

THE
SHIP OF GLASS;
OR,
THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND.

A ROMANCE,
IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY
HARGRAVE JENNINGS.

AUTHOR OF "MY MARINE MEMORANDUM BOOK," &c.

" 'There was a SHIP,' quoth he."
Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER
72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH SQ.

1846



PREFACE.

If a bulky book be an evil, a long preface may be regarded as a still greater nuisance. It is like a long tiresome bow from a master of the ceremonies when he is keeping you from a view of the "divine partner" he is assiduously busied in introducing. Still the Author could not divest himself of the idea that a pretending work in Three Volumes requires a word or two, lest it should be abruptly thrust into the reader's hands.

These volumes contain Two Tales of very opposite characteristics :—the one being a direct Romance ; the other a sort of Novel, where the writer speaks more

" Like a man of this world."

But of the two tales, the leading one, though by no means the longest, the writer considers may be safely depended on as the principal.

THE SHIP OF GLASS is an attempt to revive some of the more sober attractions of the old romance.

In this dry age of utilitarianism, when everything seems about resolving itself into sums and machines—to figures and fact—it may not be amiss to endeavour to qualify some of this correct rigidity by giving the reins to fancy. It may be feared whether we are not becoming too mechanical; and, if relaxing, indulging ourselves by laughing too freely at everything which bears the shape of sentiment.

We have so many books of fact—travel, science, biography, and reality of all kinds—that a good wholesale fabrication may be welcomed as relief. In such spirit is the SHIP OF GLASS offered.

The Author believes the Rye House Plot was introduced in a work of fiction published some year or two since. In the instance of ATCHERLEY there is no imitation, for the book was planned in a much more compendious form, and the two first chapters written (afterwards laid aside) so far back as the year 1836.

London, August, 1846.

THE SHIP OF GLASS.

CHAPTER I.

WHEREIN A GREAT DEAL IS SAID, THOUGH THE
READER SCARCELY GOES HIS FIRST STAGE.

“ But what’s this to the purpose ? you will say.
Gent reader, nothing ; a mere speculation,
For which my sole excuse is—’tis my way,
Sometimes with and sometimes without occasion.
I write what’s uppermost, without delay ;
This narrative is not meant for narration,
But a mere airy and fantastic basis,
To build up common things with common places.

You know, or don’t know, that great Bacon saith.
‘ Fling up a straw, ’twill show which way the
wind blows ;’

And such a straw, borne on by human breath,
Is poesy, according as the mind glows ;
A paper kite that flies ’twixt life and death,
A shadow which the onward soul behind throws :
And mine’s a bubble, not blown up for praise,
But just to play with, as an infant plays.”

Byron.

THAT our good-natured reader may be in no
doubt as to the *locale* or particular place of

our story, we will at once define it as being the coast of Spain in the modern province of Murcia, and somewhere between the boundary of that district and the old Moorish kingdom of Grenada, and Cape Palos on the Mediterranean.

For our time we must go back to a remote period. The settling of it in our own minds may be of certain difficulty, since if we were to carry it past the dark ages, and into these still darker, a warning fear might steal upon us that our inch of candle would be insufficient. That we should need the lantern of more antiquarian lore and more historical precision than we may boast or have industry and perseverance competent to master.

In this respectable and well-conducted dread, and with this doubtful diffidence, we own to a laudable disposition to grope about a little with our stick, as we have noticed a blind man do when arrived at a crossing and distrustful of the self-possession of Tray, or Trotter, or in whatever designation the canine creature may delight, which serves to guide his master's

trembling steps. With this inclination to pause, we say we offer our peruser the best guarantee, let alone our own sharp-sightedness and fidelity, that he shall not be carried on into the dark ages without, at all events, knowing where he is going. He shall have the option of providing himself with a better guide, more abundantly furnished with artificial illumination, even perhaps to a real bull's eye or a double lens.

Nobody shall suppose, if we can do aught to hinder it, that we have an ungenerous design to take our reader's hand, offered in all confidence, while he, in his simplicity and open-hearted trust, shuts his eyes and resigns himself to our guidance, and lead him into places, and forward into time where he cannot be sure of his feet. It shall not be charged upon us that we seduce him into regions that he knows so little of, as to be in danger of stumbling from ignorance of the ground on which

he treads, or want of knowledge of "the time of day." If we see anything particularly green, it shall be on the ground, and not in the optics of our companion. We will not introduce him into the dimness of by-gone ages without at all events supplying him with the tinder-box to strike a light. He shall, if he pleases, nay, we will urge it upon him, take care to indue his best double-milled spectacles, or in other words, and sober and untechnical English, his superfine ground Brazil pebbles, in which, sooth to say, he shall see the sun shine at noon-day if he looks in the right place for him.

No, we abjure, and detest, and abnegate, and put behind us; and entirely and utterly put out of sight, put up, shut up, and bag out of the way, any unfair design to practise on the reader's innocence and curiosity. We will not build up towers where no towers stand; raise towns where there are not even stones; and supply a fine race of inhabitants, and a

pattern peasantry, and an unexceptionable lord, and spick and span satin heroine, or white muslin maiden, all in the turning of a hand. Not should this be done, even had we those wonderful powers of creation, and that rapid resource and happy mode of throwing stones wherewith Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha re-peopled the world after the deluge, saving an incalculable amount of time and trouble, and all effected as "directed by the oracle."

It was, then, at a time of which, unfortunately, there comes down to us no record, or such a tattered one as we, being very particular and most fastidious as to completeness, could not piece together, that our story opens. Most happy should we have felt ourselves if we could have succeeded in fixing our date within the Christian chronology with that precision which should have placed our narrative beyond question. We have, however, not been so fortunate.

A certain trembling beset us when we

found we were rapidly losing sight of that consistent time when church-spires were in fashion, and people wore stockings. For this latter peculiarity we are forced to confess we have always retained predilection, though we are free to allow that what has been gained in comfort and propriety has been sacrificed in personal picturesqueness. Could we have persuaded ourselves that the events of our story occurred in these comfortable days when people lived indoors, and such things had disappeared from the face of the earth as heroes and fine curly heads and other nuisances, and wild-boars with awful tusks, and boar-spears as long as lamp-posts, and tiger-skin jackets, such as we see in old pictures, infinitely happier as well as more cosily-hearted should we have felt ourselves. But as our rigorous Fate with her "nose as sharp as a pen," and her shining green spectacles and skinny arms, and her long scissors ground up sharpest and thirstiest upon the swiftest grindstone, for-

bade such a hope, all that remains to us is submitting with a good grace.

We will now, if the reader pleases, proceed at once to the first round bold sweep of the outline of our story.

At a very remote period of Spanish history, indeed it is so distant in its antiquity that we are loth to fix it at either the old Gothic or Moorish epoch, or ascribe it to later and more christian-like and christian times, that a certain district bordering on the sunny shores of the wide Méditerranæan, and called the Costad'Oro, was agitated by various singular rumours, and disturbed by impressions of an extraordinary character. Civilization and the arts had happily here developed themselves much more broadly than elsewhere. The consequence was a high state of refinement of the inhabitants.

To this might be owing the speculation implied in, and fanciful character of the persuasion upon which the reader shall shortly perceive

the interest of our story hangs. This persuasion was so dim and shadowy, and at the same time so improbable, that I feel fearful of proceeding.

“Plague this fellow!” cries the reader. “There he goes again! When will he leave off these tedious digressions! Here has he been at it for the last half hour, hovering about his story without commencing it. Nibbling like a child at a cherry, taking a ridiculous and misplaced pleasure in going all round it, and never attacking it honestly at once. Is his story so hot that he cannot handle it?”

“Dear reader, be not impatient. Smooth that ruffled front, and pray consider that if you do not permit us, like Sancho, to tell our story in our own way, the chances are that you will get no story at all. And that would be a great pity, we can tell you; for we take it upon our conscience to aver that our tale will be, if not the longest in the world, (which is a blessing), the most—”

"Amusing, of course. Oh, we understand all that! But, good sir, you are---"

"Becoming tedious. We fear so. Patience, considerate reader; and as Durandarte says, 'shuffle the cards,' which being interpreted, means shuffle off, if you please, the first chapter. We have but three words more before we plunge in *medias res*. Well then---"

Our dread is that geographers instead of holding up their hands in wonder, and opening their eyes in astonishment, as we should desire them, might disappoint us, and when they have held up their heads turn them away sneeringly and in impatience, which would be worse work than the shaking them in simple incredulity.

Greatly is it to be regretted, and deeply to be deplored, that there should be so much reluctance to believe. To acknowledge assertions which, though true, must be necessarily destitute of evidence, and the means of confirmation, in proportion to their strangeness. Of

the ordinary and the usual there is fortunately abundance of proof. Everybody is ready to stand forward and aver to it, and perhaps with all the greater readiness because there is no need of it.

But he who would relate new things, and impart singular truths, is ungratefully met with that solid, not to call it stolid, sort of disbelief, which, like a great hard wall, opposes itself stoutly and immoveably to the thrusts of the light lances of the extraordinary. Certain things, though unlikely, may be none the less true. This is an axiom in physics; as, that if you employ a medical man he *may* omit to send you in the bill.

The learned classes, too, are, we lament to say, ordinarily found much too selfishly and obstinately aggravated to that which were they to examine might prove as equally worth credit as some of their own theories.

It is therefore with a moving anxiety as to this difficulty of reception and hardness of heart,

and stiffness of neck and grievous apathy to the startling, that we proceed to enlighten all who remain of the curious as to the nature of these rumours which were circulated in this unknown place, province, principality or kingdom.

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD SPANISH DRINKING-HOUSE.

"This will prove a brave kingdom to me."
Tempest. Act iii. Scene 3.

"Whether thou bee'st, or no,
 Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,
 I not know."

Shakespeare.

"You do yet taste
 Some subtilties o' the isle, that will not let you
 Believe things certain."

Shakespeare.

It had been for a long time, indeed, as high as tradition reached, for in legal phrase the fact was not contradicted by historical abstersion,

and the "memory of man ran not to the contrary," a settled belief in the province of Al-tosierro that an island existed out at sea, which was susceptible of discovery, but yet was eternally baffling all attempts at falling in with it.

Perhaps this might have been owing to the fact that the inhabitants of this portion of Spain shared but little of the slowness and inactivity of other Spanish tribes. On the contrary, they were of a bustling, enquiring character, of vivid imagination, and as it would have been designated in modern phraseology, of a castle-building *chateaux d' Espagne* turn. Their situation on the seashore, with such an ample line of coast, might have assisted them in their dreams of what, at that time, lay undiscovered in the impenetrable solitudes of the vast ocean.

Their usual habit of life was quiet and romantic. They were not much disturbed, or permitted themselves not to be so, with the

noise of commerce, though their trade was extended into many parts and strange regions, and into the corners of the then mysterious Europe. From these places their travelling merchants, and the more enterprising of their mariners, brought back strange stories, which served to amuse the winter's hearth or beguile the long summer day.

This singular belief that there existed such an extraordinary island, had descended from times of antiquity; altered indeed, and modified in its passage, but still preserving more than might be expected of its original "form and pressure." There was evidently a disposition amongst this primitive people to believe according to the good old standard. And when the uncouthness and inaptitude to modern customs of the legend, and its contradiction to the persuasions of later times presented difficulties somewhat troublesome, there yet lingered a desire to assign it in the new modifications to

which, in course of years, it became subject, as much as possible to the reverend and dearly cherished original.

Many were the stories associated with this singular belief. Thus safe and unshaken had it come down, altered, perhaps, in particulars, but still perpetuated in its form of a conviction; nor did advance in education, or discoveries in science, or the growing reluctance to believe accompanying the progress in refinement and enlarged knowledge, do more than adjust to present tastes the old fashioned prejudice.

There was scarcely a family but possessed in its archives some tale or circumstance which bore relation to it. A predecessor had in some way connected himself, or been connected with the legend, and had contributed some marvel, or had rendered assistance of less pretension to the general, nay the national article of faith. Indeed, in time, it came to blend itself with the religion of the country, and it was con-

sidered equally as great a crime to question a dogma of the sacred creed, as to infer a doubt of the existence of this unknown and tantalising island, which was always hiding itself, and would never be discovered.

At this present time, curiosity was excited in the question of the reality of this island to an extraordinary degree. A notion of wonderful wealth associated in some way with its discovery, generally prevailed. It was the first dream of childhood ... it was the reverie of youth. Occupied with the necessary occupations, and the noise and the business of the world, men in middle life would yet recur to it as a something in the corner of their hearts, and a point to wonder and speculate upon. It would creep into the drowsy talk of old age, and generally wound up every old woman's — aye, and every old man's gossiping. In fact, it was the dream of a whole people, which had a mischievous and damping effect upon attention to everyday and

useful matters. It encouraged listless vaporing, and a continual desire for unattainable good, and all sorts of idle dreams, to the prejudice of wholesome activity and the exertion of plain common sense.

When a whole people could not escape the infection, it may be readily supposed that it was the quick and imaginative youth, who earliest gave in to this subdued but enfeebling disease. Upon the young it exerted its greatest power. The dreams of boyhood were impressed with the besetting vision. All the country was persuaded that there was something to be discovered; and as from time immemorial it has been the peculiar province and incontestible right of womankind to unravel all secrets, it may be well imagined that no pains were spared, and no female assiduity and perseverance were wanting towards this grand *eclaircissement*.

Every one tried their hand at it; from the

cobbler's boy who mended shoes on a three-legged stool, to the governor of the country who sat upon a dais of three grades, and dined under a triple canopy.

Having made our reader acquainted with the state of public opinion on this interesting subject in the inquisitive country of Altosierro, we will at once introduce him into its principal town, and permit him to observe things a little closer and more narrowly and particularly.

It was a lovely evening in the fervid month of August. There was that breathing warmth in the sky, and poured abroad in the earth that made itself felt as a new and enclosing atmosphere. Notwithstanding the advancing hour, everything out of doors, (for our scene is an interior,) was intensely brilliant. You would have thought from an observation of things out of window, that it was high noon and an unclouded sun, instead of half past five of the clock.

Everything stood silent in the strong heat—for it is the property of a high state of temperature and a steady sun, to create stillness only equalled by that of night. All objects were disclosed as if there were some double illumination—a sort of mighty artificial light which might put to shame the petty expedients of gas, oil, and the new discoveries in chemical combustion.

The apartment thus brightly lighted by the setting sun, which was going down royally opposite its principal window, and pouring in every direction, and in at the open casements, a whole kingdom of flame, was large, though curiously shaped, and with a low ceiling. The last was crossed and re-crossed, and marked and divided, and cut into angles and squares, and mathematical figures innumerable. These seemed running inextricably together; in some places clinging and reticulating like the pieces of a kaleidoscope; in others, with more orderly

propriety, joining edges and forming large devices. This roof, which was a wonder of its kind, was divided at stated distances by a range of parallel beams, with a series of curious knots placed in a row and very much like little round draughtmen, or the bezants of heraldry, a resemblance the more striking as they were of a dull gold.

A pewter lustre or chandelier, or to whatever denomination it may have laid claim, of exceedingly droll shape, with fifty arms similar to long, thin, curling snakes, with their mouths open like bells, was suspended in the midst by a rope of crimson silk twist and a bulging tassel of dingy red bullion...reminding the observer of the fringed decoration to the halberts or par-tizans of the Roman soldiery, where Pontius Pilate stands presiding in an old sacred picture in his purple mantle and classic gaiters.

The walls of the apartment were of a dark

wood, burnt black by a century or two of Spanish sun, and gaping in innumerable seams, their edges dry and sharp as a penknife. They doubled in and doubled out with an eccentric inconstancy, as if the room had been composed of one immense black folding screen with the gilt leather and the shining nails. Abundance of carving of the most outlandish fashion was to be seen in the antique panelling and the ranges of clumsy cornice.

Festoons of foliage, with a certain large star-flower which was frequently repeated, or a strange barbarous head, half Bacchante, half Harpy, or half virgin, as the taste or fancy of the person contemplating it might suggest; grotesque bodies with the heads wanting; or some tricorporated demi-angels or demi-devils, with great staring eyes of blue glass or opal, and oafish ears, twining in a kind of ludicrous and unnatural conflict, met the eye in every direction. There was also a curious up and down, triplicated zig-zag kind of ornament,

ending in mighty bosses winged with dragon's wings like the flying globe of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, with a claw on a gigantic scale in the centre, perhaps, grasping a ring of a singular green metal—neither bronze, nor brass, nor green copper—for which it would be difficult to find a name.

All these out of the way carvings, old, battered and worm-eaten, decayed or deformed, covered the walls, and gave the room the most extraordinary look in the world, just as if it had been an apartment in a house in the moon.

Windows there were three, wide and gaping, though set in deep reveals. There were jingling lattices and yellowish glass, and settees and Indian mats, and various comforts of that kind. Chairs with enormous high backs and little broken pediments on the top of them or round balls and spires, and rare devices in turnery, the patterns for which seemed brought

from some curious kingdom underground ; two tables which appeared to have stood where they were placed since the creation of the world ; and a pair of tall iron candlesticks with pillars of wax in them, which looked as if they had been abstracted, on a moonlight night, from some Catholic chapel buried in woods or raised on the summit of an inaccessible hill... these formed the principal furniture.

There was a crazy beaufet, or court cupboard, on one side. Its shelves were disposed like the advanced works of a citadel, and gleamed with old plate and some oddly cornered dishes and platters, of such awful amplitude that they looked as if they might have served the giant Morgante and all his household, or the Cyclops of Sicily when giving a ponderously magnificent entertainment to their iron-visaged monarch, Vulcan. So mysteriously dreadful did these shining utensils appear that they only looked fit chargers for Herodias, or appropriate

dishes to serve up men's grisly bearded heads in, with their skins of leather and brazen earrings, at an Ogre banquet.

The whole style and arrangements of the place were of the quaintest character. Even the glass of the windows, and the wood of the furniture seemed to be different to the glass and wood found elsewhere.

No signs of abandonment or neglect were to be discerned about this curious apartment. The table was covered with drinking vessels of all kinds. So various was their description, that one might have fancied to supply the stock all such stores had been ransacked from the creation of the world, or from that period at least when mankind took to drinking — which, we may presume, was tolerably early, considering the proficiency to judge from the instance of Noah, at which they so soon arrived. These utensils for liquids were of every conceivable shape, and of all metals, or rather of all materials.

There were long-shanked affairs with a singularly twisted curl for handle, tall beakers like flower-pots, and flat receptacles like saucers. Some were rotund and burly ; others squat ; and a third class were of all the family of ups and downs. There were blue glass and green glass ; grey pottery and red stone ; pewter—nay, silver, or silver plate ; and silver-gilt, if not solid gold.

Scattered around this mighty club-table, was an assemblage of hearty gentlemen, who might from the clatter they made, and the evident state of jollity and sun shiny excitement to which they had attained, have been mistaken for the knights of King Arthur's famous Round Table, except that unfortunately their table was square.

There were about eight or ten individuals seated, or if not, strictly speaking, seated, at least deposited in chairs, or on stools or seats of some kind. Their attitudes displayed all possible modes of a bestowal of their persons ;

and the angles of the seats seemed in particular and remarkable request. There was not one who had the courage, or, to do him justice, perhaps the ability, to sit straight up in his chair like a Christian and a gentleman. The only use these personages appeared to make of their seats, was to employ them as a sort of peg on which to hang themselves. Some leant back and gazed up at the ceiling in edifying bewilderment. Some with their heads declining over their shoulders, and their long hair depending, and perhaps with one arm and hand idly dangling, might as well have been upon the floor for all the reasonable purposes they exhibited in sitting up. Others again sat propping themselves as courageously as they could up in their seats, with their steady eyes carefully fixed, alive enough to the predicament in which they were placed; and, as their attitudes hinted, as much afraid, and as grotesquely excited, as if they were sitting at the edge of a cliff, and were in momentary and fearful expectation of being tilted over.

Behind these veterans who stuck to their colours as long as colours remained for them to cleave to, were some scattered groups of less persevering disciples of Bacchus. These noisy and riotous neophytes, who invoked the rubicund god with shout and scream rather than the tokens of grave attachment, and with the silent devotion of older devotees, were throwing themselves into all sorts of attitudes, which would have struck as more impressive and extraordinary than graceful on canvas.

The dress of all these worthies was droll and fantastic in the extreme. There were one or two with good heads and fine features, but their faces were encased perhaps in a blue woollen hood, or a high peaked cap, which spoiled them, or their effect was changed by small round caps, like ordinary plates, and a high feather, so tall that you might think there would never be an end of it. Small indeed was the number who displayed themselves to advantage.

The strangeness of the dresses, the swarthi-

ness of the men, their long, dark hair and twisted moustachios, long hands and long legs, the eagle eyes which abounded, with a glance as sharp as a javelin; and, with these characteristics, the multitude of chalices and drinking cups, and the outlandish furniture, the uncouthness of the language, and the glorious sunset, made up as extraordinary and as picturesquely peculiar a scene, as perhaps was ever shut in by walls and ceiling.

CHAPTER III.

THE DISPUTE.

"Now, close your ears to 'pleadings. Stir not
hence,
Till you have trounced him soundly. Such a brag-
gart
Moon never saw, much less the searching sun,
Which 'twixt the bright east and the cold grey west,
Pours thousand beams far sifting. Tie him up!
And strangle pity, that shes hall not stretch
Her piteous hands to save him."

Old Play.

"*Fang.*—A rescue! A rescue!
Hostess Quickly.—Good people, bring a rescue or
two."

*Second Part of King Henry the Fourth. Act II.
Scene I.*

PERHAPS the most conspicuous figure in this
company of boozers, was a young man of con-

siderable height, but with legs of a longitude greater in proportion than his elevation warranted. He was of a high and determined bearing, with bright dark eyes, a long face, long nose, well-shaped chin, and an olive complexion.

His movements were hasty and vehement, and betrayed emotions of no very peaceable or probably easily mollified character. His right arm was extended, in a sort of accusative impetuosity, towards a small thin man, dressed in three or four colours, whose face was red with mingled shame, anger, and ruffled pride, whilst he seemed to shrink away like the sensitive plant every time the fist of his opponent was even shaken. Around the two, many of those present had gathered and the rest looked on over the backs of the chairs, or over the shoulders of such of their companions as were nearest the disputants, or up in a dull sort of vague half-fuddled curiosity from the table, from which they seemed

indisposed to stir to satisfy beyond this the fresh interest which had arisen in their minds.

"Don't make so much noise, Pietro," said one of the pacific order, of which there were few enough present. "Pimpernella can hear you."

"Hear me! of course he does," cried Pietro, the young man whom we have described as being in this high state of excitement, and the object of attention to the company. "The walls hear me, and so I should wish them, for I never listened to such a mean, backdrawing, withdrawing, parleying recantation. Would you have believed it?"

"I believe every thing," said one of the wise men at the table, "and that, I take it, is the best mode of managing, for then you can never encounter contradiction."

"Comrades and friends," cried Pietro, "you pay me a very indifferent compliment in clasping our dear Pimpernella so affectionately round the collar. "Do not be afraid. I am

no bulldog; and he may smooth his ruff in full confidence that I shall not dart at his throat and rumple it. Does he mean to say that he must talk, and brag in his drink, and tell lies, and swagger, and that as privileged buffoon and ticketed bravado nobody is to cut me off his copper gilt tassels?"

"You won't let the poor fellow have a word," chimed in a pitying acquaintance. "See, his eyes are fixed on you, Pietro, as if he were conjuring something up from the depths of his stomach if you would let him articulate."

"Let the white dog speak," returned Pietro, in tones like growling thunder, "and the shepherd shall withhold his club for a time."

"Come, we shouldn't have any quarreling, for the bet was made in humour after all," said one of the group, named Hap Warmhose, a middle-aged, contented-looking individual, with a round, happy-looking face, and a sly eye. "The Senhora Phroditis would feel

herself but ill complimented, if when her name was brought in question there should be hard words and harder fists over her."

"But you all heard the bet I made," said Pietro, his eager face first turning to one of his comrades, and then to another, as if he were seeking confirmation of what he was demanding. "Pimpernella, the fool, knew fast enough what he was advancing, and what he was engaging to do. By the ten stars of St. Packthread! if I don't make him hold his engagement. He shall put his courage to issue this eve, spite of all the bearded custodian's vials, powders, and imps."

"'Tis but fair," said a noisy member of the society named Pickaxos. "Pimpernella must run the gauntlet through the risk; or we shall first submit him to his penance, which won't be white wool, and then kick him out of our all honourable society."

"He's a slippery knave," cried Hap Warmhose; "but what can you expect of a tailor?"

“ Tailors were born for needle and thread as naturally,” said Pickaxos, “ as the big ox eats grass.”

“ Peace, senhors, peace !” cried Pietro. “ I will give the tailor his present chance. Perhaps he’ll pluck heart of grace, and say like a Trojan he’ll beard the white-headed owl for the sake of the young dove. Come, Pimpernella ! up with your heart and let us hear the few false notes of that cracked instrument of music of yours. Give the bellows wind, and let the puppet gorge squeak.”

“ Speak, man, speak ! Have you put your voice in your pocket ?” said two or three, roughly shaking the poor tailor.

“ By our holy lady, you would shake the breath out of a giant,” said Pimpernella, endeavouring to disengage himself, and placing his hands on the arms of two of those who detained him. “ How can you expect that I should speak, if you keep thrusting your big hands into one’s mouth, and marking those

iron knuckles of yours in my flesh? Besides you're all upon me, and I have nobody to reply to you, or to take my part, or wield an arm for me but myself. Thank Heaven, when I like I can find myself not the weakest in the world! but no thanks to you. Very unfriendly of you, friends! very; though you mayn't think so. As to Pietro, I shouldn't have answered him, or have spoken a word to him, did you not all look to me as if there were something in particular between me and him. I don't see it. But we've already wasted so much time, that I think it would be better to discuss—"

"Now! now! No, you don't get off in that way," shouted several to the mortified tailor, who was looking anxiously about, as if he were in an extreme state of desire for some honourable mode of retreat from the perplexity into which he had contrived to introduce himself.

"Don't press upon me so, gentlemen," cried

Pimpernella, beginning to feel really alarmed at the threatening gestures and eager and wild-looking and inflamed visages of his companions. "You have really no mercy on toes, heels, or elbows."

"Will you do it, then? Will you do it?" shouted Pietro. "Will you force your way into Klypp Heufueros' garden, and will you make him show you his daughter?"

"Oh! that's demanding too much," cried the tailor, expostulatively, "Achilles himself wouldn't have done it. I never—"

"Did he not," cried Pietro, turning suddenly round. "I appeal. What was his offer?"

"Something very like it," cried Pickaxos. "Too much like it, at all events, for him to escape. Did he not say that he could do something that none of us could do? Did he not compare himself to me? and I flatter myself I have as lovely a face for bold doings as most. He shall redeem himself, or we will mark him

with ten thousand hot irons. Diavolos! By Saint Stampos' black moustachios, but he shall do all that he has said he'll do ;"

"Oh senhors! Oh good friends! you never supposed that I could mean to dare the mighty Klypp's black images and all his devils. All the town trembles at him; and you've heard what they say—that when he snores the foundations of the city rock."

"He's afraid! Ah! he's afraid. He won't do it. He's streaked—streaked with white!" shouted a dozen in gleeful chorus, delighted at the opportunity of punishing the tailor and affording themselves amusement at the same time.

"Come, will you swear upon my holy silver ring to do it or not?" demanded Pietro, fiercely, and grasping Pimpernella by the collar, which gave way in his hands as if partaking of the fright of its owner, and fell in a pitiful rent adown the doughty tailor's doublet.

Pimpernella was so terrified at this sudden

assault, and discomposed by the awful tearing of his somewhat pretending frill, which stuck out bombastically and seemed always in the way, that he fell down on his knees and clasped his hands over his torn collar, as if it had been a wound and he desired to stop the blood.

"I will—I will do it some time," moaned the tailor. "I will do it perhaps next Christmas."

"Christmas! He mocks us—he jeers—he laughs at us," cried a roaring dozen, amongst whom Pickaxos was foremost. "Away with him!"

"Aye! away with him," cried Pietro; "and away with every craven who walks upon two legs. He may think it well that we do not mark him with the bloody cross. Better men have suffered it for more pardonable self-vaunting. Fix him to the post, and let him have his silver rain."

This referred to a custom which obtained in

this curiously constituted club, and by the laws of which it was permitted that a member who went from his word, and refused to redeem when called upon any engagement into which he had voluntarily entered, or to make good any boast made in the assembly, should be fastened up to a post, and that every individual present should have the privilege, if he chose to exercise it, of casting anything which might be to be found upon the table at the head of the general victim.

"Oh! no, my masters," shrieked the tailor. "Allot me any penalty—give me any penance, but don't fix me up to that horrid beam."

"You should have thought of that before, senhor," said Pickaxos, amidst a whirlwind of laughter, stamping on the floor, mock howling, oaths, and invocations to all the saints that could be remembered presiding over correction of offenders,

"The wooden spine is too good for him," said a grim short man, with an eye which might

almost have been called of a cold green. "I'd rather break his bones on marble than wood. Hark ye, senhors; it would be a capital punishment for his bragging to make Pimpermella, the tailor, sew up his own mouth. And we might guide his fingers."

At this savage but ingenious proposal there was a general laugh, which ended off in a delighted whine from the most brutal.

Every person more peaceably and mercifully disposed slunk off to the entry of the room, while the more boisterous and the most intoxicated bustled eagerly forward and felt about the table for the heaviest goblets, which they grasped with a nervous trembling anxiety and relaxed fingers. Others, cooler in their movements, and more refined and scientific over their expected banquet of blows, picked out with fastidious nicety, and to indulge a certain luxury in cruelty, all the articles which presented the hardest bosses and the sharpest corners,

It was evident that although all those present would have been more or less indisposed and disinclined themselves to have performed the bold task for refusing which they were about to inflict such severe and summary castigation on the tailor, they felt high pleasure in venting the mischievous and violent turn which their revelry had taken upon the body of their companion, least able as he was to take care of himself, and, therefore the safest to practise upon.

In fact the mirth of the company had risen to a dangerous pitch. All was noise and uproar, with the figures of the malevolently bustling boon companions intermingling and twisted in all directions, as they made for the table and armed themselves with the projectiles they chose, or struggled forward with Pimpernella in their arms, who kicked, and cried, and wrestled in impotent despair and vain contention with his burly associates, whose ribs were like iron and arms brawny to the last degree. He

looked like some poor weak animal—a sheep, for instance—about to be sacrificed by a herd of red-eyed wolves.

The poor tailor cast piteous looks around, in vain imploring assistance. At last his fright and distress became so great, that he ceased actual resistance, and had to be dragged along the floor by his relentless and now evidently savagely excited associates. His small thin limbs trailed resistlessly behind him; his curious peaked shoes scraping the dark planks as if he was entirely benumbed with terror, and deprived, much less of struggling, of the capacity of even uttering a cry. He looked an effigy of a man: and was now seen, now lost in the midst of the pushing, straining, whooping band, with seemingly no more feeling or volition in his limbs than if they had been stuffed with sawdust.

In a multitude of sunburnt faces with the hair streaming wildly, the eyes starting, and the cheeks heated and swollen with intem-

perance ; in a crowd such as formed perchance by the mad priests of Bacchus at a Saturnalia ; amongst long arms and short arms, rough boots and galligaskins, spurs like small fire-shovels, and long Spanish rapiers with bulbs of metal at their top, which swung, and hitched, and bumped, and clattered—surrounded with figures adorned as thus, and tossed and buffeted about amidst a heap of brown cloaks and red jackets, yellow skirts, broad brimmed *sombreros*, which were dropping from their owners' heads or hastily replaced and that perhaps awry, and drooping or broken feathers, was the body of Pimpernella raised on its tiptoes and fastened up, tied tightly with three dozen scarfs, to the penitential beam.

This was a curious kind of column against the wall with a twisted capital, and its base formed of a coiled serpent resting on a square plinth.

The larger vessels on the table were already in the hands of the fiercest members of this

persecuting convocation. On the table rested the remainder, all laid together and piled up so as to form a reserve of ammunition when the continuous fire usual on such occasions should have exhausted the projectiles appropriated beforehand.

"Oh! mercy, senhors," cried Pimpernella, his eyes glancing with alarm from one drinking goblet to another as he saw them grasped in three dozen flinty fists.

"Speak truth, then, another time, and don't brag. We are now going to give you a lesson on vain speaking," cried Pickaxos. I shall make you bow to my particular reproof, I can promise you."

"Cease howling, you cur!" cried another, deliberately taking aim at the unfortunate tailor's head with an enormous pewter flaggon, the handle of which was formed by the curled tail of a scorpion in act to sting. "Cease howling," he cried, taking his sight coolly with one eye, as he seemed with a waving motion

of his hand to be timing himself before he threw. "Cry not out before thou art hurt, or I will give myself a pace of advantage over thine inviting sconce."

"Oh don't throw! Have pity. Withhold those fearful things for the love of all you hold holiest!" cried, or rather screamed, the unhappy Pimpernella. "Oh! don't throw for the sake of all the saints."

"I shall, for the sake of the father of all the lies," returned his tormentor.

"Now, then, are we ready? Clear the course! Viva! viva! Here are the bulls!" (a proverbial Spanish exclamation of delight.) "Pietro, thy granite nozzle should be first in;" cried Pickaxos.

As Pickaxos said this, he unbuckled his rapier, as if to bestow upon himself greater freedom for his intended assault upon the tailor. Another careful individual, as if preparing for the scene of penance with business-like coolness, took off his short sticking-out

cloak, folded it carefully in longitudinal divisions, and hung it up by the collar on a long brass peg.

Pimpermella's entreaties were unattended to ; and in the narrow space to which he was limited, he was endeavouring to shuffle round so as to prepare himself for the metal shower by presenting the side of his head and his advanced elbow to his ruthless persecutors.

All arranged themselves in rank, a formidable row of sacrificial ministers, armed with implements of punishment dreadful enough to look at and overwhelmingly terrific to expect.

The apartment echoed with the noise. Some danced ; some knocked their metal vessels on the floor ; and the female domestics of the *posada* crowded into the doorway, holding up their upper dress before their faces, but peeping over with round intent eyes, and a sort of wincing yet eagerly excited curiosity.

"First place to Pickaxos," cried Pietro.

"Advance one leg:—one; two; three; and throw."

"Oh! saints be merciful to my sinful soul. Here it comes!" ejaculated Pimpernella in anguish, and making the post actually shake in his anticipatory writhing.

"Off with you, Pickaxos!" cried two or three.

One, two, three, was counted; and forward flew the missile with which Pickaxos was armed—an immense pewter goblet with a rim of bone. It struck the poor tailor on the shoulder and fell crashing to the floor, along which it first bounded and then rolled.

"A clumsy toss," cried one or two.

"I'll lay a wager our friend Kot will mend it," said Pietro. "He snarls like a dog, but tosses coppers and kettles like an emperor."

"Don't praise him to his face," said Pickaxos, "or we shall have for the future every vessel, as soon as he looks into it, blush *extempore*."

"Now, Kot, now!" cried Pietro. "A tight-fitting crown for the tailor jammed down on his sconce, with the tankard lid hanging down behind to keep the rain off."

"Why, gossips, he'll beat King Charlemagne with that plated pot on his head," said one.

"Knock in the top, hearts of oak, and you'll crown him with the iron crown," said another.

"We shall have him nailed to the post," said a third, "like a Babylonian foot-soldier skewered up with his own spear to a tree by the victor Numidians."

"Break up the shell of the tortoise! Tumble the stones about the ears of the ass! Let daylight into his cave of thought," were the cries of some of those more behind.

Kot, the most brutal of the whole assembly, rough as they might have been considered, stepped forward with malicious alacrity and turned up his cuffs. He then grasped a great stone jug, and balancing it with dexterity

between finger and thumb, so that it might swing whirling round when he let it fly, took cool aim at the poor tailor's exposed head.

"Viva! Long live the great Kot! King of the Bullies, and Tetrarch of the Tagrags," shouted the savage Pickaxos. "Pietro, you look grave at that granite water-bason."

One; two; were counted; and at the third exclamation the poor tailor would without doubt have been levelled with the floor, if not killed, had not just as Kot was opening his lips to enunciate the fatal "three," and swinging his arm back to its full length to give it further force, a terrible crash of one of the diamond-paned windows scattered glass in all directions in a sharp rattling shower.

At the same instant the no less extraordinary apparition than a loose heavy boot, with about half a hundred weight of brass on its heel, and a huge jingling spur, came flying in at the hole in the window in the midst of the shower of glass, astonishing the assembly, and

causing them to drop the terrible implements which were intended for the poor victim's head.

There was a pause. Kot stood arrested in his attitude; and then several rushed to the broken window, shouting out with wild glee, and kicking and capering about as if they were possessed.

“Cunique! Cunique! That's the madman's tread who runs up the sides of people's houses, and dances on weathercocks. Cunique! Here he comes! Cunique the Roarer!”

CHAPTER IV.

A STRANGE CHARACTER.

" While I may scape,
 I will preserve myself ; and am bethought
 To take the basest and most poorest shape
 That ever penury, in contempt of man,
 Brought near to beast : my face I'll grime with
 filth,

Blanket my loins, elf all my hair in knots,
 And with presented nakedness outface
 The winds and persecutions of the sky.
 The country gives me proof and precedent
 Of Bedlam beggars, who, with roaring voices,
 Strike in their numbed and mortified bare arms,
 Pins, wooden pricks, nails, sprigs of rosemary,
 And with this horrible object, from low farms,
 Poor pelting villages, sheep-cotes, and mills,
 Sometime with lunatic bans, sometime with prayers,
 Enforce their charity. Poor Turlygood ! poor Tom !
 That's something yet. Edgar, I nothing am !"

Shakespeare.

For poor Pimpernella the interruption of the
 boot occurred at the best of times. The at-

tention of the busy assembly seemed instantaneously diverted from their victim to the new comer, who was, judging from the noise and exclamations given utterance to at the announcement of his close neighbourhood, a personage of no little consideration.

Even the tailor lifted his head, and inwardly poured out a thanksgiving for his narrow escape from the formidable presents of his-incensed colleagues. The windows were crowded with eager heads as the buzz and the bustle testified that Cunique, whoever he might be, was approaching.

Soon afterwards a loud voice, but excessively sweet in some of the upper notes, was heard singing out in the street. There was an affectation of hoarse roughness which might have promised a burly, bulky exterior, heavy as a cart-horse, when the musician should make himself visible. But with wild caprice the harsh bass note would dwindle away into a thin piping treble, and the sonorous shake

first tremble and then wind away into a delicate *false* *setto*, light as woven glass. As the voice drew near, the words of the song took something of this form—

“ O mine is a noble lineage,
And mine is the haughty name ;
A broad gold piece defends my heart,
A sword my hand may claim.

A sword to win a new world's wealth,
And tame the old one's pride---

Over, over, over, over,
Over the double bridge ;
Like stars we fly through the drooping sky
And skirt the rugged ridge.

Nay, faint not now, what matters it,
If slow we draw our breath !
If the thicket makes to-night our bed,
Or the wild and lonely heath.

Or this, or that, or anything,
Nought care I what I be ;
If the wide sky makes my lofty arch,
My canopy a tree.

My banquet spread of dockleaf dead,
An acorn for my cup--

And all the day
No single ray
Of sun peep through the shade ;
But a thick wall wove
Of the dark green grove--"

At this moment there were heard three thumps on the door, as if a battering ram was at work.

"Run and open the door, Marcus, or the wild fellow will run his spear through the wooden breast-plate," said Pietro.

The door was quickly opened, and in stalked one of the most curiously disguised figures which perhaps ever greeted the eye.

The new comer was a young man of slender form and middle height, with a face which, spite of the wild and gipsy-like length and plentitude of his hair, and the reckless, ragged way in which it clung about his ears and cheek,

and twined and twisted when he turned his head about, might have been termed startlingly handsome. His forehead was high and smooth, and white as ivory. His complexion was a clear olive, with a tinge of rich colour in his cheek, which would every now and then deepen and increase the brilliancy of his fine teeth, and add to the effect of his faultlessly curved lips. His eyes were black and sharp as cut jet. His eyebrows were of an unexceptionable shape, though from his usual penetrating mode of regarding an object, they slanted in towards his nose when he bent his brows with a greater concentration of thought than usual.

As for his dress, it was a masquerade. He wore a wrapping sort of tunic, which slanted over his chest and was brought round and fastened behind. Strangely enough in such a climate, it was trimmed with fur. The colour of this frock was dark green; and at regular intervals along its top, there were long pen-

dants of plaited straw. His waist was bound in with a belt of embossed leather, ornamented with large silver broadpieces by way of medallions. He wore tight hose on his legs, and short gaiters round his ankles. His left boot, the counterpart of the truly formidable mis-sive sent forward to announce his approach, was on his foot, and he limped in with the air that a man who had but one foot comfortably shod might be supposed to have. He had an ancient cloak on his shoulders, with a cape hanging low, and the lining turned out and streaming like a tattered ensign. A cloth cap, something resembling the Cap of Maintenance, was upon his head, and stuck so upon one side that it looked almost tumbling off. A band of large, flat, ragged shells, strung upon gold twist, encircled his head covering, in front of which was mounted an oyster shell emblazoned with some armorial bearings, and forming an ornamental base for three immensely long peacock's feathers with as many emerald eyes.

For arms this eccentric bore a singularly elegant rapier in a parchment sheath, and suspended from over his shoulder by a plated chain of plain rectangular links. In his right hand, marching in with all the pomposity of a tambour-major, he flourished a huge baton with a gilt head, about the size of an ordinary bedpost, and decorated, instead of a tassel, with seven long ribbons of different colours, the tints exactly the same as those of the rainbow.

On his entrance he rolled his eye round and seemed to comprehend the scene in a moment.

"Just in time, Roarer; just in time for the best sport in the world. We've broken the chicken's first wing already."

"Not a word, not a word, till the head of my foot has been thrust into its leather house again," returned Cunique, waving his hand round to silence them. "One of you, senhors, just lift my tramper hither."

The boot was instantly given Cunique, and, standing upright, he pulled it on in an instant.

"What bring'st thee hither, Wildfire?" asked Pietro.

"You."

"You heard our noise, I suppose, and stumbled on our rites."

"Rites are holy; it seems I stumbled on your orgies," said Cunique. "What have you been about? You've set your brains a swimming. One dozen and a half goodly barks, with high top-gallants and an universe of sails, three gold ribs and bows of sawdust, laden with lead, with feathers for rudders and the devil's pocket-handkerchief for your scarlet ensign. Give me a cup of wine, if you have not dived down to the metal of your last pot-
tlepot."

"Wine! why you're always drinking, or if you do not do that, for you never show its effects, you always make it seem as if you did," said Pietro. "Bullies, turn the tumblers up! Over with them, and see if you

cannot squeeze out of their pewter flanks a few drops of white blood."

"What's the meaning of this sight?" said Cunique, pointing with his long stick to the tailor, and then with the reverse end pushing off sundry drinking vessels from the table, which fell clanking and clattering to the floor.

"Don't scatter our ammunition, devil's bellows," said Pickaxos, expostulatingly. "We're only flashing some fire out of this roll of damp tinder. We were only interrupted by your unexpected appearance."

"Like an angel on a silver wire for a long strait beam, or a Gorgen with its moving hair, and its eyes of cold blue stone," returned Cunique. "What has the poor wretch done? for his look is horribly scared."

"Boasted of what he couldn't do; bragged of being able to do a certain thing which he couldn't even think," returned Pietro. "He has had the face to compare himself with me!"

"Well," said Cunique, folding his arms, and looking with much complacency in Pietro's face.

"Well!" repeated Pietro. "I think that's enough."

"So it is," said Cunique, "considering that you're the head of the Salamanders, and he's the tail. But methinks you've made him one present already; for yonder flagon with the lid," he continued, pointing to the floor, "gapes as if, like a leech, it were already gorged with blood. That's been at him, has it not?"

"That was the first instalment," said Pietro, "and as yet the only one. We'll give you a handsome card, if you like to take a hand in our game."

"*Muchas gracias,*" returned Cunique, "but the spots don't suit me. It's easy hitting when the bird's bound. But what was this bold feat, or high achievement, which Pimpernella has vaunted his capacity to compass the accom-

plishment of. Something sharper than a needle, and longer than a yard of thread, I suppose."

"Something sharper than a sword, and tougher than an inch rope, you should have said, senhor Cunique," cried Pickaxos. It would well try the bravery of a valiant man, and be something that he might boast of afterwards, if, like our friend here, he happened to be one of the boasting brotherhood. I must confess I should myself like to say I had done the deed, and I have not altogether the heart of a mouse, but I couldn't promise to undertake it half a mile this side of a demi-gallon of brandy."

"And yet you'd punish this poor animal for only declining to do what you confess you are afraid of, yourself," said Cunique.

"Afraid! Who's afraid?" roared the bully, suddenly.

"I am," was Cunique's reply:—afraid of you; for if you commenced the task, I should

sadly fear your magnanimity and self sacrificing spirit might induce you soon to resign the tempting honour in favour of some humbler rival. But, Senhor Pietro, what is the poor tailor's derelict?"

"We're only punishing him according to our laws, Senhor Saint," replied Pietro. Pimpernella, the tailor, chose to lay a wager with a simple man named Pietro, that he would do what nobody has done yet, see the daughter of that old wizard and crazed mathematician, old Klypp Heufueros. Nay he said he would get into the house, and speak to her in her own chamber."

"Has old Klypp a daughter?" asked Cunique.

"Has he?" returned Pietro, "aye! you may ask the question, for nobody knows except from common report."

"She must be seventeen years by this time," said one of the more quiet of the company,

"and it is bruited abroad that she is lovelier than the sun at noon day.

"That may well be," said Cunique, "I found the sun at noon this day far more ardent than lovely. Say the moon, senhor," he continued, with a droll assumption of fantastical gallantry. "Say the moon; lovelier than the loveliest moon."

"Nobody can say that they have clapped eyes on her," said Pietro.

"More the pity, *per dios*, then!" said Cunique, "if she be such a charmer. But what could have possessed the poor simple Pimpernella to make such an ill-advised boast? What miserable demon of vanity could have so pitifully deluded him as that he was to fancy this magnificent feat of arms was reserved for him? He couldn't have understood her, if he had seen her."

"All the town rings with her praises," said Pietro; "and lucky would the man be who should catch a glimpse of her: fortunate as

he who is to, one day, hit upon the famous island."

"Talk not of islands, they're clouds," cried Cunique, "and we shall go on dreaming that folly until we're islands ourselves—islands, washed by a sea of ignorance."

"You may jeer, senhor," rejoined Pietro, "but there is some man who will one day immortalize himself by a discovery of this notable island. I only wish I could flatter myself with an expectation that it might be my lot. I don't want for courage; but I scarcely think any sea-captain would ship me, promising adventurer as I am."

"Put to sea yourself in a drinking bowl," suggested Cunique, "and be independent; your ship, your own, and your crew, yourself."

"Oh! for a tithe of the wealth which would flow to us if we could but hit the longitude of this tantalising island," ejaculated one of the assembly.

"I'd bit my courser with the finest gold,

build my stable of silver plate, and have a manger of ivory,"

"And you would do well when you had done to stable yourself in it," said Cunique, "for an ass, Ferdinando de Coarsewits. An ass who longed for the unattainable golden oats, and starved himself in despising his wholesome native beans."

"Excellent, Cunique! excellent for the Roarer," cried Pietro, "who never had but one small silver piece in his pouch, and that he threw to a dog, like a half wit as he was. Well, I shall suppose in future that the giddiest pated, the vicious and the wildest, the rover and the rapscallion, the hunter and the hunted, the three-tailed cloak and the single button.—Well, I was going to say something, but I will not."

"Say it," murmured Cunique, looking with his sharp eyes, though good naturedly, at Pietro.

"*Per dios!* I shall come to you in future for

advice. He'd not make a bad *cara*, with that hat with the Vandyked brim, and that green fringe for a jacket," said Pietro.

"By St. Michael's staff, which he thrust down the dragon's throat, it's all that's left, cried Cunique. "The wardrobe that I ought to have, is a walking one—for it is all upon other mens' backs. They carry about with them my scattered reversion of habiliments. I'm possessed of a blessed independency, for I move with all my property about me. Houses, land, jewels and chains, and a sack of doubloons, I carry it all upon me: and you see I tread lightly enough."

"You'll lose your character," said Hap Warmhose.

"That's lost already," returned Cunique. "All that remained of it is sunk to the bottom, never to rise again. The last torn rag which fluttered in the air, and flashed in the last sunset gleam, has gone down for ever and-a-day, and left the gazing crowd to blame,

or curse, or pity, as it seemed best to them and its humour prompted. I'm a wretch, mighty potentates, a wretch: all that remains of a once goodly ship. I go drifting from rock to rock, and breaking my heart upon each; and sometimes I strike shore, as I have this afternoon burst in upon your most noble deliberations and still more magnanimous practice. You saw my boot. 'Twas my last mast, brought by the board, as the sailors say, and you know I'm half a one—and tossed to land before the ribbed wreck."

"What can you expect, Cunique?" said Hap Warmhose, rather more seriously than usual. "You've always been so wild a ship!"

"And am likely to be wilder," returned Cunique. "The dog's bit through his silver collar."

"You've turned yourself out of house."

"I have, until I turn, and turn in again," said Cunique. "Houses! little ones were built for dogs. Large ones are for women, and not for men. They are the twinkling lights which exhale if they are exposed to the air. Man is the steadier candle."

"And you go wandering about the streets roaring and screaming like a wild creature?"

"Like a striped zebra, or a grizzled hyena," returned Cunique. "A hyena with a most melodious laugh. My dear friend, I have the world to myself, whilst you boast but a miserable dog-hut."

"And the people stare at you, and your good careful uncle has been obliged to desire you, and it was with tears in his eyes, to quit his honest, steady roof."

"It was too steady for me," said Cunique, "I should have liked it to come down that I might have propped it up again."

"How Cunique subsists, nobody knows," chimed in Pietro.

"It's supposed he lives on bits of rusty steel with a sauce of diluted gunpowder," said Pickaxos.

"If you didn't let fall a sensible word now and then," said Hap, "people would set you down for mad, Senhor Cunique."

"That is the worst accusation which has been brought against me yet," cried Cunique. "I've been trying to escape from sense all my life, and such must be my stupidity it seems, that I have not succeeded all this time. In the meanwhile, senhors, you're forgetting the amusement I so seasonably, and perhaps so unreasonably interrupted."

"Aye, but we intend to resume it with an increase of spirit," said Pickaxos. "Now, senhors, to arms, or rather to pipkins! and Cunique the Roarer shall take the lead in the shower. He shall be first river-god with a mighty water-pot."

"Oh! mercy, dear and considerate senhors," interrupted Pimpernella. "Oh! most noble Cunique, won't you say a word—will you not interfere for your poor unfortunate townsman?"

"We won't admit a syllable," said Pietro, "unless Pimpernella swears to beard Klypp, the magician. He shall produce to us his steeple-crowned hat, and his silver beard, as proofs that he has annihilated him."

"Peace, gentlemen. Back!" cried Cunique; "and down with your weapons. Pimpernella consents."

"Does he?" cried Pietro. "What does Pimpernella say to that?"

"At least I do for him," continued Cunique. "Unbind him, senhors. I'll redeem his engagement, and I'll see this unknown fairy myself, ask her her name—nay, marry her, if that will satisfy you, spite of her father's teeth and all his wondrous engines and his workshop of devils."

"Bravo! Long live Cunique!" cried all the company.

"You'll never do it!" said Pietro, doubtfully; and looking with a serious smile at Cunique.

"Will I not?" said Cunique. "I never stumbled at anything yet, and I am not likely to be scared by an old bald eagle."

"'Tis fearful odds," ejaculated Hap Warmhose—"single rapier to the firebrands of fiends. Think about it, Cunique."

"Do you for me, Hap," said Cunique, "and give me the result to-morrow."

"O! ten thousand thanks. May all the saints bless you, and preserve you, my guardian angel—my noble deliverer!" cried the tailor, clasping his hands. "What can I do for you to show my gratitude?"

"I'll tell you what you can do for me, Pimpernella. Make me a suit, and have it ready by eleven of the clock this night," said Cunique.

"By the saints, to do that the tailor must prick his fingers," said Pietro. "'Twould be almost as hard work for him to support such a scamper over cloth, as to stand up against our shining shower."

"If I cannot make the noble Cunique a glorious suit by that hour — and it is really not possible else it should be done, if all my journeymen—supposing that I had any—lay up for a week after it," said the tailor, "I can, at least, furnish him forth like any prince from my store ready at hand. Let him only depart with me thither, and when he cometh out you shall mistake him for the governor of the province, or a walking ingot."

"Unbind Pimpernella, and let me see what bravery he can provide me," said Cunique. "You'll find he'll rig me out like any St. George."

"St. George!" cried the delighted Pimpernella. "Like St. Michael glittering in

harness from top to toe, and with the sun for a shield."

Pimpernella was almost as quickly unbound as he was fastened up to his penitential beam—and when free, he committed all sorts of extravagances in an attempt to display his gratitude.

In a little while all disappeared, and Pimpernella was leading Cunique to his work-shop.

CHAPTER V.

THE NEW ARCHIMEDES ; WITH AN INSIGHT INTO
HIS WORKSHOP.

"I've got new mythological machinery,
And very handsome supernatural scenery."
Don Juan.

"Forsooth, a great arithmetician."
Shakespeare.

"You show too much of that
For which the people stir,
The people are abused."
Shakespeare.

WE have slightly glanced in the last chapter at
a personage who is destined to make no small

figure in our "strange and eventful history.", Klypp Heufueros was descended from an ancient family, whose genealogy stretched up into the earliest times of the province. But Klypp's genealogical tree had grown straight up independently like a poplar. Its source was hid in darkness, and only known to the antiquarian mole, whose especial province it is to burrow into secrets hidden in the mould of antiquity.

