation! The bride is decked, for her part, by her young companions; who dress her in white, and cover her all over with a long veil made of the finest stuff. Early the next morning the young man and all his friends come forth, like a bridegroom out of his chamber, to seek the bride, and carry her off from her father's house. Then she, in songs as ancient as the ruins of the old temples that lie around her, sings her sorrowful farewell to the father who has cared for her and protected her hitherto; to the mother who has borne her, and cherished her; to the companions of her maidenhood; to her early home; to the fountain whence she daily fetched water; to the trees which shaded her childish play; and every now and then she gives way to natural tears: then, according to immemorial usage, the paranymp turns to the glad yet sympathetic procession, and says in a sentence which has become proverbial on such occasions—' Let her alone ! she weeps ! ' To which she must make answer, ' Lead me away, but let me weep ! ' After the *cortege* has borne the bride to the house of her husband, the whole party adjourn to church, where the religious ceremony is performed. Then they return to the dwelling of the bridegroom, where they all sit down and feast; except the bride, who remains veiled, standing alone, until the middle of the banquet, when the paranymp draws near, unlooses the veil, which falls down, and she stands blushing, exposed to the eyes of all the guests. The next day is given up to the performance of dances peculiar to a wedding. The third day the relations and friends meet all together, and lead the bride to the fountain, from the waters of which she fills a new earthen vessel; and into which she throws various provisions. They afterwards dance in circles round the fountain.

At every one of the ceremonials which I have thus

briefly recounted, a song appropriate to the occasion is chanted ; they explain the motive of each particular act—of what event in human life it is to be considered the type. Even the shaving has its song, set apart. But many of the forms I have described are very poetical, and full of meaning in themselves. The character of the marriage songs is tender, yet gay and hopeful; but the character of the 'myriologia', or funeral songs, is altogether despairing and sad. When any one dies, his wife, his mother, and his sisters, all come up to the poor motionless body, and softly close the eyes and the mouth. Then they leave the house, and go to that of a friend, where they dress in white, as if for some glad nuptial occasion: with this sole difference, that their hair is allowed to flow dishevelled and uncovered. Other women are busy with the corpse while they change their dress in a neighbour's house; the body is dressed in the best clothes the dead possessed; and it is then laid on a low bed, with the face uncovered, and turned towards the east; while the arms lie peacefully crossed on the breast. When all these preparations have been made, the relations return to the house of mourning; leaving the door open, so that all who wish once more to gaze on the face of the departed may enter in. All who come, range themselves around the bed, and weep and cry aloud without restraint. As soon as they are a little calmer some one begins to chant the myriologia—a custom common to the ancient Hebrews, as well as to the more modern Irish—with their keenes and their plaintive enumeration of the goods, and blessings, and love which the deceased possessed in this world which he has left. In the mountains of Greece, the nearest and dearest among the female relations first lifts up her voice in the myriologia; she is followed by others, either sisters or friends.

M. Fauriel gives an instance of the style of dramatic personation of events common in the myriologia. A peasant woman, about twenty-five years of age, **had** lost her husband, who left her with two infant children. She was extremely uneducated, and had lived the

silent, self-contained life common to the Greek women. But there was something very striking in the manner in which she began her wail over the dead body. Addressing herself to him, she said, 'I saw at the door of our dwelling, yea, I saw at the door of our house, a young man of tall stature and threatening aspect, having wings like the clouds for whiteness. He stood on the threshold of our home, with a naked sword in his hand. "Woman," he asked, "is thy husband within?"—"He is within," replied I; "he is there, combing the fair hair of our little Nicholas, and caressing him the while that he may not cry. Do not go in, O bright and terrible youth, thou wilt frighten our little child!" But the man with shining white wings heeded not my words. He went in. I struggled to prevent him, O my husband! I struggled; but he was stronger than I. He passed into our home; he darted on thee, O my beloved! and struck thee with his sword. He struck thee, the father of our little Nicholas. And here, here is our little son, our Nicholas, that he would also have killed.' At these words she threw herself sobbing on the corpse of her husband, and it was some time before the women standing by could bring her round. But she had hardly recovered before she began afresh, and addressed her dead husband again. She asked him how she could live without him; how she could protect his children without his strong arm to help; she recalled the first days of their marriage, how dearly they had loved each other; how, together, they had watched over the infancy of their two little children; and she only ceased when her strength utterly failed once more, and she lay by the corpse in a swoon like death itself.

Occasionally there is some one among the assemblage of mourners who has also lately lost a beloved one, and whose full hearts yet yearn for the sympathy in their griefs or joys which the dead were ever ready to give, while they were yet living. They take up the strain; and, in a form of song used from time immemorial, they conjure the dead lying before them to be the

messenger of the intelligence they wish to send to him, who is gone away for ever. A similar superstition is prevalent in the Highlands, and every one remembers Mrs. Hemans's pathetic little poem on this subject.

It is rather too abrupt a turn from the deep pathos of the faithful love implied by this superstition, to a story of something of a similar kind, which fell under the observation of a country minister in Lancashire, well known to some friends of mine. A poor man lay a-dying, but still perfectly sensible and acute. A woman of his acquaintance came to see him, who had lately lost her husband, and who was imbued with the idea mentioned above. 'Bill,' said she, 'where thou art bound to thou'lt maybe see our Tummas; be sure thou tell him we have getted th' wheel o' the shandry mended, and it's mostly as good as new; and mind thou say'st we're gotten on vary weel without him; he may as weel think so, poor chap!' To which Bill made answer, 'Why woman! dost 'oo think I'se have nought better to do than go clumping up and down the sky a-searching for thy Tummas?' To those who have lived in Lancashire the word 'clumping' exactly suggests the kind of heavy walk of the country people who wear the thick wooden clogs common in that county.

But let us jump (like Dr. Faustus) out of Lancashire into Greece. In that country some of the people around the corpse are not content with sending messages to their dead friends; they place flowers and other tokens of remembrance upon the body, entreating the last deceased whose remains lie before them to bear their flowers and presents to those who have gone before.

All these messages and these adieus are expressed in eong; nor do they cease until the body is laid in the grave. For a year afterwards his relations are only allowed to sing myriologia; any other kind of song, however pious or pathetic, is prohibited by custom. The anniversary of the death is kept by a final gathering together of the friends, who go in procession to the grave, and once more chant their farewells. If a Greek

dies far away from Greece, they substitute an effigy for the real corpse, round which they assemble, to which they bid farewell, but with an aggravation of sorrow and despair; inasmuch as he has died far from his own bright land. But perhaps the most touching of the *myriologia* are those addressed by the mothers to the infants they have lost. When the child dies very young no one but the mother sings the *myriologia*. It is hers, and she belongs to it. The tie between them was too mysteriously close to allow a stranger to intermeddle with her grief. But her lost child takes the form of every pretty thing in nature in her mind. It is a broken flower, a young bird fallen out of the nest and killed, a little yearling lamb lying dead by the side of its mother. It is the exclusive right of women to sing the *myriologia*. The men bid farewell to their companion and friend in a few simple words of prose, kissing the mouth of the deceased ere they leave the house. But two centuries ago, among the mountains of Greece, the shepherds sang the *myriologia* over each other.

The original significance of the custom is dying out even now. Women are hired to express an assumed grief in formal verses, where formerly the anguish of the nearest and dearest gave them the gift of improvisation. Before I go on to explain the character and subject of the occasional songs, I had perhaps better mention what class of men are the means of their circulation among the peasantry of Greece, as well as through the islands of the Archipelago. There are no beggars in these countries, excepting the blind; all others would think it shame to live by alms, with their blue and sunny sky above them, and their fertile soil beneath their feet. But the blind are a privileged class; they go from house to house, receiving a ready welcome at each, for they are wandering minstrels, and have been so ever since Homer's time. Some of them have learnt by heart an immense number of songs; and all know a large collection. Their memory is their stock-in-trade, their means of living; they never stay **long** in any one place, but traverse Greece from end to

end, and have a wonderful knack in adapting their choice of songs to the character of the inhabitants of the place where they chant them. They generally prefer the simple villagers as audience, to the more sophisticated townspeople; and, in the towns, they hang about the suburbs rather than enter into the busy streets in the centre. They know, half by experience half by instinct, that the most ignorant part of a population is always the least questioning, and the most susceptible of impressions. The Turks stalk past these blind minstrels with the most supreme and unmoved indifference; but the Greek welcomes them affectionately, particularly at those village feasts which are called *panegyris*, and which would fall as flat as *Hamlet* without the part of Hamlet, if there were not several blind singers present. They accompany themselves on the lyre, a five-stringed instrument, played with a bow.

These minstrels are divided into two sets; those who merely remember what they have learnt from others, and those who compose ballads of their own, in addition to their stores of memory. These latter, in their long and quiet walks through country which they know to be wild and grand, although they never more may see it, 'turn inward,' and recall all that they have heard that has excited their curiosity, or stirred their imagination either in the traditional history of their native land, or in the village accounts of some local hero. Some of the minstrels spread the fame of men whose deeds would have been unknown beyond the immediate mountain neighbourhood of each, from shore to shore. In fact these blind beggars are the novelists and the historians of modern Greece; but if one subject be more dear to them than another, it is always the deeds of arms of the *Klephts*; the *Adam Bells*, and *Clyne o' the doughs*, or perhaps still more the *Robin Hoods*, of Greece. All these songs are chanted to particular airs. The poet must be also his own musician: if he can also improvise he is a fully-accomplished minstrel. There was one who lived at the end of the last century

at Auspelatria in Thessaly, under the shadow of Mount Ossa. His name was Gavoyanius, or John the Blind. He was extremely old; and, in the exercise of his talents, he had amassed considerable wealth; so at the time when the account was given he lived at home at ease, and received the visits of those who wished to hear and were ready to pay for his songs. The Albanian soldiers of the Pasha—degenerate Greeks who served the Turk, and who could find no one to chant their exploits, voluntarily or gratuitously—used to pay John the Blind to sing their fame: the higher the praise, the greater the pay.