Klypp Heufueros, the last and the present, was so proud of this uninterrupted and, as he would have thought, unspoiled descent, that he had a mighty parchment, which took about three days to look at, hung up on his wall, detailing all the names in large letters,—but unfortunately of a crooked, perverse, and unintelligible character to all but himself, of a regiment of ancestors, all marching down, with their best foot foremost, in open column, upon the large black circle which was meant for Klypp himself, and the white

open one intended for his wife. Below, the line of ancestry ended in the neatest of all possible medallions, emblazoned pink and gold, and on which was inscribed the name of Klypp's only daughter, the fair Phroditis.

The country of Altosierro knew nothing of Klypp's grandfather. Indeed, a grave charge was brought against him, in which all of his house participated, that the first founder of the family must have been the devil. So greatly had Klypp shocked the prejudices of his Catholic neighbours by his strange studies and stranger discoveries. He had arrived in the country in an unaccountable, and unaccounted for, manner. In his intercourse with the inhabitants of the particular place where he fixed himself, he had restricted himself so cautiously, and with such jealousy to those communications only rendered absolutely necessary by his domestication in a new region, that all the people were puzzled and very dissatisfied. When a stray question was hazarded

as to his previous life, or any curiosity evinced as to his objects in his change of abode, or in anything relating to him and his affairs, he either preserved a moody silence, with his eyes fixed on the ground, like the madman Cardenio, or on the table, according as he happened to be without doors or within. Or he quietly and steadily looked his questioner full in the face, without saying a syllable, which generally had the effect of calling up a blush in the cheek, or precipitating some trifling confusion, of which Klypp would take advantage by turning the conversation. These little circumstances would make the inquisitive all the more vexed with him. Under any circumstances, so uncomfortable did people feel when Klypp looked at them in this manner, that they soon gave up the asking of him questions. However the public made amends for this discomforture in Klypp's presence, by making pretty free with his name when they were by themselves.

So years passed on. Some time after he was

settled in the city, Klypp's wife died; and he seemed grievously afflicted for a long time after her decease, and redoubled his pains upon, and attention to the education and bringing up of his daughter. At least so the world said, for folks knew nothing of him as an acquaintance; and very slight and limited was their knowledge of him in business transactions.

During all this time he lived the most secluded life possible. So remarkable did this separation from and abandonment of the world become, which was shared by all his household, that Klypp and his family grew into a veritable marvel to his neighbours, and ended in being the constant subject of their gossipings in the evening—nay, of their noonday talk, for the matter of that.

Years fled away. Nobody could tell whether this hermit-like life was agreeable to, or an infliction upon the daughter of old Klypp, for no one could boast of having seen, much

less conversed with her. There were females in the household, and they were permitted sometimes to show themselves abroad; but scanty enough was the intelligence which could be extracted from them, even by the most persevering or adroit of their own sex. All that was known, was that a young female, called Klypp's daughter, lived in his house with him; and report which will be most busy when it has least to occupy itself upon, declared that she was the most beautiful creature that ever was seen. It was on this account that the world said Klypp was so careful of his jewel.

Klypp was a mathematician, and a mighty man of science, from which he had earned the ungenerous and illiberal rumours which had been spread abroad concerning his character. Like all people who ascribe to the devil knowledge and inventions out of the common way, and which they do not understand, the good folks of the town confidently affirmed that

Klypp's acquirements were more than mortal. They said that his erudition was incalculable; that his philosophy was unfathomable (which might have been possible); that he knew everything, and was studying more; that he was deep as a well (they might have said as deep as Garrick, had Garrick then lived and the expression been a common one); and as wise as Solomon, or the three Kings of Cologne. Altogether these sinister reports and disadvantageous whispers must have been very unpleasant to a respectable old gentleman of quiet habits, who only desired to be left at peace, and to live his own way.

Klypp's genius was speculative as well as practical, and his house was filled with curious engines of a most puzzling character, and complicated apparatus all tending to some discovery, or discoveries which nobody could comprehend or get to the bottom of. He was strongly suspected of having wasted some of his best years in an unprofitable pursuit of the

philosopher's stone, the *elixir vita*, an universal dissolvent, and various of the secrets of the *Illuminati*, the Rosicrucians or Brothers of the Rosy Cross, and the Cabalists, for whom, and for the great dead of past ages, he had a becoming reverence.

There were either pictures or representations, or, as he might have styled them, *eidolons* or *icons* in his house of the remarkable, and especially the divinities of all ages. There was the great Amoun, or Amoun-ra; Thoth, or Mercury Trismegistus; Isis, Ioh, or Io; Osiris-Annôphris; Anubis and Typhon, or Khons-Kneph. Then there was Bubastes, the Egyptian Diana, and there was Phtha or Vulcan; Sate, Harsapes, Athor, Athyr, or Hathor, Themis, Pasht, or the embodiment of the Vindictive Principle, Horus-Apollo, and others, gods of the people of the Nile. Then came others, Fohe or Fohi of the Chinese, with Confucius for moral philosophy, and Budha, Brahma, Vishnu and Sieva for the great Indian

continents, and Ashtaroeth or Astarte of the Phœnicians, and Ommanes and Mithras, Orasmades or Orasmade, and Ahrimanius, and Rostan, and Zerdusht for the Chaldæans, and the Magi, and the anointed Persians, and the Guebres. Next came the gods and heroes of the Veda or Vedda, and the Volluspa, and the Princes of the Valhalla and Hela, not forgetting the white horse of the Saxon Hengist, and Sleepner, the matchless steed of the great Woden, Waden or Odin; Loke, and the Runic Friga. There were serpents from Midgard, and little figures of *penates*, and names of the mystic Valkyrizæ, pagods, Lapland idols, and the great and little Lama.

Besides all these strange gods and monstrosities, Klypp's house was garrisoned with a battalion of upright mummies and eyeless marbles, and there were long Egyptian processions about his dwelling upstairs and down, with crowds of grim flat-nosed figures with their *clafis* and *goms*, and the *oskh*, the *oft*, the

pschent, the *shaa*, the *shenti*, the *tosh*, or royal military cap, and heaven knows what all !

His laboratory was the most curious place in the world, so was it provided with such means as might enable

“ A mighty mechanist,
Bent with sublime Archimedean art,
To breathe a soul into the iron heart
Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
Which, by the force of figured spells, might win
Its way over the sea, and sport therein ;
For round the walls were hung dread engines, such
As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
Ixion or the Titan ; or the quick
Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic,
To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic ;
Or those in philosophic councils met :
With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike
and jag,
With fishes found under the utmost crag
Of Norway and the storm-encompassed isles :
And other strange and dread
Magical forms the brick floor overspread——
Proteus transformed to metal did not make
More figures, nor more strange ; nor did he take
Such shapes of unintelligible brass,

Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
Of tin and iron, not to be understood,
And forms of unintelligible wood,
To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood.
Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and grooved
blocks,

The elements of what will stand the shocks
Of wave, and wind, and time.—Upon the table
More knacks and quips there were than I am able
To catalogise in this verse of mine :—
A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
But quicksilver ; that dew which the gnomes
drink

When at their subterranean toil they swink,
Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who
Reply to them in lava cry, halloo !”

Here, surrounded with such uncouth and un-
christian articles, would old Klypp for hours
sit,

“ Like some weird Archimage,
Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,”

or with his books before him, above which
his head would be only visible, in deep ab-
straction, and with lowered brows, anatomizing

"The purposes and thoughts of men, whose eyes
Were closed in distant years."

His shelves groaned with musty tomes. Amongst his books were to be found Aristotle *de physica, de anima, de cælo, de generatione et corruptione, et de sensu*: also Diogenes Laertius, and Sextus Empiricus, Plato and Zenophon, Thales and the Physiologists, Anaximander of Miletus, Pythagoras, Zenophanes and the rest of the Eleatics, Heraclitus and Anaxagoras, Empedocles and Democritus: also Socrates and the Sophists, Antisthenes, Arcesilaus and Carneades: also the philosophical school of Alexandria, and the round of Neo-Platonism, and the Alexandrian Dialectics and Trinity, and the doctrines of Emanation, and Proclus, and such a cloud of Mystics, and so fearful and totally unexpected a mob of long-gowned old philosophers, as would have frightened Minerva herself; nay, struck terror into the breast of a Bellona. Dominic Samp-

son would have been beaten from his retreat like Don Quixote from the Cave of Montesinos by the swarm of crows; and that reverend virgin, Learning, would have been fairly, or very unfairly, stifled in the embraces of the multitude.

Countless manuscripts of all sizes and of all shapes, thick and thin, curled and muggy, dusty and dogseared, lay piled in heaps in the corners of his studio, like "altars strange." Huge folios, so large that they would have served Polyphemus, seated on the top of a

"Heaven-kissing hill,"

for his afternoon reading; with vellum covers of all the dingy varieties of green and red; volumes bound in leather, and bulky books bound in boards of goatskin, and with brazen backs and copper clasps, adorned with the beards of the goats for tassels of parti-coloured hair, like the three tails of a Pacha, were to be

seen. Such unheard of furniture as this, and triangles and multangles of brass, and hour-glasses as big as pier-glasses, and globes celestial and terrestrial, and crucibles and all sorts of retorts, and bottles and bags, and electrifying machines, and things like gibbets, and others like mousetraps, and others resembling corkscrews, and others similar to wheels, and some again of which no person on earth could make either top or tail, were scattered about

“In most admired disorder.”

In this antediluvian apartment would be continually perceived all kinds of strange odours, suggesting to those of acute sense of smelling, and perhaps at the same time of readily susceptible imagination, the drollest and the wildest fancies. Some of these were delicious, such as would raise dreams of intoxicating delight and produce the sweetest sensations, and others bad enough. It

might have been surmised that the countless spirits of Klypp's nomenclature were wandering about only revealed to a single avenue of perception, the nose, and that they were thus kept evaporating, and commingling, and condensing as semi-bodiless objects, until their great master, the Prospero of this haunted cell, should from time to time call upon them to commit and perpetrate themselves into more distinct existence.

Klypp's ostensible profession, in which he was renowned throughout the whole country, was that of shipbuilding. To the construction of his vessels he brought the most powerful science, and all the resources of incessant study and the abstrusest mathematics. Most elaborate as well as numerous were the plans and specifications, which he would prepare before he attempted to realize in practice the notions which were labouring in his mind.

Ships were in his hands much more than ships. They were laid down with the utmost

ceremony, and all the arrangements of his shipbuilding-yard were upon the most costly scale, and of the most fastidious accuracy. But he was little seen amongst his shipwrights. The work preceeded in his yard; hammers rang—men came and went—the great bell sounded thrice a day and dismissed all the quaintly costumed operatives to their meals; and sounded again another three times and recalled them, after an interval of a full hour devoted to refreshment, for Klypp was very careful of, and attentive to, his men; but the master was very rarely seen. Everyone, however, knew his comprehensive mind and active intellect were overlooking and directing all which was done. There was little or no curiosity in looks evinced, and seldom if ever expressed, at his absence, even though he should not shew himself for a week together.

His men were all of an orderly, painstaking character, slow of speech and ever thoughtful. The goodly ship would silently grow in their

hands, and gradually swell into a hull from its keelson and floor timbers, and naval timbers or ground futtocks and lower futtocks, from the vertebrated links of its long spine. In the summer's sun, and the moonlight night, would its long curved timbers seemingly extend and then return as arching ribs to enclose the hollow trunk in barred and fleshless sweep.

Indeed, these honest shipwrights looked, when hammering in silent industry at the sides of the skeleton ship, like a set of Frankensteins, building up in glum array and ghastly stillness some strange and immense monster. Or they might have been supposed, in their curious sticking-out skirts, grave faces, and outlandish caps, a crew of shipwrecked spectres, endeavouring to effect an escape from some unknown, and unearthly coast.

Klypp's leisure time, of which he had abundance, was devoted to abstruse studies, and countless speculations upon that which was monopolising the attention of all the

country far and wide—the existence of the mysterious island out at sea.

All his thoughts were bent upon this one grand discovery; and, to tell truth, if the island was susceptible of being discovered at all, and no mere image from the mischievous jack-o'-lantern of imagination, Klypp from his accomplishment in art, and his unheard of learning, seemed the individual marked out for the distinction of settling the wonder. For some reason or other he felt persuaded, or he had succeeded in convincing himself, that he was destined to have a high hand in the laying open the treasures of this undiscovered region, the surprises of this enchanted paradise, to his longing countrymen.

Actuated with the hope, and impelled with this fond desire which bore him up through the most enormous fatigue, and such toil as perhaps no man but himself could have supported, did Klypp labour on with his geographical books, his globes, his quadrants, his sex-

tants, and his astronomical instruments. Charts, yards square in size, did he travel over and retrace with the most indefatigable diligence, by the aid of an enormous pair of iron spectacles which were especially appropriated to this kind of rough work. All his brass implements and philosophical apparatus were put in requisition, until there was such a wheeling of wheels, and screwing of screws, and jingling and clicking of clockwork, and such an occasional clash when any of his complicated scientific mechanism went wrong or got foul, that he would have finished any old nervous lady in two days. When seized with one of these fits, which sometimes lasted weeks at a time, you would have thought his house turned into a vast machine, with shifting doors, and portcullises for gates, and windows which would push either one way or the other, and quite evade you if you wanted to look in, much worse if you wanted to look out. All his household clattered like a steam engine, puffing

and blowing, and hastening forward to overtake this grand discovery.

Notwithstanding this continual and remorseless poring over his books, which wore them out by so much looking at them, Klypp kept up a sharp supervision over his household : and his daughter, if she had ever so much desired it, would have found it as difficult to have obtained egress from her father's dwelling, as from a windmill with the sails whirling round and momentarily flying by the only door.

CHAPTER VI.

TOMANRAITA, THE WILD PROPHETESS.

"I conjure you, by that which you profess,
(Howe'er you came to know it) answer me."

Shakespeare.

"Mark, Marcus, mark ! I understand her signs."

Shakespeare.

KLYPP's occupation of ship-building, and the frequent intercourse it superinduced with mariners afforded him many opportunities of obtaining information respecting his chief object, of which he always greedily availed himself. Every seaman he saw was questioned

and requestioned, until his rigid cross-examination had succeeded in eliciting all that the other could supply him of new. These impartments he would compare with his own observations and the conclusions arrived at from his studies. Not a word concerning this famous island would he suffer to escape him; and it was only necessary to mention it to secure at once his full attention.

Assisting the suppositions and guesses of the inhabitants of this country, and throwing a sort of light upon the problem, if light that can be called which scarcely sufficed for more than to render the darkness visible, was a very ancient prophecy, preserved with most religious care, and continually repeated when the all-engrossing topic became the subject of conversation, or occupied men's thoughts when there were by themselves. It would quite transcend our power, even with a fresh packet of a hundred quills and a gallon of ink, to put the reader in possession of one fiftieth part of

the superstructures raised upon the base furnished by this suggestive prophecy. Truly we suspect the individual who offered it had more mischief than good will in her head, when, like the Sphinx, she propounded such a man-killing conundrum.

It literally wore the brain to pieces—the attempt to unravel this inextricable tangle.

Whether it had an end, or, as the Irishman declared, somebody had cut it off, nobody could tell. But everybody's fingers were employed upon it—men, women and children, bespectacled dames and infant eyes, the rich and the poor, those with furred gowns and those with no gowns at all, twining and winding, and twisting and disentangling, and pulling out and unthreading, until you might have conceived the bishop of the province had set the population of the whole country in ludicrous and wholesale penance unravelling one mighty skein of thread.

The prediction was a godsend to the inquisi-

tive natives of a country which was so bent upon information. The only regret that mingled with their joy at the possession of it, was that it was so short. The populace would have preferred it to have been presented to them in three volumes octavo, as a means of in some degree satisfying their intense desire of knowing all about it, with a supplement for the countrypeople, and for whom it was thought secondhand information was all that could be expected and was necessary.

But as this was unattainable, all that could be done to make amends and atone for the cruel brevity of this interesting fragment of intelligence, was to provide a diffuse commentary. And the deficiency was so well supplied, and this latter became so voluminous, that we seriously question whether the famous library of Alexandria itself would have contained it. As for the text itself, the foundation of such a pyramid—the substratum of such a mountain—the key-note of such a

never-ending *fantasia*—the hint for such a wonderful sermon—the great book of Heavymote, which is described as taking eight oxen to draw and giving you a headache for a week to look at the title at the back, was a foul to it. The oracle was pulled to pieces, and examined, and dissected; turned upside down, and read backwards, looked at in all lights, weighed with all weights, and considered so many times, that it would be no exaggeration to say that every letter was uprooted and scrutinized at the back of, and the very places in the paper fingered and looked through from which they had been extracted.

Three hundred years before the date of our true history, had this famous prediction been promulgated. It had so been by an old woman of such extraordinary age that no one dare think how old she might be.

The history of the country, in which of course she made considerable figure, repre-

sented her as living in a cavern by the side of a mountain, totally separated from humankind, her only companion an immense raven, whose glossy black had changed to silver grey through age.

Very rarely, perhaps not more than once in twelvemonth, did she condescend to emerge from her gloomy dwelling and show herself. And at last, these "angel visits, few and far between," altogether ceased; and the inhabitants of the country were left to their wonder alone respecting her life, or to the fact whether she were living or dead.

It was during one of her singular visits to the peopled districts of the country that on being met with many anxious inquiries as to the means of finding out the island, and an entreaty for the course to be taken with the probability of meeting with it, she, after long repulsing all her eager questioners, in the end exhibited some disposition towards a waver-

ing in her determination to keep her lips closed.

So did the multitude throng after her, and so impatient were they in their attempts to abstract from her some oracle, having so high an opinion of her judgment and the miraculous penetration with which she was gifted, that she turned abruptly round, probably before she had completed the distance she had intended when she emerged from her retirement.

As she turned to retrace her steps; she raised her head to the sky and tossed back her shrivelled arm, extending her skinny fingers towards the noisy crowd whose curiosity and cupidity she seemed to reprobate by the act. All shrank back in terror at her fixed and stony glance, and were crowding together and trying to hide themselves behind one another to escape from the glassy stare with which she reviewed the assembly, apparently endeavoring to single out some victim on which to fix her Gorgon

gaze. At last, perhaps being disappointed or baffled, and seized with the agony of prophesy, like another Cassandra, though her rhapsodies were fated to encounter a much more flattering reception, she threw both her hands over her head, clasped and twined her fingers, and shook from head to heel like one possessed. She then gave vent to such an unnatural — so unearthly a shriek, that the crowd trembled again.

In an instant, the shriek died off into a wail like that of a hyena crying for food. Throwing her gaze once more to earth, in a fit of the deepest abstraction she began muttering and mumbling some unintelligible jargon.

It was not long before her voice was again elevated ; and waving her arms as if to enjoin silence, she addressed the awe-struck and expectant assembly with these singular words.

“The bold must put forth with his one life to win a double. His ship must be of woven light, and shadowless must be his crew. Touch with the hands, and win !”

Little enough, it must be confessed, could be gathered from this; and the assembly looked at one another puzzled and in doubt—and also, it may be added, with a keen amount of disappointment. As for Tomanraitā, the prophetess, she gathered her rusty mantle hastily about her, burying herself in it like a crysalis, and fled away with a shambling gait, but with the swiftness of thought.

CHAPTER X.

THE ENIGMA; AND THE GRAND ATTEMPT AT
ITS SOLUTION.

"One common cause makes myriads of one breast."

Byron.

"I tell thee, fellow, there are none want eyes to
direct them the way I am going, but such as wink,
and will not use them."

Cymbeline.

THESE few words recorded in the foregoing chapter, contained the sum or substance of the famous legend, or prediction, or whatever it might be called, which had kept the whole country in agitation for so long a space.

In truth little enough could be made out of it. It darkly spoke of some bold person who was to put forth, (as it was supposed to sea), naturally enough since these anxious people were in search of an island. He was not only to put forth, but was to embark one life in an unaccountable and unreasonable attempt at obtaining another ; for which there could be little occasion, seeing that he was already possessed of nature's usual bounty in that respect. The injunction which followed put the enquirers out of all patience. A ship of woven light might certainly be an architectural achievement in the imagination of a poet, but it was feared that it might prove an idea rather diaphanous and shadowy transplanted into a more natural and less incoherently luxuriant soil. Common sense, nay the commonest sense, readily suggested that many summers might elapse before the frame of such a sunny ship was even finished, and that under circumstances

so difficult its "quick work," to speak learnedly of such matters, might be very slow work indeed. Even supposing that the loom of man's all surpassing and conquering ingenuity should be found adequate to the delicate task of weaving the rays of light into sails and cordage, and the Midsummer sunbeams, as the strongest procurable, had been fabricated into glowing timbers and shining spars, how then this sunshiny ship should be manned with a shadowless crew, was a puzzle flying in the very face of light itself, and so contradictory that it outraged even the decency of possibility.

Perplexity thickened to the last clause of this baffling and vexatious prediction.

"Touch with the hands and win!"

Now, though it was easy enough to touch, everybody's experience went to satisfy that one might touch just one hundred times without winning anything, except disappointment.

More "poohs!" and "pshaws!" and "impossibles!" and "monstrous follies!" were lavished on this unlucky annunciation of the poor prophetess, than we could number with a calculating machine of twenty-horse power.

It was abandoned, and scowled at, and sneered at, and treated with the utmost indignity over and over again, in spite of the awe and reverence which the name alone of Tomanraita inspired. Constantly would it be taken up again however, and re-examined, and then laid down with hopeless despondency and humiliating mortification. The wisest heads could make nothing of it; and these, it might have been reckoned surprising, very often drew the most illogical and quickly contradicted conclusions. It formed the bugbear at once, and the laugh of the whole country, until almost the discovery of a rational solution to this national enigma would have been looked upon as

a surprise as great, and brought as much credit to the individual, as the discovery of the wonderful island itself.

Klypp laboured on with painstaking perseverance towards unravelling this secret which baffled the united endeavours of the public. Long did he sit in debate with himself as to the meaning of this speech of the prophetess. When other people were comfortably bestowed in their beds, Klypp's lamp might have been seen burning; and he was all the time occupied with incessant attempts at deciphering that which perhaps was never capable of being made out.

It was after three hours one night of indefatigable poring over this mysterious fragment of intelligence, and he had just completed the copying it out for perhaps the fiftieth time in order to impress every letter more strongly on his memory, when in turning over in his mind that passage relating to the necessity of the ship for the discovery of this extraordinary

island being of no less novel material than woven light, a sudden light, surely of kindred brightness to that which was to compose this dazzling vessel, burst upon his mind.

“Eureka! Spirit of Archimedes, I have it at last!” he cried, starting up quite delighted, pulling off his spectacles in agitation, and twisting up his black buckram gown behind into a sort of tail, which he swung backwards and forwards as he paced very fast up and down his ancient chamber. “At last I have arrived at the meaning of this part of the prophecy at all events, and it is the principal one. The ship must be of woven light. That means, being interpreted and its figurative language translated into common sense and pure Spanish at the same time, the ship must be of glass. She must be of glass. I see it now, plain as the sun at noonday. A glass ship is destined to make this extraordinary discovery which will immortalize me.”

Klypp was so overjoyed at having made this

grand discovery, and he felt so confident of his interpretation of the injunction of the prophecy being the true one, that notwithstanding his extreme desire instantly to enlighten the world with the effect of his unparalleled penetration, and at once dazzle and confound everybody with the sublimity of his genius, he placed such guard over himself, watched himself so closely, and so heroically managed and mastered the turbulence of his spirits, and restrained his impatience, that he shut himself up three days and never spoke to a soul. He had his provisions meantime introduced through a chink in the door.

At the end of this time, he came forth; but his secret remained double-locked in his own bosom and he might have been said to have swallowed the key.

He set immediately to work with his plans, and his sections, and schemes for the building of this fragile argosy.

All shook their heads, and said that the

Senhor Klypp Heufueros was gone mad, or building a toy ship, or constructing a something which was to be the eighth wonder of the world.

Klypp's best men were devoted to this unheard of work. While he abandoned to the supervision of his two trusty foremen, grave personages of staid demcanor and such meritorious silence that they limited themselves to two words *per diem* on working days and one on Sundays—while we say he confided to these two “reverend seigniors,” whose names were respectively Andreas Stiffaspoker and Toss Tongueless, all the duties of his shipyard, and the construction of all other argosies, he took entirely upon himself the direction and management of the building of this ship of ships.

At the present time this matchless vessel had far progressed towards completion. So excellent were the hands employed upon her, and so first rate were they in all qualifications

that pertained to shipwrights, and so distinguished in their honourable "calling," or to speak more "by the card," their honourable occupation, since the two respectably quiet overseers, Senhor Andréas Stiffaspoker and Senhor Toss Tongueless, might have objected to the former clamorous designation of their trade: of such a character, we repeat, were the workmen employed upon this particular craft, that the Ship of Glass promised to be the most perfect, as she would certainly be the most original specimen of ship-building ever laid down.

CHAPTER VIII.

KLYPP'S SHIPBUILDING YARD, AND HIS
DAUGHTER'S PROMENADE.

" You know the peril.—
I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barred affections."

Cymbeline.

" Some lively touches of my daughter's favour."
As You Like It.

" Marry, I'll teach you. Think yourself a baby."
Hamlet.

" So stiff; so mute, some statue, you would swear,
Stepp'd from its pedestal to take the air."
Imitations of Horace.

It was about twilight of the same evening
which witnessed the bet between Pimpernella,

the poor tailor, and the fiery Pietro; as also the interruption of Cunique, and his rash engagement to take the tailor's penalty on his own shoulders, and perform what he had absurdly undertaken to do himself, that the fair Phroditis was walking in the shipyard of her father, the great Klypp Heufueros.

It is certainly unfair, and very ungallant to let a single word be said concerning the place wherein the fair Phroditis was taking her evening exercise, before we impart a full, true, and particular description of her person, with the colour of her eyes and colour of her ribbons, and so forth.

But do not let the reader be offended with us, for if we pause in our description of the beauty, it is only that by a word or two we may, like prudent men and cannie writers, clear away the rubbish before we display to view that "bright particular geni," which is to flash from amongst it. Or, if you better like the figure, before we shovel away the

bricks and scrape away the mortar, or clear away the mould to lay open to the eye this peerless flower, we must stipulate for, or request, a rapid glance at all which environs it, that there may be the necessary previous acquaintance with the nestling place of this tender, blushing bud of beauty.

Klypp's old ship-building yard was perhaps the most extraordinary thing ever seen this side the deluge. It was of good size, with various slips adapted for craft of different lengths. But a modern would have been singularly amused with its eccentric appurtenances. The quaint yard, rigid and narrow in its Spanish sternness, in which the ship of Columbus, fated to discover a world, was built, was nothing at all by the side of it. The stocks on which the renowned Hendrick Hudson's ship of discovery, the Half Moon, was constructed, would have been laughing stocks when mentioned in the same breath with it. Nay, we think the classic dock in

which that Hellenic seventy-four, the immortal Argo, with her hundred pink feet and her gilt eyes, was framed and planked, could not have presented so droll an appearance to the eyes of a modern master ship-wright of an English dock-yard, as Klypp's salt water preserve of monster fish.

There were tall wooden towers, with hanging windows buried in carvings and shaking with innumerable lace-work casements—little peep-hole eyes in the roof—wooden galleries and multitudinous grotesques; pendants beyond calculation, and demi-goblins guarding corners, and tall, straight figures, neither ghost nor devil, squinting up at great projecting beams like gibbets for giants. There were yellow ropes and red blocks, clashing cranes and mighty engines in which you might have swung a small bill in mid-air. There seemed to have been a shower of pinnacles over Klypp's wild buildings, so plentifully

were they scattered in all directions. Besides all these monstrosities, there was such a scent of tar and pitch, though here again there was an astonishing difference to the usual *ultramarine*, may we call them, odours of ship-building yards; for Klypp's pitch seemed to have something of an unexpected and wonderful if not magical property in it, as it smelt a great deal more like incense or a mixture of curious aromatic gums. The yard, indeed, with its fantastic buildings, its grotesque minarets, and its strange colours, looked greatly like a scene in a London pantomime—and no one need have been surprised to have beheld some outlandish figures, animated anamorphoses, with great heads and uncouthly ludicrous gestures, come emerging from behind the intercepting objects, as if they were quite at home and it was the natural place to find them.

All this was seen under a witching light, in-

describable in its purity and yet its doubt. Clouds there were, and yet seemed not to be. Light there was, and yet you seemed to see objects by their own reflection. It might have been not too much to say that the light was in character with the scene and was ancient—old fashioned light—reverend and grey—blue and elfish, as all such weird light should be. O! the twilight was romantically lustrous in sooth. It would have driven Salvator Rosa wild.

As to Phroditis, charming creature as she was, we tremble when we approach her. To expect to do justice to her beauty with such a very poor and inefficient—so miserable an implement as a pen, and a few high-flown flourishes to result from the handling of it, would be about as sane an expectation as to render the glory of a morning midsummer sun with yellow ochre and flimsy canvas. We confess that in the description of beauty we feel a certain sort of dazzling and bewilderment. An uncertainty seemeth to pervade us where we

should begin. Whether we should commence with the toe and working upwards approach, but approach with befitting caution and doubtful and shame-faced sinuosities, the marvels of the face, or at once fly at higher game, boldly proceed with hair and eyes, and compel our diffident brush to expatiate upon the countenance.

Phroditis was neither tall nor short, but of the most charming of middle heights. Her face was not so oval but that the roundness imparted by liveliness and laughter was to be traced. Her skin was white as milk, or white as snow — snow being ordinarily more to be depended upon for its whiteness, we will use the comparison to it in preference; but her cheeks were of the most delicate rose colour, just like the reflection of a rose leaf on a lily when the sun shines through it. As to her small round chin, and the little dimple by the side of it, and her two cleft rose-buds of lips, and the dazzling teeth, embattled pearls, which

were disclosed from within, they were ravishing. For her pair of quick, mischievous eyes, with their long silken fringe, which, when she lowered those stars of gentle light, or deep wells of feeling, totally concealed them, like black silk curtains veiling the glories of some magnificent and dazzling shrine, they would have routed an army of saints. These lustrous, swimming, witching orbs, black to the very extremity of blackness, would regard you with all the innocent quietness in the world until you ceased to speak, and then they would be suddenly, and coquettishly, and consciously snatched away, only to steal back to your countenance with a certain speculative alarm and bold timidity, if there be such a thing, and rogueish curiosity. Her eyes were, indeed, the most difficult things to fix. They would close into their white lids, and down would be let their curtains, to be peeped through with a demure watch, and a sharp, observant, sly sort of

fanciful neglect, and *piquante* indolence, whilst her thoughts would seem to rise like rosy clouds in her face when one looked in it.

As to her shape, it was faultless. The smallest feet, and prettiest ancles in the world, peeped out from beneath her ample skirt ; and her hair fell blackly and gloriously in abundance of large, rich, flowing tresses, covering her neck, and forming an ebon frame for her lovely face, which glanced out like that of one of the youngest angels.

Phroditis's beauty in short was of that character that you were struck dumb by it. You could see in a moment that she was perfectly well acquainted with her power, and was as high and triumphant over her loveliness as it was fit and proper, and all in the nature of things, such a dear "fragment of heaven"—such a charming creature should be.

Her companion in this quiet twilight walk was a--woman ; which is saying as much as

could be expected after the introduction of such a paragon. Truly, in other company, and when left a little to herself and permitted fair play, unexposed to such exterminating rivalry, the Senhora Castilda would have been reckoned pre-eminently handsome.

But by the side of her fair charge, you might as well have talked of the most twinkling of the little twinkling stars in comparison with the glorious sun—or of a mud hut (not to speak it profanely,) in the same breath with a magnificent marble palace with a thousand columns. Phroditis's beauty, indeed, was of that cast that it might have led captive a chain of emperors half a mile long; while the exertion of that of Castilda, perhaps would have contrived and effected the attraction after her of two score pikemen with a fat halberdier at their head.

"You are walking to-night my love," said Castilda, "as fast as if you were seeking to

make up for your father's prohibition of the streets by gathering to yourself as great an amount of ground passed over as possible."

"You should be very angry with him for shutting you so up to look after me," returned Phroditis. "And pray, what should *I* say, who do not know what a paving-stone is like out of doors.

"Ah! my dear child, you cannot tell what a great town is like!" said Castilda, throwing up her eyes and crossing herself.

"No, I cannot, indeed," replied Phroditis; "but I can understand what a tolerable amount of discontent is."

"Do not say that, for I am convinced you are very happy if you would but permit yourself to think so."

"I should be very ready to think so," was Phroditis's answer, "if I could persuade myself of it—for I can comprehend that happiness is something to be desired—though I

confess I am rather ignorant of the absolute value of the word. I do not hear any bells to-night, Castilda. What can be the meaning of that? I suppose it is because there is no wind to put them in motion. How curious that the wind should be able to play those pretty tunes!"

"I have told you before, my love, I think," said the sage Castilda, "that the bells are played by men who pull the ropes. If I could have prevailed upon your father to allow me to show you how his great bell is sounded in his yard, you would not at the present moment be labouring under such a pitiable delusion, for I should have removed a few of your silly notions. But you know your father, for excellent reasons of his own, will not—"

"Let me come out out in the yard in the daytime when the men are at work. But I've seen them all in spite of him," said Phroditis, "and they're curious creatures. Why,

I'd rather look at you, Castilda, than some of them. Pray have all the men out of doors long yellow hair and freckled faces?"

"You must really not ask me so many useless questions," replied Castilda, "and I think that your curiosity might be better directed than inquiring after the looks of the citizens of this good town. There are a great many of the folks in Tafna-Khalifas much uglier than your father Klypp's handicraftsmen."

"And what do the men do in Tafna-Khalifas, kind Castilda?" queried Phroditia. "You have been out in the streets, and you can tell me. Do they all hammer at ships as my father's people do?"

"Some do, and some do not," was Castilda's limited reply. "There are various occupations which are followed, as you know by your books. Tafna-Khalifas is a town like other towns, and the people in it exercise various callings or professions."

“ I know I have read so,” said Phroditis, “ but I never could understand the use of it. Why should they work so all day, and keep so perseveringly at it, instead of looking out of window and amusing themselves in the sun in winter and the shade in summer ?”

“ Why, my love, for the best of reasons, and that you might learn by experience were you not so happily situated as you are with a father so well able to provide for you, and so careful of you that he cannot let you out of his sight, or of my sight, which is the same thing, you know. These poor people are so compelled to labour to maintain their families; and were their industry to cease, those who have claims upon them might discontinue to have their daily necessities.”

“ But why should they be so fearful, Castilda ?” enquired the inquisitive Phroditis. “ I have everything brought to me without my seeking it. But I am tired of walking up and

down this tedious yard. It is a lovely twilight; but I can see it better from my window. All else is denied me, and my father seems determined to make life nothing to me but one dull constant panorama, working round and round like a silent picture that I am to form no part of, and only to be its dumb spectator, with you, Castilda, for the showman. I am wearied of gazing at the voiceless figures. Come, let us go in."

The two females stopped themselves in the middle of their turn from the house, and Castilda silently followed Phroditis, who had too energetic a will of her own ever to be contradicted when she set her mind upon anything.

There was, probably, some vexation mingling with Phroditis's hasty determination capriciously to abandon the yard and betake herself indoors—but however that might have been, and however disposed the Senhora Castilda might have felt herself on this particular

occasion to prolong their walk, she submitted to the (in somethings,) imperious young beauty, and returned in with her with every token of complacent and uncomplaining acquiescence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHAMBER OF THE FAIR PERODITIS.

"The high moon sails upon her beauteous way,
Serenely smoothing o'er the lofty walls
Of these tall piles and gleaming palaces."

Marino Faliero.

"'Tis her breathing, that
Perfumes the chamber thus. The flame o' the
taper

Bows towards her, and would underpeep her lids
To see the enclosed lights, now canopied
Under these windows, White and azure, laced
With blue of heaven's own tinct. But my design
To note the chamber : I will write all down :
Such, and such pictures : There the windows :

Such

The adornment of her couch : The arras figures,
Why, such and such."

Shakespeare.

PERODITIS and Castilda ascended several steps
introducing to a narrow door on one side of

the enclosed yard. This led them to a passage of no great length, terminating in a high staircase, which they ascended. Passing then through a chamber of small size, which constituted a sort of ante-room, they entered Phroditis's apartment.

This room was one of the most extraordinarily pretty which the fancy of man, or woman either, generally, and, we think, justly, reckoned more adroit and clever in the picturing of all things pretty, graceful, or in taste, could have conceived. No pains indeed, and no forethought seemed to have been wanting; and, what is more, no expense was certainly spared to render it worthy of the purposes to which it was destined, and the use of so fair and graceful a tenant as the Senhora Phroditis.

The boudoir, as it would have been designated in modern and fashionable phraseology, was not so small in size but that it admitted of considerable display in the way of furniture, and afforded abundant accommodation. It had

two narrow though very tall windows; and here the jealous watchfulness and precaution which had dictated the strength of construction observable in the mansion, were visible, for the deep reveals, or rather the embrasures, in which the lancet-shaped, mathematically leaded casements were set, would have denied anything like amusement from an approach to the windows, had not in one merciful instance the comfort of an inmate been provided for. The second window was so cut away at the sides that a species of bay or oriel was formed in the thickness of the wall, exceedingly snug, and permitting a close proximity to the glass and consequently a capital view out of doors.

The walls were composed of a rich wood, excessively delicate, of a light colour, highly polished and scattered over with eyes in the grain.

There were large frames of panelling exquisitely carved, and embracing within a waving narrow silver moulding flat spaces of

dark blue tapestry. This latter was evidently of the very richest and thickest kind, and was covered with gorgeous arabesques. The ceiling was of a dark shining wood, reticulated diamond-wise or lozenge-fashion. The windows were capable of being concealed, when so it should be desired, with flowing draperies of crimson silk ; though the heavy folds and drooping fringes of the latter were at the present moment either looped up with gold pendants of Saracenic slenderness and the chaste and most elegant pattern, or, as might have been observable in one or two instances, tossed carelessly over the backs of the seats. A square Persian carpet, bright with a thousand colours, with a wide marone fringe, was upon the floor ; the boards round it were inlaid with red, white, and amber woods. Tiger skins, or the coats of rare animals, were scattered for repose. Mingling on the floor were scented paper, rose leaves, gold threads, and the many coloured feathers of fancy birds.

The furniture in the room was quite in a moresco taste. Cushions were piled one on the other in the corner. These, and one or two chairs very low in the seat and exceedingly high in the back ; some tables of filigree upon which stood rose water jars and agate vases, silver candelabra, and tall thin gold tripods for incense and aromatics, from which the blue smoke was lazily and fragrantly curling, like gay and festive altars silently burning in a romantic atmosphere of their own, in honour to the genius of all things graceful, elegant, or physically refined; and a few other quaint articles of furniture formed the moveables.

Upon an ornamental bracket sat a superbly sculptured Cupid of ivory, with a silver collar round his neck on which was engraved some sentence in Arabic; and with a chain of the same metal fastening him up to a cross of sandal wood that boasted an abundance of silver decoration. This little enchained

innocent, whose looks pleaded like a stray cherub in distress, as well as he could contrive to manage it from its size, was holding up a clock in an octagonal case of cabalistic design, some concealed machinery within setting in motion every fifteen minutes a round of chimes, clear tinkling bells, with such a flowing and inexhaustible profusion of silver notes, as might have been heard, an elfin curfew, softly sounding in moonlight in fairy land, when from their tiny gleaming arcades, and emerging from under myriad little glowing domes, glancing like bubbles, Oberon and Titania, and all their starry court, should trip forth in long and dancing procession.

There were four female figures of exquisite beauty in the four corners of the room, riding on winged serpents, whose barbed tails curled round into a sort of arch, or curve, or a something which might have been construed a magic shell. These miniature divinities bore each a torch of wax in a chased cup of solid silver.

The destination of this weird nook in the old tumbledown mansion, and the tastes of its lovely owner and her daily employments, were evinced in the number of tapestry frames, balls of worsted and coils of silk, and other appliances of female labour and female art, which were to be lighted upon everywhere. Canvas for paintings, papers for drawings, boards, easels, and the various utensils and small implements necessary to the artist, testified that Phroditis' pretensions to talent were not confined to the female domain of the thread and needle casket.

Phroditis walked into this apartment with the air of its mistress, and threw herself languidly upon some of the cushions which seemed to lie there for the very purpose. She tossed her head carelessly and languishingly back, permitted or rather could not hinder all her shower of curls falling adrift over the rich silk, and fixed her eyes upon the ceiling. As if the ceiling, however, could not present to

her any feature of novelty, she soon relapsed into indifference, softly let her long dark eye-lashes close over her eyes, and appeared gradually to decline into a soft voluptuous reverie, in which she lay as still as a piece of lovely sculpture.

"Now do, my kind, good Castilda, say something, or do anything that might put me in a good humour, or in some humour," said, or, rather, playfully and perhaps somewhat affectedly drawled, Phroditis. "I am fearfully weary this night of everything. Even my accustomed evening walk, and the lustrous twilight, and the gaunt shapes and giant curves of some two dozen argosies which my father is concerned in building—nay, even thine high and mighty presence, and that staid, and solemn, and highly improving air of gravity and dignified monition which you put on sometimes, all have failed to have any effect upon me. Everything seems to conspire to deny me feeling as happy as I

sometimes feel even in this gilded cage. Would it be too poetic to suppose that sometimes witching visions of lawns and sunny slopes, and deep blue islands set like sapphires in a sunny southern sky—aye, and the air, open as the grateful heart and sweet as liberty herself, visit the languishing, the slow, long, weary dreams of the imprisoned bird. I have birds—lovely, innocent, noisy things, specks of sunshine, shivers from gems, animated dew-drops, as an Arabian poet, and I at humble distance, might call them, whose scarlet, and purple, and orange feathers are of Nature's own embroidery—and these poor captives are detained to pleasure me! My pleasure then makes other's pain, none the less acute for being supported within gilt wires. Castilda, I have never thought of this before."

"And I wish you had not thought of it now," murmured Castilda, though in so low

a tone that nobody could hear her. "This girl will never let me be at peace. I warrant she'll next ask me to bring all her cages to her."

"I will get up," continued Phroditis, as if seized with a sudden thought, sitting straight up in the cushion. "I will get up, and I'll open all the doors of my cages. But would not this evening air be too doubtful and dark for them, delicate little things as they are; and by freeing them at this present moment, should I not be exposing them to greater torment than they can suffer from me within those hateful prisons, which I detest now from the bottom of my heart."

"Your last recollection, you see, by far the most sensible—and one that I highly approve, has corrected the ill-advised impetuosity of your first resolve," returned Castilda. "My dear love, you are much too quick."

"No, not the least shadow of a shade of it,"

was Phroditis's instant and vigorous rejoinder ;
“only you are so—so immensely slow. Pri-
thee, Castilda, go to the window and look out,
and tell me if there is the evening star shi-
ning in the twilight.”

“My dear child, it is as yet much too light,”
again murmured Castilda in a rather sleepy
tone, the disinclination to stir, and the evident
desire to keep the restless Phroditis quiet, ex-
pressed in which, was fully justified, and ren-
dered exceedingly consistent, by Castilda's
comfortably recumbent attitude, as she lay
with her feet upon an ottoman, and her head
buried in the very softest cushion to be found in
Phroditis' apartment—through which any rea-
sonably wearied man, or woman, either, for the
matter of that, might have sunk for ever, and
that without forming one wish to be extricated
to the surface.

“Besides, do you not see,” resumed Cas-
tilda, who was afraid of the quiet as dreading its

introduction of some new whim into the head of her wayward pupil, as the duenna fidgetted her head a little about in her pillow, "do you not perceive, my dear, that the effect of your evening star will be very considerably heightened when it becomes a great deal darker than it is at present. The twilight, beautiful as it is now, must deepen greatly before the thin lines of light grow into strength, and the star, at present flickering faintly, offers itself as the glorious object it will be some time hence. Also before the sky deepens sufficiently into its dark, deep purple tint, to form the loveliest back ground for the planet in its effulgence."

"Excellent, upon my conscience, Castilda!" answered Phroditis. "Sentences as well put together as could have been linked in the brain of a professor after a day's reflection. Except that, perhaps, he would have improved on the delivery, or been justly

chargeable with indifference and mumbling. But perhaps your sage lecture is as well and as lucid as anything could be expected from such a cushion as you have. No! I cannot rest here any longer. If this be your idle time, and a season for self-indulgence, or, as perhaps you may exalt and dignify it, for rumination, I will prefer to ruminate gazing at that glorious sky. And I will watch the little stars peep cautiously forth one after the other, like sparks of boats launched into the interminable sea. How many of those stray lights are scattered every night!"

"How should I know!" was Castilda's peevish exclamation, after a pause as if she was disinclined to give herself the trouble of replying though there was no need of it, for Phroditis was rather speaking to herself than addressing her companion.

Phroditis, as if tired of her position of ease, started up and stepped to the window. It was

of course that which permitted of a contemplation of objects out of doors. She unfastened the lattices, and threw them widely open.

It was a lovely night. As the soft air, balmy and languishing in its voluptuous, almost enervating mildness, found its way into the apartment, a scarcely perceptible flutter of the draperies was all the indication that the atmosphere without was not still as the motionless forms of the circling trees. It was the loveliest stillness. It seemed to breathe—to be conscious—to respire, almost, in the thoughtfulness of its quiet. You might have fancied all nature in repose. That its widely spread—searching activity was in suspense.

A good third of the heavens was still palely though rosily illuminated with the reflection of the now long-departed sun. The broad even reflection was neither red, nor yellow,

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nor lucent blue ; but a mixture of all the three colours, as if liquid lights, if there could be such things, of various tints had flowed into one another and united to where the lustrous red predominated stretching along the horizon. Dark crowded objects rose distinct and awful below, and the deep dark blue asserted its prerogative above.

The rest of the sky was of a placid purple—a very world for Milton's *Penseroso*, or mild Urania with her dovelike upturned eyes, clothed in the holy garb of contemplation and diademed with stars. The stars were indeed slowly—very slowly, with their long, straight, tiny rays, timidly and yet earnestly *sharpening* into existence, as if they were the waking eyes of the expanse ; the nightly outguard of the frontiers of heaven with their thousand beacon fires lighted ; or the glittering population of the azure fields of the night air.

Phroditis' window looked down upon the

ancient shipyard, where the slips of water gleamed, and all remote objects, and the towering buildings intermingled in dubious obscurity like the *chiaro 'scuro* of a Rembrandt, or some of the oldest of the old Spanish painters, in whose umber shadows and dusky twilights, flat, even, and uniform as the tint may be, you are deceived into gradually distinguishing unsubstantial and incoherent shapes of structures and representations of objects, which in their uncertainty might be anything or nothing. In fact, in the very picturequeness of the doubtfulness and immateriality and uncertainty of this southern twilight, filling and penetrating into the depths and closing up into the corners of the shipbuilding domain, you might have laid out, and arranged, and pictured to yourself a whole region of things, and persuaded your readily credulous imagination that there had been, and was still going on an actual wreathing into forms and embodiment of articulated shadows.

Gaunt, giantlike—nay awful, rose spire and turret. Doors looked more than doors. Holes looked dens. Every shadow quickened as if it could breed its ghost. Out of the depth and darkness below, rendered more curious from a strange sort of blue glow which spread abroad, you might have thought the moresco steeples, and the fretted and crocketted pinnacles, were happy in escaping into air and catching the last waning light and a glimpse of pale undecided moonshine, too grey for starlight, as it was too watery and shimmeringly yellow for moonlight.

Phroditis put her head out of window and looked abroad, as if she desired to give herself the sensation of being out in the open air, and surrounded by these interesting sights, whilst she should not escape that reserve in remembrance, and the comfortable conviction that her feet were within her own room.

“ ’Tis these beautiful sights which make me feel more poignantly the being shut up

here, cried Phroditis: "but I acknowledge to a certain sort of fear at this mysterious, nay awful-looking twilight, for one may well call it awful when my father keeps such hideous ships in his yard, whose prows look like so many—I do not know what to style them. Those figureheads are frightful things! They grin and stare at you with unnecessary and uncalled for pertinacity, and sometimes look askance as if they were very devils hammered out of wood—as if, spite of the leers and smiles assiduously bestowed upon them in liberal fellow spirit by the more amiably tempered carvers, they could not escape the original perversity of their grain nor its occasionally demoniacal twist. I am like a princess of an old romance planted down amidst monsters. All these creatures overlook my walks, nay overlook my looks; and they are glancing up at me now with their sightless eyeballs. We are garri-

soned with a wooden battalion picked from every age and all the kingdoms which have existed since the creation of the world. And this wooden population is branded with my father's mark, and claimed to himself as his handywork and the production of his genius, and as Neptune's children, christened with a fiery christening into their watery life. How calmly the stars shine down on all this trumpery! and there is the broad round moon in her yellow illumination, sad as the veiled mourner by the marble urn, when the low wind alone speaketh for the lonely dead, and watching life becometh as living death. Pale and wide, a sphere of watery light, she arises over the dark towers and ancient tops of the distant buildings, and will soon gleam in the ghastly faces of our wooden sentinels. One; two; three; four; five face her. They will see her mount into the thin blue air, the one wakeful eye of the silent night; and far off will the thousand stars burn, the scattered

lights of a right royal fleet, or lamps to mark the tracks and pilot the passage of the sea of air!"

"Surely, Phroditis, you cannot want those casements open," cried Castilda, with some impatience. "I assure you, night is not the time for you to be gazing out, and gratuitously making all sorts of silly observations upon the poor wooden faces of your father's figureheads. Who could see, except yourself, all that nonsense you have been talking in a fine twilight? And besides I cannot fancy, nor can I approve of all those strange speculations you have been hazarding on the carved figures which grow up out of the stems of the Senhor Klypp's argosies. To put such a string of mysterious and objectionable contemplations upon stocks and stones and senseless shapes into language, has a certain sort of sinister and dark power; and I am sure Father Bonifacio would not like that you should be the one to too rashly handle edge-tools, which

are words even in the hands of foolhardy and inexperienced young people. So if you will not draw your head inside and shut up the lattices, I must really rise; and though it is putting me greatly out of my way, I must go away into my own chamber and say my evening service to myself."

"Well, if you prefer it," said Phroditis, returning into the apartment, but without closing the windows, "go by all means; and when I am tired of looking out into the yard and the moon has fairly risen, and the last gleam of twilight has faded into that void which has swallowed up so many twilights, why, I will do as you. So *adios*, dear Castilda! and a good supper to you."

"*Adios*, Senhora!" answered Castilda; and rising and gaping, Castilda retired towards the door, opening which she let herself out and left Phroditis alone, or with the stars for company.

And sometimes do we not find the stars the

best of company ? and such companionship as we would not forego or abandon for the finest society which this glittering and showy, but empty and disappointing world can afford us ?

CHAPTER X.

SOLITUDE.

" He who hath loved not, here would learn that love
And make his heart a spirit ; he who knows
That tender mystery, will love the more,
For this is Love's recess.

He grows

Into a boundless blessing, which may vie
With the immortal lights, in its eternity."

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage.

" These are my pleasures, and to be alone."

Byron.

THERE is sometimes a relief in hearing a door shut and being left alone. It seems as if you

were once more abandoned to your own court ; that the busy and inquisitive were removed ; and that you could look around you undeterred in the vagrancies of your thought by observant eyes, and the consciousness of independent and unaccording motions around. The mind is expansive when left to its own play, and not repelled and cast back upon itself by the recollection that it is to be accommodated to the unknown, and unfathomed, and uncertain whims and commonplace caprices, which are every second in action or expectation, when there is living, and breathing, and human companionship, or rather watch.

It is this ill-assorted communication, or rather want of communication, which becomes so burthensome. That sense that it is expected and necessary for you to controul yourself, and not merely express yourself but also think "by the card." That regularity which you must prescribe for

your behaviour, and the precision which will be needful to secure you in the conventional path along which all who have the ticket of leave to traverse the beaten walks of the world permit themselves or love to move. When submitting to this supervision—when so well guarded with this visible sign of the real and conformable, and probable sentinel from the battalion of the jealously correct, with this possible witness against you, you feel contracted to the circle in which the proprieties expected and exacted confine you, and remain persuaded that the first duty of man, at least in such an artificial state, is to exist, and that is all.

Your kingdom is then a kingdom of chairs and tables, in which you become sensible of the value of such articles of furniture, nor dare or wish to exalt them, or, as in your then state of mind you think, to pervert their intention beyond their real solid honesty of usefulness

and unromantic plainness. You are enclosed by four walls, and seem to perceive that it is a very comfortable boundary ; at all events safe from all delusions of fancy or assaults of the mysterious, the sentimental and irregularly exciting. You felicitate yourself on your quietness, and feel the snugness, and above all the convenience of the plain and natural, in contradistinction to the dangerous intoxication and expensive because enervating and spoiling luxuries of the fanciful and enthusiastic. Tending to this end, and greatly assisting the placidity and composure which supervene upon the subsiding waters when the wind of the stirrings of our nature withdraws, is the presence of some one with us. Though but an individual we feel that we are in the face of the world, and bound to regulate our behaviour by its judgments of right and wrong—of the correct and incorrect. But take away this look out upon our minds, and the fetters so willingly

worn are suddenly found to encumber, and we readily, and without thought about it throw them aside to enjoy the exercise of our free limbs. We then walk into new wisdom, but it is the wisdom born of solitude.