I have alluded to the panegyris. They are feasts in honour of the patron saint of some one hamlet where the meeting is held, all the surrounding villages turning out their inhabitants to come and make merry. In short they must bear a close resemblance to the wakes in England; for they are always held on the Sunday after the saint's day to whom the parish church is dedicated. But there are some slight differences between a Greek panegyri and English wakes; the Eastern festival is gayer and more simple in character. The evening before a panegyri, each of the neighbouring villages comes trooping in to the place of rendezvous; the people are dressed in their Sunday's best, and march along to merry music. When they arrive at their destination they make haste to pitch their tents; and those who are not rich enough to possess the necessary canvas pluck branches of trees, and make themselves a leafy covering to protect themselves from the dew and the moon's beams; both of which are held in the East to be injurious to health. On the day of the feast every one goes to the service in church in honour of the patron saint. When they come back to their houses or tents there is no general feast for everybody to share. Each family prepares its separate meal; the greater number in the open air, and nothing is to be seen (or smelt) but roasting mutton and broiling lamb. After dinner **the** dancing begins; every village dances by itself, **and** makes merry by itself until supper time.

After that they pay visits to each other, or listen to the blind minstrels who accompany each set of villagers.

The little Homers of the day find an attentive and numerous audience in the groups who sit round them in the cool of the evening; some on the soft turf, crushing below them the blue hyacinth which makes the ground purple and odorous hereabouts; some on pieces of rock, all listening with unquestioning eagerness; all, for the time, forgetting that the Turk is their neighbour. Many ballads are composed expressly for these occasions; nor can there be a surer mode of securing their popularity. One sung for the first time at a panegyri is circulated the next day through eight or ten villages. Some of these songs are literally ballads in the old Provencal sense of the words; they are exclusively sung by the dancers as they dance. Indeed it is a characteristic of the Greek popular poetry, that it is so frequently intended to be sung while the singers are dancing. The dancing is, in fact, with them, a pretty mimicry of the emotions and movements which the song describes. Every province has its own peculiar dance and ballad, appropriate to the district from time immemorial. This custom, of singing and dancing in concert, seems almost to be the origin of the serious part of our modern pantomime. Of course the dance is not a mere mimicry of the ballad sung; but the character of the dance depends on that of the song. If the latter relates to deeds of arms, or feats of warriors, the movements are abrupt and decided; if it be a love song (and this description is condemned and despised by the austere mountaineers), the motions of the corresponding dance are soft and graceful.

Of the former species of song (those relating to deeds of arms), the story almost invariably has a Klepht for a hero. Klepht signifies 'freebooter', a more picturesque name than 'thief', which is, I believe, the literal translation. But we must not judge of everything by its name. To explain something of the true character of the Klephts: When the Turks first conquered the Greek provinces, there were always native

mountaineers who refused to acknowledge the Mussulman government, and considered the Turkish possession of the lands of the Greeks, their forefathers, as nothing less than robbery. These mountain peasantry came down in armed bands upon the fertile plains and the luxurious towns, and stripped the Turks and those who had quietly submitted to their sway, whenever they could; it was from those who were thus robbed, that the mountaineers received the name of Klephts. But our Saxon ancestors did the same to the Normans; Robin Hood was an English Klepht, taking only what he thought was unjustly acquired, and unfairly held. The Turks found it rather difficult to make war against these guerillas; they fled to wild and rocky recesses of the mountains when pursued. So the wise and cautious conquerors tried to make friends, and partially succeeded. In return for certain privileges, a portion of the mountaineers organized themselves into a kind of militia, called Armatolians; but there was always a rough and stern remnant who persevered in their independent and Klephtic habits. And in course of time, many of the Armatolians, oppressed by the Turks, who no longer feared them, returned to their primitive state of hostility against their conquerors, began to pillage afresh, and resumed the name of Klepht. Affront an Armatolian captain of the militia, bound to preserve order, or let him be unjustly treated by a Turk, and he instantly turned Klepht, and robbed with more zest and enjoyment than he had ever experienced in preserving the peace. So, as may easily be imagined, the Klephts who were weak yesterday, may be strong to-day, both in numbers and in intelligence respecting the movements of the great convoys appointed to guard treasures. They lived in wild places, with their arms in their hands; sometimes on the brink of absolute starvation, but rarely forgetting that they were Greeks, and might only steal from the Turks. The flocks and herds of the Turks were carried off in the night; but seldom those of the Greeks, unless indeed they had made positive friends with those of the oppressors who lived

among them. Sometimes an unlucky aga would be taken prisoner by the Klephts, and would have to pay a high ransom for his liberty. Again, they were like Robin Hood and his merry men in the hatred they bore to the caloyers or monks ; and these last were not slow in avenging themselves; whenever they could, they gave information to the Turks where they might surprise a half-starved party of Klephts.