Then indeed we gather heart and look about us. The heart seems to revive—the eyes are raised—there is returning animation, and awaking interest in things mundane: and the wavering and wandering scintillations, which were every second becoming fewer, retrace back as lights. The soul, sensible that the observers upon its house have betaken themselves away, returns to its windows. Then comes the flattering remembrance, that

“ In solitude, when we are least alone,”

we have travelled back again to our strength—that we are no deposed kings, treading over the dust which we are aware contains jewels, though we dare not stop to look for them.

We are compelled no longer to submit to the principle that through our ears we must not hear, nor through our eyes see, nor that we must speak the words of our hearts. On the contrary, our life begins, our guard is withdrawn, and we may step up our throne and call our court, which has only impatiently deferred its homage until we should become free men and therefore worthy to receive its tribute.

Relief like this was felt by Phroditis—dreamer, enthusiast, visionary as she was, when the starched formal figure of her matter-of-fact duenna, or abigail, we know not which to style her, nor do we much care, disappeared behind that happy door, which seemed to close the quicker and with all the greater alacrity that the personified propriety was to be shut upon.

Phroditis's room seemed to become her own once more, and not the mere case for a wooden dummy as Phroditis's rather too vehement im-

patience at her half *gouvernante* and whole companion petulantly denounced her. She seemed to be restored suddenly to authority over the articles devoted to her use and her ease, and released from the negative thralldom of having to hear, though she never troubled herself to reply oftener than her humour suited with an answer, all the insipidities, and wearisome bewailments, fretfulness over trifles, and even good-natured though idle and mistaken chat, poured out by the persevering Castilda.

Phroditis already looked about as if her most active part of the day—at least as far as the exertion of the mind was concerned, was coming.

“Let me see. I cannot sit still,” thought, and almost said, Phroditis. “Now that that tiresome old woman has taken herself off, for she is old, spite of all her endeavours to persuade me, and perhaps others with more earnestness, that she is a young woman spoiled by

suffering or endurance, or what not, as they all are, instead of years: now that mistress Castilda has gone, let me consider what I can best do. And that odious garden where nothing grows, or yard, or whatever my father and his people call it! What is the use of going out into it when I can see nothing but walls and the stars above me, which are certainly very pretty, but yet not all that I should like to see. I declare I feel almost tempted to make a solemn vow upon my pincushion that I will not again don my mantilla to go out into it. I am sure I need not be so careful in hiding my face when there is nothing but old battered images to look at me. Now first I will have all my lights lighted; and then I must take but one peep at the mirror, to see if this rose agrees with my black hair; but what does it matter if it will when no one looks at me but the prim Castilda, who shuts her eyes and yawns when I turn round to ask her her opinion, or my father, who says

'seventy-three,' if I put it to him whether he does not like white better than black. I am sure I ought to be considered an unhappy young creature, when I have a father in black buckram with an extinguisher upon his head, and a guardian angel about me in the shape of a rush candle, quite as white or, rather, yellow, and as tall as a steeple with a cap like a holy water bason."

Pouting her lovely lip, which was ripe and as red as a polished cherry, Phroditis stepped up and down the room a few turns, went to the window, put both her little white hands upon the window-sill, and looked out.

But she soon returned with a look of weariness, and sat down to a tapestry frame.

"And here are all the stitches hanging out just as I left them when I started up from my frame, delighted at Castilda's insidious proposal to go out and take the air—in the ship-yard! Where are my needles? I will work well for some time at this, until I render

the unfinished side something even. There is Joseph's coat of many colours has not half the colours yet ; and Rebecca's robe seems as if a slight acquaintance with the scissars would not be amiss, as it looks rather ragged and trails behind her. Jacob's beard wants trimming ; and the sky calls aloud for the flying threads to be taken out of it. Santa Maria ! if I have not forgotten the head of that sheep. And the wolf in the background looks a little too much as if he has been making a prize of it whilst the heads of the others were turned, and is slyly moving off. I must put in a little wool and soften the sharpness and vicious angularity of his physiognomy ; and insinuate a little more grief into the face of that man with the indigo sheet upon him."

So saying Phroditis took up her implements—settled herself down in her seat—and seemed really as if she was disposed to recommence her work in earnest, with her thoughts all in it. Her eyes were bent in attention upon the

colours of her embroidery frame which glowed in the strong yet soft light, and her mind seemed suddenly to have become all red, blue and green, and their shades, the varieties of the silk, and the still more puzzling though less brilliant differences of woollen. But looking at her, and thinking of the tints which were passing under her fingers, you could not—nor would you if you could, have been able to fancy them ordinary red, or blue, or so forth, the colours that a heavy mindless rustic might look at or any ordinary person, but on the contrary fairy hues — strips of the rainbow, which had been suddenly brought down to earth and woven into the domesticities of household and familiar life.

It would have been no easy task to have guessed at all the thoughts, which at first may be said to have passed, but then *run* through Phroditis' head while she remained thus employed. In truth, she was very inconstant in

her thinkings; and, after full twenty minutes perhaps of sober, steady—nay, philosophic thought, as she concluded—all of it tending to improve her mind, and form her intellect, and extract the full and fair share of usefulness out of the Senhora Castilda's sage lessons, prudential maxims and general directions, she would be suddenly taken in hand against her will, and notwithstanding her magnanimous efforts to free herself, by some high-flown romantic fancy, some whim, or wild wish, or buoyant and heady train of thought, which would fairly lift her out of herself. And it would soar away sky high, an enormous distance from all the sobriety, and the formalities, and all the unpretending safety and correctness which ever kept aspiring spirit down.

Phroditis used always to be ashamed of these wanderings, and lamented excessively that there should be some deficiency, as she imagined, which should prevent her maintaining attention to graver subjects of thought. But

she was of a very rapid imagination, rendered perhaps all the stronger by the worldly ignorance in which she was rigorously and relentlessly kept. It might not, absolutely, have been difficult to persuade her of the most extraordinary contradictions: that is, contradictions to reality, but not of the truth of things in themselves not correspondent.

She had a happy judgment, which saw, as we might say, by its own light, as it was debarred from that to be supplied by stranger experience. So intense was her desire to believe and credit out of the common track, that there was no extreme, hardly, of conduct, provided always it was graceful or enthusiastic, or reconcilable to the all-pervading elegance which filled her mind, and which she fancied must be of necessity as fully shared by others, that you might not have persuaded her of. As she was totally unacquainted with mean or low motives or inferior inducements, and could not reconcile their existence with her own free

and lofty inspirations, and events of her experience, since she found nature so noble and her own feelings so impellant towards the high and great, she imagined that the world must be a sort of paradise, in which people lived, and moved, and acted, as if the days before sin destroyed the order, and concert, and beauty, and elevation of being, were not already past.

Phroditis' lovely countenance, full of heaven, in which the rapid imaginings and tender dreams ascended and chased each other as the clouds of a rich and glowing sunset, was a glass for innocence herself to have looked in. In the soft voluptuous light of her now flashing, now downcast eyes, a thousand loves might have sprung. Warmed to life in the sweetness and alluring placidity of her presence—fired to wildness in her smile and her glance of fascination. In the steady depth and holy contemplation of her intent eyes, which at other times possessed an inexhaustible trea-

sure of tenderness, when their full, cold, collected meaning rested upon you; and in the mortifying sense of the might of her haughty and removed beauty—its distance as far as heaven from earth—its aspect all purity, all spirit—its separation, its hopeless excess of elevation, a thousand desires and a thousand dreams would have been chilled to death. And yet they would have found a blessed tomb and happy burial since they met annihilation at her hands.

Phroditis' face was a paradise, whose expressions and changeful witcheries were the spirits to inhabit it. They would be all beautiful, but the loveliest would come last.

And Phroditis' heart was a treasure. Richer was it than the land that ever adventurous ship in quest of left her native shore. Untold, undreamt, unfathomable, were the extremities of devotion—the height of enthusiasm of which it was capable. All of beauty or grace; all of

tenderness and rapture, dwelt within, lived within, clustered around and clung to it. There was a perpetual sunshine of not the presence, but the capability and susceptibilities of love around it and upon it. Love lit his choicest lights in her eyes.

If the altar of her heart lay as yet flameless and solitary in the midst of its own beautiful loveliness, it was only because though the circling wreaths did blush with their thousand rosy blossoms, and the votive garlands, heaped in their profusion and sinking in the sweetness of their own odours, trailed around it and along, and the freshest and rarest offerings rose upon its top, that the sparkless torch lay crossing the golden base not in forgetfulness but repose until that certain hand guided by fate, should arrive to be stretched forth and then to kindle a quenchless but the holiest fire.

Oh! Phroditis' love was as a stately temple already springing into height, and breadth,

and length, adorned with every gift, boasting every glory in the resources of art, hung, and twined, and spiring, a marvel and an awe; extending wide and deep in the supernatural splendour of its perspective, with the soft blue plains afar, and the distant mountains faint and dim in the strength of their own beauty. Now still and echoless, it rears itself a solid dream wrought whole and rich out of the panorama of the spirit. Called it is into existence by fairy spells; words breathed in the witching night; thoughts burning for expression in the summer day; wrought stone by stone, piled column by column out of the mines known amongst the principalities of the mind as revery, and hope and longing, and the eager and gushing imagination, best and latest dowry, with its countless shades for people and colours for tribes. Erect, majestic, wonderful in its symmetry and its vastness, matchless in its magnificence, it only awaits the warming, penetrating rays

of the rising sun at once to be turned to gold.

Phroditis's mind, and heart, and soul, formed and fashioned as they were for all the melting tenderness of woman's nature and her softest capabilities, full of impassioned dreaming and a world of those uncertain, hesitating, and consciously cautious emotions which frequently rise to a state of feeling equal to all extremities, powerful when it seems to be most powerless, burning when it would appear to be slumbering over its unsuspected, unthought-of intensity, might have been likened to a beautiful and wonderful country which only wanted to be inhabited. All her fine feelings, all that groundwork of passion which should have transformed her into a lively, active and impetuous type and votary of love, at present lay waste, or expended and exhausted themselves in aimless luxuriance and indefinite display. She was a perfect child of Na-

ture, whose very thoughts were colours from her—whose every action was a flower from her garden. Her thoughts were reflections from the changing expression of that one lovely, placid face, whose happy, chaste glow and spiritual radiance have converted the thick stained lights of the material universe into illumination clear as the eye of heaven, and the palpabilities of dull, unrefined, undecorated form and hard plasticity indeed to

“Something rich and strange !”

CHAPTER XI.

HOW CUNIQUE IS ENGAGED IN THE REDEMPTION OF HIS PROMISE. SOME OF HIS COGITATIONS ON HIS SITUATION.

"I'm cold—
I'm dark. I've blown my fingers—numbered o'er
And o'er my steps—and knock'd my head against
Some fifty buttresses : and roused the rats
And bats in general insurrection, till
Their cursed pattering feet, and whirling wings,
Leave me scarce hearing for another sound."

Werner.

"I do follow here in the chase, not like a hound
that hunts, but one that fills up the cry."

Shakespeare.

WE must now return to Cunique, who is engaged in the redemption of his promise to per-

form the hard task declined by the vain glorious and over confident tailor, the boastful Pimpernella. Nor have we very far to transport ourselves from the scene of our last chapter and the chamber of the fair Phroditis, before we encounter our hero in rather close and curious—and as far as Phroditis herself was concerned, greatly as she was interested in the fact, and much as the future modifications of her fate depended on it, very unexpected proximity to her. How near was he now to the principal object of interest, always excepting the renowned and undiscovered island, to the good people in general, and the inquisitive class in particular, of the magnificent town of Tafna-Khalifas on the Costadoro and the extraordinary country of Altosierro.

Cunigue was in the dark, and feeling his way along by the wall in a bewilderment which would have been ludicrous, had it not been for the eventful nature of his errand, his generous daring to save another, even the consequences of

his own folly, and the dangers which environed him. These threatened limb and life from the jealous vigilance and formidable anger of the suspected and dreaded magician; nay, even offered risk to the stability of his intellect and the health of soul, since arrayed against him were the unearthly powers of which it was supposed the mechanician Klypp had the command, and the sort of visionary and terrible servants that attended his pleasure, and kept watch and ward over him and his mansion.

How Cunique got there, was a marvel which, considering the intricacies about the old building, and also taking into view how large it was, he was not prepared to solve himself. He could only be conscious of the fact, as far as his judgment served him, that he was there present in his own person; but he preserved a very indistinct and shadowy remembrance of the process by which he arrived there, and the succession of the metaphorical

as well as actual steps by which he had mounted to the pleasant state of darkness, doubt and difficulty in which he found himself.

“ My life certainly has done justice,” thought he, “ to the predictions of that old vagrant Egyptian who foretold that I should have a sort of piebald life : chequered good and evil, black and white, like a chess-board ; with so many events, and so many escapes, and so many wondrous leapings, and runnings, and occasional screwings of myself, and embarrassments, that I should resemble continually a man caught in a net. I suppose I am in such a net now, and striving to extricate myself. The latter I am, there is no doubt of. How I got here I cannot tell ! Whether I am in heaven, or earth, or under the earth, might puzzle sharper brains and more ingenuity in disentangling, and fingers of greater nimbleness and dexterity at drawing straight than Cunique the Roarer could ever boast. Dark-

ness is round me. I feel a floor under my feet—of wood, I suppose—but I may be deceived in that, and it may be stone ; although wood is more likely, as I came up a staircase and am now in a gallery, I think. East, west, north, south, every point of the heavens seems to have changed place. I might fancy myself a thing spawned of this darkness—a walking error, dark enough prudence will bear me witness—a locomotive mistake, to whom, or to which, (for in this blackness I cannot settle the question whether I am entitled to assume the dignity of pronoun, or should abandon myself as a very unsound substantive) exactness of place was of very little moment. Truly, I might remain content and comfortable with the assurance that I was a yard-and-a-half square of darkness, and needing no light, were I not contradicted---thrown back into the world by all this silk bravery. Very pretty to have disguised myself thus handsomely to waste all my splendour upon a dark passage ;

with an ultimate hope only of by-and-bye encountering some tasteful owl, that denied all show and any brightness in his own plumage, knows yet how to estimate and appreciate it in other stray birds. Fool so to deceive myself! and to imagine because I so cleverly vaulted, favoured by the night and a moon labouring through a world of clouds, also by the ins and outs, the corners and squares, and buttresses, and angles protruded, and all the other shapeless and purposeless heapings and pilings of this quaint old palace of plank — this tumbledown castle of nails and knees, ribs and rope: because I stepped lightly enough over the wall, and came down on my feet like the great enemy of mankind alighting in the Garden of Eden, I was to suppose that I could win my way to the *sanctum sanctorum*; the jewel casket which is to contain this precious gem set in gold, with such a superabundance of magic chasing. Now the clubs of all her father's fiends, I

will not say beat me to the ground, for that would be an unholy and ominous aspiration which I would rather avoid in the present posture of my affairs: let all the wizard clubs, wielded by unseen hands, which ever started at old Klypp's most potent spell, hammer away at his finest model of a ship until it shall be reduced to sawdust, if I ever undertake such a hopeless task, and such an unproductive and unsatisfactory feat again! But I have promised; and Cunique's word, at any cost, and at all risks, must be redeemed. I must see this famous Phroditis, if I hunt about these holes and corners for a twelve-month. What if her father, being a magician as he is, should by his prescience foresee I am coming, and lock her up or put her out of the way somehow? I cannot try all his doors and rattle the handles until I have stumbled upon the right apartment. Besides, he might change her; alter her bodily presence on purpose to delude me; extinguish her

beauty, and then how should I know her? I might pass by a high-backed chair, little dreaming that it was she. She might be a short goblet, or a black cat, or Proteus only knows what, could I see any of them, and that is an important and not to be forgotten or lost sight of consideration. I might be feeling the very object of my visit to this den of terrors, and nothing suspect. I might walk by with all the self-satisfied, ridiculously confident indifference in the world:—nay, hear a bird sing, without surmising that it was the song of the enchanted Phroditis I was listening to.

CHAPTER XII.

CUNIQUE DISCOVERS PHRODITIS.

“ A lordly and a lofty room,
Part lighted by a lamp with silver beam,
Placed by a couch of Agra's silken loom,
And part by moonshine pale, and part was hid in
gloom.

Fair all the pageant—but how passing fair
The slender form which lay on couch of Ind !
O'er her white bosom strayed her hazel hair,
Pale her dear cheek, as if for love she pined :
All in her night-robe loose, she lay reclined.”
Lay of the Last Minstrel.

CUNIQUE, still uncertain of where he was
going, put himself in motion towards the end

of the passage. Wandering about without direction, and with no knowledge of where his steps were leading him, he yet had, or seemed to have, some sort of imagination that he was not very far from the object of his search : that he was in the neighbourhood of that "cynosure of neighbouring eyes," to satisfy his judgment of whose beauty, and perform what he had solemnly undertaken, he had penetrated and persevered thus far.

Before him now he was able to perceive a glimmering light, which diffused a mild and gentle radiance upon some forms which resembled columns. On a nearer approach he found himself in a circular sort of vestibule, with four doors round it, or what he supposed to be doors, with dark draperies hanging before them, and with horseshoe architraves of rich design in the regular Moorish taste.

A profound silence reigned around. Everything was motionless, and not a fold of the draperies moved. All that he could distinguish

on listening intently was a low subdued kind of ticking. This he had no great difficulty in concluding proceeded from a clock; and as he thought it not unlikely that the object of his search might be to be found in its vicinity, he cautiously proceeded towards that door from beyond which the sound seemed to issue.

Cunique applied his ear to the chink, but could hear nothing beyond the low regular tick of the clock, which was in fact the curious one in Phroditis' apartment. Grown bolder by the perfect absence of all other sound, Cunique drew himself up as if relieved, though a certain amount of curiosity and excitement gathered in his eyes. He thought that it was possible that nobody might be in the room, and that if he opened the door and looked in, it would not much signify, and yet he thought there might.

Gathering courage, for there was something awing in the perfect quiet and yet the recollection that it was impossible he could be very

far off some of the inhabitants of the house, Cunique laid his hand softly to the handle of the door: and after a few moments' pause upon it, as if he were in debate in his mind, suddenly withdrew it, or lightly shook it off as if it were hot.

With his senses keenly alive, and an attention which was almost painful, drawing his breath regularly and with the utmost quietude, and treading on tip-toe,

“ So that the blind mole could not hear him,”

he left the door, but extended one hand mechanically towards it as if he would keep it shut to prevent its being suddenly opened from within and a surprise offered him. He walked with the utmost softness some paces down the gallery, and listened. Nothing stirred. Then he returned; and looking at the lamp which burned so quietly, and yet as he could have fancied consciously, a notion at

which he smiled passed through his mind. It was that the lamp, if sensible, might have knowledge of all that transpired in the house, and that there was the power in it as he looked at it to inform him of what he so desired to know, secretly and apart, as it were, without breaking confidence.

There is certainly a strange feeling in being in a lighted vestibule all in silence in a house of which you are ignorant, and where you have no business, listening for nothing, and with the recollection that there must be people about, to whom, if you were stumbled upon, you would take just such sudden and unexpected effect as an apparition.

Cunique, quite in doubt, and feeling just like a knight of romance in an old enchanted castle expecting an adventure at any effort in a fresh direction, walked back to the door; and this time, determining to act boldly, compressed his lips, as all people do when they

are about to tax themselves to anything, and laid his hand firmly upon the handle which at his previous attempts had seemed so difficult to clasp.

He turned it softly—most slowly in his hand, though it seemed to circle easily and slipperily enough, and then he felt the sensation in his fingers' end of having the power to push open or swing to any distance he might like this inviting but mysterious door. However he did not go rashly to work, and only set it, as it is called, ajar, amusing himself as he did so in perceiving a single straight thin line of light. This mysterious strip of light from within was bright, though unsatisfactory, tantalising and suggestive enough, and Cuni-que felt half afraid of his next step, lest anybody should be in the room and the movement of the door might catch the eye.

He waited a few moments gazing at the chink, in a sort of dreading expectation, as if

he should hear somebody rise all at once and then steps across the room, and that the door should be suddenly opened, and he as suddenly disclosed. And at this time he heard the ticking of the clock distinctly enough. But nothing stirred. Now concluding that he had made a mistake, and there really was no one in the room, and that there was much less to fear if anything, he permitted the door to slip forward to greater width. As it slowly opened, were disclosed to view first the antique carved wood-work; then the arabesques; then the silver moulding; and lastly some implements for work and other little matters which hinted that the chamber was the haunt of a female.

“I’m right,” thought Cunique, as his heart gave a sudden leap, and he could almost be said to have felt that his eyes sparkled.

The other side of the room as he glanced in, from the way he was hampered in his movements, looked half a mile off, so distant in his

possibility or practicability of arriving at it did it seem. The space over the floor looked a voyage; so Cunique recalled his eyes to his own neighbourhood, and with a sensation of pleasure, and as if he could see a snug and comfortable retreat, nay, a home, he detected a most opportune curtain close to him, and at no farther space removed than the side of the door. The friendly folds of the curtain seemed to stand out as if kindly inviting him behind their protection. But how to get there, was the question, should there be a "wide awake" person in the apartment.

Cunique, however, after a little while, hearing nothing stir, put one hand to the edge of the curtain, and under favour of the door passed himself insinuatingly behind it. As he did this, though he managed it as adroitly as possibly, he could not prevent some unfortunate shaking of the curtain, and a slight rustle, which went to his heart, and which nobody could appreciate but any one who

happens to have been in the like situation, and felt as if they were trembling on the verge of a similar discovery. He felt just like a man on the perpendicularly sloping face of the summit of a high cliff, with fingers caught round a knot of grass, perhaps the sea murmuring, from its vast distance, under a cloud below, and with the creeping, giddy sensation of his weight, as if he was suddenly grown stone instead of flesh, whose only safety depends on a strained tuft of grass and the crumbling earth about its root.

Cunigue contrived to place his eye just behind the junction of two draperies, and his perseverance was rewarded by the sight not only of Phroditis' chamber, such as we have described it, but of Phroditis herself, who had now grown tired of her work, and also apparently of book and everything else, for she was reclining on her cushions with her eyes closed, her hair dependant, and one fair hand with its taper fingers white as snow, and blaz-

ing with jewels lightly laid upon her gently heaving bosom. He might justly have exclaimed in the words of Iachimo, that "Italian fiend," who seems a man of taste,

"Cytherea !

How bravely thou becom'st thy couch ! fresh lily !
And whiter than the snow. That I might touch,
But kiss ; one kiss. Rubies unparagoned !
How dearly they do't."

Cunique truly was struck dumb. He had never seen so beautiful a creature in his life—never had such a form, such a face, visited his wildest dreams, and they had been wild enough. With intent eyes he gazed with rapture on that lovely form as it lay extended in repose upon her crimson cushions, like a single sweet lily on a heap of roses.

A multitude of new and thrilling, and as it seemed to him very strange sensations came upon him. He felt change come over him ; as if what he saw was the work of

enchantment, for he thought it impossibly beautiful for reality. He could have fancied that he had climbed to heaven, and with profane eyes was gazing on an angel. As if he had suddenly stumbled upon a sleeping fairy, nestled amidst tall flowers whose colours were of more than mortal brightness, and canopied with a thousand interweaving branches—as if spreading above might be the sylvan framework of a roof of reticulating twigs and sinuous arms, sheathed and smothered with sheaves of leaves, each standing fixed and bright in the magic atmosphere like a glowing emerald in the thick yellow flames and liquid gold of a blazing sunset.

The rich chamber looked a strange place now, as if it could not be of earth, nor belong to it, nor be on it. It was as a dream wrought to daylight, and the peerless shape in the midst the point round which the radiations had strengthened and settled, and worked out of

their shadowy gleam and unsubstantial nebulosity into brightness and body.

Cunigue could hardly reconcole with the sight which he saw his last day just passed. It seemed as if he had arrived in some new region, of which at some strange dreaming time he might have caught a something of a glimpse, but the transition from his remembrances of the dull matter of fact, "of the earth earthy" day he had just spent, to the dazzling, the bewildering, the entirely novel revelation which beset his vision—altogether confounded him, seemed so sudden and unexpected, so inconsequential in fact, that it looked like magic.

It was as if there came upon him a sort of shame at the kind of character he was supporting. A regret and vexation, coupled with rising pride, and an anxiety to stand forward as himself, and in the presence of beauty like this to cease to take advantage of concealment

in his contemplation, or to abuse the consciousness that the lovely figure before him must have that she was alone and sacred from prying eyes, took possession of his mind. Then a bitter feeling seemed to come upon his heart which melted into tenderness as he convinced himself of the loveliness of this fairest of Eve's daughters, and then, casting back his glance, recurred to his own unworthiness. He felt mean and pitiful, and very strange to say tears sprung to his eyes: it would have been an odd effect to ascribe to the revelation of beauty, but Cunique's fancy was impressed unaccountably, and the next moment his eyes darted light, and his lofty brow contracted for an instant with high pride and determination.

He was restless and anxious now, though the step was very hazardous and sure to startle if not alarm Phroditis, who of all things in the world could not have fancied a stranger and a youth such as Cunique was near her, to make his

presence visible, and, daring everything, to speak to her. Indeed had he been in a situation to reflect quietly, which he was not, he would have seen that some communication with her was necessary to his plan. But Cunique did not reflect at all. His plan, his promise, his comrades, everything seemed abstracted from him. He only was a something in the room with Phroditis; and whether he saw her with his eyes, or by some strange physiological or psychical perception—whether he was not a piece of furniture, he would have been puzzled to say, so was he engrossed, so entirely taken up and all his sensations absorbed by a something, which was hardly a sense, that he was gazing at the most beautiful creature he had ever beheld.

It seemed a sin to stir. He was half afraid that a movement — a breath would break the spell. Nay, the fancy occurred to him that even by admitting an instant's change of thought the whole scene,

beauty and all, might waver and become indistinct, if he did not combat and persevere until he had driven out the invading idea, and, insupportable recollection! perhaps altogether disappear. He felt a feverish anxiety—an eager, spurring, covetous desire to fix this vision for ever, and he longed—madly longed for some words of might, some potent spell which might force it into actual, palpable truth, so that he might be relieved of that great dread that it should escape him.

Time however was precious. Ashamed of the motives which had drawn him there, and struck dumb by the result—blessing his fate a thousand times for the lucky accident, he silently stepped one short pace behind the drapery, and cast about in his mind for the best means of preparing the maiden for the introduction of himself.

Perplexed and excited as he was he could think of no expedient, or such only occurred

to him as were disadvantageous, or only practicable with some sacrifice which he desired not to make. At last he reached out his hand in a sort of despair, and a determination to abide results whatever they might be, and to follow on as he best might. Pausing a moment, at last he extended his hand behind the door, which was slightly open, and gave a knock upon it as if of somebody outside the room and asking permission to enter.

From his concealment he watched its effect upon Phroditis. She started up from her reclining position, and was for a moment in a state of mute surprise. This might have been somewhat owing to the knock being uncertain and irregular—a *diffused* sort of knock, which betrayed trembling fingers; and Phroditis knew of nobody who was likely to so approach her, or would have occasion to announce their neighbourhood with such eccentricity of fear. Nay she could pretty well

calculate the knocks of all her visitors, and this was a strange one. The telegraph presented a figure which was not to be found in her key-book of signals.

The pause was only that of a moment; and Phroditis said "come in" in perhaps rather a higher key than would have been consequent upon a freedom from surprise, and at the same time perhaps from timidity.

Cunigue's situation at this "come in" was certainly rather peculiar, and excessively embarrassing. What to do he did not know: whether to walk off and betake himself out of the house as fast as possible, never to see this enchantress again but to dream for ever after of her; or whether to walk in mechanically and without a thought about it, and let fate speak for him, since he felt that he had not the power of a word or scarcely an idea.

Without doubt Cunigue had chosen the drollest mode to introduce himself which ever entered into the brain of man; but he

thought that he was already so very far gone in his task, that "returning was as tedious," nay as impossible, as going on. Besides he was courageous enough; though the greatest courage will often fail where a woman is concerned.

It is our private and particular opinion, and we do not say that it may not be shared by others who have accustomed themselves to look a little more deeply than usual into the phenomena of feeling, and the peculiar and all-powerful influence which the presence of woman asserts, more particularly over the refined and high-minded, and those of the true nobility of mind, that under some circumstances it would challenge more courage to address a female than to storm a fortress.

As it was Cunique could not help himself; and nervously expecting the effect the sight of him would have upon Phroditis; very much like a cowardly spirit compelled to walk his

round in the haunts, but dreading of all things the eye of mortal, he pushed open the door, and at the same time put back the drapery and stepped forward into the room, making it so appear that it would have been difficult to ascribe his entrance to the ordinary access to the room or from the door, or from behind the draperies.

Phroditis of course screamed when she saw him, says the reader. No, indeed, she did not; the effect of his appearance was striking enough upon her; but she did not cry out or utter a sound. In fact she did not change her position. All she did was to open her eyes wide and stare at Cunique as if he had been a picture stepped down from its frame. It really may be matter for guess whether she did not at first sight set him down for an automaton image, sent up as a surprise by her father; except that second thoughts assured he would not have been so indiscreet and cruel, and so she dismissed the fancy with

a coolness which did wonderful credit to her nerves.

But there is sometimes an actually fortifying and strengthening quality in astonishment. At the sudden display of something so unaccountable that we cannot understand and credit it, there is an arrest of the sensations, fixing of the faculties, but no fear. It is revealed suddenly as an object which our eyes would seem to shew is there, though we at the same moment see in our minds, nay we feel all over us that the thing ought not to be. We have been so often cheated with shadows—so many times have images been presented to us which shifting of the light or readjustment of our eyesight from its momentary derangement have corrected—so in some moods have we confounded and intermingled things seen “in the mind’s eye” with objects corporeal, and so in the mystic operations of revery and deep, settled, and settling down thought have they been forced together, that we are

from experience very naturally distrustful.

The mind of itself is but of gradual grasp.—can apply itself only to one object at one time. Impressions must be piled before we can deduce, as a spark, meaning from them. And then has that meaning to be reconciled in bodily objects to the historical register of our senses. Violation of nature is a shock;—violation of expectation and probability one of smaller force.

While we are engaged in dissociating and analysing to build up our idea, the mind is occupied, but intent on its own task, and reserving its judgment, it is not fear that occupies it. It is only when we become convinced that the thing should not be—that there is some infraction of necessity implying menace and danger; that something is discovered which we cannot account for, and that in its unknown depth, because we have no light to guide us in its exploration, there may be, since we cannot feel to the contrary, all that may be hurtful,

may, as we are not limited, an universe of unwelcome possibilities—it is only when thus the edifice of thought is constructed—built completely up and crowned, that we see it has no business in the place we perceive it, and therefore danger must follow its presence.

Phroditis remained looking at Cunique in astonishment so long, and he on the other side with no less steadfastness maintained his gaze upon her, that the old clock which Cupid was industriously occupied in holding up over his head, remained the only voice and only tangible and palpable communication between them. Its *tick, tick*, seemed the click of the screw-barrel which was mechanically but correctly turning the scenes changing with each catch of the other's mind.

Phroditis, like Miranda, to whom in her solitude, and the fact of her never having seen any specimen of mankind scarcely, but her father, she bore a strong resemblance, might have exclaimed with delight, and in the

words of her sister beauty of the enchanted island, when looking up in answer to the amused glance of pleased forethought of what must naturally come after, and admiring and tender love of her wizard father,

“The fringed curtains of thine eyes advance
And say, what thou see'st yond—

What is't—a spirit?

Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, Sir,
It carries a brave form;—But 'tis a spirit.
I might call him

A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

There's nothing ill can dwell in such a temple:
If the ill spirit have so fair a house,
Good things will strive to dwell with't.
This is the third man that e'er I saw; the first
That e'er I sigh'd for: pity move my father
To be inclined my way.”

Cunio would at present have done justice to the flattering observation of even a Miranda herself. The tailor, Pimpernella, impelled not only by gratitude, of which we are not un-

willing to ascribe him a due share, but perhaps at the same time a not unequal amount of content and satisfaction at his own escape through the instrumentality of his new friend and protector, had been as good as his word, and had turned Cunique out from under his hands as brave and gallant a figure as ever stept in lordly hall or mounted a destrier.

Cunique's fine yet slender form was displayed to the utmost advantage in the really elegant and *recherché* costume with which he was now provided. There mingled in his attire a seductively wild air. No harsh lines met the eye, but all was graceful and flowing. His habiliments fitted faultlessly, according with all the curves of his figure; and an air of the *spirituel* and fantastic, just slight enough to add a high tinge of romance, and impart a character of wildness to his appearance, and keeping carefully within the limits of the delicate and attractively eccentric, was infused. He might have been a Prince of Elfland, a

Knight of Romance supernaturally gifted, or some visionary form known only to the glittering fancies of the *Fabliaux*, or to be found in *Provençal* lay, Such a form might have stood forward out of the fancifully lighted recollections of legendary lore, or been found in the speculative dreams, and absorbing and beautiful reveries of poetry.

He wore a short frock of blue velvet, tight to the body, with a trimming of deep gold, and broad gold bands passing over his shoulders and meeting in a point in his waist. The lower edge of the gold band which ornamented the skirt of his upper garment was profusely decorated with gold pendants. Tight-fitting hose covered his legs, and shoes with silver clasps defended his feet. A belt of gold circled his waist, from which depended his long rapier blade in his own scabbard of parchment. A sash of snowy silk, embroidered with a red cross, passed athwart his body, and was tied in a careless knot behind. His sleeves were

long, and slashed up to the elbow ; and a number of trembling tags shook and glittered at their laced edges.

He wore his long hair arranged with a species of studied carelessness ; and on his head was a small black velvet cap, with a long red feather placed straight up, and continually nodding and quivering.

Altogether, he presented as gallant and handsome an exterior as any woman on the right side of forty could have desired to behold. And in such guise did he introduce himself to the fair Phroditis.

CHAPTER XIII.

A SCENE BETWEEN TWO LOVERS.

"And now, fair dames, methinks I see
You listen to my minstrelsy :
Your waving locks ye backward throw,
And sidelong bend your necks of snow :
Ye ween to hear a melting tale
Of two true lovers in a dale ;
And how the knight, with tender fire,
To paint his faithful passion strove,
Swore, he might at her feet expire,
But never, never cease to love ;
And how she blushed, and how she sighed,
And, half-consenting, half-denied,
And said, that she would die a maid."

Lay of the Last Minstrel.

CUNIQUE, as was quite correct, was the first to break the silence which reigned, and his first-

actually distinct impression, at least of reality and life and the things of this world, was that his voice sounded as it had never sounded before, There, in that room, and above all in that presence, it seemed as if it did not belong to him, but that it had somehow come to him with his dress, with which latter, however, he felt on much easier and self-oblivious terms.

His tones were at first low, and they trembled. But gradually a strength seemed to come to him, and he could speak firmly.

“Lady, your eyes tell me a tale of surprise of much higher intensity than I might gather from your lips, even should you open them to question the apparition before you as to the place from which he came, and the meaning of his being here. Scarcely should I be able to afford you a rational answer, seeing that I am yet undecided whether I am in a fairy palace and the victim of enchantment, therefore to be pitied, or living and breathing,

and one that might answer to his own name."

Cunique's voice seemed so natural and was so soft, and his expressions were so mild and inoffensive, that a good share of Phroditis' fear evaporated. She gave up suddenly the notion that it was some visitant from the world of shadows, or rather the idea took itself away from her.

But a new and wonderful leaf seemed suddenly turned over in her history. She was so much puzzled and bewildered with her novel sensations, that although her eyes became fixedly brilliant, her face grew pale as marble.

A moment after, a spot of pink, about the size and of the tint of the most delicate rosebud, shone in her cheek—her bosom heaved—she clasped her hands unconsciously together, and cast her eyes to the ground.

She felt that she should say something—that a word ought to be spoken—it did not

much matter what—that the very walls were asking it of her; but beyond the painfully acute sensation that she should open her lips and speak, nothing would come to her mind.

A pause ensued.—A most singular one. Cunique was looking intently, but with the respect with which he might have regarded an angel, in the face of the witching inhabitant of this mysterious chamber.

He seemed to feel it a profanation to break with coarse words the delicious silence of the room, hallowed as it was by her presence. But a few moments after, it occurred to him that something at least murmuringly said might not be inappropriate, nor sound inconsistent, though he feared that if he let fall a word, the lady of the scene might start up and fly, and that he should himself be the cause that he should never see her more.

“If it be true that my presence surprises you, so that alarm— but how should it be otherwise, sweet lady, for they say that you are not

accustomed to the world's commonest presentments. That you live in it as if not being of it. And what have you in accordance—what is there in that air and face, which should claim kindred with the rough common-places, the weariness and idle vanity, the emptiness and ignorance, the coarseness and earthiness of the world! To it you would be as a spot of light in an universe of darkness. Oh! I feel as if I were now—now in a dream, and had left the world behind me. And fain would I for ever gaze on thee, asking no other pleasure—no other employment than ever to be in that same room which has contained thee, even though thou should'st be withdrawn from my sight for ever. Could I have dreamt that in this one wide world dwelt that which should shoot to the heart of Cunique pain like this at the lowness of its lot!—shame and contempt—such contempt at all which might have formed objects of desire, of ambition and struggling!—no longer lights to have incited

him on, even had his steps not strayed far—far away from the beaten tracks which should introduce to such, but pallid sparks birthed in the blotted fogs of seething marshes, and glimmeringly drooping over that which at once produced them and is destined to be their grave. I may offend thee with my presence. Thou must be astonished to see me here. Ask as many questions as shall seem fit unto thee, and I will reply as if I were indeed questioned by one of Heaven's ministers;—one to whom the thoughts of my heart must be as evident as the words with which I might essay to invest them. Language fails me when I most need it. In one word, and I may defeat myself in the intensity of my desire to strengthen it with the fullest force of persuasion, do not fear me! for if you can form to yourself the lightest wish that I should depart, so instantly am I prepared to obey—so would I exhibit the command a glance of that eye could exert, that

I could throw myself readily—cheerfully from the topmost height of your loftiest tower, and only bless those hard stones, which should receive me in so holy a cause. I am breathless with eagerness to speak, and yet my words come tumultuous and confusedly, nor am I conscious of aught except that thy presence is the reason they crumble thus before thee as dust. But speak one word, and it shall be received as a decree from Heaven—at an injunction from the highest, holiest shrine at which devotee ever bent a knee, or before which the haughtiest head bowed lowliest. Thou mayest pronounce my death; thou mayest withdraw thy light from my life to come; deny to my fearful, trembling, yet ravished steps those stars which could lead me on to deeds earth ne'er yet saw. Descending from thy throne of beauty, thou mightest trample on thy worshipper; though from that

dear eye I read that thou would'st be pained whilst thou should'st sacrifice. Thine arrow might'st pierce my heart, but its blood should pour forth, a sacred torrent, and blush in the glorifying light at its unworthiness and yet its honour in streaming for thee! Oh that my words were fire! that, standing in burning characters, I might with finger trace to thee that magic story I would yet cannot tell. Paltry, poor, wretched are words! Tones fail; heart fails; fancy fails! Contemn me—despise me, for I am an automaton to which Love supplied flame, Prometheus-like snatched from the starry altars of Heaven; but it is gone, and I am earth once more!"

Who shall not say that there can be love at first sight! What could have induced Cunique's sudden enthusiasm—caused those feelings which were burning to make themselves known; but yet through their very fervency, and the multitude of new-thronging thoughts which rushed to him, failed

in the assumption of shape even to himself perhaps, much less of interpretation to the idol before whom these hasty and precipitate, nay incoherent offerings were scattered:—what might have caused this extraordinary forgetfulness of self, of his errand, and all belonging to him, and of the great world he had so lately quitted, but the universal tyrant and irresistible conqueror—love?

They err who advance that love requires time—that the tender plant demands its due nourishment, its sunshine, nay even its tears, before it can spring. It is subservient to no elements; to no exactions or necessities of nature: it is not amenable to time, but controls and subjugates time himself.

Has it to gain its knowledge step by step—denied to move forward until, committed to and deeply impressed upon memory, its earliest elements and initiatory constituents, are duly measured, and appreciated, and recorded in the heart's judgment? On the contrary, it can

start up with the most rapid growth: rise from nothing, flourish, expand into the flower before others dream the seed has even alighted. Its recognition is spiritual and mysterious, coming we know not whence—constituted we know not how. That strange instinct which prompts to the instant acknowledgment of the twin of the heart—long lost, seen before alone in dreams, but now found living, breathing, real, capable of affection, of the entire, rapturous giving up of self; and, what is more, competent to resign itself to us, loving us wholly purely and truly: this quick instinct is undoubtedly not of man, but something far beyond worldly scope and compass, and rapid as light and as direct.

In the very singularity of her position—in, as she felt, its eventful nature, there was something which gave Phroditis confidence. She rose up, and though with some tremulousness, and the fitful coming and going

of colour, she with tolerable firmness spoke.

“I am too great a stranger to the world to understand whether your address has in it any of those forms of speech customary on an occasion when stranger meet stranger. I cannot tell who thou art, or from whence thou comest, or what may be thy purpose here. But frankly I could listen to more that thou should'st say, did I not fear that I might be wrong in opening mine ears to words which sound singular and unusual, and such that though sweet seem inconsistent to me. Pardon my foolishness if I say aught which should not be according to the fashions that prevail out of this house, for I am little more than a child, and these things which you see around have alone been my instructors. Treat me as a child, then; but do not abuse my simplicity, and if I can trust your face, and I am a reader of countenances, and in my own fancy have

acquired some skill in that language of nature's own making, I think that you would not ; nay, something whispers to me, that you *could not* say with your lips those things which should not be reflections from your own heart. *I* never do. I could not."

"Oh, rare excellence! Oh, divine innocence! Convince me that you are not so perfect," cried Cunique, "or I shall think really that I yet dream : that I am cheated with some lovely delusion which will dissolve and leave me to darkness and tears. Drive me not from thy presence. Question me — ask me what has brought me hither, why I am here, and what I am, and I will answer with pure solid truth, entire and sacred as that of thine own heart. I will be thy question's reflection. Echo of thine own imaginings. And as far as my imperfect nature will admit, I will glass back in the mirror of my own mind accurately to each thought which shall rise distinct in the

clear table of thine own. Faith shall be faithlessness to the exactness of my replies. Oh! only trust me—only try me.”

Strange it was, or perhaps it was not strange at all, that Phroditis should first blush a “celestial rosy red,” and then that, raising her eyes in the purest confidence, with a childlike, touching appeal, and an invitation to interchange of confidence which was all nature and no doubt, and where all form was banished, and which would have been in the judgment of the world, hasty, thoughtless and indecorous in the highest degree—we say it was strange that those tender orbs—now orbs of watery light, should fill with tears. But so it was. Phroditis wept: her eyes were suffused with the sweetest tears that ever dimmed their glory.

“Oh! if you want proof,” she cried, “that I am prepared to believe thee—take my hand. I know that you are full of truth, for heaven cannot deceive, and it has set its stamp of

credit in thy forehead. Oh! pardon me," she ejaculated the moment afterwards, clasping her hands and throwing up her eyes, and then as quickly letting them fall to Cunique's feet: "pardon me if I have done wrong!"

"Wrong!" echoed Cunique; "wrong! How can I repay such truth! What can I do to convince you that I am not unworthy of that high and noble confidence you so promptly extend. Lady, a base, and unworthy motive brought me hither. Rumour with her hundred tongues, hath been busy about this place in which thou livest. She has noised thee abroad as beautiful. I heard perhaps—little I heeded. Perchance, I disbelieved. Curiosity induced me to seek out thy concealment, and to decide with my own eyes the justice of the praises lavished on thee. Thus do I come. Wretch that I am, and despicable, for I seem to despise myself for it, I have with profaning foot and careless thought broken in upon the sanctity which should surround thee, and gazed with

sacrilegious eyes upon a treasure too great, too rich for earth! Can you forgive me that I scaled these walls in defiance of your father's name of terror, and that reputation which assigns to him unearthly command, and power over spirits to work ill and mischief, to consume and destroy those who provoke his anger? Out of that black, dim, dreary world," continued Cunique, pointing with his finger to the window, "have I come; my unhallowed foot has trespassed upon enchanted ground. I am a blot from its blackness — a leafless twig from the withered, blasted forest, sapless, motionless, seized with the dry decay which permeates and crumbles root, trunk and branch, at once consuming in slow but certain and silent destruction a thousand stems and a thousand arms. I am a wandering bird from that world of owls, bearing upon my beating, sooty, impatient wings, nought but polluted fog and thick and poisonous darkness. I have

blindly struggled into light ; and now dazzled benumbed and weak, crushed and confounded, I am fluttering in an exhausted attempt to get back to my kindred obscurity.

“ Your words remind me of something I had quite forgotten,” said Phroditis. “ My father. *Ay de mi!* if he might suspect that such as you were here : if the Senhora Castilda, whose restless disposition will, I dread, not detain her where she has retired—if she should return, woe be to you ; woe to both of us ! Oh ! go : quit me. I may believe thine assertion that some idle whim—some vague, indefinite curiosity hath brought thee hither, and that in thine attempts to find this room thou hast been assisted by chance, but I could not see thee a victim. Oh heaven ! what was I about to say ! What did I think ! Dear stranger, quit me quickly. If all in the outer world, of which I know nothing, and now behold thee as its first specimen, be as thou, my wretchedness at

being thus confined--thus imprisoned will be aggravated tenfold, and I shall lose that poor peace and slight comfort, and that meagre consolation which I possessed before. I shall know my misery--feel my deprivation; but I must learn--I must teach myself to languish and endure. Oh! waste no more words! Delay not. Fly while thou hast time. And--and farewell--farewell for ever, for I shall never see thee again!"

"I have sworn to leave thee---quit thee at thy lightest wish," cried Cunique. "I was prepared to obey though my heart should break. Thy last word will make me traitor to my pledge, and linger when perhaps I ought only the rather to hasten. But if I go answer me but one thing. Could, oh loveliest--most precious creature that these eyes ever beheld I might I in the innermost recesses of my soul--in the depth of my conscious abasement...in the knowledge and conviction of presumptuous aspirations, mad while they are most raptur-

ous ; with that flame starting from my heart--ambitious flame perhaps only instantaneously to be trodden out--dare I hope that thou would'st say farewell and retain one remembrance--one tender thought of him who crossed thee like a shadow, to be removed from thy path and leave thee light. But thou ! Oh ! thoughts of thee shall be the flowers which shall adorn that mournful altar upon which I sacrifice my hopes, my dreams, my all--myself ! Bid me go ; but say it as if thou should'st like to see me again, though thou never shalt. I go--never to forget thee : my closing hour shall testify to my unaltered--my imperishable devotion ; ages should see me the same. Thou wilt forget me ; soon, perhaps, very soon ; but say that thou wilt remember until to-morrow !"

"Until to-morrow ! Oh, how little thou knowest of what I am capable. Do--oh, do you love me ?"

Cunique clasped his hands in an agony of

joy, threw himself on one knee before Phroditis, bowed down his head in token of his inexpressible devotion, and gasped in a vain attempt to speak. At last large tears sprung to his eyes; and then he looked up and gazed upon Phroditis with all the touching tenderness in the world.

A moment after he sprung to his feet, and trembled with his excitement and eagerness, as the thought struck him that he must have deceived himself. That he had heard something too sweet, too delicious to be true—too rapturous to be trusted.

He looked to Phroditis in mournful doubt as if he must have mistaken her, and have wildly flattered himself with a hope which madness could alone have suggested.

“Love!—do I love? Can you ask? Oh, that all these thousand stars could each stand witness to the truth that I *do* fondly—passionately—madly love you! Let each in his magic circle now attest—may they to everlasting

burn an ever-living, eternal token and record that I pledge to you my heart's dearest affection;—its hopes for the future, resigning to you all memories of the past. Sweet is the thought that I am even permitted thus much to tell thee. Oh, bright, beautiful being! for a smile from thee I would scale earth's highest peaks, daring the icy terrors of the loftiest mountain which ever shot, (eternal and ambitious watch-tower) towards the blue depths of the impenetrable, ever-rising Heaven. For thee would I brave winter's keenest snow; the sharp artillery of the rattling hail poured from its magazines of cloud: the mountain fires starting from livid and gaping craters, whose harsh dry lips and crusted throats alone in the rending agonies of their fiery fever vomit showered dust and ashes, below thrice sifted in the mad whirl of the volcanic conflict. Earth's wildest rocks and broadest rivers—its dragon-haunted caverns, and its nodding cliffs—its shapes of mystery and scenes of loneliness—its

unpierced solitudes and desert silence---its torture in the storm; its ruin in the earthquake; its slow consuming waste and eating decay, all could I cheerfully endure, more could I undauntedly face for thee. To gratify a single wish of thine, I would persevere to the world's hopeless heights; descend to her lowest, darkest depth. Oh, say this is no boast!--I know it none. I feel the strength of hundreds in these arms. I have the devotion of an incalculable love within this heart. Strength that should nerve me to the combat of the wildest things of fright:--all monstrous forms and legendary goblins; all shapes, all shadows. My weapon should be the love of thee, which should vanquish all!"

What could Phroditis say, half inclined as she was already to believe all that Cunique poured out and grant the best portion of his prayers. She experienced so many new feelings--such a world of irresistible emotions opened to her, that though she would willingly have as

fully expressed herself; she could only think, without capability of giving utterance to it, that sudden, glowing affection which dictated the happy language, meltingly powerful in its sweet artlessness and conquering trust,

"I do not know

One of my sex ; scarce woman's face remember,

Save, from my glass, my own ; nor have I seen

More that I may call men, than you, good friend,

And my dear father : how features are abroad,

I am skill-less of ; but by my modesty,

(The jewel in my dower) I would not wish

Any companion in the world but you ;

Nor can imagination form a shape,

Besides yourself, to like of ; but I prattle

Something too wildly and my father's precepts

Therein forget.

Hence, bookful cunning !

And prompt me plain and holy innocence !

I am your wife, if you will marry me ;

If not, I'll die your maid : to be your fellow

You may deny me, but I'll be your servant,

Whether you will or no.

Dost thou love me ? I know thou wilt say—ay ;

And I will take thy word ; yet, if thou swear'st,

Thou may'st prove false ; at lover's perjuries,

They say, Jove laughs. O, gentle stranger,
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully :
Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
So thou wilt woo ; but, else, not for the world.
In truth, fair youth, I know I am too fond ;
And therefore thou may'st think my 'haviour light.
But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
Than those who have more cunning to be shy.
I should have been more strange, I must confess,
But that thou didst impel, ere I was 'ware,
My true love's passion ; therefore pardon me ;
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which but surprise hath so discovered."

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHAPTER ON LOVE.

"And if this be the science of the stars,
I too, with glad and zealous industry,
Will learn acquaintance with this cheerful faith.
It is a gentle and affectionate thought,
That in immeasurable heights above us,
At our first birth, the wreath of love was woven,
With sparkling stars for flowers.
Not only roses,
But thorns too hath the heaven."

Coleridge.

Or all passions in the world, love not only is
the most tyrannical, and takes the deepest

hold, but is also speediest in its transformation, and in its change of the scenery round us; nay the scenery environing the heart.

That love is the great sweetener of existence—the active and stirring principle—that spring which sets everything in motion—the vivid awakener, exponent and representation of all the finest, most delicate, and subtlest movements in our spiritual nature, who could deny! But it must differ in all minds; the tasteful can love but with taste; the delicate with delicacy; the fervent and eager with high impellant strength, and burning completeness and abandonment. There is love which once aroused—called to the surface from its tender fountain, and boiling up out of its placid depths, becomes like the torrent sweeping on in impetuosity, rising up against and surmounting with fury all the petty obstacles and small interruptions which the envy or cautious policy, the coldness or worldliness of man seek to interpose to it.

Love is such a giant power that it seems to gather strength from obstruction, and at every difficulty rises to higher might. It is all dominant—all conquering; a grand leveller which can bring down to its own universal line of equalization the proudest heights, and remove the stubbornest impediments. There is no hope of resisting it, for it outwatches watch; submerges everything, acquiring strength as it proceeds; ever-growing, nay, growing out of itself.

Instead of exhausting itself...instead of weakening or wasting itself at those times when it putteth forth its greatest strength; draweth most upon its vigour, and summoneth out most severely its force from the depth from which that force ascends, it seems actually to beget a new abundance, and thereby to secure the vivacity and permanence of the supply out of its very expenditure.

From a very harmless, merely pleasing, scarcely more than exciting affection of the

mind; from a small caprice, so light and unsubstantial, so thin and vapoury, with so little root, and with a flower of so diaphanous and shadowy, yet withal fancifully tender colour, if left to itself how insidiously does it spread, and grow, and strengthen. It will take up more of the time; it will be quitted with more and more regret; it will be returned to with more and more pleasure. We shall then commence looking for it at times that we ought not to want it...that we ought to know we should be better without it. We shall be missing it when we shall still have our usual employments, and the everyday moulds into which we are accustomed to pour our thoughts. It may then be said to have strengthened in the head, and to have taken up its station there, supplying new lights to our eyes, pouring unexpected, and yet, as they came, welcome tones into our ears; and we shall continually find new strange words rise to our lips, of

which we only become conscious in time to stop.

This is a transition state, which should awake the jealousy. It is a time to seize, and make the most of for your own preservation; to arrest those "thick coming fancies;" to bestir yourself in, if you desire to successfully combat that cunning viridity and eagerly springing luxuriance of what may afterwards bear bitter fruit. You may rest assured that your outworks are carried; and though you may remain satisfied with the thought that when you rise in your strength you can check and repel the advances of an enemy who perhaps all the more formidably approaches with smiles, it is not to be forgotten that your adversary is one that never sleeps; that when to all appearance he is most quiet he is the most intent, and the most industriously occupied in plotting your mischief. His hostility is managed with such a lowly perseverance,

and his triumphs over you are so persuasively assumed and gracefully registered, that your discomfiture is turned into delight, and he saps and mines with such flattering pertinacity that you feel only pleased and honoured at the very success which is your undoing, and that so redoubted a conqueror, who fights with his eyes, and vanquishes in embracing, should have selected you for his object of attack.