Sometimes the Klephts, when hard pressed by starvation and an ever-watchful enemy, would send word to a village that unless a certain sum was paid in a place specified by a particular day, all the houses should be burnt. The poor villagers were between two fires. If they gave to the Klephts, the Turks took from them all their possessions; if they did not give to the Klephts after such a notice, the menace was sure to be fulfilled. So, before they gave to the Klephts, the warning had usually to be repeated. If they showed no sign of acquiescence after the second notice the third and last came on a piece of paper burnt at all the four corners ; and then the poor villagers dared no longer refuse. They gave what they were asked for; the Turks took all the rest of their possessions, and they were turned empty and naked upon the world to become Klephts if they liked.

The Klephts kept a constant watch against surprises all day long. At night their mountain paths were all but inaccessible, and they might sleep in the open air wrapped up in goatskins, on beds made of leaves. When they set out on a predatory expedition, it was always by night—the darker and the more stormy the better for their purpose. In their mountain hiding-places they practised shooting, until they acquired what *they* supposed to be extraordinary skill as marksmen. They had rifles of an unusual length, with which some of the most expert could hit an egg hung by a thread to a branch of a tree at a distance of two hundred paces. Others yet more skilful could send a bullet through a ring hardly larger ; and this gave rise to a proverbial expression for a good marksman—* he can thread the

ring with a bullet.' The Klephts by long practice acquired such quickness of sight that many of them could, by watching from whence the flash of an enemy's musket fire proceeded, pick out the man, and lay him low with their rifle. They called this 'firing upon fire'. Besides all these exercises, the Klephts practised some which came down to them from the ancient Greeks. One of the principal of these was the game of the disk, which was to be thrown: he who hurled it the farthest was the conqueror. The Klephts were famous leapers; and wonderful stories are told of them in this capacity. One Klephtic hero, the Captain Niko Isaras, is said on good authority to have cleared seven horses standing abreast. There is another anecdote on record of a man who leaped over three wagons loaded with stones to the height of seven or eight feet. Their feats in running were equally marvellous; not to say incredible. They tell of one man who literally ran so fast that 'his heels touched his ears'. Fortunio's servant Lightfoot was a fool to this. But there is no doubt that the Klepht was unrivalled in his power of making long marches. They were also capable of enduring extraordinary hunger. Combats of three days and nights, during which the Klephts neither ate, drank, nor slept, were not unusual among them, according to M. Fauriel. The same endurance was known in bearing the torture which surely awaited them if taken alive. Having their limbs crushed by repeated blows from a blacksmith's hammer was a common mode of execution; there were others, more rare, too horrible to be mentioned. No wonder that it became a favourite toast among the Klephts to wish each other 'a sure hit from a bullet.'

But what was most injurious to their sense of honour **was** the dread of having their heads, after death, exposed to all the insults which the Turks could devise. The entreaty of the wounded Klepht to his comrades **was** to cut off his head, and bear it far away to their mountain fastnesses **far** out of the reach of the Turks. Thus, in one of their songs, the Klepht says, 'O my

brother, cut off my head; let not the Turkish passers-by see my shame. My enemies will wag their heads and laugh; but my mother—my mother will die of grief.' All honour attended the death of him who was slain in battle. He was called a 'victim,' and the survivors mourned him with pride; whereas he who died of illness on his bed was spoken of as the **corps crevt*, and he was looked upon with a kind of shame and repugnance. But the Klephts in the midst of their wild and barbarous life preserved many chivalrous and noble feelings. They might be simple—they were not vulgar; they might be fierce—they were never cruel. They were full of delicate honour in their treatment of their female captives; even when these were the wives or daughters of those who had most deeply injured and outraged relations of their own. A captain of a band of Klephts who insulted a Turkish woman taken prisoner, was immediately killed by his own soldiers as unworthy to command brave men. Their songs are full of allusions to the respect with which their female prisoners are treated. Images of the Virgin hung up in some rocky cleft made their chapel, where they performed their devotions with the utmost piety. Some of the Klephts made pilgrimages to Jerusalem on foot; their rifles on their backs. No Klepht was ever known to be a renegade. Whatever horrors awaited him if he refused to become a Mussulman, he remained true to his faith. But, indeed, he pined away and died if he was forced to leave his wild rocks, and the mountain gorges which were his home. Up in these homes, women cooked the flesh of goats and kids, roasting them whole in the open air; and they had always secret friends in the fertile plains, who furnished them with wine in abundance to wash down their Homeric feasts. Mount Olympus was the especial hold of the Klephts, and although not so high as some of the Alps or the Pyrenees, it is uninhabitable in the winter on account of the snow. The poor Klephts were often obliged to descend. They first hid their arms and ammunition by wrapping them well up in waxen cloths, and covering

them over with stones. Then they dispersed and sought some hospitable shelter among the Ionian islanders, under the protection of the Venetian government. But they never mixed themselves up with the Greek population that they had to pass through; they preserved their national dress, their proud and haughty bearing, their brilliant complexion, which made their great beauty yet more distinguished. The Greeks looked on them with admiration; these were the men who dared to defy the Turks; in each Greek cottage there hung a rude portrait of some Klephtic hero, and their fame was the staple subject of all the popular songs. It was the Klephts who contributed mainly to the establishment of the kingdom of Greece.

The Greeks would shudder if they thought that they preserved any of the old Pagan superstitions; nevertheless, without their knowing it, much of the heathen belief is mingled with their traditional observances. They speak of their Hellenic forefathers as giants who once inhabited the country where they now dwell. These giants were as tall as the highest poplar trees; and, if they fell down, they died, not having power to get up again. The most terrible oath among these old Pagans, according to the modern Greek tradition, was 'May I fall if it was not so'. Many of the superstitions derived from their ancestors are common to all nations, such as the necessity for blessing themselves if they sneezed, to prevent the entrance of an evil spirit at such times; the evil eye; the presage of death by the barking of dogs, &c. Every one knows how famous or infamous Thessaly was in ancient times for its magicians. Thessaly is still the headquarters of witches and wizards, who (so says popular report) can draw the moon out of the heavens to do their bidding (a remnant of the old invocations to Hecate), and to turn the moon into a cow, from which they draw milk that has irresistible power of enchantment. All over Greece they believe firmly in sorcery. The Hamadryads, the Nymphs, the Nereids, Ac., under which names the ancient Greeks personified the different objects of nature, are gone—

their very names forgotten by their descendants, who, nevertheless, believe that every tree, and rock, and fountain, has its guardian genius, who takes any shape he likes, but most frequently that of a serpent or a dragon, and is always on the watch to defend the object which is put under his care, and with the existence of which his own is bound up.

The plague is personified, as I think I have read is also the case in some of the country towns of Scotland. My idea is that Hugh Miller mentions it somewhere, as a blind woman, going from house to house, giving death to all whom she touches; but, as she can only grope along by the sides of the walls, those escape harmless who keep in the middle of the streets, or the centre of rooms. This is probably a modern superstition. But again, the plague is personified as the ancient fates, in many places. No longer a blind woman, but as a terrible Three, does it come to a doomed town. One awful woman holds a roll of paper, on which she writes the name of those appointed to die; another has the shears with which she snaps the thread of life, and the third carries the besom of destruction, with which to sweep the dead forth from their habitations. The Furies are no longer known; but every one remembers how the attempt was made to propitiate them by calling them the Eumenides; just as in Scotland the fairies, who stole children and performed all manner of small mischief, were called 'the good people'. There is the same desire now shown to conciliate the small-pox, which is to this day a terrible scourge among Greek families. The small-pox is personified as a woman scowling on children, but who may be mollified by calling her, and invoking her under a Greek name which means 'she who mercifully spares'; the small-pox indeed is universally spoken of as Eulogia—the 'well-spoken-of', she whom all are bound under pain of terrible penalties to name with respect.

Some of their superstitions are a confused blending together of several ancient beliefs. For instance, it is said that round the summit of Mount Scardamyla three

beautiful maidens dance perpetually. They appear at first of unearthly beauty, but they have the legs and feet of goats. Whoever draws near to that enchanted spot is first compelled to kiss them, and then is torn to pieces, and thrown down from the rocks. This is evidently a mixture of three old beliefs: the Oreads, the Satyrs, and the Graces.

Death is personified under the form of a stern old man, who comes to summon the living to leave the light of day. He is called Charon, although his office is more properly that of Mercury. He can transform himself into a bird or an animal; in fact take any shape under which he can best surprise those who do not think enough about him. He has no power over those who are constantly remembering his existence.

Such are some of the national customs and superstitions of which M. Fauriel gives an account before introducing his songs to the readers notice. The translation of the ballads into French is literal; from it we may judge of the racy and individual flavour of the ballads themselves. Abrupt, wild, and dramatic are they; not unlike, in vividness of painting and quick transition from one part to another, to some of Robert Browning's smaller poems. They are full of colour; there is no description of feeling; the actions of the dramatis personae tell plainly enough how they felt. Reading any good ballad is like eating game; almost everything else seems poor and tasteless after it.

VIII

AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION

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AN ITALIAN INSTITUTION

WHEN the traveller, only a few years ago, entered Naples from the sea, he was struck by the circumstance that as he handed the boatman his fare, a man suddenly appeared, who looked on at the payment, and then, receiving a certain small part of it, went his way without a word. The same ceremony, with a different individual for the actor, occurred as the traveller paid his cab-fare to the hotel, and paid the porter who took down his luggage ; and, doubtless, had he been able to see it, he would have recognized a similar agency at work when he discharged the bill of his landlord. The *servitore di piazza* who accompanied him to the Opera was met by one of these mysterious figures. Even down to the itinerant orange vendor, or the fabricator of cooling drinks on the Chiaja, all were visited, all were alike subject to this strange supervision. If, tempted by the curiosity natural on such a theme, the stranger asked for an explanation, he was told, with a significance which implied that further elucidation was better avoided, 'La Camorra.'