This is your dangerous time. Your flag stills flies in the wind upon the citadel, but you are not aware that the very sky has changed; that your colours are altering, your ensigns brightening but brightening on the opposing side. You do not see that rosy gleams, fatal to their security, play on your battlements: that your fierce pennons languidly sink in the enervating air; that a warmth and glow are growing round your hold, to cause the eyelids of your watchmen to fall, their glances to be diverted, their

vigilance to be charmed away, their arms to be laid aside as suddenly found encumbrances. Nay, the rigid hardening and bristling menace, defensive self-possession and stony-hearted determination of the rocky girdle which fences your "power," are melting in the soft and sunny beams which are playing towards and converging into straight lines directly levelled at your defences. Your fortress is dilapidated rampart by rampart: no longer able to retain their mutual hold, stones fall from each other, and part in the loosening warmth, and seductive and charmingly treacherous indolence which widely work and interpenetrate among them. The sharp and thirsty points which edged your lines of fortification, fall off apparently without visible agency, and your forces are routed unconsciously, even when most strung to the watch, and armed with their firmest resolutions, and the fixed obstinacy not to be conquered. Then the rays of love strengthen and broaden, and with more and

more boldness tend, without disguise, and with no more circuitous inflections, to their grand object. They lengthen towards the heart: some most forward pierce it, and pass quickly, sharply through, though the very sensation, painful though it be, is delicious pain and delirious delight. Those eager, arrowy flames, thin as lightest rays of light, thicken and increase, until Love's quiver is exhausted, or darts no longer are needed, and you rapidly fall towards him and decline into his arms. In that finally vanquishing and overwhelming embrace, you own *him* as your dearest friend and most powerful protector, whom you before but looked upon as cunning foe, and an enemy whose very footsteps spoke of mischief and desolation.

And Love has so many disguises...takes so many shapes...weaves around him such diversity of colouring...presents so many phases of beauty, for even though mournful, terrible, or despairing may be his aspect, there is a sof-

tening power and beautiful enchantment that always invests it, because these changes of mind are all owing to him and flow to existence in his shadow. Love numbers up so many transitions; such a multiplicity of appearances, that we can scarcely point the finger and say that love is there, or that it is not.

Cunningly does it evade...slyly will it slip from observation. As the touch to the sensitive plant, so is the cold common eye of the cheerless, matter of fact world, which would recal with cold monitory look, and unsympathising surprise, and contemptuously pitying if not stern discountenance, springing affection, and all the glowing impulses of love. Love knows that it is no fit thing for earth, or the barren platitudes of worldly scenes, and therefore shrinks away and tries to hide itself...to escape observation by mingling in and becoming something else. Its best justice, and greatest truth, is to forswear itself. Closing over and brooding upon its precious

secret, even as the dove closes her snowy wings over her frightened heart, will it lose itself in and entwine and identify itself with the paltry things of a world of wood and varnish, though in its retiring track it invariably illuminates with its own passing glow the soulless forms and plastic conventionalities through which its way to escape is taken.

Love is the light, the majesty of life: that principle to which after all our struggling, and writhing, and twisting, all things must be resolved. Take it away, and what becomes of the world! It is a barren wilderness. A world of monuments, each standing upright and crumbling: an army of grey stones, without a chaplet, without a leaf to take off with its glimpse of green their flat insipidity and offensive uniformity, upon a shrubless plain. Things base and foul, creeping and obscene, withered and bloodless and brainless, could alone spring

from such a marble-hearted soil. Its vegetation must be flint; its grass but fields of *spiculæ*, like white coral, shivering to the foot. Heaped sand, springless, herbless; slaty rocks and limestone splinters, cold and impenetrable as Egyptian obelisks, scattered to stand for ever in the profundity of their own desolation, and to rear their giant shapes to a heaven of lead, whose clouds sluggishly and ponderously move, like marble islands, in an atmosphere of hopeless depression, stagnant and unmoving.

Love is the sun of the moral world; which revives, invigorates, calls into life, and illumines all objects; gives strength to the weak, fire to our plans and purposes, brings about great things, and is at once the mainspring and grand stirrer of all that is not only sweet, graceful and beautiful in our constitution, but noble, bold, aspiring.

Love's darts are silver when they leave his quiver, but they turn to fire in the noble heart.

They impart a portion of that heavenly flame which is their element. Love is of such a refining, elevating character, that it expels all that is mean and base; bids us think great thoughts, do great deeds, changes our common clay into fine gold. It illuminates our path, darkling and mysterious as it may be, with torchlights lit from the one great light.

Oh, poor, weak, inexpressive are words when sought to strew, as with stars, the path and track of the expression of love's greatness, and love's power! Dull, pitiful, and cold, a cheating, horny gleam, as strung stones by the side of precious gems, and the far-flashing of the sparkling ruby with his heart of fire! The blue eyes of turquoises, or the liquid light of the sapphire, should alone be tasked to spell along, and character our thoughts of love. Fixed, flaming, and continuous, then truly

“Thoughts that breathe, and words that burn.”

would dance, and sparkle, and brightly flash a thousand jewels twined into language: hooked, and linked, and strung as flowers of flame, whose dazzling petals, and scorching scrolls, and ever changing, ever springing blue, and amber, and ruby beams, would twist and connect into chain of hieroglyphics keen and shiny as Love's own lucent alphabet, or his diamond diadem in his own blue heaven. Then might we indeed

“Glow while we read, and tremble while we write.”

But now a night of coldness is round us. The strings of the harp are cut, and low they hang; binding yet up in fond and faithful clasp the broken frame of gold. The wreath is dead which is caught upon its topmost curve, and the lovely notes are still. They

have sped away and evaporated as glancing rays from the moonlit cups of drooping bell-flowers. The roses are dead; their colours have fled away and melted into the twilight: and one by one are coming down, silently and sadly, odourless and still reluctant, those tender blushing leaves which were once so beautiful.

And what total and all pervading interest is supplied by love! Verily a new heaven seemeth to be above us; a new earth beneath us. The scenery of the world has its sunshine let in upon it: everything appears not only of the *couleur de rose*, but of the brilliancy of gold. Sorrow and disappointment may come; but never mind them, we have love—we have that inexhaustible fountain of joy within us. Love has furnished us flaming armour from the cold shot of the world. The stormy hail may beat and rattle on our harness, but it will melt, nor shall it prevail against the never-dying bloom of the myrtles which are wreathed about our

silver crest. Who does not glow in the summer light, in the melting witcheries of lovely eyes! And when they beam for us, or when, alas! we can only persuade ourselves that they do, with what power are they gifted! What instant and unspeakable joy rushes through us! And those moments of giddy happiness who would exchange for the pomps and pleasures, the honours and wealth of a world which is after all so poor as to be compelled to borrow its best treasures from the imagination.

“ And say I that my limbs are old ;
And say I that my blood is cold,
And that my kindly fire is fled,
And my poor withered heart is dead,
And that I may not sing of love ?
How can I to the dearest theme
That ever warmed a minstrel's dream,
So foul, so false, a recreant prove ;
How can I name Love's very name,
Nor wake my harp to notes of flame !
In peace, Love tunes the shepherd's reed ;

In war, he mounts the warrior's steed ;
In halls, in gay attire is seen ;
In hamlets, dances on the green.
Love rules the court, the camp, the grove,
And men below and saints above ;
For love is heaven, and heaven is love."

How will a glance thrill ! How will a word which seems to rise to the lips, and there stop, send the blood like rushing fire through the veins ! Our whole being will tremble and tingle with the hope, the rapture, and yet with the certain tincture of dread that always accompanies an approaching confession. We shall live on a look for a night, and bear it away as a sacred gift which we shall never part from, and shall recur and fly back to when chilled with the world, as a treasure our own—dearly our own, and all the sweeter for its darling secrecy. Unknown to—unseen by all, pass these mysterious intelligences which tell such

tales of the heart. In them we read our fate—find whole ages of pain or delight.

The flashing glance—the timid look hastily averted, the heaving bosom, the low struggling sigh which only catches your single ear, the hasty movement, the very avoidance of you sometimes, the parting word, the faltering farewell which needlessly lingers, and capriciously as it seems is snatched from you when you would most wish to dwell upon it, all are food for your long solitude, and restless questioning of what may be possible, and abstracted dreams, and your multitudinous guesses, numberless as the uncounted stars.

“And Love has many languages, all of which are more eloquent than words. How ingenious are its artifices, how fertile its resources of expression! The language of the eye is clearer than the choicest phrases culled by a poet’s inspiration. The language of touch hath its own world of feeling, apart from all other modes and forms of emotion.

Then with what prompt cunning doth Love appropriate to itself the most distant images, and unlikely things wherewith to convey by parable some hidden meaning to the one who can alone understand its application. It hath the skill to translate all things to its own use, and to quicken, even without look, word, or touch, the kindling flame by a happy dexterity in appearing to neglect it. Is not its mute obedience a language full of purpose? Is not its mercurial indifference, uneasily put on and pettishly abandoned, a language beyond speech? But when it designedly transgresses for the sake of the sweet reproof, and falls into open rebellion only that it may be captured and put into chains again, hath it not in these caprices and vicissitudes a multitude of unspoken languages, making themselves known by visible signs — the masonry of the heart — which none but the initiated can comprehend?

“ Love makes us very conscious and suspi-

cious of every movement. The lover imagines himself to be so embarrassed that every body must perceive it, and he is therefore constantly employed in devising cunning schemes for eluding and evading observation ; forgetting that the more he struggles to escape it, the more he draws it down upon him.

“ There are many ways of making love. Indeed, the varieties of the art are endless---it may be called an art, and certainly it is not only one of the fine arts, but unequivocally the finest of all the arts. It would be utterly impossible to imagine the diversities of that sort that arise in the course of a three months' courtship, from the dawn of the sensation to its final outbreak and confession, after which it may may be said to lose half its charms. You may make love with your foot, as Sterne would say, and nobody in the world but the Beloved would be the wiser of it. And then how would she take such a strange and wondrously intelligible medium of expression ?

Ah ! her blue eyes, or deep hazel, or light ash, or whatever colour they might be, would suddenly sparkle as if an electric wire had touched her, and she would raise them with their new born thoughts springing up in them to look into your face, not with a full gaze, but a half downcast and thrilling glance of an instant, like a sunflash, and then a blush, burning and sudden, would rush into her face, and she would unconsciously squeeze her beautiful lips together, and then turn away her head suddenly as if provoked at having been betrayed into a recognition of the meaning of your familiar, and, we must add, contraband mode of awakening her feelings. And how many silly men are there who, tongue-tied, make love with their hands and their eyes.

“ Love certainly is not eloquent. It cannot talk *to*, but it can talk for ever of the object, That is to say, while the early season is full of its clouds and showers, and the wooer is not over confident of the future. But when the

sun breaks out and there is assurance of hope, then even the timid grow brave, and become as garrulous as if they had practised delicious nonsense all their lives long. Yet it is odd, that any man with the passion, which is ecstatic even in its uncertainty, throbbing like a mad pulse in his bosom, can sit, statue-fashion, all dulness and melancholy, looking, and moping, and dreaming, while the fawn-like Being is moving round him full of Grace, and Joy, and Beauty. A man, the most impassioned on all other subjects, becomes very grave when his heart is in question, just as if he felt, which he does not, for he knows nothing about it, that in that transition of his nature, his whole world was about to be changed, and his soul translated into a different order of existence. One would think that his sadness was contemplation, and that his thoughtfulness was thought--but it is no such thing. His mind--with all respect for nature's laws--is a vacuum. He is a person absorbed in spite of himself. He

neither thinks, nor wishes, nor fears, nor hopes. He does nothing but look stupid, and the best of it is, that, all the while, he is secretly persuaded that he is doing miracles within himself, towards the accomplishment of some vague achievement in the arrangement and subjugation of his feelings.

"The truth is, love is a paradox. It acts by contradictions. All we know is, that its force is centrifugal. We might as well attempt to reap the winds, count the motes in the sun, or swim in the air, as to trace its rise and progress. The catechism of love—that is Farquhar's—says, arbitrarily, that it enters at the eyes. We have Shakespeare's authority also to the same effect.

"Tell me, where is fancy bred,
How begot? How nourished?
It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and there it dies
In the cradle where it lies."

“The very notion is profane, for it limits the universal influence of the passion. It enters everywhere; it penetrates the tips of the fingers, for we often fall in love with a touch of the hand—it is born in the sound of the voice, for we often fall in love with a musical tone—it comes, we know not how—and goes, sometimes we care not whither.”

CHAPTER XV.

CUNIQUE A SUBJECT OF A NEW EMPIRE.

"Alas, that love, so gentle in his view,
Should be so tyrannous and rough in proof !
Tut, I have lost myself ; I am not here ;
This is not Romeo, he's some other where."

Shakespeare.

CUNIQUE'S fate from that delicious moment when he first saw Phroditis was sealed : whether happily or not, he could not tell ; but at present he felt very miserable.

He could hardly believe himself the same person. A change so sudden, so total had come upon him—so complete and so unexpectedly dazzling was this new light which had burst in upon the hollow caverns and drear crags of his mind, that its first effect was to confound and bewilder him. His whole previous life seemed a picture wanting light. A landscape desolate and gloomy, with the slow clouds trooping over it in blank and heavy monotony; an abandoned fane, roofless and in ruins, standing solitarily amidst the sombre shades of a silent forest; a pale Hades, peopled with wandering and shapeless shadows. It all seemed discordant, unhinged, unfixed: and its masquerade anomalies and coarse eccentricities—nay, what he then considered pleasures and excitements, now wore an air of disappointment, weariness, flatness, and sickening insipidity.

How he could have lived, and thought he then lived, he was puzzled to imagine. The

grand purpose of his life, nay, the grand purpose of life in general, seemed wanting. It was as body without soul...face without mind...the earth without beauty...nay, the heaven without sun. He contemned and despised himself for his easy compliance with the unsatisfactory events of his daily experience. How he could have been interested at that time, he could not reconcile to his new perception. Life misspent, hours wasted, days exhausted in frivolous pursuits and unbecoming though not vicious irregularities, rose up against him. By what strange blindness he could have existed so long in ignorance of what he had now found out, seemed the most astonishing thing in the world to him: how in that very town should have been so much—that town with whose every street he was so familiar, and the aspect of each of whose buildings was as deeply impressed upon him as the letters of the alphabet; whose people he thought he everyone knew, and whose sources of inter-

est or excitement he thought he had drained to the last...how in this his very birthplace and daily haunt, should have existed without his knowledge, or without the surmise crossing his mind, the being who could supply value to the world, or be a world, was a fact which overpowered him.

Breath, heart, life was all Love's. Cunique's mind at this period was a maze. It was filled with a thousand thoughts; but likely or unlikely, consistent or inconsistent, there was one image, Proteus like, which would link and incorporate itself into all. His thoughts would belie his words. While his words might be sensible enough, and appropriate to the subject matter in hand, his thoughts were the strangest rigmarole. They kept not the least correspondence with them.

His tongue seemed mechanically the implement of the world, and, taught by long practice, like any other machine, it did its work well enough. It went on without requiring

direction or watch, and appeared to be in action on its own account, and with an old grafted force still maintaining itself and living on its first impulse. But his thoughts were so strained, disjointed, and twisted out of connection, that they refused to hook, or in their attempts to adjust themselves only exhibited the greater confusion, and served to render that irrelative disparity visible which might otherwise have escaped notice.

His senses indeed seemed to decline their several offices. His eyes refused to see; his ears testified disinclination to hear; nay, his hands and his feet showed symptoms of rebellion. He was restless—pre-occupied—thoughtful about nothing—talkative when he should have been silent—silent when he should have talked.

He had suddenly become convinced that he had a heart: what is more he felt it faintly sink away in his bosom. Like Sterne, he was

positive of it, and nobody could have persuaded him to the contrary. He felt it languishing when he thought of HER. Or if her name was mentioned, how it beat! His cheeks would glow—his conscious eyes sparkle, as if something had suddenly touched him to which his whole being responded.

Morning, noon, and night: with the rising sun as he climbed boldly through the flaming circlets of cloud, spreading a glowing blush through the dim blue light and sleeping vapours of early day; with the steadily burning orb, as with his broad yellow radiance he poured his cheering light over the face of illuminated nature; and when the last lights had faded one after the other like fairy torches reversed and put out as at the constellated funeral of the dying day, a thought—One thought, one image, occupied Cunique's mind. When the long rays had drawn in, and the glorious lamp had sunk to rest in the ardent

glow of its fiery ashes, then when the starry host was paraded in all its glittering pride, and the lucent argosy of night was afloat to steer her trackless way through the deep unfathomable blue of the still and solemn sky; with the whispered vespers of the lonely woods, and the thousand smokes of unseen altars, tended by their shadowy guardians, whose placid faces and spirit forms are folded in the doubling embrace of their clasping wings as the sleepy flowers close in a myriad of graceful involutions their tender bells at the step of Night; at all these seasons—in a word, at all times, did Cunique think of Phroditis. To him there was a lovely shape—one airy form exalted to heaven, to which his upward wishes tended in one long fervent adoration. His passage through his thoughts was lit by love. He had parted with his soul—his dearer half; its beauty only made apparent to him when it rendered itself visible to steal away. And now he seemed in restless yearning, and

long-languishing regret, to be looking after it and tracing its way until he beheld it lost and swallowed up in the embrace of that Lovely Existence, whose path was sunbeams, and whose presence was joy and life beyond name.

Cunique was only half himself. He had lost his heart. It was away. He walked like a man who had lost his soul. He was as the gorgeous setting with his dearest jewel gone. There was a doleful sweetness about him, which shed a strange melancholy fascination upon the objects which surrounded him. He seemed environed by touching memories, each of which melted into his heart like the odours of roses steeped and dropping with tears. The steeples spoke to him. The chimes of the bells seemed the voices of spirits, recalling long lost but unforgotten glimpses of a fairy-land of thought. Musical memories were wafted to him and stole away again upon the wings of the floating wind. The sky shone but deep mournful blue, and its beautiful

silence seemed sympathy to which his heart appealed. He poured his soul into nature; and in its voiceless recesses—in its thousand forms and countless aspects—in its heart of hearts, he seemed to be answered. Into the bosom of the Mighty Mother he poured his sorrow; and though there was no tangible, palpable voice, though she could but look with her languid, tender eyes, though she might not express save with those nameless hints and vague whisperings which the ear does not hear but the mind must catch as magic reflections from a charmed glass, he knew she heard, and he felt persuaded he was not alone in his anguish, but that agony found its pitying echo.

Fettered—bound to one place—languishing for room, and yet condemned to stand, as in a prison, in the hollow cell of his own dark loneliness, how he longed for the eyes of a spirit! Like those of Margaret, were his feelings.

" Still her gaze
Is fixed upon the clouds that roll and fall
Afar beyond the ancient city's wall ;
And 'were I but a bird,' so runs her song
Half through the night, and all the whole day long !
Cheerful awhile, but mostly pensive, she
Now seems as if outwept—and then will be
Composed apparently—but love-sick ever."

Perpetually thinking of his darling Phroditis,
he might have exclaimed with the suddenly
impassioned Faust.—

" What ! in her arms are all the joys of Heaven !
Oh ! let the rapture be unto me given
To glow with passion on her yielded breast !"

Slowly—sadly passed the day. The hours
seemed to creep. Well indeed might the com-
plaint of the maiden in love, forgotten and
abandoned to her desolation, have sorted with
Cunigue's condition !

" Beneath the mouldering wall, no footstep near,
Under the blue expanse, serenely clear,
I waste the slow day—count the crawling hours,
Watching the trembling of the silent flowers.

O ! heart of mine, whichever way I turn,
The brightest things seem sad as lonely urn
Shrined in a dim retreat, or sculptures rude
Standing a silence in a solitude.

O ! dark in sunshine—lone in crowds, I dwell.
As a Spirit in a melancholy cell,
Where gushes only of a fountain nigh
Shall a sort of sound of silentness supply.

I faint ! My heart is sick ! The lagging clouds
In the calm azure look but snowy shrouds.
Lonely I sit, and o'er the sunny land
I throw my listless eyes—my head upon my hand !”

At times Cunique's love took a more decided, and hopeful and vigorous turn. He felt that he must do something ;—that there was much for him to do. His blood would mount to his forehead, his eyes would glisten, and with step erect, and high determination and proud daring, he would walk to and fro with the air of a prince. Such would be his bearing, that success was written in every linea-

ment. You could not doubt it. All things you would feel persuaded must yield to that strength of purpose, and noble and unconquerable contempt of obstacles.

CHAPTER XVI.

DESPAIR.

" This is the very ecstasy of love ;
Whose violent property fordoes itself,
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,
As oft as any passion under Heaven,
That does afflict our natures."

Shakespeare.

CUNIQUE'S employments were now all changed. He led a wandering, unsettled and unhappy life. His dearest pleasure was to haunt about the street in which Phroditis lived, and to

watch for what he thought her window, for he had had no definite means of distinguishing it when he made his hurried visit on the night when Phroditis and he met.

Cunique's prospects were, as regards his love, not only by reason of the character of the father of his adored, and the jealous watchfulness and absurd guard which was maintained over her, but also because Cunique's own position was so unfavourable, almost hopeless. This conviction would continually seize him, notwithstanding his determination to banish all such thoughts, and his exceedingly eager and sanguine temperament, especially when heightened by the presence of such a passion. Indeed to such a love as Cunique's, which was an intense burning fire, occupying his whole soul, and scorching up and consuming all cold doubts and weak-hearted scruples, difficulties were nothing. Nay, they only added fuel to the flame. He felt positive that he could have done the most impossible things

to win her. That he could face armies—that he could undergo the sharpest torments, that he could go through fire and flood; beyond this, that he was prepared, in the inexhaustible depth of his devotion, cheerfully and joyously to lay down his life in her cause, that he could pour out his blood if he was to be solaced with the persuasion that it was for her, and that she would appreciate the sacrifice.

Love like Cunique's, busy and intent every moment, night and day, upon the object which it had to gain, and which was the world's ambition to it, could not but outwatch the sternest and most untiring vigilance—could but tire out the most unflagging resolution, and vanquish insurmountable obstacles. It would have put to sleep the hundred-eyed Argus. It would have exhausted Time himself, and compelled in its intensity even necessity to at last give in before it, and forego resistance found impracticable.

It may be easily supposed that Cunique's mind, disturbed and in storm as it was, could not supply him much assistance towards a very important particular, the improvement of his fortunes. They were indeed sunk to the very lowest ebb.

A hundred times did despair rush in upon him like an awful tide, and sweep away love, the sense of life, and hope in irresistible, and bitter and pitiless fury before it. Then he would give up all for lost, curse his miserable destiny fifty times a day, and stamp upon the ground and cast his accusing, haggard, tearless eyes to heaven, as if he were possessed! He would seem to ask, in that attitude of fiery grief, what he had done that he should thus be abandoned---outcast from hope. Why *he* should be singled out for adversity's sharpest darts to be lavished upon, at every fresh puncture---at every new wound his very heart's blood rushing. He would try to extort an end to his sufferings. To pray that the miserable

conflict might cease. With pleading face, and in heart-broken tones, would he beg on his knees that his agony might find its termination, and, if fate frowned upon his love, that he might fall the sacrifice and die, and then that he and his love should be forgotten together.

As suddenly would Cunique's mood change. His excitement would consume itself: the tumultuous rapidity of his feelings would subside. His thoughts—his passion ran entirely in another channel—took a new direction. He would clasp and press his hands together; tears would run in rivers from his eyes, and strange as it would appear, for Cunique was firm as a rock, bold as a lion, fearing nothing in the world that did not assail his feelings, he would weep like a little child,

He thought continually of abandoning his native city, once more seeing and bidding adieu to Phroditis, and taking service with the governments of either of two neighbouring provinces which were car-

rying on a desultory war with one another, and seeking an honourable grave, wherein he could bury at once his love and disappointment.

Meantime he sought all modes of seeing and addressing Phroditis ; but he was rarely successful. Fortune had been singularly propitious to him on that occasion. She seemed little inclined to repeat her favours. She will often grant to daring, when our feelings are not engaged, and a chance solicitation, that which she will afterwards deny to perseverance and more earnest attempts ; when our heart is with us, and we really stand most in need of her pity and assistance.

In Phroditis's lonely walks, little square folded notes, tied with ribbon, and breathing all the perfumes of Arabia, such as might have softened the most rigorous bosom, and dispelled even the the frosty distrust of the vigilant Castilda, had she known the source of these winged missives, would continually fall at her

feet. They were filled with such moving adjurations and such vows of endearment, that Phroditis's heart, which was rapidly running away from her, if not entirely gone, never to be at disposal again, melted at them. She would weep for a week over one; and then her sorrow was only to recommence with the next tender and melancholy appeal. Footsteps would be round her when she least looked for them, and where they might have been the last things expected. Sighs met her ear at every turning. Roses seemed to start up from the earth for her. She could hardly go to her window without token, or receiving some evidence of the love which was pining for her. A very atmosphere of love seemed to surround her. Every tone spoke it. Love haunted the lonely moonlight. Its eye was in the stars, and its voice was found in the wind, and in the tinkling fountain; in the bosom of the still, and the flowing heart of the moving waters. It sank into and subdued her

It discovered its most eloquent interpretation, and choicest, and happiest expression in Music: really such music as melted the heart, and seemed to dissolve your being in exstasy, but exstasy with no slight tinge of sadness at the same time.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE OLD PHILOSOPHER UNBURTHENS HIS MIND
OF SOME OF ITS ANXIETIES.

"*Merchant*.—How is the man esteemed here in the city ?

"*Angelo*.—Of very reverend reputation, sir,
Of credit infinite, highly beloved,
Second to none that lives here in the city."

Comedy of Errors.

OLD Klypp still kept on the "even," if not
"noiseless tenour of his way." Activity reigned
in his yard ; but all solicitude was gradually

embraced and monopolised by the wonderful Ship of Glass.

It was now fast approaching completion : its transparent planks were laid, its timbers of glass were bowed and fastened, and like silver pillars, or, to speak poetically, like frozen lines of moonlight, rose its spiry masts in slender, pointing diminution. The silver yards were crossed, and the filmy cordage rove.

At this stage of the construction of his ship, the cautious old Klypp, though he would by no means permit of indiscriminate examination, yet allowed the grandees and chief people of Tafna-Khalifas and the country round to enter his yard under certain restrictions, and proper pledges that the satisfaction of their curiosity should be limited to the magic vessel.

All held up their hands at it. So remarkable a thing was never seen ; nor in all their lives had the people heard of such a strange vagary entertained, much less wrought up to

absolute fact, actually accomplished, and placed there before their eyes, as a ship to be built out of glass. But there it stood, in all its magnificent dimensions, to contradict the persuasion of its impossibility—an existing, substantial record of the originality of Klypp's genius, and the transcendant and unapproachable capacity of his handicraftsmen. Glorious—preternaturally brilliant did she look, yet so light and fragile, that she every moment threatened to tumble to pieces and scatter herself in glass dust. As she upreared herself there, shiny and silent, she looked like a precious monster silver model. She looked in the light like a hail cloud momentarily reduced to drops, its myriad of stary ice-gems prismatically glittering, and shooting abroad a world of bright beams.

It was one morning that Klypp in his furred gown, with a black velvet scull-cap on his bald head, and his right hand, shrivelled and yellow as parchment, with the stray blue veins

to his long and attenuated fingers, grasping a roll of that to which we have likened his hand, was walking in his yard, before his famous Ship of Glass, in company with Toss Tongueless one of his principal foremen already mentioned.

Klypp's face instantly impressed the beholder. You were persuaded you were looking on a remarkable man. The mental gifts of nature, tokens of pre-eminent intelligence and comprehensive capacity, were displayed in every lineament.

His head was finely formed, and his forehead rose high and massive, without a wrinkle, but with every inflection and indentation, particularly at the temples, and taking the form of distinct and defined but not violent curves at the sides of the lateral arch constituted by the forehead, which phrenologists have been in the habit of ascribing to men of commanding talent. He was bald at the crown of the head, but tresses of silver grey descended on either

side, and imparted such a majesty, such grave handsomeness, it might absolutely have been called beauty, to his countenance, that in its noble expression and startling impressiveness you could have thought that you were contemplating, grown on to age, the impersonation of the Phidian Jupiter.

Stately beyond all comparison was was the step and gait of this old Spanish philosopher. He moved slowly, and with all the dignity that we associate with the venerated and and venerable personages of antiquity. His features were excellent, but his nose was sharpened and his cheeks were fallen in, and there was a sallow hue, though it was clear enough, on his cheek, and precision and fineness in the lines about his face, and the acutely chiselled curves congregating round his lips and classic chin, all which told of years of study and nightly toil, and grinding, laborious and consuming thought. His beetling brows gathered over his thoughtful eyes like shaggy promontories

crowning hollow caves, whose unfathomable darkness invites and fascinates whilst it awes and terrifies you, you scarcely know why.

His was the sort of face which might look down upon you in an ancient bust, whose immoveable sternness and majesty sublime were as the marble in which they were wrought. That intent, self-wrapt visage, heavy like a monster thunder-cloud, with its own weight of thought, inflexible and passionless in its supernatural dreams and more than mortal light, seeming deepened and intensified to that solidity by the awe and terror of the secrets which it hints, would have glared at you from dilapidated pedestals, shrouded in shadows, and cold, and grey and ponderous — ponderous, grey and cold as the Hand of Death itself.

Klypp Heufueros' dress was a gown of brown velvet with flowing folds, and with a border of sables. He wore shoes of rough leather on his feet, each of which bore on the in-

step a small crescent of silver whose cuspid points very nearly met.

Klypp's companion, Toss Tongueless, was more like an image than a man. So stiffly did he step, that he hardly seemed to walk but glide—to pass forward and away from you like a mist or a ghost. So peculiar was this walk, that he seemed to slip along on a platform, And he always preserved such a commendable silence, that he never spoke except when he was obliged.

So upright was Toss in mind and body, that he was a truer perpendicular than one of the steeples on his master's, the great Klypp's house.

Klypp Heufueros, and his faithful companion, right hand man, and trusted adherent, Toss, surnamed Tongueless, were walking up and down in the ship-yard, engaged in debate upon Klypp's grand scheme of discovering the undiscoverable island by means of the Ship of Glass.

"How say you, Toss?" enquired Klypp.
"Are the people so fearful? Do they so much want courage? Am I to be visited by the recollection that I belong to such a dastardly, mean-spirited town, that nothing is to be ventured in the cause of science, and the resolution of that which has made the whole country's thought by day and dream by night?"

"For time immemorial," added Toss.

"And at this moment, too," continued Klypp, "when we may look upon the whole work done, all labour, and all speculation at an end, and the grand discovery made."

"Dear master, so it is," answered Toss, "and it grieveth me sorely to have to report such backwardness and backsliding to you. People's eyes sparkle when I talk to them of making this grand discovery; men, women—nay, the little children; old and young, all crowd round me when I enlarge upon your stupendous exertions towards this event which

is to enrich them for ever, and immortalize the age. But they only listen. Intently do they dwell upon each word which falls from my lips; and when I speak of you, a murmur of admiration runs through the crowd. All bow their heads when you are named, as a man mighty in renown, and worthy of all respect and honour."

"Go on. I am shamed—I am pained; but go on," said Klypp.

"Every one is in delight and wonder at the Ship of Glass:—every one feels sure that you have rightly read the prophecy of the wonderful woman, Tomanraits. But, alas! when I propose the navigating of the ship; tell the crowd she is destined to put out to sea and brave the perils of the great trackless ocean; that she is built and rigged, ready to launch, and only awaits volunteers for crew and captain—when I approach the sum, and total, and head and front and object of our business, all draw back, their countenances sink, they drop

from my side, and seek to discover in each other's looks that courage and devotion to the mighty object each finds wanting in himself!"

"I was not prepared for this," murmured Klypp. Grieved—deeply grieved do I feel! If that monument of my skill, and triumph of my penetration," Klypp continued, pointing with his roll of parchment to the Ship of Glass, "be destined to remain in inglorious inactivity within the cinoture of my ship-yard, then I am a lost man! If her crystal prow be denied to stem the bright blue waves—if it be pronounced that she shall not cleave her arrowy path of light across the sunny sea—if from this place she may not move, forbidden to glide into that wonderful element which inviteth her, and to which she was born—which should be her home, her kingdom, and the scene of the accomplishment of her everlasting renown—then am I nought! Spirits of the great philosophers of old! mighty shadows of antiquity!

the great of ages long passed but unforgotten
—the lights of an intelligence buried but un-
surpassed—all capable and unapproachable, if it
be written that the fruit of my labour be never
to be gathered—that that honour I may not see
for which I have so dearly contended—to which
I have sacrificed peace, health, and life, O then
may thy glassy ribs, thou mook, thou frostwork
bauble of the idle hour in which thou wert con-
ceived--thou extravagant and impossible vision
of a besotted brain, thou taunt, thou toy, fall
like magic to pieces! May'st thou be
dispelled like an ice-bespangled vapour; pass
away like a Dream whose shadowy shape con-
tracts, collapses and fleeth away before the
keen vengeful arrows of the God of Light!
May thy translucent flesh wither, parch and
consume, and thy crystal armament of bones
fall crashing to the stones, at once thy cradle
and the giant grave into which thou sinkest!
Fall thou in sparkling rain, like a cloud of
light struck by a spell and reduced to starry

drops, a victim to inexorable Destiny, and a glorious mausoleum to the mechanician Klypp, for I will be coffined within thee !”

There was a pause, for Toss Tongueless had too much respect to interrupt the fit of abstraction into which Klypp fell after his last excited speech.

“ They are afraid, I suppose,” at length asked Klypp.

“ They shake their heads, honoured master,” returned Toss. “ They fear everything. Even the mariners tremble, and, to say truth, a voyage in a ship of glass would seem a formidable undertaking. They doubt the coherency and substantiality of the material, dear sir, in which we have worked. All admit that you have made out the prophecy ; but the conditions are very hard ”

“ They are so ” said Klypp ; but I cannot help that. Repeat to me, my dear friend, my conditions and the prophecy, that I may com-

pare them. But I have already done so, and see clearly that these are indeed the stipulations of this too fatal undertaking."

"The bold must put forth with his one life to win a double," said Toss Tongueless in obedience to the command of his master, and he said the words as slowly and distinctly as if he wanted each syllable, and the extent of what was expected, to be impressed upon his patron's recollection.

"The courageous and the bold must win this alone," cried Klypp; "it could be no part for the weak and faint-hearted. Winning, he would win a double life in glory and in treasure, and in the greatness he would bring to his country. I addressed myself to the great of heart, but I find not one—cannot find one."

"His ship must be of woven light" continued Toss.

"His ship must be of glass, and there she stands," re-echoed Klypp.

“‘And shadowless must be his crew,’” repeated Toss, endeavouring to make his master understand the full force of every word: —“‘and shadowless must be his crew.’”

“That I have already explained,” said Klypp, “and imposed it as one of my conditions. By my prescience I perceive the drift of this enunciation. Language may be esteemed the shadow of man marking the way his steps take. His mental path is as clearly indicated by his speech—movement by movement, step by step—as his bodily direction by the shadow which accompanies him and follows his earthly form as his words follow his spiritual. No tongue must be heard—no word must be spoken aboard that ship, from the day she leaves the land until that eventful hour when she drops anchor on the unknown bottom. A word would break the spell. Her magic protection would cease, and some vast and annihilating calamity would overtake her. All my conditions observed, the ship will sail -

in safety—‘hands will touch and win.’ Oh that they might, and that I might find the hero who would navigate her.”

“All are aghast at the ship of glass, and sacrificing their lives in what they denounce as certain ruin—sailing to death.”

“Men of little faith!” returned Klypp. “Do they not know that where the will is firm all things yield? That there is *no* danger to the bold of heart and constant of mind;—that nothing is impossible to the determined. That, under God, the elements themselves yield to man when he is resolved.”

“The men of the sea ask,” said Toss Tongueless with sincerity to his master, though with some diffidence, “how they should navigate a ship, if they are not permitted to speak.”

“By signal,” returned Klypp. “Signal—sign by hand—each to other. That ship must be voiceless as the sea itself. She must be Nature personified in discovery of nature, but nature silent—wordless with the words of man.

Sacred, resigned, given up must she be to the spirits of the elements; and if they be not affronted with the vain talk of mortals, they will accept the trust. Toes, is there no man who will undertake this glorious but daring enterprise?"

"Not a man, my honoured master, that I know of. All shrink and are silent."

"What is health, what life, what the world to me, to this one grand object of my existence!" ejaculated Klypp. "One other chance shall be tried. My daughter! Lovely is she as the opening day, bright as paradise, holy as the dream of dying saint. She shall be the prize of that man who shall navigate my ship, steer her to sea, and, whether soon or at some remote period, in whatever time he shall effect it, or whenever he shall return with those glorious proofs of his success, crown the prime object, and dearest and highest hope, and precious fancy of my soul with certainty. And with this jewel of my life, my last, my

dearest treasure, my heart of hearts, my sun, my day, my fellow life, shall go the half of my fortune."

Toss Tongueless, surprised at this last decided proof of his patron's munificence, took off his cap, knelt down on one knee, seized the hand of his master, imprinted a kiss upon it, then arose and gave such a cheer that the very yard re-echoed.

At this moment a sound of military music, as of the triumphant march of soldiery into the town, disturbed the echoes of Tafna-Khalifas, and was wafted over into Klypp's shipbuilding yard among his ships and machinery.

Klypp Heufneros cast his eyes up the avenue and perceived four or five of his people, who directly they caught sight of their master, approached him with high deference, though with every token of haste. When they had arrived quite close, they each gave a *salaam* in the Moorish fashion, at which Klypp slightly inclined his head.

"What brought ye hither, my children?" asked Klypp: "what want ye with me, and what is the meaning of this noise of music I have heard, which just seems entering the city?"

"Noble sir," answered the foremost, the Governor has arrived, and asks to be admitted to the privacy of the renowned man of science, the great Klypp Heufueros."

"Doth he wish to visit me here, or desireth he that I should sally forth from my own ground?" demanded Klypp.

"Noble sir, he is waiting you at the gate of Alcala-rosas, and he sent forward two of his men of honour to request that you would trouble yourself to attend him."

"'Tis well! I come to him," replied Klypp. "Toss, your arm. Let my great gates be opened, and closed behind me, and all work cease and no hammer ring whilst I confer with our lord the Governor."

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GOVERNOR ARRIVES ; AND AN UNEXPECTED
INTRODUCTION.

" I saw his heart in his face. Give me thy hand.
Be pilot to me, and thy places shall
Still neighbour mine. My ship is ready."

Winter's Tale.

" Come hither, herald,—let the trumpet sound,
And read out this.

Officer. Sound trumpet. (*A trumpet sounds.*)"

King Lear.

WHEN Klypp emerged out of his gates into the street, he saw the gorgeous procession of the Governor stopping at some little distance

off, apparently in expectation of the arrival of the great philosopher whose fame filled the country.

Klypp, followed by Toss Tongueless and Andreas Stiffaspoker, and a train of his principal and best-looking artisans, made haste past the glittering files of the guards of the Governor, and presented himself in all form to that magnificent functionary.

Tophaik Calumet, the ruler of Altosierro, was a man of about fifty years of age. He was attired in a glittering suit of armour, and wore on his head a coronet indicative of his rank, with four aspiring ostrich feathers. His breast blazed with jewels; he grasped in his hand an ivory baton tipped with gold; and his mien was noble and imposing to a very high degree. He was mounted on a superb barb, whose matchless blood spoke out in every movement. The animal was a pure white, and the trappings with which he was loaded clattered with gold and precious stones

Tophaik was surrounded with knights and gentlemen, all in magnificent costumes, and mounted on some of the finest horses to be found in the whole country. Plumes waved, armour glittered, and swords and spears glanced in all directions.

Pennons and pennoncelles, banners and bannerolles gleamed above the heads of the crowd, who were kept back to respectful distance by tall *arbalétriers*, or crossbow-men in crimson kirtles and shining steel morions. Behind Tophaik Calumet was carried a flag bearing his ensigns armorial, ruby, two lions, *passant guardant*, in pale, topaz, for Altosierro; a chief, topaz, fretty, sapphire, for Tafna-Khalifas.

As Klypp approached the Governor, Tophaik, as a mark of high respect to the philosopher in receiving him [on foot beckoned for two of his pages to attend him, one to hold the horse, and another the stirrup, and quickly and gracefully dismounted. He

then embraced Klypp, who bowed his head with grave submission.

“ Distinguished for ever may this day be in the calendar, and marked for honour in all the records of Tafna-Khalifas and Altosierro, which affords me an opportunity of testifying in person, and upon an occasion so momentous, my high consideration for thee, renowned father. I have paid this visit to Tafna-Khalifas for the purpose of seeing and embracing thee. I come to present thee a thousand thanks, not only in my own name, but for all the people of a country which shall be so indebted to thy genius, and who will owe the brightest page in their history, and their chiefest glory to thy talents, thy perseverance, in short, to thee. Thou art, from henceforth our country's guide, its light, its true aid. Wonderful man ! thou hast read that mystic prophecy aright. I envy thee the profound penetration with which nature hath gifted thee. Most of all

am I struck with that happy guess by which thou hast secured an immortality to thyself, and wealth incalculable, and profit vast, and honour enduring to that land which hath become the country of thine adoption. I have come purposely here to proffer my assistance should'st thou stand in need of it. Ask, and my power shall be exerted for thee. I will stretch forth my hand to make thy work of avail."

"Noble sir, worthy of all honour, and much more than can be rendered thee by the old philosopher Klypp," replied the Mechanician, "my ship is built, and ready for sea: but I have not a single volunteer in this glorious cause; no one is prepared, braving all the risks of this momentous voyage, and making all sacrifices for the honour of conducting it, to advance and place himself in my hands. No, though the rewards are the applause of a whole country, and the

hand of the loveliest maiden in Tafna-Khalifas. Cold of heart, unsteady of purpose, weak in resolution, dull, feeble and cowardly, they are afraid of venturing themselves to sea in a ship of the apparently fragile material in which, in strict and faithful accordance with the oracle, I have wrought. There stands my ship—the Ship of Glass! There is the vessel, honourable spectators, destined to discover a new world of wonders: but she requires a captain; that captain stands in need of a ship's company.”

“And is it true there cannot be found one man...none of our courageous mariners... perilous though the enterprise must be admitted, bold enough to engage himself in the cause? I could feel almost tempted to devote myself to this marvellous trial,” said the Governor.

“There are multitudes of chivalrous and knightly hearts,” said one of the Governor's

attendants, whose name was Ferdinando de León, "ready to dare everything carrying a chance of coming alive out of the ordeal. I can answer for myself—for all the noble knights and gallant gentlemen in presence. But to resign oneself to certain destruction, is asking more than may be expected from even the fool-hardy."

"Your Ship of Glass, learned Klypp," said the Governor, "must be exposed to the dangers incident to its material. You cannot promise—it is impossible that you can insure, that it shall be exempt from the certain destruction which would follow on its putting to sea and striking aught."

"I cannot, noble governor," answered Klypp: "no man could. Still am I assured confidence in me—faith in the fortunes of the ship would protect it. If there be no fear, she will be indestructible."

"But where is such firmness to be found?" replied Tophawk with gentleness, and with a

troubled brow, for he heartily desired less difficulty to surround the undertaking. "And you impose a severe and terrifying injunction. There must be no word heard...nothing must be spoken aboard this charmed ship."

"No word of man," returned Klypp. "Then would the spell of safety be snapped in twain. Destruction immediate and irreparable would follow the breaking of my interdiction."

"We are surrounded with perplexity," said Tophaik. "Nevertheless shall an exertion be made to assist thine astonishing work to trial. We will exhaust all means to bring that gallant ship afloat; and, to that end, will I publish, under my own authority, an invitation to the people, that a volunteer may be found from amongst them. Let us not yet despair, noble friend!"

Saying these words, Tophaik Calumet, with an appearance of hope which he did not feel, mounted his horse, commanded the people to be pressed back and a square to be made, and

placed himself, with Klypp at his right hand, one hand grasped in that of the venerable philosopher, and with all his glittering retinue around him, at one side of it. He then ordered the trumpets to sound a flourish, the banners to be wide displayed, and the herald to pronounce after him, with a loud voice, the following proclamation.

“ The Lord and Governor, Calumet, Prince of Tafna-Khalifas and Altosierro, maketh known, publisheth, and proclaimeth, that any-one willing to embark aboard and navigate the Ship of Glass, destined for a voyage for discovery of the Fortunate Island, shall step forward. He must in all things submit to the direction and impositions of the renowned philosopher Klypp Heufueros, now in presence. Besides the high honour, and all the rewards consequent upon success, the Prince Tophaik Calumet promiseth his favour and friendship, and thirty gold ingots from the governor's treasury, each a foot and a half in circumfer-

ence and three feet long. The high and mighty Prince Tophaik Calumet also engageth, upon his safe return, to create the successful adventurer knight, and to augment his paternal coat, should he have such, if not to bestow upon him, a new coat, to be granted and ceded to, and to be enjoyed by him and his posterity for ever: Azure, a galley, argent; in chief, a star of six points, or; as emblematic and commemorative of his achievement, and the guiding and propitious destiny which presided over it."

When this proclamation was ended, the trumpets sounded thrice. All remained silent in the crowd. The sun was only seen to shine in the breastplates of the Governor's guards.

A frown gathered over the brow of Tophaik Calumet, and he was just about to turn to the philosopher Klypp, with disappointment and mortification expressed in every feature, when a voice was heard.

“ And is this all promised for the discovery of the Fortunate Island, or will more follow ?”

All turned their heads to look at each other ; but the speaker could nowhere be seen. Klypp and the Governor whispered together for some moments ; and then, in compliance with fresh directions, the trumpets sounded again, and the herald's voice was heard.

“ This is not all ! Klypp Heufueros, the Mechanician of Tafna-Khalifas, promiseth his fair daughter, Phroditis, in marriage, and with her half his fortune, to the man who is successful in discovering the island, and bringeth back convincing proofs of his good fortune.”

At this succession of magnificent proposals, inducements which might have tempted the faintest of heart to risk something, and impelled the courageous at once to have offered closed by old Klypp's engagement, which seemed the grandest and most valuable of all, so surely as Phroditis was likely to be coveted before all the honours, and all the gold

and jewels in the Governor's treasury, aye, and fifty other treasures besides as rich bribe followed on the heels of the one preceding, there were murmurs of pleasure in the crowd.

Men's eyes glistened. There was as much bustle as could be consistent with the respect due to the presence of the Governor, and the awe in which everybody stood of Klypp the Philosopher. At last, and when the proclamation was ended, breaking in like a boisterous tide on the shrill trumpets, rose a mighty cheer. It shook the steeples, and died off in distant echoes amongst the remote deserted streets.

But now there was an agitation in the crowd. Men looked back. They seemed to be making way for some person who was advancing through the multitude. There was a sound of voices, and an excitement

"Among the gloomy crows and glittering spears."

A track of commotion—a path of bustle, as it might have been characterised, seemed to be serpentine through the assembly. And at last, at one point the crowd broke apart, two crossbow-men stepped aside who were engaged in endeavouring to restore order in this part of the congregation, and Cunique, in the same dress in which he made his appearance before Phroditis, but enveloped in a large mantle, whose clustering folds thickened about his shoulders, stepped into the square, and strode quickly towards the group formed by the Governor, Klypp, and the retinue.

“Who have we here?” cried the Governor.

“A spirited-looking person; but rather slight for the task, if he comes to propose himself for it! Who art thou, friend?”

“One who presents himself before you, mighty Prince, to accept the conditions, navigate the Ship of Glass, and brave all risks. I will embark in the glass ship, put to sea in

her, and, if heaven favour my endeavours, will discover the fortunate island! Blessed, thrice blessed shall I be, if I am successful! If I fail, I will bury myself and my misfortunes together, sink in the vessel entrusted to me, but never return to acknowledge a failure. I devote myself to this trial, and am willing and prepared, should such be the decree of fate, to offer myself sacrifice."

"Noble youth! he has my blessing," exclaimed old Klypp, "and fortune will go with him. At last have I found one who will put my scheme to test. Courage and perseverance are written in his face. This is the youth of whom I have dreamt. If he is fortunate, happy—happy shall I be. But if he fails—I must not think of it!"

"Have you well considered your proposal?" asked Tophaik Calumet. "Have you reflected on the chances against you—on the sort of ship in which you shall be summoned to embark?"

Are you prepared to share her fortunes, should she swim or sink?"

"I am," answered Cunique. "Whether she remain on the surface, and I draw breath upon her glassy deck, or whether she go to the bottom; for, in that case, life will be valueless, and it will be happiness to forget myself, and to be forgotten. I am prepared—happy to venture all in her. To stake hopes and life upon her. To abide her fortunes, be they for good or be they for evil. Let me be identified with her;—too happy to have my name associated with hers, considering the cause in which I am engaged!"

"What should be that cause?" demanded the Prince. Is it the disclosure of this mystery? Is it the discovery of the Island?"

"It is not," answered Cunique.

"You say it is not," repeated Tophaik. "What then can be this powerful motive which leads you to peril life in what all must allow a desperate enterprise? Destiny, by rendering

the means of discovery so impossible, has thrown an impassable barrier around this wonderful island. Would'st thou dare natural contradictions? and has thy motive force enough to supply thee strength to do it?"

"It has, and more," replied Cunique.

"'Tis a base thought to deem that the love of gold—the lust of treasure, is what urges thee forward in this thine absolute search after danger. What other men avoid—what they shrink from, thou covetest."

"I dare all," cried Cunique, with a devotion which spoke out in every word and look, "for all that is dear to me on this side of the grave. Happy shall I be if I win that jewel for which I become pilgrim. If the risk is great, the stake is coextensive with it. Through clouds, storm and darkness; through doubt, and difficulty, and danger; through all obstacles, and in the face of every discouragement—every peril, will I onward:—onward still with the constant heart and the unflinching hand. I

succeed or perish ;---happy to die in a cause so sacred, to which my poor life were nothing ! I am here---I have spoken---I have professed for the task. Am I accepted ?”

“Thou art, brave youth,” returned the Governor ; “and may good fortune go with thee, and that I may welcome thee back in triumph ! Thou shalt have all thou askest to speed thee in thy enterprise. Thou shalt be furnished forth like any prince. With the concurrence of her projector and builder, the unapproachable Klypp Heufueros, I name and constitute thee Captain of the Ship of Glass ; and all with which science can furnish thee or art supply, or my anxiety provide or authority exact, shall be thine to the utmost of thy wishes. Say, reverend Klypp, have I spoken well ?---have I spoken as thou approvest ?”

“To the very letter, my most noble lord and governor,” answered Klypp.

“Thus then shall we proceed,” rejoined the Prince. “Our business is for the present

concluded. Sir Stranger, thou wilt have need of men to navigate this vessel; but I am more than afraid that thou wilt look out in vain for willing assistants. Be not cast down, for I have expedients to supply this want. Ferdinando de Leon," continued Tophaik, addressing one of his distinguished officers, "how many prisoners entered Tafna-Khalifas this day under thine escort?"

"One hundred and fifty Moors we captured," replied Ferdinando de Leon. Each is a heathen hound that worships idols of metal, of wood, and of stone."

"How many men, respected father," asked Tophaik Calumet of Klypp, "must embark in thine enchanted ship?"

"Five and twenty souls, resigning speech, upon penalty of destruction, until they drop anchor after leaving our port," replied Klypp.

"Thus then do we adjudge the number to be made up," said Tophaik Calumet. "Ferdinando, choose twelve of the most active and

dexterous of these Moors, clothe them in a sailor costume, and let them be prepared to embark. Alphonso D'Astorga, thou art Admiral of the Gallies, go, assemble all the seamen of the port of Tafna-Khalifas. Inform them of this arduous duty we impose upon those chosen out of their number, and, if thou should'st have no volunteers, cast lots, and take men to the number of twelve. Should they refuse or make resistance, they shall be sent to sea, as punishment for their contumacy, in a boat without oars, sails or rudder, and left to perish. This double twelve, with their leader and captain, this gallant stranger, will complete the number twenty-five. I invest him with absolute and unlimited command over this number of twenty-four men, to be solemnly sworn, the Christians upon the Holy Gospels, and the heathen half of the crew by their gods, to rest under his orders, and to obey him as I should be obeyed. Language must be dead amongst them from the hour they

embark, on pain of being cast into the sea. Let them well understand the Ship of Glass is a lost ship if a word be uttered aboard her — if the silence be for an instant broken. At that moment will she fall to pieces of herself. So announces her constructor, and so do I believe. Ferdinando de Leon and Alphonso D'Astorga, conduct your contingents to the Square of St. Michael, whither I and the architect of the vessel, and her captain, now proceed. I will see these men, address them and administer the oath myself. Death is their lot if they infringe one tittle of these commands."

THE END OF VOLUME THE FIRST.

THE
SHIP OF GLASS;
OR,
THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND.
A ROMANCE,
IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY
HARGRAVE JENNINGS.

AUTHOR OF "MY MARINE MEMORANDUM BOOK," &c.

" 'There was a SHIP,' quoth he."
Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH Sq.

1846

THE SHIP OF GLASS.

CHAPTER I.

TAFNA-KHALIFAS. THE SAILING OF THE SHIP.

"The ship was cheered, the harbour cleared,
Merrily did we drop
Below the kirk, below the hill,
Below the light-house top.

The sun came up upon the left,
Out of the sea came he ;
And he shone bright, and on the right
Went down into the sea."