What does La Camorra mean ? Etymologically, it is not easy to say. The word would seem to have come from a Spanish origin, as the practice which it commemorates, lovers of Italy are fain to believe, was also derived from Spain. It is, to use the simplest of all illustrations, a system of blackmail, so extended and organized as to apply to every walk in life, and every condition of human industry. From the affluent merchant with his argosies on the seas, to the humblest faquino on the Mole—all are its victims. From the minister in his cabinet, or the professor in his chair, down to him who asks alms at the door of the church, or the very galley-slave whose chains clank as he moves

in his weary labour—all pay their quota of this iniquitous exaction, and all recognize in its infliction the existence of a system which no Bourbon government ever yet dared to grapple with, and for the success against which, of the present rulers of South Italy, I am very far indeed from confident.

Corruptions of a government are very speedily propagated through every class, and for a long series of years the sway of the Neapolitan Bourbons has been little else than an organized intimidation. Every one was under the influence of terror, and the dread of being 'denounced' was universal. The oppressed were not slow to learn the lesson of the oppressors, and thus grew up crops of secret societies, which, ostensibly organized for self-protection, soon became agents of the most oppressive and cruel tyranny. Of these the Camorra was the chief, representing within its limits all that Thuggee is to the Bengalese, Whiteboyism to the Irish, and the old Highland system of blackmail to the natives of the north of Scotland.

Had the working of the association contemplated nothing beyond the exaction of a tax, without assuming, or affecting to assume, some relative obligations, it is likely enough that it might have been long since resisted. La Camorra, was, however, ingenious enough to pretend to a paternal care for its followers, and it at least provided that they should not be robbed or pillaged by any other agency than its own. For this purpose, a careful selection of those who were to carry out its edicts was necessary, and admission into the order was only obtained after due and unquestionable proofs of courage and boldness. In fact, the first task usually proposed to an aspirant for the Camorra was an assassination, and, if he shrank from the task, to ensure secrecy his own life always paid the penalty.

The society consisted of a number of distinct groups or knots, under the guidance of a chief—the *Capo di Camorra*, as he was called—who treasured the revenues that were brought in, and distributed the payments to the followers with an admirable fairness and regularity.

These sums, collected in the most minute fractions from every fashion and form of human industry, and even levying toll upon the gains of mendicancy, rose to very considerable amounts, and were sensibly felt in the diminished revenues of the state, which they in a measure anticipated and supplanted.

While the Bourbon government tolerated this gross abuse as exercised among the humble classes of its subjects, it also availed itself of the Camorra as a means of intimidation or vengeance, and gave up the whole discipline of its prisons to this infamous sect. Here it was, in reality, that the Camorra ruled supreme. The newly-admitted prisoner had but to pass the threshold of his cell, to feel himself in its toils. The first demand usually made was for a contribution to the lamp in honour of the Virgin, over the door; for the Camorra is strictly religious, and would not think of dedicating a locality to its vices without assuring itself of the friendly protection of a chosen saint. The privilege to possess money, to buy food or eat it, to smoke, drink, gamble, or sing, was taxed; and the faintest show of resistance was met by the knife. Indeed, he who determined to resent the dictation of the Camorra soon saw that he must place life on the issue. If, aided by a stout heart and strong hand, he conquered his adversary he was himself at once affiliated into the society, and was recognized by its members as worthy of the order. In this way a priest, who sturdily resented an attempt to extort money from him, and who in the struggle that ensued fatally wounded his antagonist, was presented with a powerful stick by an unknown hand, and handsomely complimented on the courage by which he had distinguished himself. Though the Camorra, therefore, declared its protective care of all beneath its rules, it never vindicated the fate of those who defended themselves ill; nay, it took measures always to mark that courage was the first of gifts, and that he who was unequal to his own defence could not be relied upon to protect others. Success, too, was exalted to the position of a test, and no extenuating

circumstances, no plausibilities, could absolve him who failed. There was an obvious policy in this. The system depended entirely upon intimidation, and it was, above all things, necessary that the opinion should prevail that its victims never escaped. So widespread and general was this impression, that every secret vengeance, every dark and untracked crime, was unhesitatingly referred to the Camorristi. With such an unrelenting persistence were they wont to track and hunt down their victims, that men have been known to commit crimes, and get consigned to prison, for no other object than to be fellow-prisoners with one whom they had doomed to destruction.

Outside the limits of their own sect, the Camorrists pretended to be, and in some respects were, the friends of order ; that is, they lent a willing aid to the police to track out all malefactors who were not Camorristi. They were ever ready to suppress riot in the streets, to arrange disputes that grew up at play, and to arbitrate between contending gamblers. They assumed at times, too, the functions of benevolence, and took upon them the care of the suffering or the wounded by the accidents of street warfare.

Of the modes in which they contributed to establish something like discipline in the prisons, the police reports are full. The mean and cowardly jailers relied upon them almost exclusively for the maintenance of order; and whenever, from any chance outbreak among the prisoners, some feat of personal daring would be called for, it was at the hands of a Camorrist it would be required. When it is borne in mind that the Camorra was thus regarded and recognized by the state, it need be little wondered at that its exactions were submitted to with patient obedience by the poor, unprotected and undefended as they were.

A market-gardener at one of the city gates was lately congratulated that the odious imposts of the Camorra were no more, and that he had no longer to groan under the insolent tyranny of this robber association. His answer was, 'So much the worse. The Camorra de-

manded his mulct, it is true, but gave us protection in return. It watched after our property in the streets, and suffered none to defraud us. If we have lost one robber, we have gained thirty.' And so, through every industry that the poorest live by, was the Camorra recognized. It was the ever-present help to every form of human wretchedness, indicating—just as disease will sometimes indicate the remedy—how a people might be cared for and guided and protected, their lives assured, their property defended, had the government that ruled them been only more eager for the good of those under its sway than for a demoralization and abasement which made them easier to control, and fitter tools of despotism.

In the lottery, the Camorra played a distinguished part, the news of the successful numbers being transmitted hither and thither by the fraternity with a speed and exactitude that the telegraph itself never rivalled. To the poor and unlettered man awaiting his fate at some remote village, and not trusting to public sources of information, it is scarcely credible what a boon was the intelligence brought by some Camorristo, who even could lighten the load of heavy fortune by assurances of better luck in store, or some explanation as to the peculiar causes which were then so adverse to his benefit.

As the lowest venture in the state lottery is four carlini, or about a franc and a half, on the Saturday, the last day of the venture, it is rare for the poor Neapolitan who has played during the entire week to find a single grain in his pocket. With, however, the very smallest coin he can scrape out of it, he repairs to the office of some secret Camorrist, and by his intervention is able to associate himself with others as poor and as speculative as himself, and by whose conjoint efforts the requisite sum is made up. If the venture should win, the Camorrist distributes the gain with a marvellous probity and accuracy; when a failure is announced, not the slightest shadow of a doubt ever obtains as to the fairness and credit to the Camorrist who proclaims it.

The tax of the Camorra was not, however, limited to the vices of the poor man. An agent of the sect was to be seen at fashionable gaming-tables, and at the doors of houses of private play, exacting his 'tenth', the recognized mulct, with a regularity that showed how the 'institution' was regarded.

As, in that open-air life popular in the south, a party have amused themselves with a game at cards before their own door of an evening, an agent of the Camorra has suddenly appeared to claim his dividend. Though assured that they are playing for nothing, it avails not; he regrets the circumstance with politeness, but reasserts his claim, and with success; for all are aware that, however luck may vacillate at play, he who resists the Camorra defies fate and fortune.

The very fact that the Camorra had never connected itself with politics, rendered it a useful agent in the hands of a corrupt and tyrannical government. The severities which the Liberal party well knew they had to expect from the state, were, however, as nothing compared to the atrocities in store if the Camorra should be loosened upon them. It was by dark hints at such a day of reckoning that Ferdinand held in check those who would not have feared to adventure their fortune in a contest with all the force of government. It was also by appealing to this sect that the king assumed to enjoy that popularity among his subjects, by which he replied to the energetic protests of France and England.

'Ask the Neapolitans how they feel towards me ! * said he to M. Bresson, the French minister, who had, in writing home to his court, to own that the lowest rabble of Naples entertained for the king a devotion that was marvellous. In fact, the only offences which never could be pardoned under the Bourbon dynasty were those against the state. The terrible crimes which rend society in twain; the fearful acts which make **men** almost despair of humanity ; were all more or less mercifully dealt with. Talarico, for instance, the assassin of a dozen people, was banished to a pleasant and salubrious island, pensioned, and set at liberty.

The world knows the story of Poerio and his companions in the terrible scenes of '49. The lowest populace sided entirely with the monarchy, and this show of popular sympathy offered to strangers one of the most puzzling and difficult problems of the day. Minister after minister wrote home to their several courts, 'We cannot deny, as little can we explain, the marvellous popularity the king enjoys.'

'Which of your masters,' said the king, on one day of a court-reception, to the assembled ambassadors—'which of your masters can go amongst his people with more confidence than I can? Come down with me into the street, and see whether I am loved by my people!'