Coleridge.

THREE days after the events of the last chapter, was the Ship of Glass launched and

VOL. II.

B

riding in the harbour of Tafna-Khalifae, in anticipation of her wonderful voyage.

Klypp Henfueros, who was an astrologer in addition to all his other acquirements, had constructed schemes and consulted the aspect of the planets. He had approved the third night, at the full of the moon, for the sailing of his ship.

Bright, beautiful was the night. The sky was of the richest purple hue—deep, placid and profound. It is quite impossible to describe the transparency, the purity of it. It looked like half a dozen Italian skies at midnight, all melted into one, with more stars shining than have been visible on all the separate nights since the foundation of the world. Clear, bright blue, like sapphire, or like liquid blue light, poured and spread out like a sea, and sparkling with ten thousand lights for ships, grouped in places into squadrons and fleets, and in other directions strewn and scattered like single lonely cruisers steering in silent

steady course by mighty continents of cloud and floating islands, with innumerable broken or sweeping shadows for rocks and cliffs and spiry points, on whose piercing tops would perhaps burn small lancet-shaped flames—a monstrous purple mantle like richest velvet smooth and soft, powdered, or in heraldic language *seméed*, with a myriad of silver dotting spangles, were the heavens.

“The stars came thick over the twilight sea.
Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high.
Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
On the still waters.”

There were islands of the most beautiful, and the most fantastic shapes in the sky. All were moving slowly—majestically, as one grand airy panorama. The sky was so flooded, so suffused, so interpenetrated with moonlight, that it was more than moonlight; it was only a dimmer, holier kind of day—a spirit or a fairy day. On one side of the heavens were

ramparts of cloud, black and solid as black marble itself, rolled, and graded, and serried — nay, terraced in long embattled lines like the bristling fortifications of some elfin king, or the walls of one of the Kingdoms of the Invisible. As these giddy pinnacles, and haughty promontories, and baseless turrets, screwed up by the circularly moving winds from out of the heart, of the pliant clouds, towered aloft above the range of less aspiring masses, each seemed to emerge, and spring into a sky of light of its own. A little land of such scenery as might be expected in the moon, tossed into the strangest and most unnatural shapes, and appearing like an illuminated realm above the grandeur, and the darkness, and the hollow mystery of the substantial, gigantically deepened and broadened base, extended with its shivered shadows, and its profusely scattered lights, as a top stratum or upper independent half, above those

“Platforms of the wind.”

on which it was borne along.

Farther off were thousands of curls, and wreaths, and twists of brilliant vapour, twining and interweaving, and flung over the azure like lucent fret-work. The sky, indeed, was such as might have been seen over an enchanted island, or spreading above haunted ground, from which the glancing fays and slender spirits might be descried rising in tiny chains, and joining hands and twining their gracefully lithe limbs around the long straight moonbeams, like lily bells and pearly pendants scrolled and voluted around silver wires. One touch of such a sky would make an artist's fortune, and be the wonder of the world.

In front was the wide trackless sea:—a glassy desert whose ripples were light. It extended, a shining plain, or rather a succession of plains, some in shadow, some illuminated, and some in which both shadow and illumina-

tion seemed contending. There was the conflict between light and shadow, like the mystic and spiritual antagonism between the Peri and Dives powers of the ancient Persian mythology.

Over the sea shone the moon;—a gigantic orb; a world of light, whose pure effulgence invested and covered everything with surpassing glory, marking out every wave and firing it with white light as it rose above the restlessly heaving mass of waters. So thickly were the moonbeams showered down, that they looked like lines of rain over the sea, except that they were broader. If the sky was deep sapphire set with the “stalled fires,” the sea was regal purple; but when it turned into light it glittered like shattered silver. The round clear circle of the queen of night, broad and bright as the shield of a Celestial Power displayed for angelic conflict, was distinctly printed on its dark back-ground, like the curved hull of a lucent ship freighted with

light for a new world. On the gleaming disc, plain and well defined as if marked on a map, were the eccentric wavy outlines, and irregular dots and points, and grouped spots of light, and disseminated shadows peculiar to the hemisphere of the satellite of night.

Looking in towards the land, were found the sublimest aspects of coast scenery. There was a deep, though not very large bay, shaped semicircularly something like a half moon, with one horn considerably advanced, and composed of piled crags and shelving rocks, so curiously and stupendously laid together through the all-powerful industry of nature that it looked like an artificial mole and the work of the hand of man. Pointed rocks of the most fantastic and extraordinary shapes, stood in the sea; some were like spires of churches, some like bridges, and others again resembled the columns, and wreathed buttresses, and wild, air-hung, dizzy arches of a mighty basaltic grotto. Clouds of spray dust,

cast into the moonlit air like the powder of diamonds; millions of flashing drops which flamed and disappeared, or fell in tiny ringlets of light into the bright blue sea, were continually starting, and yet with some certain sort of regular recurrence, from the juts, and knobs, and splinters of smooth and slippery rock. You might have thought them flights of water sprites in the shape of spouting fountains of sparks.

Gaunt rough cliffs, whose cleaving summits climbed to the stars, abounding with devious ways and cavernous passages to the sands and the sea;—"looped and windowed" terraces whose natural slits, and pendant *crenelles*, and gaping embrasures wanted, to realize their characteristics of warlike resistance, but an activity which might have been supplied from the magazines of monstrous loose stones, and riven trunks of scorched, and blistered, and split pines, which clung together and lay heaped or stood toppling one on other;—firs of mighty

growth, bent to all angles out of the perpendicular, round whose iron and bossy bases their tough and tangling roots wound, and twined and knotted as if they had been ropes, or like serpents in mail of glistening silver grey or green! such objects as these met the eye in every direction, and assisted in making up the scene. It was the most curious view one ever beheld. It was romantic to the very extremity of romance, and a place to dream about—hardly to see.

Round the bay was disposed the town, with its lines of defence, and many minarets, and gleaming towers, of the ancient Tafna-Khalifas. The antique citadel, and the Governor's palace, both rich in all the elaborate and magnificent detail of Moresco architecture, studded with a thousand turrets, and abounding in buttress, and bartizan, and battlement, stood on high ground, and overlooked the wilderness of buildings. There was a strong tinge of eastern wildness, and eastern pomp in the aspect of this quaint

city. Its basons were filled with glittering craft, light *caiques* and sturdier vessels; argosies with portly sides and drooping sails, seemingly built of gold; and a fleet of skiffs and boats.

The whole city seemed afloat; there was such a twinkling of innumerable lights about it, one might have thought restlessly changing place; now uniting and growing into steady lustre, and now breaking away and dispersing like fireflies or the gold, and blue, and crimson rains of a rocket.

Lights glanced from every place. The windows of the houses, the steeples of the churches, the flat terraces on the tops of domestic edifices, columns and fountains, nay the very rocks, and the island stones in the sea itself, blazed with light. It seemed a gorgeous festival, which indeed it was. Then there were two lighthouses in the bay of so original an architecture, and with such curious zigzags and uncouth and incoherent appurtenances

about them, that they looked fitter for two watchboxes for Gnomes, or carved cells for Afrites, guarding the approaches to some silent and mystic city in which were accumulated the faëry treasures of countless ages. These two structures were now illuminated with a species of Greek fire, which alternately burnt bright red and threw a blood colour over the whole strange scene, and then would turn to blue and invest everything with a ghastly supernatural hue;—as if the old moon was extinguished and a new and unaccountable one introduced.

Dots of light covered the entire scene, like pins' points. Innumerable torches shone like a new heaven no longer placid and silent, with an universe of stars. Rows and ranks of light glittered everywhere, as if they had been flambeaux borne by an army in regular and systematic array. The hulls of the vessels in the harbour were lustrous as if they had been on fire. Lamps were displayed everywhere.

They were hung out at the stems, over the bows, and were fixed over the sterns and glittered in the rigging and at the yard arms of all the navy of Tafna-Khalifas. Changing fires burned on the highest peaks of the rocks, and paths of flame were traced in zigzags up the sides of the distant mountains, till they terminated on the bristling summits in stray bale fires which gleamed like mighty steadily burning planets.

All the population was poured out upon the walls and lines of fortification, and covered every place, and clustered on every elevation from which a sight of the harbour, and of the sea could be obtained.

Upon a large platform of stone in the centre of the town was Tophaik Calumet and all his retinue, surrounded with the ensigns of his dignity, and all the parade and attendance incidental to his authority as Governor. The lines of his guards and their glittering partizans, and the multitudinous emblazoned banners

flaming by the light of hundreds of flambeaux held in rows like paths of stars, gradually diminished in perspective until they were lost in the soft shades of the moonlight night.

But in the centre of the bay, the object of breathless attention to all the populace, was the wonderful Ship of Glass. Eyes were fastened with wonder upon her, and every rope and every spar was examined with a curiosity which seemed as if it was incapable of being satisfied. At intervals bursts of military music would swell on the air, and then sink into silence or float away in magic echoes over the surface of the water. At different points from hill to shore, from sea to strand, on either side of the harbour, would the clash of cymbal, and the hollow beat of the eastern drum be heard, as if sound answered to sound.

Magnificent in her proportions, symmetrical in her curves of light, a fairy ship of giant size, lay the Ship of Glass. She rose and fell

softly on the sleepy heaves of the shining sea. She looked a vision conjured up out of the water. So thin and transparent was she, so diaphanous were her glassy timbers and broadside, that you could see through her and discern her portholes on the other side, with the figures of people passing to and fro between upon her deck. Her outline was graceful in the extreme, and her tall aspiring masts, and her multitude of giddy yards crossing and stretching their long thin arms like silver spears, her prismatic cordage like woven ice, and the filmy cloud of the upper rigging, which twined and interweaved in lines so small that you could scarcely see them—all the puzzling and seemingly inextricable tangle of her rig, was clear and distinct, and sharply though minutely traced upon a back-ground of sky which seemed light of itself.

The Ship of Glass seemed to shine by its own light, as if it were a lucid body and scattered its pale illumination upon the blue water

like a globe of crystal the hollow of which was filled with moonlight. She looked built of watery haze and moonlight, in fact ; formed of ten thousand sharp cold rays, keen and piercing as the points of the finest darts, and crossed and reticulating, and starting up and tending down, and converging and diverging. As if whole sheaves of elfin arrows had been arrested in their sparkling flight, and, struck by the spell, had arranged themselves in fanciful groups suggesting to the eye the figure of a ship. As if the discursive rays of the *Aurora Borealis* had congregated and converged into the semblance of a luminous man of war.

Nobody that saw her but with the utmost difficulty could believe that she was not the work of magic—that she was not perhaps a living thing, awful in its terrific beauty. She hardly looked solid ; but perhaps owing to the mystic and delusive light in which

“ All the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
Like restless clouds before the steadfast sun,”

it was but fancy that she appeared to fade and brighten again, not in her whole length but in parts, to sink in and collapse, and then recover the full value and extent of her proportions, or the firmness and distinct severity of her outline.

As it was, there was not a few who encouraged the idea that they should shortly see her evolve the supernatural light with which she seemed gifted, return that shape into the witchlike and spell-transmuted air out of which it was probably wrought, and shrink into and disappear in a shower of dimpling drops, to fall into the azure sea.

CHAPTER II.

THE SHIP AT SEA.

" Alone, alone, all, all, alone,
Alone on a wide wide sea !
And never a saint took pity on
My soul in agony."

Coleridge.

MULTITUDINOUS were the criticisms hazarded on the Ship of Glass, and innumerable were the doubts as to whether she would, or could even sail or not. The envious, who constitute

a very strong class everywhere, and formed a by no means inconsiderable section of the population, would have been loud in their censures, even perhaps not sparing of ridicule, had they dared. But they were deterred, and faultfinders were overawed by the countenance which the Governor of the country had bestowed upon Klypp's momentous and daring project. The incredulous were also silenced by seeing the ship there present before their eyes, launched and afloat, with her crew on board, her captain on his quarter deck, and preparations making for slipping her cable and quitting her harbour.

Such proofs of the reality of the intention of sending the ship to sea, set all at rest. All was eager attention, and there was such excitement succeeding the late bustle, and usurping the place of that which had seemed nothing but pleasure and festival, that the music ceased of its own accord, the people did

not move about or even talk, but all eyes were directed with greater intensity than ever upon the theatre of operations, which was the harbour.

Presently all lurking doubts and jealous distrust were terminated by, at a certain signal, the sight of the sails of the Ship of Glass, being loosed. They were cast from the yards and fell in graceful festoons. The mariners who were aloft discharging this to them novel duty upon such material, appeared to lay out upon the slippery yards with ease, and the texture of the fabric of the sails, though glossy like cloth woven out of glass, seemed natural enough, except that, when the sails were sheered home and the yards hoisted, they beamed with all the colours of the rainbow.

Astonishment and admiration filled the minds of the assembly, when they actually saw an anchor of glass and a glass cable rise out of the water and slowly ascend to a

crystal cat-head. Each fresh manœuvre was a marvel. It seemed every moment as if ropes must part, or chains snap, or sails be blown away, or masts split like frostwork, or hull crash: but to the wonder and wild delight of the spectators all held.

Then slowly the water slid away and fell asunder from before the glistening, cutting prow, as if the ship was propelled by some invisible force; the sails touched and steadily filled, the graceful fabric slightly swaying over upon the swelling waves, and the Ship of Glass was in stately motion. At this sight there rose such a shout that the town seemed alive with echoes, and the hill tops trembled again. In fact the ship itself momentarily oscillated on its way, as its delicate slender fabric answered to the sound; but there seemed to grow strength out of itself, produced and deepening out of its very progress, which instantly restored it to equilibrium. Evenly, steadily, silently, solemn and majestic yet

beautiful in its grace, its correctness, its faultless architecture, did the ship pursue her way, straight as an arrow out of a bow out of the harbour's mouth, past the heads of the mole crowded with people, and lighthouses blazing with beacon-lights, and boldly out into the open sea.

Minute by minute the buildings on the sea shore became smaller and smaller. The horns of the harbour seemed to close together, the city receded, and the tall cliffs, the spiry rocks and romantic uplands crowned with stars,

"Bowed their haughty crests,"

sinking like a panorama of cloud into the wide sea, which seemed waiting to receive them and to take them in into its blue bosom.

The ship held her way on gallantly and left the land, which quicker and quicker glided into distance as the broad ocean began to roll and extend its mighty waves. The lights

crowded together and began to twinkle like distant stars; and the sensation grew around those who were now the lonely wanderers of the great deep, that they were exiles with nature and solitude, abandoned in that great silence, separate in that trackless desert, that unsubstantial world without mark or sign or path.

Smaller and smaller, dimmer and dimmer grew the line of the coast. The lights disappeared waning in the moonlight. The cliffs slid softly down, as it were, into the sea, and were met with a gauzy track of vapour which spread along the dubious line of the horizon. All was now sea and sky, with the stars above and the waves below. Unmingled, uninterrupted silence was everywhere; and the Ship of Glass sped onward with her cloud of gossamer sails like a phantom. She seemed to glide softly and silently over the water, like a pile of driving mist which a mortal bark could have skimmed through.

Night gave place to day. The ship sailed on. In compliance with the directions of Klypp Heufueros, the Ship of Glass shaped her course along the line of the Spanish coast until where it narrowed to the Straits of Gibraltar, or, as they were then known, Hercules' Pillars.

The haughty summits of Calpe and Abyla, lost in the clouds, and rising into a heaven of celestial, cerulean blue, were not long before they showed themselves. The Ship of Glass held her steady way through the Straits with a fair wind and with the most delicious weather. And then was she seen stemming, a silver spot upon the sapphire sea, the broad waves of the mighty Atlantic.

Cunique now, in accordance with the directions of the projector of the expedition, and after a careful examination of a heap of charts and papers committed to him to supply him assistance in his arduous and doubtful voyage, directed his vessel's head to be laid to the

southward and westward. It was in this direction, and in a certain latitude indicated to him, that it was anticipated he might fall in with the mysterious island, destined indeed to be a Fortunate Island should Cunique discover it.

To the astonishment and delight of Cunique and his crew, especially to the pleasure and admiration of the latter, who sadly stood in need of some confirmation of their resolution, and direct evidence that their mortal fear of the security of the Ship of Glass rested more in imagination than reality, the ship sailed well, lay firmly and solidly on the water, and answered her helm with exactness and precision. In a few days the terror which had rendered his mariners in the first instance almost incapable of exertion, and disposed to look upon themselves as victims and the ship purposely doomed, wore away. They became reconciled to their situation, and traversed the ship with greater confidence and with more easy hearts, though they could not prevent

themselves from continually running to look over the side, as if they every moment expected to see the waves burst in upon the apparently frail sides of their crystal argosy. All held up their hands in mingled wonder and excitement; but they were denied speech, though exclamations of astonishment, even of pleasure rose frequently to their lips and were as instantaneously repressed, checked by the fear of the dreadful things denounced them should man ope his lips aboard. They made up for this deprivation of language, by transmitting their impressions by signs one to another. The Moors, indeed, were adepts at this mode of communicating their thoughts. The ship presented the singular spectacle of conversation carried on, and orders issued, and manœuvres effected, and changes of trim readily and expeditiously put in practice, without a single word being said, and the vessel all the time as profoundly silent as if there were no one single human soul aboard her.

The wind with but slight interruptions held fair, and the mariners with pleasure, and yet with a considerable and natural mingling of terror, saw that they were making great way. A vague feeling of alarm began to seize them, and gained ground in the ship. The material of the vessel, so insubstantial, so astonishing, so dangerous; the character of their errand; the mystery in which the island was enveloped; the circumstances under which their young captain had been chosen; the distance they now found themselves not only from their own country, but from any shore; the prospect of interminable waters which met the eye in every direction; and, last and chiefly, the reputation for magic which the builder of the ship and the projector of the scheme enjoyed, and which constituted him a terror in his own town, and threw suspicion round all his acts; all these sources of distrust operated unfavourably in the superstitious minds of the seamen of the Ship of Glass.

Nor were there wanting prognostics of af-fright. Two black birds that flew so high that it was impossible to make out of what species they were, even supposing that the settlement of such a question would have calmed the in-creasing misgivings of the solitary crew, came winging their dingy ominous way from a re-mote distance, when the ship must have been such an incalculable way off from any land that their appearance was sinister and unac-countable in the extreme. They took their line over the ship, beating their silent sooty pinions as if they were direct messengers of evil, and charged with some embassy of dire portent from which they durst not swerve neither to the right hand nor to the left, but must still sail right on.

Cunique with the most undaunted courage and perseverance still held on, despising all omens, and bent to succeed or perish in his attempt to discover the island, and win that

dear being for whom he languished, and in whom his very life was bound up.

But the favourable weather changed. Clouds rose threateningly out of the distant sea. The sea first grew lead-colour of a sad, depressing uniformity, and then black; frowningly, terrifically black. The waves began to rise and the wind to blow. The Ship of Glass was tost and tumbled on the rolling billows, though still her crystal timbers firmly held, and flung the assailing surges indignantly aside, as she cut her cleaving way through the solid mass of waters which would sometimes rise up before her as if to forbid her passage. The noise of the sea on her glass sides as the waves came rolling on and dashed up against her, and sometimes mounted above and splashed over her dripping deck, was hollow, strange and awful to a degree.

Months seemed to have elapsed since the adventurous mariners left their native shore, and pale fear was exhibiting itself in their

faces. The deprivation of speech—the dreadful silence which reigned on board in the howling of the storm, seemed condemnation and doom in itself. An appalling comparison suggested itself to their mind, that their situation appeared that of a crew of hollow-eyed and speechless ghosts, sailing to some fearful world where punishment and dole were to be their lot for an eternity. Many were the vows which were inwardly breathed. The most violent cursed their destiny, and were scarcely deterred from rising upon their commander, seizing the ship and putting about, with a hope of saving their lives. The fear of Klypp Heufueros, and of a vengeance esteemed so deadly, even of his name as the redoubted magician he was considered; and also the firm, temperate, and confident bearing of Cunique, as yet kept the malcontents quiet.

With so many terrors aboard, and so many

fears for the future, with the wonder resulting from their situation, the time flew swiftly—swiftly as the ship herself, which sped on her unknown way with a velocity scarcely more than borrowed from desperation.

CHAPTER III.

THE SHIP SAILING INTO UNKNOWN LATITUDES,
ENCOUNTERS TEMPESTUOUS WEATHER.

" And now the storm blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong ;
He struck with his o'ertaking wings,
And chased us south along.
With aloping masts and dipping prow,
As who pursues with yell and blow
Still treads the shadow of his foe,
And forward bends his head,
The ship drove fast, loud roared the blast,
And southward aye we fled."

Coleridge.

BUT now new dangers seemed to threaten
our daring voyagers. Cut off—hopelessly

separated from human aid, exiled from every thing bearing tokens of pity, assistance, or community of feeling, exposed to the relentless hostilities of the deaf sea, and the formidable chances with which the elements might be stored against them, every day, in fact every hour might be said to bring with it fresh alarm or deepening despondence.

To add to the danger of Cunique's situation, and aggravating his perplexities, symptoms of indifference to command, reluctance to discharge those duties and perform the obligations even necessary to safety, much less hope, mutiny in its own hideous and appalling form were observable among the crew. They seemed like men urged on by fear to extremity. Scowling eyes and menacing gestures, though as yet there was no fatal act of resistance, and the silence upon which the safety of the ship depended was preserved, met the restless and exhausted, almost despairing eyes of the vigilant commander. He

hourly feared the explosion of the pent-up wrath and vengeance of his rebellious ship's company.

Twilight had sunk in gloomy and portentous shadows. The sea ran high. Wave after wave came on—the long sweeping waves of the mighty Atlantic, majestic in their circling roll and ponderous body. Hill and valley undulated interchangeably. Masses—mountains rather of water changed place, now gleaming with a sad faint light, and now rushing into darkness.

Fainter—fainter grew the evening. Piles of clouds towered up, apparently urged over the straight line of the distant horizon from beneath by some invisible agency. A stream of driving vapour, broad as the sea itself, extended like a monstrous shroud along the tops of the billows and concealed its dark background of clouds. It spread and looked as if it opened out of itself, and gradually took in new lengths and lengths of sea, 'until it em-

braced the whole west. It then stole down as if its fate—its dreary office was to cover the doomed ship and to enshroud it in its pale deathlike vesture, never to emerge to light and life again.

Shortly night came on: night without moon: night starless. All that was visible were the rolling waves, heaving and tossing near and afar off. The Ship of Glass rocked and tumbled upon the giant billows: swaying over, she would lift her shining side out of the brine, which dripped and ran in cataracts from her ports and channels, and then down; lower down would sink her broadside, as if the gallant, graceful fabric was really to be engulfed. Her crew were gathered in a silent row on deck, like men every minute expecting their death-warrant, or like the company of ghastly spectres they had fancied themselves, denied speech, forbidden to offer comfort and reciprocate terror even one to another.

Meantime the floodgates of heaven were opened, and a tempest of hail—the rattling, bounding artillery of the angry skies—poured down upon the devoted ship and hid it like a curtain. Presently the clouds seemed to open, and the lonely ship was seen, in all her dazzling majesty, battling with the furious elements amidst repeated flashes of blazing lightning, which actually seemed to set the sea on fire. Tossed on high, she vaulted up the steeps of roaring water, and, poised for a moment on the vertex, then plunged low into a valley where the sound of the storm itself was lost. The mariners abandoned all courage; flung their arms abroad in wild despair; and looked, with their frantic gestures, as if they were possessed.

Cunique, still on his quarter deck, with his hair flying in the gale, and grasping with one hand his slippery mizen mast, which in common with its fellow spars had stood the storm as if indeed they and the whole ship were

fenced, bound and protected by a spell, fixed his eager, dauntless eyes still forward on the darkness. There was no symptom of fear, of wavering or abandonment of purpose in him.

The ship still bore on, with as little sail set as was sufficient to keep the vessel's head in the direction enjoined. But the roaring waves which followed furiously after, pursuing with vengeful and relentless pertinacity their flying victim, appeared to mount higher and higher, until at last a climbing wave started up with irresistible force and extinguished the three stern lanterns, which had hitherto burned, emblems of hope, above the howling, hungry sea.

The crew started to their feet. Then burst upon the air a loud, revengeful, despairing cry.

The ship seemed to pause in her headlong course as if she were possessed of sense, and sound had struck her. She shook to her centre. A sort of trembling beset her; as if

she might be aware of the effect of that cry and her approaching dissolution.

Cunique, at that dreadful sound—at the violation of that decree upon which the voice of fate had pronounced the safety of the ship depended, clasped his hands, threw himself upon his knees and compressed his lips, as if in that act he could repair the destruction precipitated by his comrades.

Agony and despair were turned to rage: the thirst for blood—the thirst for *his* life whom they thought had betrayed them into their present lost condition, filled the breasts of the frantic crew. They rushed upon Cunique, seized him in their clenching hands—their mad, raging clasp. Struggling in vain, they bore him to the gangway. Two dozen knives were instantly bared to be sheathed in his bosom, and gleamed in the lightning.

At that moment, the leader of the mutineers dropped from before his face the folds of a huge sea cloak, and displayed to view the features of Pietro.

"Behold me! 'tis written thy sacrifice shall be our safety," he cried. "I followed thee to share thy spoils; but an enchanter has caught me in his toils. The elements shall be appeased through thy death. Great Nemesis! receive thy victim."

"Hold, Pietro, hold!" exclaimed Cunique. "Thou ruinest thyself and me. I would have made thee rich. Voluntarily didst thou follow me. Rememberest thou thine oath? Oh, what—what hast thou done!"

"Hence, traitor! hence, fiend! Away with him! Into the sea with the sorcerer! Heaven will take pity on us if we relieve the ship of her infernal burden."

The words were scarcely out of Pietro's mouth, when the Ship of Glass was momentarily arrested in her progress. Once, twice, thrice she struck; and at each blow her glass timbers splintered, crashed, and flew apart in sparkling fragments. She now lay over in helpless ruin, an irretrievable wreck, heaving

up her globed side with its range of crystal ports, and chains, and courses of overlapping wales. In her destruction she was a glorious object. Every minute the flashes of lightning displayed her like a dazzling diamond whose mighty heart had been cut out and its sphered sides hewn into rows of prismatic ribs. A thousand coruscations surrounded her; a thousand flashing fires hung like dew-drops upon spars rigging and hull. She was all red, blue, and amber beams. Electrified and glowing from taffrail to the jibboomend, and from truck to keel.

Such was the flashing funeral of the Ship of Glass. Hers were obsequies of which the roaring wind was the wild knell, the pale lights of heaven the myriad of attendant torches. A mighty catafalque, imprisoning the doomed, bearing them down to death, to darkness; consuming one by one its whole freight of superhuman lights, until that floating triumph of matchless art and a too ambitious,

too daring ingenuity, was reduced to sparkless ashes. Klypp's magic burnt itself out in the coffin in which he had purposely confined it and committed to the ocean. His presumptuous fires were trodden out by the indignant footsteps of the aroused elements which met his impious venture and exterminated it.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ISLAND.

" Here in this island we arrived."

Tempest.

" Be not afraid ; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt
not.

Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears ; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Would make me sleep again : and then, in dreaming,
The clouds, methought, would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me ; that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again."

Tempest.

It was morning. The clouds had rolled away
and left a clear blue sky, brilliant blue like

the eyes of seraphs, clear as translucent wells which lie far hidden, deep, solitary and profound, motionless and intense in their unatiring, inaccessible purity, surrounded with the freshest, greenest treasures of a bountiful nature, and enshrined and embosomed in the very heart of the hoar woods, whose grassy steeps and elfin mossy hollows, softening shadows, and now sweeping now sinking arcades link, and extend, and entwine, and raise their ramparts of leaves and russet buttresses of ancient trunks to repel the straying foot.

It was heaven alone to look up at that sky, and drink in its matchless glory. You grew young again in regarding it. The frost of age unlocked its sparkling chains, and their fragments fell to your feet. Its peace—its holiness sunk deep into your soul and possessed you utterly, and for the first time you seemed to perceive what the sky of paradise might be.

But while you looked, clouds which must

have been enchantment, so lovelily, wonderfully shaped and tinted did they appear, came trooping up. Like snowy flocks at the summons of the shepherd sun, did this population of the air follow on in the track of day.

But, wonder of wonders! there was land. There it was, broad, bright, stretching into distance. It was no magic delusion—no phantasmagoria—no cheat of the sight, to which the intensity of hope lent force, and the vividly excited imagination colour. Firm, substantial, so that there could be no doubt of its reality, there was at last revealed to sight the mysterious, the baffling island, to find out which had been the dream of generations. Disaster had been fortune—shipwreck was safety—destruction life; for all Cunique's hopes were now answered. By means of the Ship of Glass he had forced into tangible form the shadowy island.

Who shall describe Cunique's emotions when from the piece of rock which he had succeeded

in gaining in the storm and darkness of the night, when consciousness returned to him and he awoke in the strong light, this scene burst upon him ! With what joy did he survey this new treasure ; this new dominion ; this pledge and evidence of his success ; this proof of his happy fate !

In his delight he uttered a cry of joy, and stooped down and kissed the ground which had made him so happy. As yet he could hardly believe that what he saw was real. He seemed to feel that he should—that he must awake and find it all a dream. He opened his eyes, and then shut them and opened them again, in some sort of vague, doubtful expectation that he should find the island vanished, and see instead the ocean given back to him, with its great waves and its sullen, inhospitable silence.

To recollect himself, to gather his confused thoughts, and to assure himself that he had actually sailed to that spot in a Ship of Glass,

that there had been storm and darkness; and that his notion there had been a ship in danger, a splitting on a rock, a shipwreck and dispersion of the mariners, was not entirely false, he looked abroad. What did he see?

There, shining in the morning light like the ruins of a castle of resplendent steel, just on the edge of the rocks, or where water, and rock and sand intermingled, so uniting that dominion seemed to be shared among them, was the Ship of Glass high and dry. Her masts of glass and cross spars, and a confused net of glass cordage, were shattered and in ruin. Poles of glass stuck up like the splinters of a temple of ice shining in the cold clear brilliancy of a Russian sun.

But who shall, or could describe the wonders of this enchanted isle! All that has been read in fairy tales—all the curiosities of nature, and the mass of surprising things with which stories of enchantment are filled—the most daring flights of fancy, would have been

surpassed here. The inexhaustible mines in which the sorceress Poetry and her army of dazzling spirits are restlessly, sleeplessly, everlastingly at work, would be vainly taxed to supply the varieties in colour and form, the beauty and grandeur with which was stored

“This precious gem set in the silver sea.”

Cunique was so surprised and occupied with what he saw, that he could have remained looking for ever.

He never once thought of his companions in that scene of danger which he had just passed through, and had forgotten, if not forgiven, his own perils, in the wild delight—the joy, the intoxication of having succeeded, and finding land where land to all appearance was the last thing to be encountered. But he was at once brought back to his situation, when on mounting a rather high rock to gain a more satisfactory view of his new discovery, he per-

ceived a group of his mariners gathered around the wreck of the Ship of Glass.

Perhaps his first impulse would have been retreat, had he not been perceived. His men set up a cheer at discovering him, and came running towards the place on which he stood with all the marks of unbounded delight, wonder and affection; at least so he construed their gestures. He ran over in his mind all the reasons he might have in congratulating himself upon their co-operation. He saw clearly that without their assistance he should have no means of proving to his countrymen the truth of his discovery of the island, or of devising means of returning to Tafna-Khalifas. With them all might be attainable: without the assistance of fellow men in such a situation, he saw he should be helpless—helpless in a realm of riches—a miserable prisoner in the golden island.

They joined company. There were no longer clouded looks, or doubt, or menace,

Instead of despair, all was hope. Hatred was swallowed up in admiration: and crowding around him, nay kneeling at his feet as to a superior being, his late unruly and turbulent subordinates looked upon his face with the same veneration with which Columbus was regarded when he first stood upon the shore of that Indian Isle, and was saluted Discoverer of a New World.

A new world indeed was this wonderful island—this happy region, exhaustless in its glories, to the eager explorers. The spot in which they found themselves at this moment was singularly beautiful. It looked a scene in a realm of faëry. A small bay of curved form enclosed a space of sea of the most dazzling blue, rippling in the light, and so translucent that looking into it you could perceive the innumerable tree-ferns, and all the countless, curious diversities of marine vegetation, now still, now slightly wavering, as the waves shifted, with a distinctness which the most

delicate of microscopic aids to vision could alone supply. In this clear water of sapphire blue, which as it struck and broke upon the scattered miniature points, knobs and juts of rock, threw itself far and wide in showers of diamonds, could be discovered choice shells, lumps of amber which glistened like gold, pearls of enormous size, and precious things without name and without end.

The golden sands, reflecting the ardent beams of the broad bright day, gleamed with the richest treasures of ocean. There were shells of monstrous dimensions, with repeated volves whose pink, and green, and multitudinously coloured linings, were of such an illumination that hundreds of small rainbows seemed populating the borders of this fairy haven. Trees of coral, bright red, and white, nay, blue and purple; stems and spiculæ of basalt, and, farther up, and clinging amongst the soft shadows amid which would glow and play false lights, or reflected *shades* of light, (if such

a figure be allowable); strange shooting forms of splintered rocks, and groups of monolithic porphyry or jasper, standing like columns of unequal height, and hung, and twined and garlanded, as was indeed every object and each picturesque fragment; innumerable forms of wild grace and natural loveliness met the eye in every direction. Colonnades of the most abundantly fantastical, grotto-like irregularity; individual pillars one would have imagined the work of art, with gigantic apertures draped with a profusion of drooping flowers of the most gorgeous colours, and remarkable objects placed upon and surrounding this handywork of nature, of such a startling resemblance to the small independent details and classic appurtenances of architecture, that a beholder would pause in a sort of alarm, with a half-formed, suggestive expectation that the contrivers of these fairy structures, or their successors the inhabitants of this island of mysteries might present themselves. Peristyles where

every tiny adjunct of art found its imitation ; arch on arch circled round the bay, and rows of stones would descend in eccentric zig-zags, until the blue waves received them and they stood dimpling the surface of the dazzling sea.

Above the line of rocks, which seemed to rise up guarding like the long walls, and buttressed ramparts, and towers of observation of an ancient city, or like the solid perpendicular cliffs confining a wild uninhabited country, was a tract of dark forest, grim and gloomy as the domain of the Hesperides, awful and mysterious and suggestive of the wild things which might be contained within its jealous, dragon embrace. Here and there out of its recesses shot up trees of evidently immense height though the distance was so great. A sombre, fearful division of country indeed this looked, and contradictory and opposed to the blue beaming of the sky which spread above it, the strong sun which filled the air and earth

with brilliance, and the congregated heaps of the fantastic clouds, with their edges of scrolled light and their gleaming airy spires. In the centre of the island, and towering up peak after peak like the grouped minarets of a Mahomedan fane with its curved cupolas and Saracenic domes, its terraces and its traceries, were mountains which shone now of a deep blue colour, and printed their outlines, except where interrupted by the passing clouds which sailed as if swept across in laborious yet magnificent procession, distinct with every jag, and shelve, and precipitous dip, upon the background of burning sky. Loosed and scattered, indeed, over the heavens ; sprinkled, and cast adrift, and flinging down correspondingly intense colour over the landscapes which as you advanced successively opened to the eye, were showers of fiery clouds.

Cunique and his companions, after penetrating for two hours into the wild solitudes, found themselves descending. They lost sight

of the sea. They were now surrounded with monstrous rocks of the wildest shapes which it ever entered into the mind of madman even to conceive. Nature, wrung, and twisted, and agonized in her struggles towards ease and respite, and restoration to the regular and consistent and coherent, seemed like the dolphin in its last quiverings to extract involuntarily from her torture fresher, keener beauties, and a more startling glory: at every new contortion, at each recurring paroxysm to throw out, like beams, some unexpected phase of grandeur or impossible sublimity, which in its terror should strike dumb.

On their coming past the giant rocks, which were interspersed with trees of uncumbered centuries of age, Cunique and his company encountered matchless proofs of the riches of the island. Sometimes lumps of solid silver lurked in the crevices, even lay in slabs and paved a rough but precious road into the darkness of caverns which looked as if they would wind

away into the centre of the earth. Great cedar trees, tough trunks, and lighter stems of the richest woods, were everywhere. And in one place where there was a sort of track winding round the edge of an enormous hollow or rather circular valley, into which from the perpendicular character of the walls of rock which sunk down, there appeared no means of descent, there were scattered diamonds of such a size, and of so inestimable a value, that a single one would have been a revenue for three generations.

Cunique's followers found it impossible to suppress their joy at these discoveries, and were very eager to pause and store themselves with some of the treasures which they saw so prodigally scattered within their reach. Cunique succeeded, though with difficulty, in persuading them for the present to refrain. All journeyed on, though with some fear that they might eventually find the island not quite so abandoned and uninhabited as they at first supposed.

Proceeding farther, they found the country again change in its aspect. The cliffs, whose terrific summits had darkened over the serpentine passage, voiceless except with strange hollow echoes and mysterious whispers which struck fear into the hearts of the lonely wanderers, now drew apart and stretched away. The sound of running water met the ear; and soon a magnificent succession of cascades, shining like molten silver in the steady sun, accompanied the devious path which Cunique's people traced for themselves amongst the prostrate pines and tossed fragments of rock. At a considerable depth below, as yet blue in its distance, was a lovely valley, through which a wide river, speckled with green islets smiling in lavish fertility, took its placid way, until it circled in perspective and disappeared amidst the wide rich woodlands on the horizon.

After a long journey, the reverse of wearisome from the innumerable new objects of

excitement and interest which courted their gaze at every step, our adventurers approached the brink of the river. The sun was sloping, a globe of resplendent gold, in such a sky as Claude or Poussin never caught glimpse or reflection of in their most luxuriant, most highly coloured reveries. The scene was paradise; and the intense heat, and scorching abundance of the westerly sunbeams, which danced on the water in countless spires of yellow flame, tempted Cunique and his company to rest. So they sat down on the soft grass, and commenced an examination of the scenery which environed them.

Not a single human being, or the slightest trace of inhabitants, or a hint even that the island was ever visited by aught bearing the form of man! Cunique and his ship's company felt entirely alone. Animals had been seen: deer and goats, and smaller creatures; but they all appeared excessively shy, and had started away alarmed at the sight of

man, almost before their character could be made out.

A peculiar quality of this island, and one that was mysterious and unaccountable to an anxious extent sometimes, was that ever and anon, and though interrupted by the excited moods of mind with which so many terrestrial surprises were surveyed, and which it might have been concluded should dull their force, strange feelings stole over the minds of the adventurous company.

A sort of consciousness possessed them that there were other eyes there than their own. That there was an invisible presence regarding—watching them, from which, however they changed their scene, they did not escape. That they were not alone ; but were followed with surprise, perhaps displeasure, though nothing was to be seen, and this recognition of an influence—this perception of airy, unsubstantial attendance dwelt but in the fancy.

The island seemed peopled with strange airs. Musical murmurs, so faint and indistinct that you could scarcely think them anything but the lowest whisper of a soft summer wind, stole from the neighbouring woods and followed on, breathing such quiet yet keen and subtle harmony that the very heart fainted. Then a hundred golden harps would seem to vibrate in various directions, until the sound subsided into a silent breathing of more natural character, and you would recognise the undulating sweep of the wind or the hum and low plash of restless waters.

CHAPTER V.

HOW CUNIQUE RETURNS HOME, HIS OBJECTS
ACCOMPLISHED ; AND HOW HE IS UNITED
WITH THE FAIR PHRODITIS.

" Oh ! dream of joy ! is this, indeed,
The light-house top I see ?
Is this the hill ? is this the kirk ?
Is this my own countree ?"

Coleridge.

WHATEVER magic there might have been in
the island, and however delicious a place of
residence it seemed, Cunique's companions

were very anxious to quit it, and to reach their native country with the welcome tidings that the voyage of the Ship of Glass had been crowned with success, and the wonderful island been discovered.

With their superstitious minds alarmed by the strange sounds they had heard, and the glimpses of strange things they had caught in the interior of the island, the crew of the Ship of Glass remained wholly on the side of it on which were they cast ashore. They had not the heart again to penetrate into its mysterious recesses, but testified a very restless anxiety to quit the alluring but possibly treacherous shore. At least so they feared it.

In a short time they had gathered such a store of riches as perhaps ship never bore back to the country from which she had started forth.

How to contrive their escape from the island and compass a safe return with their spoils, was

a subject which agitated their councils night and day.

During all this time the food of our adventurers was literally

“The fruits :—their drink, the crystal well.”

Ripened by the southern sun, the fruits were delicious beyond measure, and were scattered in glowing abundance.

Cunigue's ready wit and ability, and moreover his maritime knowledge, in his voyage and now turned to the best account, were brought to bear upon the point at the present juncture. By his advice a bark, sufficiently large and strong to carry the adventurers, was to be built. There was indeed the wreck of the Ship of Glass, and from the fragments, had they been so disposed, her late crew might have managed to construct a vessel of a like character to carry them away, to that which had brought

them to the island. But there was wanting the matchless — almost pronounced — *magic* skill which had put together that frail-looking, but, as it had proved, durable bark. Even had such a achievement been possible as the reconstruction of the Ship of Glass, it may be doubted whether one who came in her would have been inclined to trust her strength, and peril his safety in her again.

Wood there was in plenty, and of the richest quality, too, to send to sea such a fleet as had never been seen afloat before, had there been builders. But as numbers were so few, and strength so unequal, a clumsy sort of vessel was all that could be hoped.

Under Cunique's direction, by dint of hard labour a small bark was built on the sea-shore in a sort of little natural harbour, where the water was deep enough to float her when she should be finished. Near to the waterside grew a grove of sandal wood; and of this costly material was Cunique's new ship built.

Such a cargo perhaps was never seen. She was laden with bars of gold, a quantity of the richest diamonds procurable out of the bounds of that haunted region in the centre of the island, and such specimens of the productions of the island, and a collection so great of curiosities of a sort and kind never before seen in the world, that the extravagant expectations of the wonder they should excite on their return, might have been justified in our fortunate adventurers.

Bright and beautiful—auspicious in every way, was the day on which Cunique set sail for his own country. Such a pleasant steady breeze set in after the ship had attained some leagues from the shore, that by afternoon the island was a low blue cloud in the west.

Days past;—months came and went, and Cunique's new ship sailed gallantly forward with a swift breeze and a smooth sea. At length, after repeated trials, he gained the latitude of the Straits. He sailed through

them and came in sight of the Costad'oro; and lastly of Tafna-Khalifas.

We shall make no pause to tell of the wonder, the joy with which Cunique was telegraphed on his return, and the parade with which he entered the harbour, and was carried before the Governor, Tophaik Calumet. Illuminations for three days, and a universal festival greeted his return.

The curiosities he displayed, the priceless gems he produced; more than all, the astonishing accounts which his companions circulated of the riches, the beauties, and the mysteries of the island, bought

“Golden opinions from all sorts of people.”

Cunique and Phroditis were folded in each other's arms. United to part never—never more—What happiness was theirs—what delight was Cunique's! Let us hasten to our conclusion, or we shall be hurried into a grave fault which we would much rather not fall into:—we shall envy him.

Blessed for ever be that fair island—mysterious though it remained—through the instrumentality of which, such good was effected—such a joy compassed as the union of two such hearts!

If there be two such devoted lovers as Cunique and Phroditis:—we are uncertain, because we scarcely think that people in these bad days love as they did in those bright times when the world was young;—hardly indeed as they did a century ago, for Love has grown commercial, and has had the feathers of his wings cut into pens and his quiver of darts run away with and an account-book given him instead:—but if there remain so true a pair of lovers, may they have, if not a fortunate island, at least a fortunate something or somebody to bring them together!

And to this good wish, we say Amen! with all our heart.

THE END.

ATCHERLEY.

" To beguile the time,
Look like the time ; bear welcome in your eye,
Your hand, your tongue : Look like the innocent
flower,
But be the serpent under it."

Shakespeare.

" So, in the world : 'tis furnish'd well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive ;
Yet, in the number, I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshak'd of motion ; and, that I am he."

Shakespeare.

" He invariably turned the whole arcana of life to the account of the absurd, and made men, not the victims of distaste as I did, but the shallow puppets of a farce."

Robert Bell.

ATCHERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

"All furnish'd, all in arms,
All plumed like estridges that wing the wind ;
Bated like eagles having lately bathed ;
Glittering in golden coats like images,
As full of spirit as the month of May,
And gorgeous as the sun at midsummer ;
I saw young Harry,—with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly arm'd,
Rise from the ground like feather'd Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds,
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus,
And witch the world with noble horsemanship."

Henry IV. Act IV. Scene I.

—————"By my hopes,——
This present enterprise set off his head,——
I do not think, a braver gentleman,
More active-valiant, or more valiant-young,
More daring, or more bold, is now alive,
To grace this latter age with noble deeds."

Henry IV. Act V. Scene I.

"I am not what I am."

Othello, Act I. Scene I.

Two travellers were journeying along a cross road, sufficiently rough to cause some incon-

venience to their steeds, in the heart of the county of Derby.

Apparently the horses had traversed a considerable space since their last place of abiding; for their advance was somewhat laborious, and their air the reverse of sprightly. Any one could however have discerned that their blood was of some condition, and their character, when fresh, of an elevated order.

The progenitors of the nearer one had evidently snuffed the air of the plains of Iberia; for though not much of the noble spirit of his ancestors could now be detected within him, there was a subdued though struggling vivacity in his movements, which proclaimed to the observer, that, when unwearied, in the field or course he could exhibit a not insignificant portion of the mettle of his honourable race.

The other animal displayed the more cautious, not to say sluggish, characteristics of his German or rather Flemish genealogy. His

colour was a coal black, even without the usual exception of snips and stars of white on feet and nose; but its sleekness was materially impaired by the accumulated dust of hastily traversed leagues. His shape, however, if not as eminently symmetrical as that of his less exhausted companion, possessed considerable claims to the least superficial admiration; and his steadiness and obedience fully counterbalanced the disadvantages which, in the opinion of some, he might have inherited from his not equally distinguished lineage.

The riders of these sometime gallant steeds exhibited a sufficiently different appearance to partly identify them with the characteristics of the creatures on which they were mounted. The disposition of a man may often be seen by the nature of the animal with which he is accustomed to be associated. There is a tacit necessity for agreement in their movements which involuntarily suggests the choice; that species of provident speculation which influences a

man in the selection of a friend ; the conviction that there must be a likeness in tastes, habits and inclinations, sufficiently strong to prevent unpleasant collision afterwards.

Agreeably to this apparently immaterial bias in human nature, the two animals might have furnished a quick observer with something like an insight into the characters of their correspondent cavaliers. It is said that the countenance is the index of the mind ; but the saying, though true in a broad sense, cannot always be made to individually apply. The face, being the chief seat of expression, is always the point most solicitously guarded : as the avenue which might let out the betrayal of his weakness is ever most carefully watched by a prudent governor. Even the habitual and guardless expression of the face is an ill guide that will as often lead one to false conclusions as to correct. As danger will alight from an unsuspected quarter, so will unanticipated traits evolve from a seemingly well

regulated and quiescent disposition. In dress the inclinations of a man will frequently display themselves: while we keep an unremitting eye over the chief inlets of penetration, we often overlook those which are less obvious but not the less serviceable. From the attire of our two worthies, a guess, with the chance of being a remote one, might have been hazarded at their governing peculiarities.

As the nearer, and, to judge from outward circumstances, slightly more attractive one, we will begin with the younger person.

The frame of this individual was tall though slight; but his height had the disadvantage of being scanned on horseback. Possessed of the well rounded outlines that bestow a general grace, gifted with that consummate ease which only a practised horseman can acquire, his form bore an air of patrician activity, of soldierlike independence, that was a ready passport to the respect of the beholder. There was a carelessness in his movements that be-

tokened a bias towards wilfulness in his disposition; and the mode in which he now encouraged and then checked his steed, shewed that he was either inattentive to the obvious langour of the animal, or that his mind was occupied by other and higher objects; more probably the latter.

His countenance, though usually open, was thoughtful; and a slight frown, one of deep consideration, the deeper perhaps because of the rarity of the feeling which it expressed, shaded his brow as his eye wandered around him. His face was long and of a good outline: the lower part of it tapering away to a well-formed chin: his complexion was good, though slightly tinctured with brown, probably through exposure to the suns of a warm climate, and his features were remarkably handsome. Quick black eyes, arched by two dark, well-bowed eyebrows, shone beneath a high, wide and pale forehead, by the side of

which drooped, in the style of the day, long curls glossy and exuberant.

His dress, though not calculated particularly to catch the eye, was handsome and scrupulously cut, and its material apparently of a superior quality. His shape was fitted by a travelling coat of buff, the seams guarded with lace, and the shoulder-points teeming with a profusion of scarlet ribbons and gold tags. Round his neck and half way over his shoulders was a collar of rich lace, covered with white embroidery; riding boots of roughly dressed leather were drawn half way up his legs; their edges, instead of being trimmed, as usual, with the same kind of lace as that of which his collar was composed, were simply bound with a cord of gold: spurs of a light metal protruded from his heels, and his knees and vestments glittered with quivering tags gilt with gold.

Over a face, the lower part of which was ornamented with a pair of moustachios, circled

a round, low-crowned hat of beaver, banded with a circlet of gold lace, fastened in front with a brooch of gold, the light workmanship of which was studded by a small amethyst. The broad flat brim of his head covering was decorated by a lateral half circle of feathers, that alternately waved and fluttered in the evening breeze.

To complete the portrait, by way of arms were borne a rapier, hilted and scabbard-jointed with gold, lightly attached to a broad shoulder-belt of scarlet that, passing diagonally across his body, was drawn beneath a sash of silk of the same showy colour closing and uniting his waist, and a pair of silver-mounted pistols deposited in holsters of damasked leather.

His companion made a much more simple appearance. His height was not so great as that of his neighbour, and though the latter was rivalled with respect to slightness of form, the limbs of his friend were so accurately proportioned, his body was so

judiciously moulded, and each proportion so admirably prevented from becoming a too prominent feature, that an air of equal activity and much superior strength was imparted. A breadth of shoulder that promised a capability of much endurance, a rising neck and well-balanced head that argued a constancy of purpose and clearness and soundness of an ever self-possessing judgment, a gradual inclination of waist and straitness and roundness of arm, implying much stability, and the firmness and graceful outline of his lower limbs, added a peculiar effect to his height, that seemed to bestow a prepossessing grandeur to the impression of his whole appearance, and caused the eyes of the beholder to wander from the person of its favoured possessor to that of his scarcely less gifted companion, in uncertainty whether to admire most the youthful elasticity of shape and lightness of movement of the one, or the tranquil and fascinating dignity of the other.

His face was not even as slightly embrowned as that of his youthful neighbour: it was pale and contemplative. His features were equilly well formed. Manly and well outlined lips, a classical nose, and delicately rounded chin; high, eminently intellectual and expansive forehead, hollowed temples, and dark clustering locks, created a resemblance in his countenance, when composed, to the chiselled facial sublimities of the Phidian Jupiter.

A glance would have told the observer that nothing could have been gathered by the expression of that to which we ordinarily look for a solution of our doubts respecting it, of his real character. In the cold, composed, and perfectly self-possessed, full-faced look that courted the eye of the observer, seemingly incapable of being compelled to exhibit a trait of undesired interest and particular intelligence, you read that all the advantage of observation must rest on the side of the

individual whom you were hopelessly seeking to betray into an expression of real undisguised nature. Nothing could be so mortifying to one who fancies he possesses the power of observation. This was so eminently the character of the second traveller's glance, that disappointment could only be propitiated by wondering how a self-command so advantageously despotic to the possessor and so thoroughly inacquirable so long as the human face was made for expression, could possibly, to judge from appearances, be so easily obtained and felicitously exercised.

His eyes, indeed—black, large and clear orbs, shaded by clear dark brows—seemed formed for penetrating not only the thin and ordinary concealments of less important character, but the deeper, more reserved, and most solicitously guarded secrets, that weighty and tyrannical reasons might decree for everlasting suppression. The most confident schemer that ever buried his machinations in

a mystery inaccessible to those who rejoiced in a reputation for an extraordinary penetration among the usually ill-judging crowd, might well have feared to meet his unpreoccupied, intense and unwavering eye. . He seemed, in short, to possess as perfect a command over his slightest look or motion, as he did over the animal he so deliberately, carelessly, and yet so surpassingly governed.

Attire in a man of this peculiar nature would seem to be a very secondary guide as to character. From a refinement in policy, however, he studied to meet that which would appear, in the general level of human nature, a profound deduction; and foreseeing that few, witnessing his apparent character, would look for a betrayal of his real one in so insignificant a matter as his dress, his vestments were unstudiedly dissimilar to his merely superficial nature, and perhaps approached more nearly than would have been suspected to his real one.

This one-sided policy savoured much of that of a celebrated general, who invariably published, when about to move, his true line of march, justly arguing that as the enemy were likely to disbelieve him he should take them by surprise, and flattering in this respect the inclination of human nature, which rarely does one the justice to suppose a real intention, so contrary to all the favourite principles of worldly mindedness, is so candidly and apparently so impolitically exposed. Those, therefore, who would have come to conclusions upon seemingly elaborate and deep reasons, would, in reality, have stood the fairest chance of being themselves overreached.

His dress, though simple, betokened, even in these outward and inferior circumstances, one entitled to respect. He wore a similar travelling coat to that of his companion; but, though it was assiduously fitted, its hue was of a very different nature. Composed of olive-green cloth, simply if at all relieved by

silk lace of the same colour, and exhibiting a very scanty distribution of ornament, it seemed even to better agree with the thoughtful character of his face than a garment of more ostentatious and valuable appearance. His limbs were cased in black hose, that were partly concealed by leathern boots of a similar style though more formal cut than those of his fellow traveller. Stout spurs, varnished with green, completed his lower appointments, while a horseman's spreading cloak, half thrown off and hanging slightly over one shoulder, displayed somewhat less of his person than might have been desired. His alight sword hung by a baldric of polished leather, and he carried weapons of no other description. The sleeves of his sombre coat were tight enough to display a muscular and well rounded arm, while his hands, almost feminine in smallness and delicacy, were covered with gauntlets wholly destitute of stud or ornament.

Over his face, which was greatly shaded by thick and dark hair, he wore a round hat of a very similar style to that of his friend; only, instead of a band of gold, it was encircled by a broad one of silk, vying in obscurity with the hue of the glossy beaver. His plumes were also disposed in much the same manner they were in the other case, but they were much fewer in number and sable in tint.

The prevailing character of his vestments it will be seen was one of stability nearly allied to dignity, willing at the same time that it avoided observation to inspire respect and proclaim the respectability of the wearer, while the operation by which that conviction of respectability was conveyed remained unobtruded and unsuspected.

It inspired that feeling, in fact, which actuates the beholder when he knows he is in the presence of a superior person, but is at a loss to state by what means or through what unostentatious channel the knowledge is conveyed. A

hasty observer would have assigned it to the countenance, in which was concentrated so much self-collected dignity, aided by a handsomely curled upper lip and slight moustache; but a closer examination would have been sufficient to disturb the attributing it to any particular source, when the total want of all authority, the undisguised repose, and the absence of any peculiar expression floated over the memory.

The *tout ensemble*, however, evidently produced the effect, the presence of which was acknowledged while its mode of production was problematical, that was inattributable to the agency of any independent feature.

The scene through which our two wayfarers were journeying was romantic, and must when the sun was high enough to display distant objects have been peculiarly calculated to attract the attention.

The narrow road, the repair of which was forgotten as long as the slight use that was

made of it justified the neglect, was sufficiently rough in surface and irregular in line to accord with the secluded character of the country on either side. Ridges of broken ground straggling into all the varieties of uncultured eccentricity, patched in places with an undergrowth of heath and gorse, the dark streaks of which, gemmed with innumerable yellow stars, contrasted richly with the gravelly stratified features of the soil, breaking abruptly into miniature cliffs and fringy gulphs, rose tier after tier, now advancing near and then climbing more ambitiously into comparative distance, on either side of the devious and uncertain road.

At some distance the country seemed to break away towards some cultivated tract; for though the bright green masses of trees which threw their solitary stems into the tangled herbage that crept about their curling roots descended into the adjacent ground free to every vagrant foot that chose to wind

among them, studded lines of less irregular green ranked themselves behind each other and based a few glimpses of rich blue country, that glanced between the rising and fantastic groups of flowery rock.

The scene was graced by a perfect stillness except when broken by the slow and drowsy tread of the travellers' horses. The sun was dipping down, attended merely by a few crimson crescents of cloud, towards the line of western crag, gilding the opposite points and juttings with a deep and equal intensity; and the bright blue of the scarcely clouded sky was already deepening, as if anticipating the obscurity of twilight.

CHAPTER II.

" *Polonius*.—But, sir, such wanton, wild, and usual
slips,

As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty.

Reynaldo.—As gaming, my lord."

Hamlet. Act ii. Scene 1.

" Nay then I have an eye of you."

Ibid. Act ii. Scene 2.

For some time past, as if by mutual agree-
ment, the converse of our two worthies had

been limited to subjects desultorily remembered of a more than ordinary importance, or passing observations on that encountered which called for particular remark.

Now however that the termination of their journey seemed throwing off its remoteness, their attention appeared more than usually active; and the readiness for brisker and more continued conversation was developed in each by their abandoning that air of abstraction which had hung over them. The horseman in the olive green vestments perceiving that what he said was not likely to be expended upon a preoccupied hearer, was the first to break the silence.

"We shall find the seclusion of Tarrington Place," said he, "dull after the gaieties of Paris."

"I shall find it the less tolerable," answered his companion, "that I am returning to it with somewhat different feelings to those with which I set out. In the light in which I look

upon it at the present moment, it seems more than usually uncongenial. It is the effect of impatience to make us dissatisfied with that which was before even pleasing. There was a time when I was fond of all about it—aye, of its very name; but affairs change, and we are such very chameleons that we partake the change.”

“It is natural: we are the creatures of circumstance, and it is not strange that a variation in that on which we subsist should revolutionise its dependants.”

“I have been a fool,” continued the younger traveller, “and should have known better than to be carried away so passively by the stream. Either a forgetfulness of the determination I should have called forth, or an acquiescent indolence unwilling to see towards what shoal I was driving, set my judgment to sleep. I cannot even restore myself to self-complacency by a resolution to raise what has passed to the dignity of a monitor. Could

such an alchymy be effected, it would be extracting good out of evil. But time, that traitor, that destroyer of all good resolutions, by weakening the impression will impair my justification."

"Time has many things to answer for, as well as good to be ascribed to; we can make him our enemy as well as our friend. I am unwilling to have recourse to the world's peculiarly effective mode of consolation, and say, 'Ah! I told you how it would be,' and, 'if you had but listened to my advice!'"

"Depend upon it your unwillingness cannot be greater than mine. Certainly, if gifted with no other praiseworthy quality, you have one laudable distinction, and that is, that you obtrude your advice in such small quantities that the doses have more an agreeable pungency than otherwise. I do not think you will ever offend my peculiarities in that respect."

"Are you clear that the cautious propositions in which my advice has been administered

have not been more beneficial, because not equally obvious, than if a contrary course had been pursued."

"You are right," answered his neighbour, "and your position will carry double. Nothing could better have satisfied me that doctors are inimical instead of friendly to the constitution, seeing that it is their interest to reiterate their medicines, and that the too constant application of an intended remedy will neutralise its operation."

"You are become a close reasoner, I perceive," said the individual in green, with a quiet smile, "if of no other advantage, the circles of Paris have done you good by sharpening you into a casuist, Is it not almost a pity that the newly acquired attainment came too late to serve you in balancing probabilities?"

"Ah!" cried his companion, "I see what you would be at: honest as you are, Atcherley, you have yet something like a malicious bias to hovering over a sore subject. You

put me in mind of one of those insects which become more pertinacious as the object of their persecution is more extensively galled. A whole skin invites not the one, and a sound conscience defies the other.

“You are the only man I ever met,” returned he who had been styled Atcherley, “whose candour provoked an observation like your last. Candour in some cases is a virtue ; in others an indiscretion. Is laying bare a fault likely to add to the respect of others ? would the exposing of his weakness by a commander probably increase the forbearance of an enemy ? You will say that those to whom only you would be candid are likely to be the reverse of inimical : but do we not all flatter ourselves with the belief that we reach a satisfactory standard of goodness, and must not the confession of a dereliction imply an inferiority in another. But do not quarrel with what you call my hovering over a sore subject : you were fearful but now that time

his meaning was by no means apparent, the very reverse; "the equanimity to which it gives rise is favourable to reflection. I do not apprehend Sir Reginald Torrington would be inclined to make up the deficiency in your fortune; and yet he *might* have reckoned his dignity was compromised in the unfortunate affair."

"I am sure he would not; it was at my departure for a species of voluntary exile, undertaken principally at his representations, *and my view of them,*" the latter words were uttered with peculiar significance, "that he besought me by all means to be economical, as his own income, whatever it might *appear*, was comparatively scanty; you know in what light, Atcherley, we are to take the concluding assertion.

An acquiescent sigh of thoughtfulness was the only reply.

"It was singular, however, he should attempt to mislead *me* by it."

“Ah!” said Atcherley, with a meaning smile, “Sir Reginald has as much philosophy as his brother; but do you not think that that philosophy which can be seen through, scarcely deserves the name?”

“I do not exactly see that philosophy, to be genuine, should affect obscurity, or that it would be necessary in our instance.”

“Its application may necessarily be more general than you imagine,” replied Atcherley, drily. “You have one consolation, however, in this business, and that is, that the loss of the money could not have affected your position with Rockingham and his daughter.”

“It would not directly,” answered his friend, “but, implying extravagance, might have heightened the disadvantageous light in which he views me. I am fated to be unsuccessful in everything. I tried in vain to persuade Julia to a secret marriage, urging my ability to procure her all the gratifications to which, in

the house of her father, she was accustomed, and my unalterable love. Both inducements, poor as they were, but all I had to offer, were insufficient to shake what she called her duty to her father, and her unwillingness to take—what appeared to her—so strange and imprudent a step. In holding out to her a belief that I was capable of supporting her in the mode I wished, without hesitation or difficulty, I somewhat overstept the truth; and this present unfortunate *accident*, as you are pleased to call it—though I could not then have it in contemplation — has widened the dereliction.”

“The proposal was scarcely prudent, and could not have failed of producing mortification perhaps on both sides. Her forbearance was commendable, for you have reason to think she loves you.”

“The conviction,” answered his companion, “adds to my impatience and distress !”

“ And now that you are returning to your brother's house, and consequently to her neighbourhood, what course do you propose to pursue?”

“ I do not know : in returning I have merely gratified that restlessness which longs for change. When the decision was made, I fancied I could not rest in her neighbourhood ; and when I found myself a greater distance from the spot from which I had wandered than I was willing to think of, I discovered that while my body was in Paris, my mind was in Derbyshire.”

“ A material and not altogether convenient separation,” muttered Atcherley. “ Now to tell the truth,” he continued, in a more audible tone. “ I do not see the matter in the same difficult light as you. You are one of those despairing lovers who are too dispirited to grasp with the obstacles that arise in their path. Foiled in the outset in what they deem an important point, they lose the false deter-

mination with which they boldly set out, and give the matter, with a melancholy and wistful irresolution, over as desperate. Hitherto I have only acted in this matter as a looker-on; hazarding now and then a word of advice, encouragement or observation: but now I am determined to become a more interested performer. Rockingham and I are on very good terms, and it may be in my power to assist you. He is accounted wealthy, and the dowry which he is able to give his daughter has made him think himself entitled to match her with the noble. Strange it is, indeed, that you should so have steered apart from each other, since there is a parallel in your mode of thinking which seemingly you have hitherto overlooked. This point to which you are unconsciously journeying, seems to promise, however, to bring you into close and friendly contact."

The look of incomprehensibility which the

young traveller bestowed upon his companion, was not unmixed with a speculative satisfaction.

“ I was not aware,” said he, after a pause, “ there existed any point of resemblance between the father of Julia and myself.”

“ This it has been my lot to discover,” said Atcherley. While mutual distrust has kept you apart, your opinions have been the same; and the similarity of those opinions will materially change the light in which he views you. An equal indignation at oppression, an equal perception of the no longer cautious steps with which tyranny is advancing to triumph, a requickening zeal for the threatened liberties of an insulted and degraded country, and a conviction that decisive measures can alone preserve all that is worth preservation from the high-seated yet diligent spoiler, form the basis of similarity, and ought to remove the little

reserve and distrust which it is expedient yet should remain between ye. The obstacle to your happiness, I take it, is removed with the apparent aversion of one whom I may now call your future father-in-law. You must be as well pleased to see it effected through identity of opinion, as I am to contemplate the easy way in which it was brought to pass!"

Surprise kept his companion silent for some minutes. Viewing doubts and difficulties, which had appeared portentous, through the new and half-convincing medium which so unexpectedly and yet feasibly submitted to him without extinguishing had greatly impaired their force, he seemed unable to appreciate or admit the tangibility of the means by which they had been so simply and felicitously changed.

While his fear and disinclination to believe what appeared a surprise too agreeable to be substantial, impelled him to review what

had been imparted with a jealous scrutiny, his hopes acknowledged it not palpably assailable, and yet he was kept in doubt how far he might extend his trust. Knowing little or nothing of Rockingham's opinions, as they were always solicitously kept in the back ground, and not having had occasion to consider how far his own were in accordance with them, or whether, having been so, they would have worked an alteration in his favour, he had but taken his discountenance in a general sense, and had never earnestly employed himself in examining from what particular source it happened to spring.

He had been chiefly inclined, however, to attribute it to the obvious neglect with which Sir Reginald Torrington treated him, and which Rockingham would have naturally fancied proceeded from some well-grounded reason, and to the calumnious imputations of dissipation and extravagance which had been cast on his character.

At present he seemed to think with Atcherley, that the sentiments of Rockingham had of late been greatly qualified.

“ Ah !” he cried, taking the hand of his friend, and shaking it with candid fervour ; “ I can perceive your silent yet industrious and friendly interposition in this most unexpected change.”

“ Which has been partly effected during the first part of your residence in France, and during which you will remember I yet remained in England. Rockingham has in his eye a rescue of the nation from Popery and misgovernment. Though I am seldom accustomed to give vent to my opinion on such matters, I must confess the latter has been carried to its verge. He is inclined to look about for assistants, and this political contact of kindred spirits may be agreeable in more than one way.”

“ If, as you assert, and I am inclined to believe,” said his neighbour, eagerly ; “ such an advantageous change has taken place in the point which would

have alone uniformly separated us, a visit from both of us would not be disagreeable. While he could not altogether approve of me as a near connection, he expressed no objection for me to continue my visits at his house in the character of a friend."

Atcherley had now brought his friend round to expressing that of which he had himself a desire. He had a singular partiality for making a companion in person bring the very thing forward which he wished himself, while it was apparently wholly a matter of independent thought. While the person upon whom his calculations rested fancied they were bringing forward a subject originating with themselves, they had been impelled by a refined and unperceived machinery to unconsciously broach that, the expression of which had been probably all along angled for.

Atcherley having thus thoroughly gratified his peculiarity—a peculiarity so habitual that suc-

cess afforded no unusual satisfaction--expressed a purposely partially hesitating assent, and quietly observed that a turn in the road to the right would bring them to the new object of their destination. His companion, losing the air of easy indifference with which he had impelled his steed to a constancy of pace, in one of impatience, struck the spurs lightly into the flanks of the animal, who, wincing at the unexpected and unwelcome inducement, started off into what was a brisk trot for his state of hitherto indulged exhaustion, and bore his rider some yards in advance of his politic fellow traveller.

Agreeably to his intimation, the road, viewing in sinuosities and roughness with that from which they were about to emerge, which Atcherley had mentioned, was discovered, winding off into some rising ground.

The younger personage, whose increased speed noticed above had somewhat thrown him forward, espying the deviation, drew up

in order to confirm his supposition that this was the turning they were to take by the approval of his informant. A sign sufficed to give the information necessary, and the enquirer consequently disappeared. He was shortly, however, rejoined by Atcherley, who for that purpose had put his horse in motion.

Resuming their way with an amended speed which betokened anxiety to reach the place, to which they were now bound before the fading light should entirely disappear, their conversation became more sparing, and was confined to that important matter which had preceded the present relaxation of discourse.

The younger traveller had now totally lost that dispiriting appearance of care and abstraction, which even a thoughtless and vivacious temperament like his own could not prevent seizing him, and when obtruded, was insufficient to shake off. With a happy indifference to, or rather forgetfulness of the

past, germane to his cast of mind, and of utility sufficient to throw that on one side the remembrance of which, as well as useless, was painful and irksome, he seemed to possess the agreeable facility of shifting his views till one was presented sufficiently congenial to be entertained.

That which we are anxious to believe we reconcile to our doubts and accept as understood. Our eyesight then appears to assume the faculty of perceiving all which we are desirous to behold — and we adjudge the object must be as palpable to other people's senses, as we have flattered ourselves into the conviction it is to our own. We will not permit ourselves to examine whether our wishes may not have had some share in the creation, but acknowledge it, and want that strength of mind which will thoroughly examine before it coincides.

Highly pleased that so much of the diffi-

culty which opposed him had given way, and eager to conclude that the work, thus well begun, would soon yield to his efforts he merged the contemplation of any remaining obstacle in the gratification excited by that success already achieved, and the smiling probabilities that on every side arose to cheer him. Eager to feel himself in the condition so much and yet so hopelessly desired, as fully to the satisfaction of others as already apparent to himself, he exercised a mechanical wish to really diminish every moment, the distance which his heart had even now over-leaped.

His impatience, though visible enough, was not shared by his less sanguine companion. His aspect was the same as before the change which his communications had worked in his listener, and if he had a trifle increased his speed, it was plain enough it as much owing to the disinclination to have darkness with the remainder of their now

rapidly terminating journey, as the partaking of the young man's feelings.

The road was now winding through a picturesque and elevated tract; and in the distance, half concealed by the mists of evening, the object for which they had digressed from the road to the original limit of their journey, was faintly to be discerned.

CHAPTER III.

"Alas, poor lady! desolate and left!"
Two Gentlemen of Verona. Act 4. Scene 4.

"Father'd he is, and yet he's fatherless."
Macbeth. Act 4. Scene 2

"Sirrah, your father's dead;
And what will you do now? How will you live?"
Ibid. Act 4. Scene 2.

"The course of true love never did run smooth."
Midsommer Night's Dream. Act 1. Scene 1.

DURING the short time which yet remains to
our travellers to spend upon the road before

they reach the habitation of Rockingham, it may be perhaps more conducive to the thorough understanding of the relative circumstances under which they are about to re-introduce themselves to him, if we give our kind reader a slight insight into their characters, and the contingencies which first took the companion of Atcherley to the metropolis of France, guided his conduct there, and influenced his not altogether expected return. What may not have been gathered in its clear and necessary bearings from the conversation of the preceding chapter, we may by recapitulating in a connected and less desultory form satisfactorily intimate. The necessary information may be comprehensively and briefly conveyed, and the motives already partially developed be at the same time elucidated.

The younger individual already introduced to the reader, whose name was Roland Torrington, was the second son of Sir Henry

Torrington, a baronet of considerable estate in Derbyshire.

Deriving his name from an ancient family, whose possessions in former days, though not extensive, were valuable, and educated in those particular dogmas of royal and episcopal ascendancy which then viewed with jealousy and impatience, afterwards became the sources of that convulsion which shook the kingdom to its basis, it is not surprising that a high degree of self-value and monarchical prejudice should have been infused into his disposition. Though carefully inducting his son in all the extremity of his own opinions, and moulding his opening character upon the model judged so pre-eminent, Sir Henry's father confined his advocacy of the royal cause to a verbal and passive maintenance. Motives of prudence might have had their share in this lukewarmness, for those of the landed nobility and gentry who had not been able to preserve the

same laudable neutrality, at the declension of their royal master's fortunes were severely reminded of the side they adopted.

Whatever had been the influence to which this caution was attributable, Sir Henry, on the decease of his parent, was wise enough to see that it had profited him; and acutely arguing that what had been of advantage before was likely to be so again, he felt not only a disinclination to quarrel with the policy of which it was the result, but paid it the best of all compliments, a steady imitation.

Succeeding to the family honours in the early part of the Protectorate, his conduct was so perfectly free from the irregularities of faction, that he was left to preserve to himself not only the opinions in which he had been educated, but the temporalities with which they stood in rather dangerous juxtaposition.

Over the principal body of the Royalists in England, which, overawed and seeking no inconvenient intimation of its presence was yet

not remote from strength, he was qualified by his abilities and good birth, still more by the acknowledged loyalty of his name, though that name had not been found in the ranks of the supporters of regality in the great Civil War, to exercise a by no means limited or empty influence. But his mind had no political bias. Though energetic, its energy was wasted on things of secondary moment: though powerful, its power was least of all likely to be tested in political and at the same time dangerous intrigue. Impelled by this self-abandonment, he slighted many opportunities by which he might have obtained the confidence of his silent though observant party, and the future obligations of him upon whom, in his conviction, he looked as his sovereign.

And yet there were moments when he could break through the ice of his caution and exhibit the qualifications for command which were really to be found in his character. Capabilities which might have borne good

fruit, had been obscured if not subverted by a vicious and injudicious education ;—an education by which he had been taught to look with fondness upon idleness and gaiety, and contemplate with peculiar complacency the character of an influential star in the fashion and frivolity which had characterised a former period, and still made part of the religion of a thorough Cavalier.

The power of his mind—a mind whose natural luxuriance had run to waste and profusely brought forth, flourishing on a light and superficial soil, instead of the more cautious, slowly developed, and sterling fruits, a succession of gaudy and ephemeral productions—those powers debarred from more honourable channels, all leaned to an epicurism decorated by imagination, dignified by a sophistical philosophy, rendered pleasing by a good-natured though ill-judging generosity, and graced by a deliberate yet unflinching courage. He was in fact the Belial of his party.

His bias towards a general gallantry was done ample justice to. The lady of rank, the tradesman's wife or daughter, and the simple cottage maiden were each answerable to it.

In one instance, and but one, his generosity had been compromised. The case related to a beautiful female who had yielded to his arts, and who, after a protection of some duration, had been abruptly deserted. The desertion was shared by a male infant, after whom apparently no enquiry had been subsequently made by Sir Henry.

This child, educated and supported by his mother until his arrival at years of discretion, was after her death, which was reported to have taken place in her thirty-seventh year and under circumstances of considerable privation, traced to a foreign country but eventually lost sight of. A short time previous to her death, some enquiry had been instituted by Sir Henry Torrington respecting her place

of retreat. This enquiry, unsuccessful at its outset, never reached her, and the poor creature died in ignorance of his tardy solicitude. Report whispered it to be the result of remorse aggravated by illness, for some little time antecedent to her decease Sir Henry was seized with what threatened to be a long and dangerous disease.

He was fated however to recover, and at the end of a few months had regained all his original strength. His good intentions, if he had ever seriously entertained any, departed with the illness which had given rise to them, and no subsequent inquiries were ever made respecting his unknown child and its much injured and scarcely remembered parent.

A few years waned away, and the preceding events were forgotten by all. Providence however was yet to inflict the severest chastisement upon Sir Henry. The sixth year from the death of the deserted one was in its commencement, when he was attacked with sudden

and alarming illness, which resisting the efforts of all his physicians, who declared themselves puzzled with its character, terminated fatally in a brief space. The lately gay and gallant Sir Henry, who had however latterly reformed much of the outward unseemliness of his behaviour and betaken himself wholly to the country, breathed his last at his hereditary residence, Torrington Place, in the forty-eighth year of his age, leaving two sons, who at the time of his decease, which occurred in the year 1674, had attained the respective ages of twenty-one and seventeen.

He was succeeded in his title, estate, and influence in the county, by the eldest of his sons. Their mother, the scion of a noble house, to whom Sir Henry had been wedded but a very short time after the *liaison* noticed above, had been peculiarly partial to the elder, whom she fancied, in contradistinction to his less fortunate brother, inherited her disposition in addition to his title to the reversion of the

family honours. She died long previous to the period at which the latter fell into his possession.

As the family had, as we have before observed, throughout the civil war wholly taken a neutral or rather totally inactive part, occupied by their own concerns, and had at the condemnation and execution of the unfortunate Charles prudently seen the wisdom of holding their peace upon the political affairs then agitating, the ruling party had no pretext for interfering with their perhaps still silently entertained opinions, or sequestrating any part of their property. At the death of Sir Henry Torrington it therefore passed into the hands of his son, now Sir Reginald, unaffected by the change which had in a greater or less degree taken place through the country.

Sir Reginald, on assuming his new dignity, brought with him a dignified and prepossessing person, a fine though thoughtful and some-

what melancholy countenance, and a disposition not unamiably inclined though cautious and reserved. His education had been more judicious than that of his father, and the events of the time had taught him forbearance in opinion and a liberal and unprejudiced mode of viewing things. Many therefore of the more arbitrary and unnecessary acts of the profligate government excited a censure which savoured of liberalism, and induced him to seclude himself not only from public affairs and courtly intrigue, but the atmosphere in which they saw the light and were successively transacted.

Somewhat niggard of expense, and diligent in the supervision of his domestic affairs, he had formed the design of completing his brother's education, who, it will be remembered, on his taking possession of his patrimony was some years his junior, by forwarding his inclinations for a transit to a German university. On his father's death, Roland

Torrington therefore took his departure for the continent and settled himself in the place agreed upon.

It was at this place he first became acquainted with Atcherley, who held a subordinate commission in the Imperial army. Though dissimilar in several points, their acquaintance through cultivation ripened into intimacy; and upon Atcherley's departure from the city in which Roland was living, the latter, whose careless and lively temperament little accorded with the persevering severities of study, was after some persuasion induced, as he suggested by way of justification to his conscience, for a time to forego the tedious routine of academical discipline, and seek in other places for relaxation.

Though for a time betrayed into some reprehensible irregularities, Roland was too much a person of impulse to uniformly or finally abandon serious and advantageous pursuits. After a relaxation of some duration,

he again, partly at the instigation of his friend Atcherley, who, singular enough, was the reverse of what might have been looked for in so constant a companion, betook himself to the university, and completed his studies with more success than might from his eager and enterprising character have been expected.

A few years passed away. Roland's visits to England had not been infrequent, and in one of these Atcherley accompanied him. Notwithstanding his habitual solidity and caution, the latter, without any species of effort, gained so far upon Sir Reginald, that he was once heard to express his surprise as well as satisfaction at his brother's fortune in meeting with so well disposed and profitable a friend.

At length Roland, by the help of his brother, entered the English army and fairly settled himself in his native country. But being able through his own extended resources and his brother's liberality to mix in courtly circles, he unfortunately fell into the carelessness and

extravagance that distinguished the time, and especially the class to which he had gained admission. His thoughtlessness made him the prey of the designing; and his extravagant habits involved him in difficulties for the sober examination of which his aversion to laborious and at the same time disagreeable pursuits perfectly disqualified him.

Sir Reginald's perplexed disapprobation of these indiscretions was greatly aggravated by a circumstance which he had but recently discovered. Oliver Rockingham, who had been a bold and sour schemer during the Protectorate, thoroughly disappointed in all his political *manœuvres* by the unfavourable turn for them affairs since the Restoration had taken, had secluded himself in disgust wholly from his former occupations, in an old manorial building situated in the neighbourhood of Torrington Place, to which his family had some antiquated but successful claim. Their vicinity had gradually brought companionship

about, and Sir Reginald was more than suspected of having formed an attachment for his neighbour's daughter, an attachment of which Rockingham had no reason to disapprove, had it met his ear in any more palpable form than that in which it did, namely as a general though somewhat cautious rumour. Rockingham, stern, direct and selfish, either paid it no attention or disbelieved it *in toto*, as no advance on the subject had ever been made by Sir Reginald.

The affair was in this vague and scarcely existent state, when the vivacious Roland quitted the continent and hastened into Derbyshire. The acquaintance which between Rockingham and Sir Reginald had been built upon weekly instalments, much in the same cautious manner as a besieger makes his approaches to a hostile fortress, or two enemies' ships *manœuvre* until they tardily ascertain each other's friendly character, was in Roland's instance little more than the work of a day.

To Rockingham's cold and solemn reserve he paid little attention, treating it as a matter of course, and letting time soften him. A short time served to convince him that he was thoroughly in love with Julia Rockingham, and that the feeling which had hitherto passed under its name was but a type, a shadow of the true thing. Julia, unlike her father, though less the creature of impulse, approached in many particulars to the character of Roland. It was not till some time after she had laughed, when there was no observation, at the grave peculiarities of her republican father and the statue-like reserve of Sir Reginald, in concert with Roland, that she all at once discovered her enjoyment could not have been so great had there not been a strong predilection existent for the partner in her merriment.

This conviction imparted to Roland an interest which though as fully existent before had never been perceived. She had assented to, but did not analyse her feelings; and

pleased with the unknown charm which seemed newly to have fallen upon her life, did not stop to trace from what source it was derived. Julia and Roland were not long in coming to an understanding, and entered into their new position with all the ardour and delight which distinguished their nature.

Roland's application to her father, as we have seen, was unfortunate, as well as his scarcely prudent endeavours to persuade Julia to a clandestine marriage. Rockingham's objections were founded on reasons which have been hinted at before. The character generally ascribed to Roland, doubtless as usual much exaggerated, was the reverse of advantageous, and the silence of Sir Reginald on the subject gave it a stamp of authenticity : besides, having particular though as yet undeveloped reasons for thwarting Roland's views with respect to Rockingham, Sir Reginald, though in a secondary way, was not unwilling to effect an unfavourable interposition.

This interposition, though not in the least suspected by Roland, was assisted by his restless and painful disinclination to remain longer in a spot which was fraught with so many cheerless and bitter recollections. This dissatisfaction with his present abode and morbid longing for change was carefully instigated by his brother, whose natural desire was to get rid of so formidable a rival. Every representation to this end was urged in so insinuating and quiet a manner, that Roland was more quickly awakened to his present uncomfortable position than he otherwise might have been. He saw that his presence was undesired at Torrington Place, and caught eagerly at what his high spirit instantly decided was the consequence.

Sir Reginald's wishes were soon gratified. Roland departed for France; and after wandering mechanically for some time about the country, fixed his residence at the metropolis.

When he last parted from Atcherley, the

latter, with an intimation of a speedy revisit, returned to Germany. Roland departed in the interim; and when his friend again went into Derbyshire, he was coldly informed of the occurrences which succeeded his departure. Little could escape the sharp sight of Atcherley. He saw that something was wrong with respect to his friend, and determined to sift out the particulars. Of his love for Julia Rockingham, which when Atcherley was before with Roland had not been reversed, through his ingenuous though premature disclosure, by her sour-minded father, he was not uninformed, and at once suspected this was in some way connected with his exile. To come to a thorough understanding he paid a seemingly casual visit to Oliver Rockingham, and easily through indifferent enquiries made himself master of all he wished to know.

Resolving neither to follow Roland or to inform him of what he was doing in his behalf till he had fully succeeded, his visits to

Rockingham's house became frequent, and a most important discovery which he was able some time after to make, put him on such confidential terms with his host, that he was able, by the exercise of some tact, to clear the way for Rockingham's approval of the suit which he had before so entirely discountenanced. Oliver was blunt, and but little given to the exercise of any art. Atcherley soon became aware of the strongly inimical light in which the former beheld the reigning monarch and the measures of his arbitrary government, and fished out an acknowledgment that a league was in progress for their immediate counteraction. Of a person whose declared opinions so closely corresponded with his own—extreme as the latter were—Rockingham could have no distrust: the outlines of the conspiracy then agitating were therefore laid open to him, under the fullest assurances of secrecy, and at least passive assent.

His object thus obtained, Atcherley took a

most friendly leave of his confiding host, and hastened to Paris. Roland and Atcherley again met; but with that peculiarly refined policy which he had on many occasions so successfully put in practice, the latter forbore making any direct revelation of what he had been able to compass in Roland's behalf. He found his friend reckless and misanthropic; anxious once more for change, and impatient of his voluntary exile. Finding that he was sufficiently predisposed to revisit England without any new or powerful inducement, Atcherley, who to further his objects never put a greater engine into operation than was necessary, left his desires to work out their own conclusion, and determined to take his time in the discovery.

Hopeless and disappointed, Roland, during his stay in Paris, had fallen into a habit of gaming, though his funds for the purpose were slender enough. There was something in the feverish excitement thus induced, the

occupation of thought and quelling of retrospection, to which his broken spirit eagerly clung. Atcherley was too much a man of the world to abruptly combat this predilection. He contented himself, anxious not to create an interference, with suggesting the little advantage there could ever be in such pursuits. He knew that Roland was highly impatient of advice, and, so, solicitously prevented the reflections made from assuming the disagreeable form. Determining to keep so keen an eye over his movements that he might unseen hinder a formidable loss taking place, he allowed affairs to take their own course, which as the case stood was perhaps the most advisable conduct.

A few days however before that destined for their departure, Roland, during the temporary absence of Atcherley, lost so great a sum, that he seemed unwilling, although his friend never in the slightest degree pretended to curiosity or interference, to mention his mis-

fortune. Hoping to recover that which had been so carelessly thrown away, the next evening he attended the same table: but ill fortune seemed to pursue him. Instead of recovering he doubled his losses, and at the strong persuasion of Atcherley, who in the middle of the game had entered the room and joined his friend, he quitted the scene of his evil fortune, vowing, as usual in such cases, to take a final leave of play.

We have seen that Roland announced his entire loss as reaching to "two-thirds of the whole." By "the whole" was signified the small fortune which had been left him by his father, and beyond which his independent means did not extend. The money was paid, and with Atcherley's assurance of finding some means of retrieval on their arrival in England, the subject was not frequently agitated. The amount of the full loss Roland promised to lay before his friend when circumstances should allow them to composedly and

securely look into the business. With these views they quitted Paris and bent their steps towards England. Looking on Torrington Place as his hereditary home, Roland determined, for at least a time, to make it his residence, thinking that he would, after another attempt to shake the resolution of Rockingham—or, at least that of his daughter—betake himself to London and look out for means to make up for the deficiency in his fortune. When introduced to the reader, he and his friend had nearly completed their journey. The communications of Atcherley, as we have seen, changed their object; and we shall now beg to rejoin them at Rockingham's gate.

CHAPTER VI.

Casca.—Hold my hand :
Be factious for redress of all these griefs ;
And I will set this foot of mine as far.
As who goes farthest.

Cassius.—There's a bargain made.
Now know you, *Casca*, I have moved already
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans,
To undergo, with me, an enterprise
Of honourable-dangerous consequence."

Julius Cæsar.

Imogene.—My lord, I fear,
Has forgot Britain.

Iachimo.—And himself. Not I,
Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce
The beggary of his change ; but 'tis your graces
That from my mutest conscience, to my tongue,
Charms this report out."

Cymbeline.

THE hamlet at the end of which Rockingham's house was situated, was scarcely of any length: and, having rode smartly through it,

our travellers found themselves at his ancient gateway.

Darkness had now so fallen over the scene that no part of the house, which was surrounded with trees, and nothing save the ivied outer wall and tall iron gate, could be distinguished. The sky was full of clouds and there was but little or no wind : the village had been left some distance behind, and the approach to the house, except to a person well acquainted with it, was not so easily discoverable. Atcherley, however, had paid the place too many visits to mistake his bearings ; and it was with the most self-satisfying confidence that he quickly dismounted and applied his hand to the bell. After some delay, the gate was slowly opened, and an enquiry put respecting the business of the applicant for admission.

The answer appeared satisfactory, for, gravely doffing his cap, the porter threw open one of

the gates and invited the horsemen to enter. On complying with this invitation, they found themselves in what appeared to be a broad and stately though somewhat neglected avenue. The night, however, prevented them from seeing distinctly. The wind blew chillily down the trees; and it was with some alacrity that they followed their conductor to an inner entrance, situated some distance from the gate at which they had obtained admission into the grounds. Here he paused, and intimating that he could take charge of the steeds, assisted their riders to dismount. After touching the bell, a summons which was not long being answered, he desired the attendant to announce the arrival of guests and walked off to the stable.

Roland and Atcherley were first shewn into a lower apartment. The silence of the house was only disturbed by the footsteps of the servant, who soon returned and quietly announced

the readiness of his master see them. Motioning the man to precede him, Atcherley rose, and followed by Roland, whose sensations were sufficiently tumultuous, ascended the wide and ponderous staircase. Arrived on the first story, a door to the right was opened through which light was visible. Unannounced they passed the solemn-looking attendant and entered the apartment.

The room was large and lofty; well, though somewhat scantily furnished, and bearing the impress of a cold dignity. Three windows, now concealed by dark green draperies, were on one side; a few ebony cabinets, embellished with inlaid work, old-fashioned high-backed chairs, the damask seats of which were sadly faded, and other pieces of cumbrous furniture, on the other. At the upper end, over an architectural chimney-piece of oak, was a smoky portrait of the great Hampden, whose forehead was the only point which had escaped

the general obscurity. A pedigree on discoloured vellum was on one side of the painting, the ramifications of which were sufficiently intricate : and some framed conveyance, in black letter, on the other. The apartment too was half in darkness ; for the light of the two tall and sickly tapers, exalted upon a highly venerable pair of pole-like candlesticks, was insufficient to dispel the many shadows which hung about the room. The scanty light, the size of the apartment, the heaviness of the furniture and the melancholy hue of the walls, created an uncertainty through which the eyesight had much difficulty to pierce.

Two figures were discernible at the farther end, who rose as their visitors entered. On an approach their characteristics were more particularly visible : one was an old man, the other a young lady, and a glance sufficed to intimate what sort of persons they were. Of each we must give some description.

The lady was attractive. To judge from the

girlish style of her radiant features, the flash or melting of her rich dark eye, and the lovely bloom of her cheek, her years could scarcely have numbered nineteen or twenty. Her height was not great, though had she been less faultlessly moulded something might have been added to it. Her figure, delicately rounded and symmetrically outlined, was captivating, and fairylike, her step elastic, and her movements natural and lively. From the hem of her dress glanced a foot and ankle so tiny and ravishing, that it seemed almost a profanation for them to touch so rough a thing as earth. About her lips—lips red and full as cherries—there appeared to flit a roguish enjoyment that seemed to flatter though indulged at your own expense. Gratified, indeed, to catch her notice at any cost, the eye could only reply by a gaze of fascinated admiration, disarmed of its accustomed weapons, and eagerly subscribing an entire and delicious surrender. Her complexion was dazzlingly fair; except

when the luxuriant colour mounted in excitement to her cheek, and deepened the rose-hue that ruled it as its home and broke upon a brow that beamed with tenderness and intelligence. Full black eyes, arched by lightly pencilled brows, and swimming in a tender yet witch-like langour, now raised in speculative and re-awakened interest, now chastened into a heavenly devotion, and now flashing, in full triumph, their glorious merriment, alternately glanced upon, or dazzled the beholder.

There was little of thoughtfulness in her features: what there was of it appeared to be expended upon passing and immediate objects. Hers was not the silence of abstraction but enjoyment; unoccupied by grave images, and dealing only with that which was most lively and attractive. Her mind was as buoyant as her figure, avoiding the heavier things of life, and associating only with the airy, the gay, and the superficial. To a perception more quick than profound, and a capacity more or-

namental than extensive, she added a sanguine and light-hearted temperament, which only saw sunshine where others saw shadow, contemplated nature's face as drest in smiles, and looked upon the world and the people which it contained, with wonder that the one in being accused of deceit and disappointment, and the other of treachery and wickedness, should have been so hastily and grossly libelled.

You would have associated her with warm suns, spring flowers and perfumed breezes. Surrounded with the sweets of nature, removed from the cares, noise, and subtleties of the world, unmocked by the asperities of rigorous and inhospitable winter, she would seem in her proper element. Over such a creature, light as the clouds as they float in a summer sky, buoyant as the leaves when they flutter in the evening wind, and dazzling as the sunshine when it lights some beautiful landscape, death would seem to have no power. Looking in her face, a strange regret would creep

over the heart, that so beautiful a creature should ever be fated to grace his black dominion.

Her father seemed strangely different in appearance as well as character. He was tall and stoutly framed, with powerful limbs and broad shoulders. Though advancing in years, his back had not yet received the slightest bend; and his iron visage was marked with very few wrinkles. There was a cold and marble-like self-possession in his countenance that seemed not capable of being easily disturbed, and his large grey eyes were determined and collected. His face was weather-beaten, and embrowned to an unusual depth by much exposure. Brown hair, much intermixed with grey, fringed the back of his head: his forehead was broad and of a peculiarly grave formation; and his shaggy brows beetled over his eyes like the bust of an old Roman Emperor.

The dress of these individuals, notwith-

standing their near relationship, was sufficiently contrasted. The lady was attired in a robe of blue silk with hanging sleeves, decorated with lace and knots of ribband. Slippers that might have rivalled those of Cinderella, and silk stockings were upon her feet. Her hair, simply confined with a blue ribband, fell in luxuriant tresses over her shoulders; and round her neck was a chain of gold. Her father wore a full coat of dark-coloured cloth, cinctured at the waist, and with sleeves similar to those of a herald's coat. A silk cap was upon his head, and his feet were thrust into capacious slippers.

Rockingham paused a moment on first seeing his visitors; perhaps in uncertainty who they were, as the light was not sufficiently strong to decide the question at a single glance. The first few words of Atcherley however satisfied him.

“ I am never long,” said the latter as he ad-

vanced up the room, "in being recognised. I see, sir, that you have now discovered who your visitors are. *Mademoiselle*, I have the pleasure of asking how you have been since I last had the honour of seeing you: you perceive that I have usurped the privilege of an old friend—a title, Mr. Rockingham, to which you will think I am not altogether entitled—and taken the liberty of introducing a friend of mine: one with whom, I am given to understand, you are not unacquainted."

The first embarrassing moment of a fresh meeting was thus felicitously got over. Though Rockingham had last parted with Roland under the most apparent friendly circumstances, there was mixed in the discovery who his second visiter was a natural stiffness, that would have rendered the greetings which would have been consequently exchanged somewhat embarrassing to both parties. With Julia the case stood still more disagreeable. Her eyes were quicker than her father's, and

no sooner had the visitors entered than with a throb of the heart she saw who *one* of them was. A momentary blush, that was no sooner there than gone, flitted over her cheek; and she instinctively rose, bowed, and resumed her seat; sooner than under different circumstances she might have done. There was an uneasiness in her manner which—observed with a slight smile by Atcherley—told well for Roland; and though she was two or three times going to speak, she mechanically turned her eyes towards her father, as if afraid to trust the firmness of her own voice and anxious that he should give the welcome for both.

Roland felt also very awkward and very much as a lover would under such circumstances. His bow was remote and almost coldly polite; though, by a strange yet natural contradiction, his heart was beating with excitement. He stammered out a few words in answer to Rockingham's instant greeting; and singular as it may appear, not daring to trust

his eyes in Julia's direction, hardly addressed her. Julia, also, after one stolen glance at her lover, made the usual enquiry as to state of health of Atcherley, and seemed desirous of keeping her regards on that side of the apartment.

Atcherley having thus softened the first minute of reunion by rapidly speaking that which we have seen above, and, still more, by the easy openness of his manner put all parties at tolerable ease, drew a seat towards the table, motioning at the same time for Roland to do the same, and Rockingham to resume the chair from which he had arisen.

Debating an instant in his mind whether it would be better to take notice of the more agreeable circumstances under which Roland was again admitted to the family, and so put all parties, through explanation for each, right with one another, or to pass it over altogether, and let the conversation flow onward as if nothing had intervened, he glanced around him,

and from the expression of the faces of the party decided for the latter.

"You are looking better," said he, addressing himself to Rockingham, "than I remember to have seen you for some time: change of air does not seem to have the influence usually attributed to it, for I and Roland have of late sufficiently shifted our locality, and I am convinced you can discern no change in our physiognomy. I am afraid that we shall almost do too great justice to your supper; for a long journey sharpens the appetite, especially when carried through, as in our instance, with few interruptions for its satisfaction."

"I am pleased to hear so," answered Rockingham. "Thank Heaven! we are not badly supplied with the means of answering our natural wants, and what my poor house can afford I need not tell thee thou art welcome to."

"It has always been with a kindred spirit

to that in which they were offered that I have accepted your hospitalities. If I had not known they were freely bestowed I should not have so freely availed myself of them. You will learn from Roland that we have intruded on you before the threshold even of Torrington Place answered to our entering foot-step."

"I am not given to much speaking," answered Rockingham, cordially, "on slight matters. When I say that I am glad to see ye both, I hope I shall be credited for more than is expressed in the simple phrase. And yet there is more heartiness in the plain 'I am glad to see thee,' than the loquacity of the present day is willing to acknowledge. Roland Torrington, here is my hand: thou hast a friend in thy neighbour whom I need not tell thee to appreciate."

Roland took the offered hand and shook it with fervour.

"Thou art a good lad, and I have hopes of thee. But let me not be inattentive: ye have

ridden far and fast, and it is not meet that ye wait for a later hour. Julia, bid a servant prepare us our evening repast."

"I dare say, father, it is ready," answered Julia, "shall I make known your wish?"

"Do so," was the reply.

Julia accordingly took up a bell that lay upon the table, and rang it. A servant was promptly in waiting with the evening meal. The conversation was kept up during the intervals of eating, and by the time the repast had finished it had become general and unrestrained.

"You did not take London in your road hither?" demanded Rockingham. "'Twas something out of your way, but you might have had inducements."

"None sufficiently strong," answered Atcherley, "to attract me from my more direct route. At the moment I had no reason for visiting it."

"Thou did'st not lose aught by avoiding it:

its atmosphere is more pernicious than those who live in it are willing to admit. I have from early youth ever had an objection to it, and paid it only such visits as were indispensable for business. And now 'tis doubly dangerous."

"The neighbourhood of an arbitrary and suspicious court is certainly not wholly free from peril. Yet they who would give battle to the lion must not be afraid of his den."

"Charles, as I am informed, still abides there."

"I have heard so too."

"He rests in the imagined security of despotism: with a nation at his feet, his chains on their energies, and his iron sceptre waved over their heads, even the wise man would be apt to say, 'Soul be of good cheer, eat, drink, and be merry:' but the air is silent ere the earthquake bursts; and the bow is most strained when it sends the arrow with the

greatest force, and with the deadliest certainty."

"Charles," answered Atcherley, "rests contented with *appearances*. He will credit danger when he sees it; but, like an unskilful mariner, he is contented or deceived with the brightness of the moment."

"And well he may be, for the evil approaches with the caution of age and the fire of youth. 'Twould be difficult to betray grey heads into a premature disclosure of the front under which they are advancing. Risk is the best teacher of prudence. You have thought, since we parted, upon what I entrusted to you."

"I have," said Atcherley, coolly, "and you see me again."

"Roland Torrington," said Rockingham, seriously, turning, after a slight pause, to his younger visiter, "when I last saw you our communications were limited, and our mutual character, I doubt me not, a matter of specu-

lation and distrust. I must confess that when thou *did'st* cross my mind, which was not often, as I was then occupied with affairs the ripening of which has freed me for other thoughts, it was but in the light of an eager, mercurial, and inconstant youth, of some good intention, but little solidity. Thou need'st not be offended at what I thought of thee, because at the same time thou wert looking upon me as a stern, immoveable, and rigorous enthusiast, unwarmed by the charities of life, and living for sour and removed self-entertainment. Perhaps we both erred, through insufficient examination, and from our proceeding on false premises; but even then there was something about thee—that is in thine appearance—that did not displease me.”

“Your good opinion, sir, was not expended upon an ingrate.”

“My views have perhaps since changed: but that will be seen in our future intercourse. That intercourse will be great and confiden-

tial, for, Roland, if thou art what I now take thee to be, we have much to do."

"I have no objection to lend a helping hand in the good work which I have been given to understand is about. This of itself is a considerable admission, for I have received on the part of the individual against the *government* of whom our deliberations are to be pointed, many marks of kindness and confidence."

An emphasis was laid upon the word *government* which did not escape Rockingham's ear. He looked at Atcherley, who returned the glance, but did not speak.

"We deprecate such lengths," Rockingham quietly said, "as others went in times gone by. To lop the *unnecessary branches* is to improve the health of the tree, to inflict a wound upon the *stem* is to destroy it. Yet well meaning though mistaken zeal will sometimes carry men farther than they at first intended. We hope to preserve the wholesomeness of our judgment while we rigorously persevere."

"Yet in the flush of success," said Roland, "we cannot always so hold the reins over our inclinations. I am glad to hear a moderation in your intentions so frankly avowed, sir, and do not hesitate in trusting you to the uttermost. A fear that matters might have been carried too far, had all parties present nothing to do with the enterprise, and the affair been merely the speculation of strangers, would, though my silence had been insured through my natural wishes for the extension and safety of liberty, have restrained me from becoming a participator; though I should at the same time have wished heartily well to the *principle* under which the project was undertaken. But I have no distrust. I am sure you, sir, would not sanction anything that had for its end an unnecessary and gratuitous violence, and I have such faith in Atcherley, that while I am persuaded his sharp sight has taken in the whole business, and that he sees the

result, I am satisfied that nothing is contemplated which *honour* would shrink from."

"Indeed," said Atcherley, "you do me more than justice. I am not so deep in the secret as you may suppose. I trust, however, I am not so far gone as to join at all an enterprise to which the coolest reflection might object. How say you, Master Rockingham?"

"That he who doubts the justice of our cause is either diffident or treacherous. Roland I hope is not the former, and I am certain will never be the *latter*."

"As yet I have no fear of myself," said Roland with a smile.

"Fear nothing, my son; for by that name I am not unwilling to call thee. That is right, Julia, our discourse is uninteresting to thee, and thy needlework will amuse thee. We shall require nothing of thee but what thou volunteerest thyself. I hope my character is a sufficient guarantee for any enterprise in which I may engage.

This evening must be profitably employed, for I suppose we shall not have your company to-morrow."

"No," said Atcherley, "at daybreak we must ride over to the Place."

"Our enterprise draws to a head," said Rockingham with interest. "Here are letters," going to a cabinet and bringing out some papers, "from the principals in the conspi——"

"Hush!" interrupted Atcherley: "that is something of an ugly word."

"Thou fearest my domestics. Honest creatures! they are too deeply indebted and attached to me, to play eaves-droppers for anything but my advantage. I trust I am wise enough, however, to not trust a secret of this nature to any walls except those which are round us. Thou need'st not take the trouble to convince thyself," he continued, with a smile, "how worthy they are of a greater confidence than I can place in them. This apartment is a tomb which never returns that

which is deposited in it. But to return to our business. Here are letters containing much and useful information. These I shall submit to Roland in private, and he will see that the nicest honour cannot except to the principles and projects there developed. I shall then fully explain to him the bearings of our position; free him, if he then chooses, from the advance already made; exacting merely a promise of secrecy; or, as I anticipate, receive his tendered adhesion and admit him into the confederation. His principles are ours: he condemns what we condemn; he desires what we desire; to what then can be object?"

"You need not fear," said Atcherley, "my representations have not outstripped the truth."

"I *hope* not, and I *think* not," was the answer. "When thou findest, Roland, the names attached to these documents—names high in the world's esteem, associated with the vir-

tuons and exalted, and of the first consideration in the kingdom—thy last exception will be swept away. As yet thou art in a cloud: but thou wilt prove worthy of our confidence, and shalt gaze upon that rising light which others have descried before thee. What thinkest thou? is not the name of Russel a beacon worthy of trust?"

"Russel!" repeated Roland.

"Aye, Russel: 'tis a name that would confirm the veriest laggard."

"My last lingering objection, could I have any, would be shamed before his name. But I was decided before, and knowing, as I do now, that your project points not to an extremity as well for all parties avoided. I will link myself with those who are most forward amongst you."

"Well, and candidly, and stoutly advanced," cried Rockingham. "This readiness shall be of no disadvantage to thee. Follow me, Roland Torrington: I have a few matters to

debate with thee in private. One of the parties whom we leave behind us may not be uninterested in the result; and the result will be, I anticipate, as desired."

Saying these words, Rockingham rose from his seat, and touching Roland on the shoulder, led the way to an inner room of small dimensions, the thickness of the walls of which was a sufficient guarantee for secrecy. On this occasion Roland's eyes *did* glance round, with a flash of pleasure, to where Julia sat, with *hers* ostensibly fixed upon her work, yet with her trembling fingers betraying her embarrassment, and a deepening blush rising on her cheek.

The door closed, and Atcherley and Julia found themselves alone.

A pause ensued, during which Atcherley left his seat and slowly paced up the apartment.

"I may be deceived," said he, "but I think

I can perceive a marked change in Master Rockingham's disposition."

"I am pleased," said Julia in answer, "to find my own opinion borne out by that of one who has a character for penetration. The perplexities in which he has been involved some time since, have given way as time advanced; and the clearness of his present position has softened his kind, but sometimes scarcely even temper."

"You are pleased to grace me with a faculty to which I am not entitled," said Atcherley, answering to the first part of her reply; "I pretend to no more penetration than my neighbours, I possess no more, and yet the character has stuck to me. Would that the ability were more general than it is!"

"Now I, on the contrary," rejoined Julia, "have always thought that mainly to our blindness we owe many of the things that pleasure us."

"A delusion, whether pleasing or otherwise, is always dangerous; and sometimes our unwillingness to see conceals that which becomes apparent to the eyes of others."

"Now you are moralising, and when you *moralise* I have penetration enough to know something is fabricating in its shadow. Of what nature is the battery you are busied in masking?"

"We are sometimes obliged to mask many harmless things because they might be not answerable to the prepossessions of others. I sometimes have this delicacy, the end of which your perhaps too eager penetration has exaggerated: the latter is the only thing, I imagine, we have in common."

"I like nothing in common," rejoined Julia quickly. "I am for exclusive possession."

"But not in *every* instance," said Atcherley, pausing in his walk and laying the tips of his fingers on the table, whilst he looked with a quiet smile into her face: "some matters you are contented to *share*."

"Yes: such as the air, the light and the heat of Heaven."

"And sometimes things of more terrestrial nature. Your disposition is not sufficiently selfish to keep all things to yourself."

"No," said Julia, raising her eyes to those of her companion, "I were uncharitable did I not rejoice the roof which shelters me can shelter others. I shall never, believe me, object to seeing it extend its protection to such an applicant for the favour as stands before me."

"I am debtor to your kindness. May I be permitted to thank you for others who have also been allowed to partake the grace; or shall the acknowledgment be made in person?"

Julia's eyes dropped to her work as she replied:

"I am not disinclined to accept you as the *representative*."

Atcherley withdrew his eyes, slightly and

quietly shaking his head, as it seemed to himself, and resumed his walk.

“The enterprise in which your father is engaged has given him employment : employment is congenial to him, and I am glad to see that he is losing the reserve and uneasiness I saw in him formerly, in the courtesies and good feeling that much intercourse will bring him. He will be benefitted by the change, and he will gain much more upon the feeling of others.”

“Though I am glad to see the change, I am something disturbed by the danger that I cannot avoid seeing in his present pursuits.”

“Has he told you anything of them?”

“Oh yes! he is preparing a remonstrance to the king, framed more energetically than is suited to his taste, upon the late arbitrary acts of the government. He may be marked for persecution ; and at all events we know it will be displeasing.”