At length the Liberal party found means to open negotiations with the leaders of the Camorra. They were not very promising, it is true, and vouched little for the patriotic aspirations of these sectaries, who only saw in the prospect of a revolution a question of their own material benefit. The Camorrists talked big; spoke of their numbers, their courage, and so forth; but did nothing beyond excite the fears of the royalists, who really dreaded them with a most disproportionate terror. At length the prefect of police determined on the bold step of arresting the Camorrists, and banishing them to Ischia; and out of this imprisonment they grew, as fellow-sufferers with Poerio and Spaventa, to regard themselves as political martyrs and patriots. Liberated on Garibaldi's entrance into Naples, their first act was to attack all the agents of the police, and destroy all the documents of that office. They were, in twenty-four hours, the masters of the capital. It was in this contingency that Liborio Romano bethought himself of enlisting these men in the cause of order and law. On one side was a baffled, enraged, and dishonoured soldiery, ready for pillage, and eager to cover their shame by acts of outrage and violence; on the other, were the helpless, unarmed, and trembling citizens. The old police was disbanded; the National Guard not yet organized; the priestly party only waiting for opportunity to renew the atrocious scenes of ten

years before. They had even hired stores to receive the pillage ! It was, it is said, at the suggestions of an old Bourbon adherent, a general, that Liborio Romano took this daring step. * Do as we did in times of danger; fall back on the mob,' was the counsel. Blame him as one may, the Camorra saved Naples !

Emboldened by his success, Liborio Romano now organized them into a sort of regular police force, under their own chiefs, and, marvellous to say, for the first month or two the experiment would seem to have succeeded. Crime of all sorts diminished, and especially theft. Armed simply with staves, and only distinguished by a tricolour cockade, they very soon obtained by their boldness and courage an amount of influence far greater than that enjoyed by the late police. But stranger than their bravery was their honesty: innumerable are the facts on record of their self-denial in temptation, and their rigid integrity ; and there is no doubt that they mainly contributed to that new-born enthusiasm for Garibaldi, whose greatest triumph ever was to evoke from popular masses whatever was good, or great, or hopeful, in their natures.

' See what such a people may become when the causes of their demoralization are removed. Look at the virtues these men exhibit, and say, is theirs a nation to be despaired of !' was the language on every side.

The first enthusiasm over, however, the Camorristi seemed to revert to their old instincts. They were not bandits nor galley-slaves, but they were men of strong frames, violent passions, long accustomed to lead lives of unrestrained licence, and to see themselves universally dreaded. Without ceasing to be a police, then, they introduced into their discipline all the oppressions and exactions of the Camorra. Their first care was to take all smuggling under their especial protection. Under the Bourbon dynasty, contraband had long ceased to attach any shame to its exercise. The most respectable merchants defrauded the government, without a particle of remorse, and without any sense of dishonour. The frauds were arranged between the

chiefs of the Camorra and the officers of the customs, and a regular tariff was established—about one-fourth of that ruled by the state. On the arrival of Garibaldi, however, the Camorristi, no longer content with half-measures, assumed all contraband as their own especial perquisites. A certain Salvatore de Cresoenza, a well-known Camorrist, took the port-dues under his peculiar care; and from forty thousand ducats, which was the daily receipt, the dues of Naples fell short of one thousand!

A no less celebrated leader, Pasquale Menotte, took charge of the 'octroi' at the gates. No sooner did a wagon arrive laden with wine, or meat, or any excisable articles, than the Camorrists presented themselves, arms in hand, to the customs officials, and crying out, 'Let it pass—it is for Garibaldi!' the order was instantly obeyed, and the tax was paid to the Camorra in the very presence of the officers of the government. Strangest of all, the tax now imposed was a mere fraction less than that imposed by the state; and so complete was the intermediation, that the people actually preferred to hand the sum to the Camorristi rather than to the servants of the government. It may be imagined to what an extent this fraud was practised, when the receipts of all the gates of the city in one day, realized only twenty-five soldi—about twopence of our money!

Spaventa, a fellow-sufferer with Poerio, a man of daring boldness and consummate craft, was the prefect of police; he resolved on a step of no mean courage. He arrested one hundred Camorristi on a single night; dissolved the whole 'Guardia Celladina', as it was called; and established in its stead a guard of public safety, over whose organization he had for some time sedulously and carefully watched. It has been alleged that Spaventa used but little discrimination in his act of repression; that some tried patriots and brave followers of Garibaldi were included among those of less fame and more damaged reputations; but it was a moment of great peril, and admitted of little time for selection.

The resources of the state were being preyed upon on all sides. Peculation was in high places as well as in low; and a letter to the formidable Camorristi was certain to take effect.

The government by this act severed itself at once and for ever from all connexion with the Camorra. Every day has widened the breach, and every day sees the powers of the state more stringently exercised toward those who declare that they are an institution of the land, and that they are determined to hold their own against the present government as they did against the last. Thus the Camorra has in latter times undergone four distinct mutations. Under the reign of Ferdinand the Second, it acted as the secret police; under his son Francis, it became the ally of the Liberals; beneath the revolution it performed the functions of a police; and now, under Victor Emmanuel, it declares itself persecuted and pronounces for the return of the Bourbons.

Profiting by the facilities which a state of siege confers upon a governor, General la Marmora made a most vigorous onslaught on the Camorra. Vast numbers have already been arrested, and the jails of even Florence and Turin are filled with these southern depredators. The more active the measures taken, the more does the extent of the disease manifest itself; the Camorra is now found to have penetrated the public service in every direction, to abound in the ranks of the army, and to have its followers in the navy.