“It may be so,” said Atcherley, drily.

"He needs supporters," added Julia, "and counts upon the help of yourself and—— friend."

The last word was hesitatingly substituted for another which more readily came to her lips.

"What little I can do is heartily at his service," said Atcherley; "and as for *my friend*, I am afraid my good offices will be outstept. Deeper influences are at work over him than would be ascribed to me. And yet sometimes the most placid-looking stream has the strongest under-current."

"My father does not doubt that you are both interested in his welfare; and his confidence has been proven by his openness to-night. Were you expected by him this evening?"

"We were not: our visit was volunteered; and I take to myself the credit of first proposing it. I had the happiness of some that are dear to me in contemplation, and seized the opportunity that presented of forwarding

it. My endeavours I hope have been successful; and I shall have the satisfaction of reuniting the kindly feelings of two whom I respect, who were separated by an unfortunate miscalculation of their true natures. Is it not strange that we should so often accept the *apparent* for the *real* character, and found our estimation upon a mistake which we at the same time regret?"

"You have self-approval as your reward," said Julia, with more frankness than she had before indulged in. "All whom you have benefitted must thank you."

"I do not wish for thanks; for, were our situations reversed, I doubt not for a moment the same good offices would be rendered me. You would have seen Roland had my more promising interposition not brought him so directly hither. I found him misanthropic at Paris, and eager, with pretence or no pretence, to return."

"And your arrival induced him at once to

do so?" asked Julia, losing her embarrassment, when Roland was on the *tapis*, in interest.

"I was eager to release him from the despondence which hovered around him, and so encouraged his inclination. Conscious that his recrossing the Channel would quell the careless and disappointed feelings which had given rise to a threatening and almost desperate state of mind, I was eager—to get him away as soon as possible. We know not what we fall into when we lose our hold of hope. 'Tis the readiest means by which we may lose our self-respect."

"Roland could never be in danger of losing the last."

"He scarcely could. You are perfectly right. But when it is the case, the world harshly refuses to look at the vindication. When a man is overloaded with care and disappointment, when he sees that on which he built his hopes of happiness crumbling into total ruin, when he beholds his wishes, his re-

sources, his sympathies with life, his means of contentment, all gliding from his grasp, and the world around losing its promising and gorgeous hues in the changeless and universal blank of desolation, he becomes reckless of the world's opinions, careless of his destiny, and indifferent to praise or blame, right or wrong, innocence or guilt. I would not trust myself, to-morrow, in such a situation."

"But Roland never sunk into anything reprehensible," said Julia. "He was not so utterly abandoned to better influences as the state of mind you have pictured."

"He was neither betrayed into anything seriously reprehensible nor was he in danger of falling into a state of mind into which I should, in his situation, have too readily been drawn. All his delinquencies only amounted to this; that he had been a little betrayed, by the schemes of Parisian sharpers, into gaming."

"Gaming!" cried Julia, dropping her needle.

"I have heard that it is a fascinating and therefore perilous vice."

"In the absence of other fascinations it may be attractive; but these things are easily counteracted. I would lay a heavy stake that in future our friend would hate a gambling table. He will be all the better for his experience. Others, however, with less to withdraw them from the vice, might have stood in a somewhat dangerous position. What attraction can the dice present when the smiles of a heavenly loveliness are arrayed on the opposite side? One might as well be expected to revel in the baleful glimmer of a marshy exhalation, when the glorious sun himself invites you to turn your gaze towards him. Other men, however, not so fortunate, might still have hovered round the dross. The ignorant Laplander may be excused for preferring his snows of centuries and half years of darkness, when the green of a temperate region and the speedy return of the congenial day-

light have never met his eye. We linger contentedly in the grossness of earth because the glories of Heaven are sealed to our vision. All seems good till we are shown something that is better: we then become dissatisfied, and turn with disgust from that which before delighted us. Let us never long for a greater happiness until we are assured that it is attainable! It makes one uncomfortable.

CHAPTER V.

Jacques.—You have a nimble wit; I think it was made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me?

Orlando.—I will chide no breather in the world, but myself; against whom I know most faults.

Jacques.—The worst fault you have is to be in love.

Orlando.—'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue."

As you Like It. Act iii. Scene 2.

FURTHER conversation was prevented by the entrance of Roland and Rockingham. The former, on this occasion, preceded his host; and it was easily to be seen that a mutual good understanding had been the consequence

of their interview. There was a smile of self satisfaction on Rockingham's lips, struggling with his habitual gravity, that was not often to be found there; and Roland's features were radiant with pleasure. Julia's ear, before the door was opened, had caught their footsteps; and it was with an eager interest, which she endeavoured in vain to conceal, that her eyes turned instantly towards Roland. As speedily did they fall again upon her work.

"A new confederate and a near connection," said Rockingham, turning towards Atcherley, "I have gained to-night; and to you I am indebted for the acquisition. The full measure of gratitude which is owing thee by these young people, they must see that they pay themselves. Our interview, as I expected, has been most satisfactory; and all matters have been cleared up betwixt us."

"Nobody can be more pleased to hear it than I," answered Atcherley. "'T will be of

happy consequence to all parties. Roland, how dost thou find thyself?"

"I am experiencing the usual effect of unexpected happiness," cried Roland, "and am unable to express one half of the things that are making sad work here:" he pointed as he spoke to his head and heart. "I attempt to repay your good offices by wishing you the same degree of transport as I shall feel when the surprise of joy is over."

"You are kind; but moderate joys accord best with my disposition. I hope to be never overwhelmed; for a smack of anxiety gives an interest to life. *Eh bien, Monsieur Rockingham*; do you not think that we had better retire, consult upon our immediate proceedings—for I quit you, you know, to-morrow—and leave our lovers to themselves. I have heard that in such cases they prefer their own to the most profitable society. Roland, make the most of your time, for we shall speedily

return. I am by nature jealous of happiness that I cannot share myself."

Perhaps he spoke the truth, for his character was one of mixed kind. He motioned Rockingham to precede him, glanced upon Roland and Julia, in the half shadow of the partially opened door, with a smile of strange meaning—a meaning which it would have been extremely difficult to analyse—and quickly disappeared.

Roland and Julia were now alone, under circumstances of happiness which, at the moment, they found it difficult to comprehend. It has been said that "sudden joys, like griefs, confound at first;" but the axiom will hold more fully with the joys than with the griefs. Grief is communicative: it is eager to disburthen itself by words and excite the wonder and commiseration of those around it; while joy, in the first flush of discovery, hugs its enjoyment to itself, and is unwilling to parade itself through the fear that something may be

consequently disclosed to diminish a delight already judged too complete and unalloyed to be substantial.

Roland did not speak a word ; but looking as if his mind was at sea sat himself down next to Julia, and grasped her hand with a pressure that told how intense his feelings were. His pressure was gently returned ; but Julia's conscious eyes were fixed upon the ground, while she shook her luxuriant hair so as to hide her face. Neither spoke for some time ; though every now and then Julia's quick and roguish eye was slyly raised to that of her lover, and an arch smile played about her tempting lips. At length, after many attempts to bridle her merri-ment, the smile expanded into a silent titter, and at last broke into a long and merry laugh. Roland's gravity was gone in a moment : and it was in the fullest sincerity that he re-echoed her enjoyment.

" Gravity," said he, " does not agree with

either of us, and, to speak the truth, it is the greatest absurdity in the world to look grave just now. I must have cut a strangely foolish figure for you to have laughed at me. But I could not help it, and I sincerely excuse you."

"How could it be a transgression when the act was involuntary?"

"You are the only person that I permit to enjoy my dismal looks. But I really saw nothing to laugh at until you set me the example."

"For a very sufficient reason, for you did not see yourself. A third person is best capable of judging of what is ridiculous when two fools like us are placed side by side, and had one been present I judge that we should equally have excited laughter."

"Perhaps so," said Roland, "for love often makes us commit extravagances."

"I hope it will not make me commit one in accepting you then," returned Julia. "Now that the difficulties of others are cleared away,

we must make some for ourselves, you see. Confident you must have been of my faith, when you left me so long as you did with one who was too busy in glossing over your indiscretions to take advantage of your absence."

"Atcherley?—I would trust him with—aye, even with *you*!"

"I am not flattered by such confidence," said Julia. "You should trust me with nobody."

"Except with a representative of whom I need entertain no apprehension," said Roland, as he drew forth a miniature of himself, taken while he was in Paris with the intention, when he should return, of presenting it to Julia as a melancholy token of one she might never see again. "I have to beg your acceptance of this under happier auspices than I expected would accompany the entreaty. While this poor memorial was in progress, I was suffering

more than I am unwilling to unfold. Let it still remind me of the pain I endured."

"Aye, a pain so great that you were compelled to seek amusement in the most objectionable quarters."

"Amusement, dearest Julia, I could not seek—for I wished but for oblivion."

"Worse and worse! you wished but for oblivion! Had your wish been granted then, the waters of Lethe would have rolled over one whom you would make me believe could alone have stood between you and your desire: unless indeed I had been unable to hold such a position, being, as you have so often asserted of your desire, its utter limit."

"And having obtained that limit," replied Roland, "I have nothing to wish beyond. Few are so favoured as I have been and hope to be. We owe no inconsiderable debt of gratitude to him through whose disinterested and fortunate interference the blessing was brought about."

" *We* owe: Had it not been better if you had confined the acknowledgement to the first person singular?"

" Will you not allow that I am justified in uniting a certain person in it?" enquired Roland.

" You have the usual taint of success," said Julia, " and grow presuming. " You see, my friend, I am grateful to Master Atcherley upon one account, and that is, that what he has done has tended to set your mind at ease. I am naturally good-hearted, and am pained at seeing the misery of others. Upon yours I looked with my usual compassion, and now you are bold enough to suppose that I was a sharer in and not the simply concerned witness of it. I delight in seeing the wretched raised out of the gulph, to see the arrow of affliction extracted; and am pleased when a smile flits over that countenance where of late despair did revel. You were recently to be pitied—I pitied you: you were a discontented exile, carrying not the

best of characters with you, and leaving little of character behind; I chivalrously stood forward and extenuated your delinquencies: you stood in need of the strong arm of protection, authority and natural influence, and I charitably exerted all in your favour: you are now rising in the estimation of others; I am pleased at it; pleased because, as I said before, of my natural good feeling, pleased that a person in whom I was somewhat interested should do no discredit to my solicitude, and chiefly pleased because you now bear out my former assertion that you were not quite so bad as you were represented to be."

"Upon my honour and verity," said Roland, laughing. "I am more bound to you than I anticipated! Well, the best person in the world to retail the particulars of your debt is your creditor, and I see that you keep a most fair and systematic ledger. I will rub off the whole account at once, and pay you with interest in

three words; and those words shall be 'I love you:' a sterling and exceptionable tender, and that you'll allow."

"A very shuffling and paper payment; the promise of a bankrupt; a bad bill that bears dishonesty on the face of it; a playing with false cards that would be detected by the next hand; an impudent composition bad and valueless in every way! You may pay Master Atcherley the debt you say you owe him in coin of such bad complexion—but as for me, I—I'll none of it. He may be satisfied, or seem to be so, which is the same thing, for something seems to whisper in my ear that he has had some crotchets of his own to gratify in appearing to forward a few of yours. He seems inclined to put the adage into practical use, and kill two birds with one pebble; privately designing while he seems to aim with indifference at both, to keep the gaudiest and goodliest for his own private delectation."

"You do not mean what you say, or you would be unjust," said Roland.

"I know not whether you are in the habit of saying what you don't mean. I am sometimes unfortunately too sincere."

"You are a wilderness to me," said Roland, "for I cannot thread the windings of your mind. I am led away by a hundred false lights that cheat me of my true path."

"Trot along in the fullest confidence, shut your eyes, and trust your beacon for a guidance."

"Aye! when I am convinced my guide is thoroughly acquainted with the ground she so rashly and vivaciously runs over. There are moral sloughs as well as temporal ones."

"Of their situation you will judge when you are in them," said Julia. "No man can know the shoals of the sea by looking at the surface."

"And who would not prefer the securer ig-

norance to such perilous knowledge? You must follow my footsteps, and be assured I shall have eyes for both."

"So I will; and if your eyes fail to secure your own safety, the danger you fall into will less blindly take care of mine."

"You would then make my destruction your salvation."

"Undoubtedly. I should then prevent your having *two* deaths to answer for instead of one. If I could not secure your temporal, I will yet exert myself for your *eternal* welfare; and, to cherish your remembrance, I will take the greatest possible care of myself. You would not wish to be forgotten after you quit this world, would you? And I will most anxiously look after my own safety in order that I may remember you."

Roland's rising and kindred reply was prevented by the re-entrance of Rockingham and Atcherley: the former's good-natured though not particularly interested eye, passed over

the couple with a light and satisfied notice ; but that of his companion glanced quickly and searchingly on Roland's countenance, and then upon that of his fair and lively neighbour. There was something strikingly peculiar in Atcherley's gaze : it was not affectedly penetrating, making up for deep and genuine observation by a stare betraying the intention of the looker, and therefore putting the person upon whom it was fixed upon their guard ; but there was a careful deliberation in its character that lulled suspicion to sleep, and flattered by its unpreoccupied attention. The deep and rigorous calculation which it possessed, letting not the most trifling circumstance escape, and comprehending at a moment the real intent and bearings of all it examined, lay concealed under the strongest and most unwavering composure.

For the remainder of the night, which was now rapidly advancing, the conversation was general and kind ; perhaps a little restrained on

Julia's part, who, from a species of intuitive perception, was not so great an admirer of Atcherley's character as her father and Roland were. There had been a waywardness and mystery in some of his words while they were conversing alone, that had awakened a vague and yet scarcely justifiable distrust in her mind. There appeared nothing to bear out her diffidence of him; his behaviour had been noble and disinterested, and exerted with the most friendly alacrity in behalf of Roland: but the very length and greatness of his services, the trouble he had taken and the difficulties he had overcome, by some means or other, though she blamed herself exceedingly for entertaining them, excited doubts and speculations.

She even heard with some dislike and a portion of fear, that Roland was to accompany his now inseparable friend to London and from thence to other quarters, upon business of importance which seemed fully understood as well by her father as his guests. She did

not hazard an indirect question as to its nature, as she saw enquiry was undesired and stood in fear of seeking information of her father that was withheld. She knew that curiosity—to which in a man he had great dislike, and still more in a female—would be the readiest means of awakening that displeasure which recently had been mellowed into complacency, if not good nature. She therefore sat silent, except when the conversation took another and an indifferent turn.

She now had but little opportunity for observation; for Rockingham—the usual hours of whose house had been considerably trespassed upon—rose quickly, and instancing the natural fatigue of his visitors, proposed a retirement for the night. This motion was at once agreed to. Julia retired, after a cordial good night from all parties; the visitors were conducted to their rooms, and Rockingham, after seeing, according to custom, that the house was properly secure, also betook himself to repose.

CHAPTER VI.

"Upon a gentle eminence, nearly a mile to the southward of the town, were seen, amongst many venerable oaks and tangled thickets, the turrets of a castle as old as the wars of York and Lancaster. The wall of the park ran alongside of the highway for two or three hundred yards; and through the different points by which the eye found glimpses into the woodland scenery, it seemed to be well stocked. Other points of view opened in succession; now a full one of the front of the old castle, and now a side glimpse at its particular towers; the former rich in all the *bizarrerie* of the Elizabethan school, while the simple and solid strength of other parts of the building seemed to show that they had been raised more for defence than ostentation."

Walter Scott.

"We are the fools of time and terror : days
Steal on us and steal from us ; yet we live,
Loathing our life, and dreading still to die.
In all the days of this detested yoke,
This vital weight upon the struggling heart
Which sinks with sorrow, or beats quick with pain,
Or joy that ends in agony or faintness—
In all the days of past and future, for
In life there is no present, we can number
How few—how less than few—wherein the soul
Forbears to pant for death, and yet draws back
As from a stream in winter, though the chill
Be but a moment's"

Manfred.

On the following morning Atcherley was up,

dressed, and walking, before any of his friends had arisen; nor did he return to the house until the breakfast bell had sounded. He had given directions to have his own horse and Roland's caparisoned at an early hour; and now entered the room in which the others were assembled with his usual composed and good-natured aspect.

Roland apparently had thought but little of their projected departure; for he gazed with some surprise on the travelling boots of his companion. Naturally enough he was in no hurry to leave the place in which he found himself.

Atcherley seated himself, and falling in with the conversation, after the usual greetings of the morning, gradually led it round to their coming departure. He mentioned his own travelling equipments, and good naturedly reproved Roland for neglecting his. The business which called them he declared admitted of no delay; especially as there was now no

excuse or necessity for it. Roland was not to be permitted to trifle with his period of probation, but was to be alert and diligent in seconding what was afoot, as idleness and happiness would arrive in due time, and he was not to enjoy the pleasures of his mistress's society until he had proved himself worthy of her. Rockingham fully seconded Atcherley's arguments, and hinted that the stipulated terms between Roland and himself were not only his adhesion, but his active, unremitting and immediate co-operation in the business they all were plighted to forward. The only road to the possession of his daughter he again and more openly repeated was Roland's zealous services towards the prosperity of the common cause: besides his honour, his word, were now irredeemably pledged, and being one of the youngest of the confederates it behoved him to display the sincerest interest and the greatest activity.

Atcherley also satisfactorily instanced the

propriety of an immediate departure, as it was a matter of prudence to visit Torrington Place in order to wake no suspicion of the object of their recent and somewhat hasty return from France, as well as for other reasons; and as the time would but with considerable economy allow for their making it their present destination.

It did not require a repetition of these arguments to sharpen Roland for the journey. Naturally impatient, he was eager to prove himself one of the most active of the confederacy: ambition also whispered him that in the changes which he was to be instrumental in bringing about, many roads would be open to him both for eminence and lucrative preferment which were at present closed. His own bare resources struck his mind; and eager with the hope, as well as fired with the necessity of bettering them, he was the first to start from his chair, though the looks of Julia seemed somewhat to upbraid him for his pre-

cupitancy, and to propose a glance at the state of their horses.

All rose instantly. Atcherley led the way to the gate at which he had commanded the horses should be in waiting, followed by Roland who was accompanied by Julia and Rockingham. Atcherley was the first to mount, and to turn his horse's head, though he still reined him in, towards the avenue. Roland, after shaking hands with Rockingham, kissed the trembling fingers of his betrothed and looked into her anxious face. To her eager demand when he should return, he was for some moments too much moved to reply.

"This," cried Atcherley, "is a most woeful leave-taking in sooth! Roland, whisper thy true love's ear, and tell her a month at most will bring us back, and, if all things go well, not to so speedily part again. Fair lady, thou mayest then take 'for better or for worse for richer or for poorer,' as it may prove, this

Sir Laggard to thyself. A season apart will prove his constancy."

"You fear it not, do you Julia?" said Roland gaily, vaulting at the same time into his saddle.

"I would have said much to thee, but you give me no time," said Julia.

"I could stay by thee all the day: but my master you see is imperative and I must obey. Treasure up every word thou would'st say to me for our next meeting, and let me have it all then. Adieu, fair Julia, till I see thee again."

Reluctantly he turned his horse, and as if afraid to trust his own determination cantered off after his friend, who had now nearly reached the outer gate. Both waved their hands as they rode out of the enclosure, and after watching until the last sound of the horses' hoofs died away, father and daughter slowly returned indoors.

It was not long before all tokens of Rock-

ingham's house, as well as the hamlet in its neighbourhood, were left behind our travellers; and the speed at which they were proceeding promised soon to bring them to Torrington Place.

This mansion was situated about seven miles from their late host's place of residence; and the wooded country in which it lay was gradually disclosing itself. A few hours' brisk riding through the shaggy and unequal ground over which the narrow road serpented, brought them into the park in the centre of which stood the old building.

Here trees of various ages, but chiefly of one very advanced, rose in broad and majestic masses on every side. The ground, which was carpeted with a verdant sward, rose in capricious inequalities, now disclosing all the romantic attributes of glen, glade, and hollow, and then sweeping gently off into miniature vallies, sloping lawns, and rising into eminences. It was in truth a noble park, filled

with deer, and of lordly dimensions. The eye in many places sought in vain to pierce the ponderous sweeps of dark foliage, and could only catch, through the silvery files of the gnarled and massy trunks of the trees, jets of sunshine that excited the interest by adding to the mystery of the sylvan arcades. In the more open places the summer sun poured down a light that was inexpressibly bright; gilding the luxuriant turf into the gayest green, revealing the clouds of leaves that circled above, and reposing in fervid magnificence upon the chequered collonades of stems, festooned or scarfed here and there with ivy and creeping plants of various kinds and colours. The trunks, with their many tinted barks, ranked proudly along, or drew away in perspective. It was evident that no hand of the spoiler had been upon these patriarchs of the forest. For centuries had they adorned and flourished in the park.

The woodlands extended around for a consi-

derable distance ; for nothing met the eye but the grandest forest scenery.

The mansion itself was one of the most attractive objects on which the eye could rest. The winding road that led through the many thickets which the stages of the road successively disclosed, drew round to the front of the house, and gave the traveller an opportunity for observation. Its angles and zig-zags were innumerable ; producing a multitude of perpendicular shadows, and imparting an air of much singularity to it. The projections consequent upon such an up and down style of building stood boldly forward in the strongest light, and threw out their many turrets, oriels, and cornices, with the richest effect. The interrupted and complicated outline of the gabled roof-edge, was printed on a sky of the most beautiful blue ; and the many bright weathercocks, fashioned into the most strange devices, glittered gaily in the sun. A colonnade in the Italian style ran along the front of

the building, and with its elaborate though scarcely classical decorations, seemed to better accord with the semi-gothic windows in front of which it ran, than might, from the incongruity of the different styles, have been expected. The principal entrance, embellished with a portico with angles, was a series of fluted columns with rich capitals, cornices and fantastic pediments, abounding in grotesques, sculptured conceits and eccentricities, the effect of all which was heightened by numberless artfully contrived and singularly effective fragments of light and shadow. The eye roved over the whole front with a curiosity that was well repaid: the slender turrets, whose mouldings ramified into those of the building, softened the harshness of many an abrupt angle; the bright red bricks of alternate length that edged every perpendicular outline, imparted richness and variety to the otherwise dusky colour of the mossy stone-work; the protruding chamber-oriels studded those walls

in the faces of which they were built, and were convenient to the inhabitants in more respects than that of light; and the slender chimney-shafts, resembling the *fusces* of the ancient Romans, not only afforded a hold for the clinging ivy, but tended to vary the horizontal lines, and rose, a superadded beauty, over the strangely cut and many-cornered gables. In short, the irregular building was the very *beau ideal* of an old English country mansion; conceived in singularity, overcharged with ornament constructed to last, and elaborately finished.

Their arrival had been noticed from the house; and had it not been for the reserved and stately manners of Sir Reginald, and his dislike, especially in Roland's instance, to any extraordinary display of good will and welcome, one half of the household would have turned out to receive the travellers, Roland being highly popular through the whole estate, and always even better received, to his bro-

ther's great jealousy, than the proprietor of the domain himself. While to Sir Reginald was naturally paid the deference and respect his station and character demanded, towards Roland was exhibited an attachment as sincere as it was gratifying. The manifestation of this kindly feeling would have been greater than it was, had it not been for his brother's peculiar disposition, and the authority he exercised over the expression, at least, of the opinions in the neighbourhood. Not willing, too, to give him umbrage, Roland, though he did not repel, as who could, did not *encourage* the avowed partiality which he everywhere met, and sometimes returned the eager kindness and respectful attentions of the tenantry, with a caution from which under other and happier circumstances he would have shrunk.

They had nearly approached the entrance of the mansion before any notice appeared to be taken of their arrival. At last a

couple of grooms made their appearance, who led the horses to the stable.

Welcomed on his arrival by some of the old domestics, who found it impossible to restrain their satisfaction, Roland, followed by his fellow traveller, entered the hall and sought his brother.

Sir Reginald Torrington was found in a Gothic apartment of some size, heavily furnished, and from its two economic windows commanding views of the woodland scenery of the neighbourhood. He was seated at a table which was covered with papers, plans, and other matters, and attired in a loose robe of sad colour velvet, cinctured by a belt of morocco. He rose as they entered, and greeted them with a bland yet mysterious smile.

His countenance was much paler than that of his brother, and had the traces of thought. From its expression he seemed not in the most robust health; and he had a habit of languidly

raising his eyelids which savoured a little of affectation. He was tall and well formed, had a polished address, and a cautious and insinuating mode of expression that pleased his auditor. But there was a polite coldness in his manner which checked friendliness and familiarity, and kept the party with whom he was conversing at a guarded and insurmountable distance. He was a kind of person upon whom you could not gain: always scrupulously affable and condescending, yet mixing with that affability an air of which you could not lose sight, and which kept you just at the point where you set out.

“Roland Torrington,” said he, smiling and shaking his hand. “I need not tell *you*, that I am pleased so soon again to see you. Master William Atcherley will accept my assurance that he is as fully welcome as he could wish!”

“I do not doubt,” answered Atcherley, “that Sir Reginald Torrington will keep pace

with the extremest wish I could have formed on the subject."

"You have ridden far and fast, I dare say," said Sir Reginald, "and need refreshment."

Atcherley during the ride had cautioned Roland against saying anything about their call at Rockingham's place of residence, and now, before he could answer, spoke for both.

"I thank you, but you will remember that it is yet early in the day; and we must not so libel the entertainment at our inn as to so soon do proper justice to the cheer of those whose kitchens are better furnished and whose viands are more scrupulously selected!"

"Aye? You passed the night then at an inn, or some such mere refuge for the destitute?" said Sir Reginald.

"Our application for its courtesies then," rejoined Atcherley, "was in character, for a bad road, a long journey in *prospectu*, and a dark night, take greatly from a man's importance."

"We had more to reduce our dignity,"

said Roland. "To the list you must add foundered horses, vast fatigue, and empty stomachs!"

"What inn did you stop at?" asked Sir Reginald.

"Our last inn," returned Atcherley, with readiness; "was the 'Wolf.'"

"You were a windfall," said Reginald, "to the poor wretch who starves even in keeping a house for general entertainment, in whom he might well rejoice. I have heard a few things of the house, and am but half inclined longer to tolerate it."

"We have reason to thank the fates the sentence has not yet gone forth," returned Roland. "Spare it and you will be repaid by the good wishes of travellers in a similar situation to ours. Nothing sharpens a man's gratitude so much as an unexpected provision for his earthly comfort."

"Ah, Roland, you are progressing," said Atcherley, with a sly smile.

"Progressing?—in what?" demanded Roland quickly, as if afraid of some *contretemps*.

"In — philosophy," returned his friend, drawling out the last word and ending with a yawn.

"You have then indoctrinated him with a little of your faculty, Master Atcherley; for I believe you—possess—or *did* possess—or had pretensions to—some of that enviable gift!"

"Yes;—enough to know that a piercing eye is not monopolised by the eagle, and that when a thing in the distance is discerned by the glittering, its tendency is to blend surrounding objects with itself."

"I have not a dull comprehension," said Sir Reginald, "and yet I confess my darkness in the present instance."

"Darkness is sometimes preferable to light," answered Atcherley, with a good-natured yet careless smile: "would you not rather fall over a cliff with a bandage on your eyes?"

"No: seeing the full extent of my danger, I would prepare to meet it."

"Anticipation is the curse of life, and blinded to your danger, you could not dread it."

"Well your's is a singular philosophy, I must confess," said Sir Reginald, laughing. "I am not inclined to follow the *ignis fatuus* held forth by each system, or to venture a tilt with you upon your own ground. How can the speculations of philosophers be beneficial to themselves or the world, when the principles of no two can be strained into concord?"

"How can three men journeying by different roads speak of the objects encountered in each? Yet they can reach the point to which the several ways they have taken converge, and by comparing what they have severally seen can hazard a shrewd guess at the nature of the country over which they have passed."

Sir Reginald's answer was a glance at At-

cherley and an incredulous smile. He threw himself back in his arm chair, pressed back his hair, and turned to Roland.

“And how have *you* found the air of France, Roland? Here have I, a person some years your senior and every way disposed and adapted for travel, stayed soberly at home, looking after my tenants, relieving their wants, keeping my house in order, an eye on my incomings, and my steed in the stable, while you, attached, too, to this part of the country for many reasons, having friends more deeply interested in you and your movements than is altogether convenient, with a fortune to make, domestic objects to gain, and a not particularly well-furnished exchequer; you, I say, have not only roved to the extremities of our island home, but crossed the very sea, penetrated into a foreign country, and fixed your quarters in its chiefest hold, the modern Babylon, a Vanity Fair celebrated for its extravagances, a quicksand which inevitably sucks in the finest

ship that touches its edge with its cautious keel. But I forget ; your pilot was one among the few."

"And his charge one among the many ; eh, Sir Reginald ?" said Atcherley.

"Was the pilot dubious," continued Sir Reginald, with an enquiring smile, "of his capabilities, had he undervalued the difficulties of the voyage, or was he so solicitous over the safety of that committed to him as to determine to run no risk, that we find him turning his head again towards the shore, and bringing his trust to a termination ere it had well begun ?

"Brother," said Roland, "you have learnt, since I left you, to deal in enigmas : have you an intention of rivalling the sphynx ? Because if you have, be assured, as far as I am concerned, you will find no *Cædipus*."

"You cannot answer, Roland, for your companion ; his accomplishments may extend further than you imagine."

"Atcherley has had something better to do than read oracles: your skill does not extend far in that, does it, William?" said Roland.

"*Usually* depending on my own eyesight," returned Atcherley, "in such *extraordinary* cases I borrow the spectacles of my neighbours."

"I would, just now," rejoined Sir Reginald, good-humouredly, "borrow the spectacles of *my* neighbours if I were able: perhaps one of you will not refuse the loan. To what are the English shores indebted for so speedy a revisit? Am I to charge you with caprice, Roland? Had you seen enough of the Continent, and had all curiosity departed? I have heard there is much to be seen beyond the limits of the French metropolis, and I am surprised you should so have forfeited your character for enterprise."

"New objects," said Roland, "sometimes have as little to attract as old ones."

"I must turn to one less interested, I see,"

said Sir Reginald. "We did not expect the pleasure of your return, Master Atcherley, for some time. You did not even favour me with a letter announcing your intention of coming, of which I should have been glad. I can offer you little in exchange for the *salons* of Paris. An old house and an eccentric household, an ancient cook who thinks quantity better than quality, old wine of cloudy character, a strong contrast to the flashing liquids over the water, unpolished hospitality, and a blunt, though I hope you will believe *cordial* welcome, I doubt me not disadvantageously contrasted with the flattering humility of a Parisian reception, are all I can boast. You will shortly be called upon to pass judgment on my cheer; for our dinner hour approaches, and I will not so cruelly compliment you as to put it back to a later and more fashionable hour. Roland, you must entertain our guest while I shift my present scarcely pardonable attire. Master Atcherley, for a

short season, your excuse. Should my grounds offer any inducement, I beg you will not remain withindoors."

Saying these words, Sir Reginald Torrington retired. Atcherley shortly followed his example, and bent his steps towards a door which led into the park. He was followed by Roland, who did not feel disinclined to enjoy the beauty of the day.

They spent, however, but little time out of doors. Retiring to their several apartments they made a necessary change in their dress, and rejoined Sir Reginald in the dining-chamber.

As if in contrast to his discouraging representation of the character of his larder, the dinner was scrupulously good, and the wine of an age and flavour which even to Atcherley was remarkable.

The day passed quickly over. Conversation, of which Sir Reginald was fond, succeeded dinner; and other modes of passing time,

equally agreeable, whiled away the afternoon and part of the evening. Sir Reginald had to ride over to a neighbouring town on pressing business connected with his estate, and with many good-humoured apologies he left Roland and his friend to make their own amusement in his absence. He promised, however, to return as soon as practicable, and heard with seeming regret that their stay for the present at Torrington Place was limited.

Sir Reginald rode away; and Roland and Atcherley were left in that revery which sometimes succeeds the excitement of interesting conversation. The apartment in which they sat was the one in which they had first seen Sir Reginald. Roland was patting a favourite deer-hound, of whose good condition he had heard on his return with much satisfaction. Atcherley was lounging in a cushioned chair, his eyes fixed upon the elaborate roof; and he was apparently in an idle mood speculating upon

its complexities. The sun was setting brightly, and threw a few of its beams into the somewhat gloomy apartment. No sound was heard except the rustling of the leaves as they were at intervals agitated by the quiet breeze, and the capricious movements of the dog as it now and then sought an easier position.

"This is a noble house and a fine estate, Roland," said Atcherley, still carelessly gazing at the roof.

"It is," answered Roland, "and Reginald seems to think so."

"It is almost a pity he does not marry," said Atcherley. "A bachelor looks an animal that ought merely to be tolerated but certainly not approved, in a house of such princely dimensions."

"A man, certainly," replied Roland, "would not have to plead the convenience of his family as an excuse for removal."

"And it would not be so destitute of cheer-

ing voices had not Sir Reginald made a blunder which unfortunately cannot be rectified in his favour: he has no disinclination to the nuptial state."

"You surprise me," said Roland, raising his eyes: "you seem to be deeper in his secrets than I am!"

"And yet Sir Reginald is not particularly confidential. I daresay he would look upon my knowledge as contraband."

"You have not derived it from the fountain head."

"I have," said Atcherley—"in a way. From what do you expect I should acquire it? The mirror can reflect, though the object it so faithfully presents may have its back to the observer; the echo may betray the sound however distant and uncertain the latter may be. Sir Reginald's position is to be lamented; for you stand in his way."

"I!" exclaimed Roland, in new surprise.

"Is such a thing impossible? Do not rela-

tions cross one another sometimes in the nearest instances?"

"Let me compare and regulate what you say," said Roland, rising from his half recumbent position and ceasing to bestow any attention on his dog, "for sometimes you speak so darkly a seer himself could scarcely make out your meaning. You said just now that Reginald had no disinclination to the nuptial state, and you add that I, in some particular, stand in his way. In the first place let me ask how you know what you first advanced?"

"By the outline of the shadow," said Archerley with a half smile; "you can guess at the character of the body which causes it."

"You bring a fog down upon me again, to make me lose my way. Do you mean," continued Roland, the thought suddenly striking him and causing a slight tremour in his voice; "do you mean—that—Reginald is in love with Julia?"

"Did I say so?" asked Atcherley, with a surprise in his manner that puzzled Roland.

"You did not; but your words only bear this interpretation."

"You mean that that is the only interpretation you can fix upon them. Sir Reginald himself might take them differently. I said, if you remember, Sir Reginald's position was unfortunate, and that you stood in his way. Even supposing that the case is as you say, and that Sir Reginald Torrington is in love with Julia Rockingham; you wince," continued he with a furtive smile, "but if such were the case, that would be the true mode of putting it, would it not? Respecting which supposed love I would ask you if you ever discerned any symptom."

"I never did: or at least my attention was never called to the subject."

"Called to the subject!" rejoined Atcherley, impatiently. "Do you wait for your attention

to be *called*? You may wait long enough then sometimes. 'A wise man will pierce the skies which are above him, the air which is around him, aye, and through the earth beneath him, ere he even acknowledge his suspicions to *himself*! His is an Argus gaze that knows no slumber; his object is his *heaven*, and the means by which he seeks its attainment his *world*. But enough of this:—Even imagining, I again say, that the case is as you have supposed, and that the love exists of which we have spoken, do you not conclude that Sir Reginald would withdraw his pretensions in regret, lament his unfortunate and mistaken passion, and generously refuse to stand between you and your happiness?"

This was said in a very peculiar manner. You were compelled to blame your own uncharitableness, while you fancied you could perceive a mysterious irony in the inflections of the speaker's musical voice.

"No ! in such a case," said Roland,

bluntly; "I don't know what would be his conduct."

"Would it not be a noble piece of self-denial and magnanimity?"

"It would; but one which in his situation I should scarcely be inclined to perform."

"And yet every one is anxious to lay claim to the character which you now repudiate," said Atcherley. "How long have you learned to acknowledge the greatness and goodness of an act, and yet shrink from its execution? Do you admit that you are below the capabilities of human nature, and yet allow that such is the conduct that has been chalked out for our pursuing? Would tasks of this severe nature have been set us, unless it had been foreseen that we were able to go through with them? If you reluctantly allow that our nature is incompetent to such exalted acts of self-mortification, you call that wisdom in question which demands their fulfilment. And yet it is a part of your creed that nothing is to be asked at our hands which we are unable to do."

“Some natures may be capable of that which I should find impossible. There are varieties of endurance, as well as of the circumstances which regulate and modify their limits. We are each acted upon by a different machinery, and see that which is submitted to us in a different light.”

“And yet there is but one system presented for our government. While we admit the inapplicability of that by which we are ruled to another and perhaps a less forward state of existence, we are debarred from admitting any other. We are like builders who subscribe but one plan, but one mode of building, and but one set of materials, while we are compelled to perceive that no two soils are alike, that the weight one foundation would bear would sink into ruin in another, that our architecture consistent in this place, would be ridiculous in a second, and dangerous in a third, and that the materials that are applicable in the climate in which they are procured, would in another,

involve the architect in perplexity, and laugh his calculations to nought. We cannot escape the universal adaptation which runs through nature, and the moment you *generalise* you reverse the machinery. The view is obvious:—do we look to one machine for a general production? Do we not apply different principles to different objects? and do we not first estimate the character of our subject before we seek its subjection to our purposes?"

"But nature," said Roland, "is governed by one grand system; and the essence of that system is *harmony*."

"One principle is kept in view," answered Atcherley, "through a thousand changes, and that principle is vital succession and annihilation. Life pervades the universe, and the moment any thing *ceases to be*, it ceases to have a share in its *essential spirit*. Death is non-entity or non-existence; and non-existence is incompatible with the productive principle. There is properly no death.

“ An alteration in the current of our conversation,” continued Atcherley, rising, “ is approaching in the person of Sir Reginald. I hear his horse’s hoofs on the stones at the entrance.”

CHAPTER VII.

"*Friar Lawrence*.—What torch is yond', that
vainly lends his light
To grubs and eyeless skulls? as I discern,
It burneth in the Capel's monument."

Romeo and Juliet. Act 5. Scene 3.

"*Horatio*.—What, has this thing appeared again
to night?

Bernardo.—I have seen nothing.

Marcellus.—Horatio says 'tis but our phantasy;
And will not let belief take hold of him,
Touching this dreaded sight, twice seen of us.

Horatio.—Well, sit we down,
And let us hear Bernardo speak of this.

Bernardo.—Last night of all,
When yon same star, that's westward from the
pole,
Had made his course to illume that part of heaven
Where now it burns, Marcellus and myself,
The bell then beating one—"

Hamlet. Act 1. Scene 1.

ATCHERLEY was correct in his announcement.

Sir Reginald's riding boots were heard clank-

ing along the vestibule, and he shortly after entered the apartment.

The cloak in which he had performed his journey was now thrown off, but his riding whip was still in his hand. The exercise had given him colour, and he seemed to have lost something of his habitually guarded manner. He threw himself on a sofa, took off his beaver, and entered immediately into the conversation that was excited by his appearance. Atcherley and Roland were reciprocating observations on the speed with which he must have traversed the ground he had to measure.

Sir Reginald's commendations of his steed were justified by the animal's performance. Conversation gradually shifted from horses to other subjects, and it was not until a rather late hour that supper was announced. In a lull of the conversation the little party had sat down to cards; and it was in the pauses of the game that the various matters they discussed

were successively brought on the *tapis*. In one of the longest of these *interregnums* or *interregna* Sir Reginald mentioned an incident in his night's journey which had somewhat excited his surprise.

"You know, Roland," said he, "the old building called in the neighbourhood 'the Monastery.'"

"I do," said Roland: "but you can scarcely call it in the neighbourhood, since it is eight miles off."

"Tut! nothing to a good horse: he would soon make it in the neighbourhood. You know the belt of wood that winds round the base of the eminence on which it stands. Where it emerges into the valley you can see the whole of the ruins, as well as the particular tower which has been for so long a time the object of the irregular attention of the people about here."

"Yes, time has robbed it partially of its in-

terest. I know the spot perfectly: but what of this?"

"You may not have heard, Master Atcherley, the circumstances which have given an interest to the place. This building is very ancient—no records existing, I believe, respecting its foundation: little is also known concerning its history. Totally in ruin, it is of course only inhabited by the bat or owl, and its crumbling walls seem to threaten a speedy and, when it *does* come, an unexpected dissolution. There are a few roofless apartments still remaining, but they are choked up with ivy and rubbish; and its few approaches are scarcely practicable. It stands in the midst of an irregular tract of woodland, broken into intervals of rock, and lies two or three miles out of even the roughest track. For years the superstitious peasantry have declared that at particular seasons lights, at the hour of midnight, have been seen to flit in its broken

windows. This fancy, coupled with the persuasion that the place must be consequently haunted, has gained so great a ground in the neighbourhood, that no person after nightfall, I believe, could be induced to cross that part of the wood in which it lies. I have paid the matter but little attention, and from the first totally disbelieved not only the many stories which as usual have been set afloat, with the exaggerations common in such cases, in the neighbourhood, but that lights had been or were at any period to be discovered about it. Looking impartially at the case, I could not account in any *ordinary* way for the presence of light in or about the vicinity of the building, although I took into consideration whether such a thing might not be caused by smugglers, gipsies, or robbers; which, if the assertion was at all to be admitted, was by far the most feasible supposition. Smugglers we have none: the country is too remote from the sea for them here to be heard of. Gipsies would

sooner make use of a less repulsive and inconvenient place; and as to robbers, they must be impolitic and audacious indeed to betray their presence by any such means."

"The most probable supposition," said Roland, "is that no such things have been seen."

"That was my opinion, but is such no longer," returned Sir Reginald. "You may guess my surprise when having mastered so difficult a part of my journey as the ground between this and the Monastery, emerging from the corner of the wood, which there gradually descends, I saw, in the first glance I gave at the ruin, the faint though steady glimmering of a light. I had disbelieved the assertion *in toto*, as I said before, but was now convinced of my mistake. It had a singular and mysterious effect, this light, breaking on the general obscurity and to be seen in a building of so desolate and ruinous a character. Conjectures respecting it occupied my mind for the re-

mainder of my journey; and it was with somewhat anxious eyes that I looked out for its appearance on my return. But I was disappointed. The place had its usual dark and melancholy appearance, and no trace of any thing remarkable was to be discovered above it."

"The case is somewhat singular," said Atcherley, who had listened with interest to the detail. "But, Sir Reginald, the game stays."

"I crave your pardon," said Sir Reginald, playing. "Would you not advise me to institute some enquiries respecting the business, and ascertain, if possible, who these midnight visitants are?"

"I think I would were I in your place," returned Atcherley, drily, "were even your search to prove unsuccessful: a supposition which *may* be hazarded."

The conversation was kept up, with some few interruptions respecting what Sir Reginald had seen, until it was time to retire. As the

clock of the house was striking the first hour of morning, the three gentlemen betook themselves to their beds.

Several days went, came, and were spent in much the same manner. The different persons with whom Roland was instructed by Oliver Rockingham to have interviews before his future father-in-law should follow, introduce him to the leaders of the confederacy already formed, and take an active part in the business which he had for some time remotely and secretly been engaged in forwarding, were not expected to betake themselves to the grand scene of consultation until a few days had passed over. The *rendezvous* was already appointed for a certain day ; and Roland was to be in London some time previous.

Atcherley had engaged to accompany his friend, see that all leading matters were put in a proper train, and act as a sort of unsuspected guarantee for his good faith and obedience.

It would be difficult to define the state of feeling with which Roland looked forward to his part of the coming struggle. He had been satisfied with the assurance that no harm was either contemplated towards the King or safety of his throne: but there was a twinge or two of conscience mixed up with that satisfaction, which somewhat reproached him for conspiring against the prerogative of a person from whom he had received favours, and disturbing the repose of a greatly provoked but yet enduring and at present quiet nation. Though Roland's views were highly patriotic in their tendency, almost amounting to republicanism, and though he felt the greatest indignation at the despotic proceedings of the government, he could not as easily as others enter upon projects which might eventually compromise life and property. The enterprise in which he had perhaps too eagerly involved himself, might, noy doubtless would, end in blood; and the full re-establishment of

liberty would not have been the less dear to him if it could be brought about without violence. But Roland had private considerations of an extraordinary character to impel him forward. Julia had merged all objects which might have influenced him in herself. When he thought of her all his doubts and misgivings fled from him, and he wondered how he could ever for a moment entertain them.

Eagerly had he subscribed the pledges required of him by Oliver Rockingham, when in the course of their private conversation the latter declared his compliance was the only means by which he could obtain the hand of her he sought. In the first flush of his pleasure he had wondered at the easiness of his bargain, and with a thoughtlessness natural to his situation felt even grateful to Rockingham for making the terms so light. The few doubts that would now cross his mind were an after growth which in the first fervour of delight

would have been too watery to take root, but in the more temperate pleasure which followed, that

“Sober certainty of waking bliss”

which pictures our coming happiness without exaggeration, found a situation in which to spring up. But all cold influences were swept away from his mind when Julia's image presented itself; and the resolution which followed was perhaps the stronger for its temporary suspension. He burned with impatience to shine in her eyes, and listen to the playful raillery with which he knew she would dwell upon his achievements and laugh at them. The anticipation of that raillery was sweeter to him than the most open praise; and he would not have changed his “heart's idol,” with all her provoking archness, carelessness and irony, for the most single-minded, devoted and unaffected maiden in Europe.

CHAPTER VIII.

"*Brutus.* Do you know them?

Lucius. No, sir ; their hats are pluck'd about their ears,

And half their faces buried in their cloaks,
That by no means I may discover them
By any mark of favour.

Brutus.—Let them enter.

They are the faction. O, conspiracy !
Sham'st thou to show thy dangerous brow by night,
When evils are most free ! O, then, by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage ? Seek none, conspiracy.

Hide in it smiles and affability :
For if thou path, thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention."

Julius Cæsar. Act 2. Scene 1

Our reader's attention must now, if he pleases, be shifted to another though not a remote locality. The connection of the following

scene with the incidents which have gone before, unaccording as the former may at first sight appear with it, will become gradually apparent. Circumstances will be presented in our new *locale* greatly though perhaps not immediately influencing the events of this history; and like the apparently incongruous succession of scenes in a theatre, some time must elapse, some occurrences take place, and some characters be allowed to speak, before the end of the act in progress can be made out.

The scene is a wild and tangled wood, gloomy in its character and extensive in its dimensions. A rough cart track, by means of which woodcutters may have been able to convey their loads, too rough for the passage of any vehicle less coarse and inartificial than a lumbering cart, and in so very bad a state that the most cautious steed could scarcely gain a firm footing, wound deviously through the clumps of trees, and made such sudden turns

that it was evident the road had been made subservient to the obstacles it encountered, rather than that the obstacles had been removed to make way for the road. Masses of leaves fringed it on either side, and threw a melancholy shade over the passage. In some places, where the breaking away of the thickets did not arbitrarily confine the view to the foreground, glimpses of the more distant woodland could be obtained, rich in all the varieties of colour and shadow, and full of those inequalities which give so great a charm to scenery of that character. The light was also advantageous for the display of its grandeur. Though the moon—a summer moon whose light was undimmed by vapour—was not high, it shed sufficient light to reveal the character of the neighbouring objects, and threw over the remoter landscape that soft and placid blue which blends all objects in its own rich illumination.

No sound was to be heard in this beautiful

solitude except the faint sweep of the murmuring breeze as it drowsily agitated the leaves, and the successive tramp, tramp of approaching hoofs. The last sounds were caused by the approach of a black steed, whose (to judge from his movements and the way in which he sat the animal) graceful rider was enveloped in the folds of a dark and voluminous mantle. His beaver was drawn over his eyes, and he wore a mask. Greater part of his horse's body was also covered with his mantle; which was so carefully drawn round him that concealment would have seemed to be the object of the wearer. Emerging from some of the most close and difficult part of the ground, the horseman increased his pace and seemed anxious to get clear of the wood;—at least a little free of those thick portions of it which obstructed his advance. He seemed successful in his wish, for the wood-tract now appeared partially to open.

A few minutes' farther ride brought him to

a descent, and to that corner of the wood which had been noticed by Sir Reginald in his description of his night's adventure, and which commanded a full view of the old monastic ruin. The moonlight now was less interrupted, and displayed the features of the scene with a distinctness which perhaps was not altogether agreeable to the horæman. At all events his first impulse was to peer suspiciously around, and then to fix his gaze upon the building before him.

It was in truth a noble scene ; and its perfect solitude invested it with an interest approaching even to awe.

The traveller was for a moment stationary on the crown of the eminence, overlooking the woody ground as it irregularly descended into a small valley filled with fragments of black rock and darkened with many shadows. The eye had much difficulty in segregating the constituent portions of this gloomy hollow, and sought a relief in dwelling upon the fan-

tastic points of shaggy rock that towered out of the foliage and were shewn in the clear light of the slow-sailing moon.

On either side the ground deliberately sloped with uniformly picturesque but sometimes impracticable perpendicularity: the grass, in the few places that it could be discovered, owing to the thickness of the brush-wood and the tortuous complexities of the numberless roots that chequered its surface, was rich and verdant; and the often occurring fractures of the upper ground, broken into the most rough and fantastic outlines, formed "coigns of vantage" whereon many varieties of creeping plants could hang their tendrils and luxuriantly spread. In the parts most elevated, where the effect was not prevented by overarching foliage or the more parallel intervention of shrubs and wide-extending bushes, the silver trunks of the tougher and more ancient trees were seen to reflect the spirit-like glimmer of the moonlight. Two

or three bold and gigantic rocks would print their heavy shapes upon the deep blue sky, and throw, with a sullen grandeur which added much to the solemnity of the scene, their huge black shadows over the lower grounds. The background of this landscape was a broad and irregularly outlined tract of woodland, forming a strong contrast to the transparency of the sky, and seeming arbitrarily to shut in every sign of a country less uncultured and solitary.

The ancient building which formed so prominent a feature in the view, was apparently erected upon an assemblage of rocks, tumbled together in confusion, and crowned with massy and in some places pendant foliage. To the left, the ground on which it had been erected was exceedingly precipitous; but on the other side it was moderate in its descent, and surmountable without any difficulty except from that presented by the underwood. The ruins—covered with lichens, and a thick ivy that

not content with scaling the side of the building by means of dilapidated buttress or mossy cornice, twined its dark and clustering leaves into the broken windows and luxuriated upon their half-shattered and corroded tracery—the ruins were oblong in their form, and contained within their area a desolate court-yard, in which weeds had grown to a height unusual even in such abandoned situations, and around which the ruined, high-pointed arches, wreathed and festooned with a profusion of creepers, had fallen stone by stone, till the fragments of rotting, mossy and roughly chiselled masonry had risen into heaps. The mouldering column-shaft was here garlanded with the freshest production of nature; the enriched window-head, which had formerly admitted the bright light, was now blocked up by an increasing vegetation; the aisles, which in their lonely grandeur still bore witness to the ancient glories of the edifice, instead of as in the past time echoing the voice of prayer

or thanksgiving, answered only to the moody hooting of the owl, or the midnight bay of the grim prowling wolf, who trod over lettered stones and looked through frameless windows; and the shadowy cloisters, which had only sullenly returned the cautious tread of the bare-footed religious as he dimly flitted along them, now lay in voiceless and slowly falling desolation. A few years longer and the last melancholy remains of the building would crumble to the earth over the graves of those whom it had so long and yet so ineffectually held over.

A tall and mouldering tower, somewhat less covered with ivy than other parts of the building, rose high and dark against the illuminated sky, and stood out in the boldest relief from all the objects in its vicinity, contrasted with the brilliancy of the moon which was fast nearing its meridian. Through a small window, almost a loophole in its size and lying open to the attacks of the elements,

a sight, clear in consequence of a breach in the wall on the opposite side, could be obtained of the silver clouds and the bright and placid azure. Stars were glittering brilliantly above, though some singularly shaped clouds were trooping slowly over the "rich profundity" of the sky, and causing the moonbeams to glide at intervals over the landscape. But the moon would soon regain its power, and stream over the whole scene the crowning grace of its clear radiance. The view, in a few words, was one upon which a poet would have been delighted to dwell, and that an artist would have longed to picture.

The horseman, who had paused a moment contemplating the beauties of the scene, dismounted from his steed and led the animal cautiously down the declivity. On reaching its base, instead of proceeding in a direct line, which would have involved many difficulties, he turned off to the right, and, winding through the patches of copsewood, arrived at the sum-

mit of the eminence on which the Monastery stood. This conduct implied an acquaintance with the ground; for it was the very best path he could have selected to reach the apparent object of his journey. He was now in a line with the building, which towered proudly on his side, and presented, on a nearer approach, a still greater aspect of ruin and melancholy than at a distance. Advancing a little farther, and by a track which though somewhat overgrown afforded a plain and not particularly inconvenient means of reaching the ruins he fastened his horse to a tree and carefully proceeded. A cloud now came over the moon and obliged him to stop and look deliberately about him. Apparently the result of his examination was decisive, for he quickened his pace, and, emerging from the trees, found himself in a somewhat open space, bounded behind by the wood, and before by the crumbling walls of the sacred structure.

A few steps forward brought him into the

court-yard already mentioned, and here the shadows from the ivied building were so dark and numerous, that after stumbling in his hasty advance two or three times over fragments of the ruin, he threw apart his heavy cloak and produced a lantern. Its dim yellow light threw a sickly gleam over the old grey stones, penetrating however a sufficient way through the darkness to point out the obstacles that lay directly in his path. By these means he reached a ruinous doorway in the upper end of the court, and advanced up the passage to which it led with increased confidence. Coming out of the open air the light of his lantern seemed to have acquired a double brilliancy, and displayed the neighbouring objects with very satisfactory distinctness.

Having arrived at the end of this passage, the stranger reached an avenue—broad in comparison with the narrowness of the former one—which by a broken door of singular construction led directly into the chapel. This

chapel with its dim desolate features—its open windows and its damp and mouldering columns, presented many points of interest: but the stranger passed all these unheeded, only pausing now and then, and looking back with a quick, suspicious glance as his footsteps seemed to double with the hollow echoes. An iron gate, red with rust, was thrown open with some difficulty, and at a few feet beyond, a stone staircase, dark as Erebus, presented its successive steps. With a sudden effort the gate was closed, and the stranger, who had put his light on the ground for the purpose, at once descended.

The staircase wound deeply down, and terminated in a circular kind of chamber, green with subterranean damps, and paved with illegibly charactered flagstones. An avenue to the left conducted to the vaults, wherein the dignitaries and brethren of the Monastery, as death had claimed its own, had been successively deposited. The grim forms of some

falling monuments could in the distance be distinguished; but the gloom of the place was great, and the glance which the stranger gave in that direction but momentary. A passage to the right, the end of which could not be discerned in the obscurity, led to the Crypt.

The stranger might justly have been expected to display some marked symptom of discomposure when as his footsteps rang along the heavy wall and died away in long-protracted echoes among the branching passages and hollow chambers, the gleam of a light was momentarily to be seen shooting athwart the gloom in the distance: but he seemed to pay little or no attention to what might have been considered so extraordinary an appearance, and kept on his way without pausing. On first observing the light he did indeed advance the lantern he carried in his hand as if to render his approach still more obvious; but it was not difficult to perceive his object

in so doing was solely to announce himself by giving some sort of signal. He had apparently satisfied the person who seemed to await him, of his character, for the light was now fully displayed.

On a nearer approach, a masked figure was discoverable in a nook of the wall. His vestments were concealed in a mantle of similar volume to that of the stranger. A cap was upon his head, and a drawn sword in his hand.

The traveller paused on receiving the challenge of this vigilant sentinel. It was in a foreign language, and the answer that was immediately given seemed satisfactory.

"I have to claim the second term of admission," said the watcher, in tones which though low were singularly distinct.

"You shall have it," was the reply.

Loosening the hand that was disengaged from the heavy folds of his mantle, the stranger quickly raised his cap, removed his mask, and displayed the features of one with

whom the reader is already acquainted. They were those of Atcherley.

The hand of the sentinel was immediately raised to his bonnet in acquiescence, and Atcherley, without any further words, passed him and advanced to the end of the passage.

He stopped a moment to more firmly replace his mask and adjust his beaver before he demanded admittance at the large Gothic door to which the passage led. This was done by a knock thrice repeated, and the door was slowly and heavily unclosed.

The apartment into which Atcherley was admitted, as well as well as extensive was of very lofty dimensions. It communicated directly, through a pair of magnificent iron gates, with the ancient Crypt that run under the Chapel. These gates, now half falling not only from their hinges but from the stone-work in which the latter had been fixed, were massy in construction, though their strength was now hopelessly impaired by the

rust of ages, and were approached by five broad steps of a dark marble. The walls were formed of heavy masonry, out of the joints of which the iron clamps had nearly worked. On one side was a richly pierced Gothic screen, the tracery of which was a masterpiece of art, though the hue of the once even coloured stone was darkened, and its luxuriant details were in some places mutilated and in others deeply time-worn. Through the mullions and their intermediate decorative ramifications, glimpses could be obtained of the space on the other side, which had been specially appropriated as the burial place of the Abbots of the Monastery, and was filled with stately table or altar monuments, the melancholy and funereal pomp of which was heightened by the image of each dignitary to the memory of whom they were raised, and which was lying at full length on the slab. The roof of the apartment was arched, and embellished with ponderous groins, ribs and knots of foliage. A row of massy

columns drew out on either side, blackened by age, and lowering in sullen magnificence on the other proportions of the subterranean hall. The floor was profusely lettered; and inscriptions, nearly illegible, on wall and pillar, met the eye in whatever place it happened to rest. A few dark and waving rags, which might once have been richly emblazoned flags and banners, shook with a slow and sepulchral magnificence as the cold air found entrance, and they added to but ennobled the charnel horrors of the place.

Ranged around a ponderous table of chesnut covered with a pall of black velvet, was an assemblage of tall and silent figures, who might have been taken for statues, their faces concealed by similar masks to those of the stranger and the sentinel, and their persons studiously concealed by flowing draperies. Bonnets were on their heads, ornamented with sable plumes, and their arms

were folded in their cloaks. On an elevated seat was an individual of taller and larger proportions than the rest of the conclave, but having not the smallest difference in his attire. His face, like those of the others, was hidden by a mask, and nothing was to be seen of its character except what might have been gathered from the piercing gleam which every now and then shot from his bright and rolling eyes. A mysterious silence reigned throughout the assemblage; they did not even seem to breathe; and nothing broke the complete and even painful stillness, but the long sigh of the wind as it swept through the ruinous aisles of the neighbouring Crypt and gibbered through its shivering and frameless windows. A couple of flickering torches, in stands of iron, diffused an unequal and lugubrious light through the apartment.

The whole expression of the place was dismal and forbidding to a degree. It was totally impossible to dissociate its blending constituents; and the eye could barely do more

than rest upon the all-pervading gloom and cloud-like solemnity of the whole. The red, imperfect and dusky glare of the waving torches was quite insufficient to do more than somewhat qualify the shadows that hung around, and tried in vain to penetrate beyond the narrow circle to which the jealous and seldom disturbed darkness confined it. The blue cold moonlight, streaming partially through "the rents of ruin," and mixing its sepulchral and deceptive glimmer with the silky illumination thrown fitfully out by the torches, drowned every object in the nearer distance in its own ghastly twilight, and invested what it did reveal with a mystery that fascinated while it awed the beholder. The place was indeed one dedicated

"To graves, to worms, and epitaphs ;"

the temple of one mightier than the mightiest of the earth ; the glass of Death wherein its loathsome features could be thoroughly con-

templated; and a living record of the vanity of the things of this world, the utter emptiness of pride, and the nothingness of existence.

The ominous gloom of these subterranean halls broken upon only by a few gleams of moonshine and by torchlight, the perfect silence of the mysterious conclave assembled there, the lonely wail of the midnight wind, and the supremely desolate character of the ancient building beneath whose ruins this singular meeting was held, were calculated to strike an awe equalled only by wonder at the object of the convocation, and the characters, to judge from their appearance, of its scarcely human members.

It would have been difficult to surmise the objects of this strange convocation, assembled so suspiciously beneath the ruins of an abandoned building similar to this. Atcherley's connection with the band seemed still more extraordinary. But an explanation may be found in the transactions of the period. It

was the age of Secret Societies—of associations united together for good and evil purposes. To what class this might be ascribed, was doubtful. Societies were not unknown whose laws were of the most flagitious character, and where the presentation of a name obnoxious to an individual member was sufficient to put in motion the means of destruction of innumerable secret agents against him. As yet England had been sacred from such dark leagues. Germany was the head-quarters of these baleful fraternities, and the taint was spreading fast. Whether political or private malignity dictated the presentation of the particular name which was this night given in by Atcherley, certain it is that the society of which this meeting was a section was of that deadly order, and perhaps the most powerful ever known.

CHAPTER IX.

"——— I'll hold thee any wager,
When we are both accoutred like young men,
I'll prove the prettier fellow of the two,
And wear my dagger with the braver grace.
I have within my mind
A thousand raw tricks of these bragging jacks,
Which I will practise."

Merchant of Venice. Act iii. Scene 4.

"I will speak to him like a saucy lacquey, and
under that habit play the knave with him."

As you Like It. Act iii. Scene 2.

HAVING spent several days in the retirement of Torrington Place, the time arrived when Roland and Atcherley, as expected, would be-

take themselves to more bustling scenes, and exchange the idleness in which they had indulged since their return from the continent for the occupations which were more congenial to their natures.

The morning on which they were to begin their journey to the metropolis was favourable; and though it was with some apparent chagrin that Sir Reginald had been acquainted with the termination of their stay at his house, his farewell to both was cordial enough. There was an inward uneasiness however in him, and an occasional clouding of the brow, though instantly cleared away, that was inexplicable to Roland, who was not by any means so thoroughly aware as Atcherley of his brother's state of mind. He had heard indeed with some alarm, the cautious intimation which Atcherley had given that Roland interfered in some respect with his brother's views; and knowing that it could not possibly be in any other particular than that of his love for Julia

Rockingham, he had eagerly endeavoured to extract from his friend a confirmation or removal of his fears. Aided by his natural wish to keep the former in the back-ground, he had given credit to the well-feigned surprise of Atcherley at the suspicion he expressed, and fancied he must have mistaken his friend's meaning. Besides Atcherley always, or at least generally, spoke so circuitously, and invested even trifling matters with a mystery that served to amuse the speculations of his hearer, that Roland did not pay his communication the attention a direct avowal would have received, and set it down as one of the sinister and exaggerated suppositions in which his friend so frequently indulged. He had, too, a reliance on his own penetration, and was satisfied with knowing that no part of his brother's behaviour warranted him in supposing he looked with any other than the commonest regard upon his neighbour's daughter.

Little or nothing had been said, after the

conversation which took place the first night of their arrival, respecting Sir Reginald's adventure or the intention he expressed of enquiring respecting the light he had discovered in the ruin. Atcherley well knew from the first that there was no chance of discovering the true character of the light, or detecting any of the members of the midnight meeting. Concerning his own participation in the latter he was perfectly at ease, and would have been ready, had it been proposed, to have thoroughly canvassed everything relating to a circumstance so mysterious, and to have explored the ruins in a search which he knew would be fruitless.

Atcherley and Roland departed early from Sir Reginald's house, and were soon some miles upon their road. They rode with one attendant for the sake of convenience, though had it been necessary or advisable for safety, they would have set out by themselves. But they knew well enough when to dispense with

the attendance, and intended on their reaching the metropolis to send the man back into Derbyshire. Their future movements needed no witness but such as might be chosen; however Atcherley, on whom these matters rested, had made no objection to attendance in the present instance.

After a hard day's journey they arrived, just about nightfall, at a place called Kibworth in Leicestershire, where they resolved to put up. The friends, as well as their horses, stood in need of refreshment, as they had made but the barely necessary pauses during the day. Here, just as they entered the village, a neat inn presented itself, recommending its hospitalities by an air of snugness and cleanliness that was particularly agreeable to the travellers. The horses were led to the stables, and the friends entertained with the best which the house afforded.

A good supper was soon on the table, after partaking of which and a flaggon of tolerable

wine, as the fatigues of the ensuing day demanded repose, they betook themselves to their bedrooms, and gave orders to have their steeds in readiness at an early hour in the morning.

Recent fatigue, conspiring with the goodness of their accommodation, prolonged their slumbers the following morning, so that they had nearly slipped the hour at which they intended to set forward. However before eight o'clock, after a somewhat hasty breakfast, they took their departure from the little inn, and being able, from the coolness of the day, to put their horses into a rapid as well as steady pace, by noon had made considerable progress. They intended to stop at Dunstable for the night, and then prosecute their journey in the morning if possible to the metropolis.

The travellers had proceeded to about a couple of miles beyond Northampton, and were advancing into the rich country which surrounds that town, when a dust which had

gradually been driving along the road behind them partly intermitted, and displayed two horsemen cantering along at a pace which soon promised to bring them up to Roland and his friend.

As they swept past them the characteristics of these horsemen were distinguishable, and it became apparent that the last person was an attendant of the one who had principally engaged the attention of both Atcherley and Roland. This traveller was mounted on a fleet horse whose shape and movements displayed high blood, and whose chafing at the momentary check his rider gave him as he passed the friends—probably for the purpose of a more than passing observation—was sufficient to draw and justify the particular notice which was given both to himself and his rider.

Little of the gentleman's dress could be seen, for he wore a large cloak and had his beaver drawn low before his eyes. The hat of the

servant was also studiously disposed, so as—as Atcherley and his friend immediately imagined—to elude observation.

Chafing at the sudden check which he had received, the stranger's horse seemed disposed to be restive. He made several graceful but impatient curvets, and snorted forth his rising anger. Several hasty and, as our travellers fancied, passionate pricks of the spur however sent him forward, and the attendant seemed in as equal a hurry to continue their journey as his master. Just as the stranger had succeeded in forcing his horse forward, Atcherley put his hand to his hat and deliberately raised it with a singular though polite smile, ejaculating at the same time, "Good day to you, sir; your haste, I see, prevents our joining company, which might otherwise have been agreeable, at least on our part."

The stranger made no other reply than a silent bend of the head and graceful wave of his hand. Spurring his horse into a canter, he

was soon out of hearing, followed closely by his attendant.

"Don't it strike you," said Atcherley, "that he bears a great resemblance to Sir Reginald? In his features I mean, for his complexion is of a much deeper colour."

"There is certainly something about him," returned Roland, "that puts one in mind of Reginald: but did you not observe he wore not only thick and dark moustachios but whiskers of a large size? Besides his hair is darker than Reginald's, and the expression of his countenance materially different. Something carries him quickly forward, for you see he declined a closer acquaintance."

"These are suspicious times," rejoined Atcherley, "and make men distrustful of new faces. He did not however favour us with a word in answer to my 'good day.'"

"A somewhat singular character, I should imagine," ejaculated Roland; and after a slight pause the conversation took another turn.

The day passed over without any particular incident, and about dark our travellers entered the old town of Dunstable. Here they intended to remain the night, hoping that the following evening would find them in London. Their day's journey had been considerable, and they were leisurely advancing up the principal street, keeping up an anxious look out for an inn of comfortable appearance. When about half way through the town, which, the occupations of the day being over, seemed full of gossips and loiterers conversing at the corners of the streets or gathered around the doors of their houses, a large sign, depending from a beam painted white and hanging half over the road, seemed hospitably to invite them to turn aside towards the building the character of which it so ostentatiously announced. At the door, which was crowned with an old-fashioned pent-house, and displayed on its sides the showy chequers painted red and white, two figures were to be seen, whose dress and bear-

ing seemed but little to accord with the rusticity of all around them. To judge from appearance they were master and servant, as the most forward person, who was notwithstanding the youngest, had an air of authority sufficiently marked to make known the relation in which they stood to each other, and the attire of the other was so plain, though he seemed to be on very confidential terms with his companion, that the eye could immediately determiné they were not of equal rank. The age of the superior was evidently not more than eighteen, and there was a richness of colour in his cheek, and a delicacy in his complexion which seemed almost too feminine. His eyes were fine and dark, and his figure peculiarly elegant. His hair was light and luxuriant, and in the fashion of the time concealed great part of his face.

The dress of this young person was rich though not extravagant. A hat was upon his head, so disposed as to let little

more than his bright and cunning eye, and a little of the upper part of his face be distinguished, and it was so profusely decorated with dark feathers that they served to shadow even the little that was seen of it. A tunic of dark velvet, cinctured with a gold belt, and a sash of blue silk passing diagonally across his breast denoted that he was a person of some consideration; and the rapier he carried at his side indicated that if necessary he would not be slack in putting himself upon the offensive. Over his shoulder was a cloak which had been partly thrown off: it was of dark green cloth lined with green silk, and lined with pearl colour sarcenet. He wore hose of white, and light boots of deer-skin, and carried in his hand a slender cane which seemed calculated on occasion to make acquaintance with the flanks of a courser. Altogether his appearance was bold and gallant, somewhat tending to affectation; and the perfume of which he was so greatly redolent, appeared to announce

he was some stray spring of fashion and frivolity, who being without controul and undisputed master of his own finances, had been seized with the whim of travelling, and was now about to make the inn at the door of which he stood, his place of rest for the coming night.

His attendant, for such there was little doubt was the character of the other individual, was perhaps a year or two his senior, and, as befitting, was somewhat more grave in countenance and bearing. His good looks and shape were doubtless helped by vanity, though his dress was studiously plain and unpretending; a plainness and unpretension which had been rendered the reverse of disadvantageous. He wore a jerkin, hose, and hat of green, the latter without any ornament except a silk band, and the two former articles of dress were bound with silk lace of the same colour, and slightly ornamented with small buttons. The second

person also carried a light sword, and seemed as likely to handle it, if there might be occasion, as adroitly and courageously as his gayer and more authoritative companion.

As Atcherley and Roland drew up to the inn door, they naturally attracted the observation of those who stood at it. The friends were not sorry to encounter a person whose *tout ensemble* announced gentle blood, and seemed not disinclined to seek an acquaintance with him. Roland was the first to dismount and to address the superior stranger.

"Good evening to you, sir," said he, "we have an unexpected gratification in meeting on our arrival, two who promise to be such respectable fellow lodgers."

"I hope, sir," was the answer, "you will not be deceived by appearances, though they are often deceitful. The true character of our intended lodging suffers by its aspect."

"By your words," said Roland, "I should

be led to suppose its accommodations are better than its outside appears to promise. Good news at all times to wearied and hungry travellers."

"It is always a rule of mine," returned the stranger, "to give a good character when I can conscientiously do so. We are often compelled to do violence to our sincerity, are we not, sir? or commendation would become so strange a thing that it would take leave of our lips. The world leans so to the wrong side that we are compelled to preserve the equilibrium by establishing an imaginative right one; and such is the inherent weight of virtue, that a small portion, a portion that would be lost if dissipated in the great field of evil, will serve to maintain the equipoise with the most satisfactory regularity. The formidableness of ill rests only in its quantity."

"You philosophise early, sir," said Atcherley, who had just dismounted and was stroking the head of his courser. "I applaud your enter-

prise. The naturalist who in the outset of his journey keeps the sharpest eye for specimens, will the soonest fill his bag. You have the advantage of getting past the rudiments before others have once thought of beginning the study. You have been seized with a laudable spirit of discovery, I presume, and having mastered the enigmas presented by the metropolis, have turned your attention towards the singularities of the provinces. One of the most profitable of studies is undoubtedly their houses of public entertainment; and for our sake I hope you have made considerable progress."

"My discoveries have embraced many matters," answered the youthful stranger, "and not among the least of them I reckon my penetrating the true character of the building behind me. I encourage retiring merit, and am pleased that things worthy estimation are to be found under an unpretending appearance. Such is the present case."

"Its owner," rejoined Atcherley, "ought to be proud of so prepossessing an advocate. With your recommendation, sir, we will make it our head quarters for the night—"

"And request your company," added Roland, "to our supper. Congenial companionship will render it doubly palatable. I hope you have no reason to keep yourselves private."

"None in particular," responded the stranger, "and as I am somewhat partial to variety I will accept your well-intended invitation. I am afraid, however," he continued, with an affected air, "you will find me something of a dull companion."

"We may, perhaps, with better justice reciprocate the self-distrust," said Roland "By your leave, good sir, we will seek a better acquaintance with our hostelry."

At this moment the ostler came up to lead off the horses to the stable; and Roland and Atcherley, having resigned them to his care

with an injunction to look well after them, followed their new friend, who, hearing the wish of Roland, had led the way to the inn. They entered the house, and following their youthful guide, who seemed familiar with the internal dispositions, ascended an old fashioned staircase which led to the upper story, and entered a good sized and comfortable apartment which looked towards the street. The furniture was of a better description than is usually to be met with in such places, and its gay carpet, covering the whole of the floor, and polished oaken walls imparted an air of snugness and respectability.

The little party seated themselves and continued their conversation; the stranger canvassing each subject with a readiness and *nonchalance* that appeared above his years. He had directed his attendant to follow him, and after a whisper to our travellers intimating that he usually indulged him in such familiarities, as the terms they were upon were exceed-

ingly confidential, and his education and family were much beyond his present situation, directed him to take a seat at the farther end of the table. He was obeyed in silence, and throughout the conversation the stranger's companion preserved a steady and respectful silence that argued he knew how to take the condescension offered him in the proper way. Sometimes, when addressed by his companion, he would venture to slightly join in the conversation; but in so doing he never put himself too forward, and by his behaviour fully bore out the representations of his master.

The latter's fashionable ease, though tinged with a considerable degree of vanity and affectation, was rather pleasing and *piquant* than otherwise, and it was not long before both Roland and Atcherley listened with amusement to his readily proffered and sometimes singular remarks. There was an archness in his eye and a versatile meaning in his smile that seconded all he said, and greatly helped out whatever

he intended to convey by their peculiar vivid and ever-changing expression. He expressed himself freely on all subjects, and developed a felicitous and sarcastic humour.

"I know," said Atcherley, "I cannot mistake in supposing that London boasts your presence the greater part of the year, and as we are going thither ourselves, perhaps shall not trespass by requesting the name of an individual with whose society we should be highly pleased during our limited sojourn there: if indeed the gratification has in any degree been mutual."

"My dear sir, in country towns and country inns your compliments are out of place. You would be wise in reserving them for the atmosphere of the court: believe me that it is only there they will be accepted as current coin. The people here might be apt to look upon them as a base issue, copper though washed with gold. I would not wish them to be subjected to so gross a mistake, and

therefore interdict their tender. We shall doubtless meet again in London ; though I do not bend my steps directly thither."

" You mortify me," said Atcherley ; " for, supposing that to be your destination, I was about to request your company on the road to-morrow."

" You will want no guide," responded the stranger, " for your road is clear enough—at least it is so at present—and society might be troublesome. I depart into another quarter, and early to-morrow morning, so I shall wish you *adieu* tonight. It will not however belong before I am in London, and there we are not unlikely to meet : for I will not so offend you as to suppose you would seek in its eastern parts for a lodging. My dear sir, there are but two or three inns in the metropolis that are not insufferable, and as for the difference in cost—"

" Oh ! it's not to be thought of," said Roland smiling.

“As you say, it is not to be thought of. Besides, such connexions as *we* should have, of course we should not look for beyond Temple Bar. I once did venture on a voyage of discovery beyond its precincts, an act, you will acknowledge, of particular and scarcely defensible hardihood.”

“We are sometimes carried too far, indeed,” ejaculated Atcherley, “by the thirst for novelty.”

“I had occasion to ever after rue the enterprise, for I was recognised in the City by some vagabonds though I dodged them for half an hour, and nothing but my restless disposition could have brought me now so far from a civilised neighbourhood. My *rencontre* with you puts me in mind of one of those interesting adventures of which we read in travels, where the European *voyageur*, penetrating savage and inhospitable countries, unexpectedly lights upon a countryman. But, to be honest and tell the truth, I was somewhat dis-

appointed in finding such unexplored and barbarous regions so tolerable as they proved, and the discovery greatly took away from the romance I had anticipated would attach to my situation. But I cannot call it a disagreeable surprise when discomfort in every shape was exchanged for conveniences which we must reckon indispensable."

"My dear sir," said Atcherley, "we must make up our mind to a number of disagreeable things when we seek instruction in travel."

"By the help of philosophy," rejoined the stranger, "we can extract honey from weeds: and as much as I possess of it I assure you has been put to proof enough. But the soldier will not go forth to the battle unless protected by armour from the attack of his antagonist, and I did not undertake my present perhaps rash but still interesting expedition without arraying all my resources against it. You must applaud my providence."

"I do indeed," said Atcherley drily, "especially as you were entering upon a business which might end in difficulties, and perhaps danger."

The stranger appeared startled, and looked a moment at the speaker before he replied—

"I had views of my own to second, and had the welfare of a friend in prospect in whom I take much interest; and it would not be seemly to grudge some pains."

"I must suppose your friend was in ignorance of your intentions in his favour."

"He was, or—"

"He might have been willing," interrupted Atcherley, "to save you the trouble. It would have been ungenerous in him to have shielded himself from risk behind your exertions. Upon my honour he has chosen a somewhat youthful champion."

"Perhaps," said the young stranger, "your reading will furnish you with something which

may be urged as justification. A certain young shepherd, named, if I remember rightly, David, slew once upon a time, as the story books have it, a certain Philistine giant called Goliath. You will acknowledge appearances in the combat were much in favour of the latter?"

There was a singular meaning in Atcherley's smile as he replied.

"Hum—I see your point. Few, to confess a truth, could have prophesied his overthrow."

A rejoinder was prevented by the entrance of a servant with refreshments. The party immediately began to make acquaintance with what had been laid before them. The young stranger, when the table was cleared, motioned to his attendant, who instantly rose, opened, and stood at the door. The bow of the former though graceful was somewhat embarrassed, and it was under the plea of fatigue that he intimated his intention of retiring. Roland and Atcherley rose and bade good night to

their young companion, hoping that they would be able to again see each other before their several departures the following morning.

To this the stranger made a polite though evasive answer, and repeating his bow quitted the apartment.

After a low reverence he was followed by his attendant; and the two travellers were left to their own reflections. Their ensuing day's journey demanded early hours, and after a desultory conversation on the strange character of their new acquaintance, both rang for attendance and quitted the sitting room for their bedchambers.

CHAPTER X.

" Beautiful !——

How beautiful is all this visible world !
How glorious in its action and itself !
But we, who name ourselves its sovereigns—we,
Half dust, half deity, alike unfit
To sink or soar, with our mix'd essence make
A conflict of its elements, and breathe
The breath of degradation and of pride.
Contending with low wants, and lofty will,
Till our mortality predominates,
And men are—what they name not to themselves,
And trust not to each other."

Manfred.

Our travellers rose at an early hour next morning, and on entering the apartment they had used the previous day were greatly disappointed and somewhat surprised to learn that

their companion of yesterday had already quitted the inn. Conjectures on the subject occupied them during their breakfast and the first hour of their journey.

"It is odd, is it not?" said Roland after a pause.

"Not altogether," returned Atcherley. "You heard last night that he intended to depart early, and he declared his intention of wishing us *adieu* last night. And he did so."

"He did; though his 'good bye' was somewhat of the slightest."

"A capricious stripling, who is his own master and seeking wisdom in his own fashion. Come, he is not worth further debate: you seem to have suddenly become interested in him. Let us mind our own affairs, which will soon become pressing enough."

"I cannot account for it, but there is something about him, though he is little removed from a puppy, that has interested me," returned Roland. "Don't you think there is

something of a likeness between him and Julia? I never heard that she had a brother; though perhaps you have made some such discovery."

"Ha, ha," laughed Atcherley. "Your mistress, Roland, is ever present to you in one shape or another, and you have now invested this I must confess good-looking youth with some of the characteristics. My eyes, you know, are not blinded, and take my word for it that the resemblance only exists in your vivid and too credulous imagination. You must make your horse increase his speed, for I must be in London to-night."

This direction, good humouredly urged, made Roland instinctively clap his spurs into his horse's side, and both travellers were cantering along at a speed which precluded conversation. About the middle of the day they arrived at St. Alban's, where they took refreshment and baited their horses. After an intermission of some time they were again

upon the road, and passing through Coney, North Mims, Barnet, Highgate and Islington, without any accident worth relating arrived at the inn or hotel where they intended to quarter themselves during their stay in London. This, being secluded and well answering their present purpose, was situate at the end of one of the streets leading from the Strand down towards the Thames.

It was about eight o'clock P.M., that they stopped at the old fashioned porch of the inn known in the neighbourhood by the sign of the 'Lion of England.' This house which would in our day have been denominated an hotel of second or third-rate importance, was rather extensive, though its front was very irregular and presented at the entrance part but an inconsiderable surface. It ran however largely back and skirted the bank of the river, from which it was protected by an old wall supported in places by props of massive timber. The irregular street at the end of which it

was situate, having no thoroughfare and only a wall breast high with an iron gate and steps leading down to the water at its southern extremity; was extremely secluded, and was seldom disturbed by the footsteps of any person except those people who were going to some one of the houses in it. It was this air of solitude and its scarcely noticeable front which had made Atcherley choose it as his residence during his stay in the metropolis. Its interior was clean though old fashioned, and its servants were both respectful and assiduous.

Our travellers were received at the door by the landlord, an old man with a bald head and white hair. He directed the horses, which had been sufficiently worked, to be conveyed to their stable, and with a candle in his hand condescended himself to usher his guests to their apartments. These were the same as Atcherley had before occupied in the house. He had signified his pleasure on first seeing the host that these should be appropriated to the use

of himself and friend, as, the greater part of the house being unoccupied, he had the power of selecting his accommodations. Ascending a wide staircase with very broad landing places and heavy balusters, the two gentlemen, ushered by the ceremonious landlord, who gravely marched at some distance before and preserved the most formal silence, entered the sitting room and immediately ordered supper. The direction was received with a stiff bow, and the host stalked out of the room.

These apartments consisted of four rooms; a small antechamber, a sitting apartment of good dimensions, and two sleeping rooms on the other side of a long gallery, the few windows of which looked out upon the river. The sitting room had the advantage of a bay window fitted up with sashes opening outwards according to the Continental fashion, and leading to a balcony commanding an extensive view of the old fashioned rows of

houses on each side the Thames, the top of Westminster Abbey, the spires of several churches, Whitehall, and the Surrey hills on the opposite bank.

At present all was seen to great advantage. The moon, then at her full, was shining brilliantly in the clear blue sky spangled with quivering stars and full of fleecy clouds, which, as they sailed one after the other over its resplendent disc, seemed like islands of floating silver in a sea of sapphire. The placid surface of the river reflected the clear light, and returned in fiery streaks the many lights which glimmered in the low and crossed casements of the houses on its gloomy margin. The crowded buildings on the opposite side of the river, with their strangely characterized gables, contrasted with the better edifices on the Westminster side of it and the tapering spires of its moonlit churches and the tops of the public buildings, stood deeply out in the picturesque blue twilight, and formed a close yet irregularly

outlined strip of houses until it terminated in the densely packed buildings in the immediate neighbourhood of London Bridge, and the many arches of that venerable structure. There was no sound to be heard but the distant plash of the waterman's oar as he leisurely pulled back towards his station, and the subdued voices, breaking drowsily on the stillness, of perhaps some late passengers on the river.

The furniture of the sitting room was costly though antique. The bay window was furnished with crimson draperies, suspended from an ebony cornice: the walls, which were rather high, were of wood, carved, panelled, and highly polished; and the ceiling displayed so many complicated devices that it puzzled and yet pleased the eye. A Flemish carpet was upon the floor; a large beaufet of dark wood, the scrolls and knobs of which were lacquered, was on one side, and a range of high-backed ebony chairs, furnished with

crimson seats and elaborately wrought, upon the other. A gilt branch was suspended from a flower in the middle of the ceiling, which on festive occasions was wont to be filled with wax lights; a Dutch painting in a gilt frame was hung over the door, the handle, key-hole, and the lock of which latter were richly flourished; and the lozenge casements were filled with glass of beautiful colours.

Roland had but little time to note all these particulars, for a drawer now entered the room, bearing a tray containing the refreshments which had been ordered. A fair linen cloth having been laid upon the oaken table, Roland and his friend drew near and began to help themselves to what had been laid before them. The supper consisted of boiled fish, well accompanied by French and Italian sauces, a couple of chickens, and a little confectionary. The wine was French, and of a tolerable quality. Their day's journey had given both an ap-

petite, and they did ample justice to mine host's good cheer.

"Don't you think," said Atcherley, "that I have done well in selecting this house as our temporary residence?"

"I have no reason," answered Roland, "to find fault with your choice. It strikes me, however, it is very secluded. Why, one cannot hear the sound of a single footstep!"

"We have not the liveliness of Paris, certainly," rejoined Atcherley. "But 'tis none the worse for that."

"I should fancy," continued Roland, "that we are mine host's only guests."

"I don't know," answered his friend. "The place may prove as convenient to others as to ourselves. It is important, just now, that our retreat should not be known by everybody."

"You should rather say," ejaculated Roland, "that it should not be known by *anybody*. We stand little chance of being discovered by

any of our friends in this out-of-the-way situation."

"And all the better. The friends who can just now best stand us are easily found, and communication with others might be productive of inconvenience. Within three days from this we must depart towards Cambridge-shire."

"Is it in that place that our projects are to commence?" enquired Roland.

"It is," answered Atcherley. "You perhaps don't know that Charles has already departed for Newmarket. He returns in about three weeks from this, and we go to meet him."

"As friends or enemies?" demanded Roland.

"That may be as circumstances shall decide. I have seen one of our party who tells me Master Oliver Rockingham will be in London to-morrow at dusk. My informant escaped your notice; it argues well for our mode of operation."

"Rockingham, I suppose," said Roland, "will be too wise to make this his head quarters."

"Yes, he will lodge in another part of the town," returned Atcherley. "But to-morrow is a day of general meeting, and Rockingham, no doubt, will be one of the first at the *rendezvous*. It takes place at dark, and at it we shall settle our future operations; for it will be the last time we see each other until we all meet in our scene of action."

"Which is——" interrupted Roland.

"You will see," interrupted Atcherley in turn. "I am not afraid of trusting you, since you are as deeply engaged in the whole business as the rest of us; but this is no place for such talk. We shall all have enough to do, and the grand blow which we are about to strike will half crown our projects with success. Come, dismiss the business from your mind to-night; you will have enough and to spare of it to-morrow. Turn your thoughts towards your

mistress; for you know you are fighting *for her*, and each day brings you nearer your wishes. Hold out manfully to the end and your task will be complete; besides your fortune is to be made, and now or never is the word. Love, glory, wealth and honour, wave you on; and with such temptations to invite, who would be found a laggard! not one of your spirit, I am sure."

"And what reward do you shape for yourself?" asked Roland.

"I shall partake of the advantages," answered Atcherley. "Love is a secondary consideration with me; besides I have no mistress to win: glory I care not for, unless it be accompanied with something substantial: never was there an emptier wish, Roland, than that of shining in the eyes of *posterity*. Surely it is as wise to take to *yourself* the praise and fame of *another*, as to long for a memory when you cannot even preserve your own identity. Show me that the ancient worthies of

Greece and Rome can take a present pleasure in—can even comprehend or be made to understand what is called their immortality, and I will most respectfully bow to the principle. As for wealth, as it is a means of obtaining all the good things of the world, I have a natural inclination to possess it; but not in such weight—like the charger which is so loaded with splendred trappings that his movements are impeded and his beauty concealed—as to cumber me. Lastly, as for honour, it is so very windy and uncertain an advantage—so liable to be blown about by the capricious breath of the multitude—so very delicate and fragile a commodity, that a touch will sully, a grasp destroy it, that I am tempted to wish but for one kind of honour—self-approbation; self-appreciation, if you will. Our own conscience is the tribunal to which we carry all appeals, and though the court may be corrupt, its corruptions are so felicitously disguised that its decrees are received both with reverence and confidence; and it

L. 1096 68.2

has the singular and never-failing advantage of identifying itself with the applicant for its justice. Make your design tally with the inclinations, prepossessions or prejudices of another, and you may look upon your success as certain."

The time was meanwhile rapidly advancing. The supper things were cleared away ; Roland sat himself down to write a letter to Julia, and Atcherley amused himself with reading a volume of *Necromantic Tales* which he had found on the beaufet. At their usual time both retired along the gallery to their several bed-chambers, which were situated at some distance from each other.

Atcherley's apartment was one of large size, with antique furniture and tapestried walls. It looked out upon the river, which was now unspeckled with boats, and its glassy surface reflected back the moonlight, as the gleaming orb had now attained its greatest elevation, with unequalled brilliancy. The light

clouds, too, had disappeared, the wind had fallen, and the azure heavens were

“Thick inlaid with patines of bright gold.”

Feeling no inclination to immediately betake himself to his bed, he threw off his outer garment and wrapped himself in a light dressing robe which the sultriness of the night rendered peculiarly agreeable. Thus attired he opened the lozenged sash, and stepped out upon a balcony of good width, defended by a heavy Gothic balustrade.

Great part of the thickly populated city lay spread before him. But all at this hour was hushed into silence and repose. Every light was extinguished on the opposite side of the river, and nothing but the quiet and beautiful moon, slowly pursuing her trackless and silvery way across the lucid blue, and streaming down her fairy radiance on

“Glimmering palace roof and tapering spire,”

seemed to be awake. How extremely beautiful, yet how impossible to describe, is a still midnight when enlivened by the watery disc of a full and elevated moon!

THE END OF VOL. II.

ATCHERLEY.

VOL. III.

THE
SHIP OF GLASS;
OR,
THE MYSTERIOUS ISLAND
A ROMANCE,
IN THREE VOLUMES.

BY
HARGRAVE JENNINGS.

AUTHOR OF "MY MARINE MEMORANDUM BOOK," &c.

" 'There was a SHIP,' quoth he."
Coleridge's Ancient Mariner.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
THOMAS CAUTLEY NEWBY, PUBLISHER,
72, MORTIMER ST., CAVENDISH Sq.

1846

ATCHERLEY.

CHAPTER I.

Cloten. She hath all courtly parts more exquisite
Than lady, ladies, woman : from every one
The best she hath, and she, of all compounded,
Outsells them all : I love her therefore.

Is she with Posthúmus ?

Pisanio. This paper is the history of my knowledge,
Touching her flight.

Cloten. Let's see't——I will pursue her
Even to Augustus' throne."

Cymbeline. Act 3. Scene 5.

It is now time to devote a few pages to Sir
Reginald, who, as the reader has doubtless
surmised, was the individual who passed Ro-
land and Atcherley on their way to London.

He had not only been surprised, but inwardly perplexed and mortified in finding that Roland had so soon returned from the Continent. His views were thus again darkened, and he dreaded his presence operating upon the known partiality of Julia. He had hoped that time and Roland's indiscretions would have a salutary influence upon her feelings, and would have gradually estranged her from him; but his return disconcerted all his hopes and projects, and threw him into the same unhappy condition from which with so much toil and chicanery he had contrived to extricate himself. Roland at a distance, he fancied he *might* have a chance of success; but while he was constantly in her eyes, and able to take advantage of her prepossessions, he knew that his endeavours would be utterly in vain. His love seemed to burn the fiercer for the obstacles which it encountered, and the farther he seemed from the accomplishment of his wishes, the less could he brook the simple

thought of being forced to give her up. He therefore determined to spin his web afresh, and keeping a fair face towards all parties, deliberately put his schemes in operation. If he could succeed by no other means, he determined to found the accomplishment of his wishes upon the utter ruin of his brother. Perhaps his passion was all the more boisterous because in other matters he was cold and moderate. He had built all his hopes upon his love for Julia Rockingham; and he determined to force his desire through every difficulty that might be raised up against him.

Luckily he did not become aware that Roland and Atcherley had paid their first visit to Rockingham's house, and that Roland's pretensions, owing to his co-operation, and still more the oath of secrecy and union which had been obtained from him, were sanctioned by the latter. Had he known this, he would—cautious and temperate as he was by nature—

have been scarcely able to conceal his rage. He resolved to keep as well with, and to appear as brotherly as he could to Roland, in order that the latter might have no suspicion of the real state of his feelings and the designs which he entertained against him.

Atcherley, meantime, had deeper objects than either of the brothers, and acted too upon a much more perfect system. He looked with contempt both upon Sir Reginald and Roland, and determined to play them off against each other, forwarding at the same time, in all he said and did, the grand designs of which he never lost sight. He had fully succeeded in duping both, artfully guiding their views so as in every instance to make them the workers of their own destruction, while his interest in each of them was fully credited, and his untiring and disinterested efforts in their behalf looked upon with gratitude and wonder. As the reader may have surmised, he was deeply attached to Julia

Rockingham himself, and his secret love was doubtless all the more despotic for being so studiously concealed. He was not a person by word, look, or act, to betray any passion which he desired to veil, and his guard over himself was so absolute, that the keenest and most experienced eye would have been utterly at fault in the enquiry. Of the ultimate success of this wayward love he was perfectly confident, and the machinery by which he sought that end, though circuitous was sure. Those upon whom he operated were in his hands but puppets, and, master of the wires that worked them, he could give what turn he pleased to their movements, and could terminate the exhibition whenever he thought proper.

The secret and implacable hatred which he bore to the whole house of Torrington—grounded upon what, as will become hereafter apparent, appeared to him sufficient reasons—explaining the presentation of Roland's name

at the midnight meeting beneath the ruins, caused him to decoy Sir Reginald to London for the purpose of destroying him. Submitting Roland to the poniards of the Secret Society, he determined to deal with Sir Reginald himself. These were the only obstacles to the gratification of his ambition. He had sworn to never rest till the Torrington family had been extirpated, and the title and possessions united in himself. His schemes were now fast ripening, and the death of the present proprietor would help him greatly forward.

The means by which he tempted Sir Reginald Torrington to the metropolis, he knew would not fail. He gave him information, during the few days he remained in the house, which led him to expect that Julia Rockingham would be found in the footsteps of Roland. This information set Sir Reginald immediately in a flame. He determined on an immediate attempt to carry her off. First, to convince himself, he paid a hurried visit to Rockingham, whose

views had now naturally changed towards him. His eager and embarrassed air gave rise to suspicion:—Rockingham's peculiar situation made him distrustful of all his neighbours except those who were as deeply compromised as himself in his plot; and an answer to his hasty, ill-judged, and almost passionate enquiries, was naturally declined. This added fuel to flame: Julia was absent from her home, he could gain no information from her father of her, and his worst suspicions were realised. He had no means—since his imprudence counteracted his wishes—to arrive at the truth, which merely was, that as Roland was absent, as her father was shortly to leave his house, and he did not wish, especially as he was about to engage in such a dangerous enterprise, though this he carefully kept from his daughter, to leave her unprotected, she had already taken her departure for Bedfordshire, on a visit to a maiden sister of her father's, who had sent her a pressing invitation to reside with her during the latter's temporary absence.

Perhaps had Sir Reginald even heard the truth, he would have fancied, knowing her volatile and capricious disposition, that instead of reaching her appointed destination she would turn aside and follow her lover. He did not know how much she distrusted Atcherley, and feared that he would lead Roland into pursuits which might compromise both honour and safety. She was also by no means pleased at so constant a companionship between them, and dreaded that while apparently only watchful for the good of others, he was occupied only with himself and his own collusive designs. Whether her suspicions were well founded or no, was only to be proven in the sequel.

Occupied only with one thought, Sir Reginald set out, disguised as much as possible, to London. He took but one attendant with him, and this man he took good care should not be one of his own domestics, with whom of course both Roland and Atcherley were well ac-

quainted. Taking the same road as the latter, as we have seen he passed them during his second day's journey. He saw the sly smile with which Atcherley recognised him through his disguise, but confident enough in other respects did not choose to hazard his voice in returning the greeting.

Arriving in London early on the day at the close of which the two friends also entered it, and informed beforehand where Atcherley intended to put up, he bent his steps towards the "Lion of England," and immediately secured a couple of rooms in a remote part of the house, studiously keeping up his disguise, scarcely ever appearing out of his apartments, and when sallying out invariably making use of a private entrance which communicated with the street to which the front of the house looked, by a narrow and particularly obscure court.

Two days passed on, and he had not yet seen anything to justify his suspicions. In-

deed he had scarcely seen anything of Roland or Atcherley; for the part of the house in which he was lodged was remote from that usually chosen. He had not escaped, however, the sharp eye of Atcherley; but they were much too guarded to hold at present any communication.

Rockingham had by this time arrived in the metropolis, and the meeting glanced at by Atcherley had already taken place. As the former quartered himself at the other end of the town, he had been only seen at the *rendezvous*. He was to depart for the farm on the road to Newmarket which was to be the scene of action, and which was, in after days, known by the name of the "Rye House," the following morning, and the rest of the conspirators, Atcherley and Roland included, were to speedily follow.

CHAPTER II.

"*Iago*.—Here, stand behind this bulk ; straight
 will he come :
 Wear thy good rapier bare, and put it home ;
 Quick, quick ; fear nothing ; I'll be at thy elbow :
 It makes us, or it mars us ; think on that,
 And fix most firm thy resolution.

Kill men i'the dark !—Where be these bloody
 thieves ?
 How silent is this town !—Ho ! murder ! murder !"
Othello. Act. v. Scene 1.

It was as nearly as possible eleven o'clock the third night of his arrival in London, that Sir Reginald was returning, muffled as usual, to the 'Lion of England.' Anxious to escape the weariness and perplexity of his own thoughts and the overpowering solitude of his

room, he had resolved for a time to go out, with the double purpose of seeking relief and endeavouring to discover some trace of her of whom he was in search. If his information had been correct and Julia was in reality following Roland's steps, it was probable that she was in the neighbourhood, or had some means of ascertaining his movements. In a perplexity that was pitiable, he wandered about; sometimes thinking that he must altogether have been deceived, and at others burning with jealousy and intensely anxious to obtain a clue to her retreat. His eyes roved in every direction with a vigilance that let nothing escape. He had hazarded enquiries at several of the inns in the neighbourhood, but they had terminated in disappointment. Instead of being weakened, his determination seemed to grow every hour stronger, and he firmly resolved not to leave London until he had obtained the knowledge he sought.

With this resolution, and with an eye on

every face he met, he proceeded slowly down the Strand, and turned into the street in which the inn was situated. The night was dark, the moon having been concealed for some time by an accumulation of clouds. It was dismal in other respects, for the wind had risen in the course of the evening, and was now wailing and whispering round the corners, and through the intervals of the high and old fashioned houses. As he advanced he could hardly see the way before him, for lamps there were none, and the light from the sky only served, as it has been expressed, "to make the darkness visible." The street was particularly narrow, and several disused and ruinous alleys, some long and winding, and others closed at their ends by tall and heavy looking buildings, led off on either side. The houses on each side of the street were of various sizes; some being high though narrow, with their several stories protruding one over the other and their crazy casements in very bad repair, and others

broad and dingy, their flat, red brick walls strengthened with X's and crosses of iron greatly impaired by rust, and displaying but a very scanty distribution of windows. The roof line exhibited a succession of singularly zig-zagged gables, some embellished with crumbling mouldings, and others decorated with tall and fantastic pinnacles of wood. The faces of these antique edifices were profusely embellished with woodwork in the shape of perpendicular, cross, and diagonal beams, balustrades, pendants, brackets, elaborate carvings, and twisted columns to the deeply recessed and pedimented porches. Sometimes short walls intervened between the houses inclosing perhaps a paved court of small dimensions, and provided with a gate or gates of rich ironwork.

All was still, except the occasional whistle of the wind, as Sir Reginald walked down the street. The profound silence that reigned at times was unbroken even by the echo of a

distant footstep, and not a light was seen to glimmer in the trellised windows as he successively passed them. The city was not so secure at that advanced hour, and in such secluded situations, as might have been desirable, and therefore Sir Reginald, feeling the cold air of the river come freshly to his face, drew his large cloak more closely around him and increased his pace. The unskilful and irregular police of the day was not sufficiently powerful to protect the passenger from the many thieves and abandoned characters that were accustomed after nightfall to infest the obscurer parts of the city; and street robbery and murder were of too frequent occurrence to allow one to thread its complexities without fear and vigilance. A score of disagreeable recollections on the subject came across Sir Reginald's mind; and though he was a man of acknowledged courage he felt but little inclination to test it in an encounter in which there was all to lose and nothing to

gain. His eye therefore glanced cautiously around him; and he was prepared at the least indication of danger to put himself on the defensive.

He had with these thoughts, and with these intentions, mastered three parts of the distance he had to go; and in a few moments more had arrived at the court which, as mentioned before, he had always used since his arrival in town as the means of ingress and egress to and from the 'Lion of England.' Before he advanced into its gloom, however, he turned quickly round, and looking up the dark and dismal street inwardly congratulated himself upon his past risk and present security. His glance was one of a moment, and, turning lightly on his heel, he plunged into the obscurity of the court before him, and in a few minutes would have reached the door. Before, however, he had advanced three paces, a dark figure darted out of a shadow by his side, and before he had time to draw his sword

or even utter a cry a dagger was plunged in his breast! Its gleam had been but momentary, but the end was accomplished. Sir Reginald fell on the ground, gave one convulsive shiver, uttered a long and heavy groan, and instantly expired.

The assassin, after listening a moment in statue-like intensity, bent slowly down, threw apart the heavy cloak in which his victim had been enveloped, uncovered his face, and gazed upon his ghastly features with the smile of a demon. Those features now wore the terrible marks of violent and just-parted death; the glassy eyes seemed fixed upon those of the midnight murderer in a soul-freezing gaze, and the lips and cheeks were as white as marble.

No sound broke on the fearful stillness: even the wind seemed to have died away in horror at the deed, and a double darkness to have fallen over every surrounding object. Rifling the pockets of the murdered man, and throwing away the instrument of his fiendish guilt,

in order to make it appear the victim had fallen into the hands of robbers, the assassin rose slowly from his inclined position, loosened his mantle, raised his hat and displayed the well-known countenance of *Atcherley*, pale, indeed, but still retaining all its surpassing composure.

Atcherley had already decided upon his further movements: he looked down at his apparel;—there were no marks of blood: he looked upon his hands;—with the dagger had departed every evidence of his crime.

CHAPTER III.

" The house and farm-offices were half ruinous ; the roads almost impassable ; besides the district in which Waldheim's farm lay was gloomy and repulsive. The lands were flat and sandy, surrounded on every side by dark fir-woods that shut out every prospect. No verdant meadows refreshed the wearied eyes—no clear lively streams varied the landscape ; only, not far from the dwelling-house, there was a desolate stagnant lake, which any good husbandman would have drained and got rid of. ' Thither,' said I to myself, ' one should send the romantic panegyrists of a country life ;—there they would find the most complete and incontestible refutation of their pastoral and Arcadian theories.' "

German Tales by R. P. Gillies.—The Warning.

ROLAND and Atcherley rose early next morning, intending to set out for the Rye-house that day, but not purposing to begin their journey until eleven or twelve in the forenoon.

Had Atcherley determined to take the direct road to his destination, two or three hours only would have been spent in the journey, but with that refinement in policy habitual to him, he resolved to make surety doubly sure, and take so circuitous a route that the remotest possibility of being watched or tracked would be removed. It was immaterial whether he and his companion were present at the Rye-house for a day or two; and the time might be as well spent upon the road, since it also contributed to the certainty of their safety, as in any other way.

Roiand was made acquainted with these circumstances, and readily acquiesced in the propriety of what Atcherley proposed. He found, also, that the circuitous route adopted by his friend had been known to, and settled upon in concert with Oliver Rockingham.

Our travellers, therefore, early in the afternoon mounted their horses, after settling with their landlord, who seemed anxious to know

when they should return, and took their departure from the 'Lion of England.' The first hours of the morning had been beautiful; and the splendour of the noon gave every promise that the rest of the day would be as equally agreeable. Their horses were in high condition, and impatiently pawed the ground as their riders reined them in for an instant while they finished their conversation with mine host.

Atcherley determined that some hamlet or village a mile or two beyond Watford should be the limit of their day's journey. Taking their way, therefore, through the western outskirt of the metropolis, they rode through Knightsbridge, then a straggling and inconsiderable village close upon the park wall of the Hyde of the Manor of Westminster, and, reaching Paddington, took the little road that branched off from the greater Edgware or north-western one through the hamlets of Kensall-Green, Hoddesdon-Green, Wembly-

Green, Preston, and Kenton, to Stanmore. Pausing at the latter place for refreshment for themselves and bait for their horses, they again departed, travelling leisurely, as the place at which they thought of remaining could be reached with the greatest facility by the time they desired.

Bushey Heath having been passed over, they crossed the boundary of Middlesex and Hertfordshire, and riding through Watford, proceeded along the road for two or three miles farther, where finding a narrow bridle-road they turned off to a solitary hamlet, called, as they were informed, Bovingdon-Green. From this out of the way place, to reach the Rye-house they had to take cross-roads to St. Albans, and from thence to pass over the country by means of the road between the last named place and Hoddesdon, till they introduced themselves into the regular highway between London and Cambridge. The Rye-House lay at a few miles' distance

from the little town of Hoddesdon. It will thus be seen that the travellers had to cross the lower part of Hertfordshire almost in a direct line from west to east.

The little hamlet before mentioned received our travellers for the night. Here they put up at a miserable ale-house, situated some distance in the northern outskirt; — a place chosen by Atcherley for its obscurity. They had little chance indeed of being seen by anybody, for they were the only guests at the inn and the neighbourhood was but thinly populated.

They thought it advisable to remain here the following day, in order to throw off suspicion and approach the limit of their journey with added caution. The day passed heavily over; and it was with much pleasure that they contemplated their departure on the morrow. Early therefore on the following afternoon, after an ill-dressed dinner they set eagerly out, determining to leisurely proceed, as their destination could be reached by nightfall.

For some miles the country was interesting in its aspect: but on descending a hill which wound lengthily and circuitously down into a straggling tract of bushy ground, its attractions seemed one after the other to wane away, and the appearance of all around them to become less and less pleasing. Low hedges skirted the road, which though not very broad was tolerably smooth; in some places diversified with rows of tall though not particularly full foliaged elms, which threw long shadows in the sunshine over the road. The ground was diversified with many undulations not to say hills, which in some parts looked bare and bleak, and were in others rendered more agreeable by clumps of wood and the russet roofs of farm-houses, with their thatched barnyards and mossy out-buildings. Towards the east, over several attenuated lines of dotted green, indicating the presence of a more fertile tract, a long expanse of blue country was remotely to be seen, softening away the deeper

tints of the nearer landscape, and greatly improving the aspect of the general country.

The travellers had not advanced much beyond the declivity when Roland's horse began to limp, and to exhibit other symptoms of being unable to keep up with his companion. Finding his pace considerably slackened, Roland dismounted, and made the unwelcome discovery that his horse had cast a shoe. This misfortune was productive of some delay. Atcherley next dismounted, and gave his attention to the state of the animal.

With some ingenuity they contrived to remedy the mishap, and were again about to mount, when they perceived a carriage, in which two persons were seated, quickly advancing along the road. Intent upon the accident the wheels had been unheard both by Roland and his friend until the carriage was near. They were soon overtaken by the newcomers.

The conveyance in which the latter were

VOL. III. C

travelling was a small calash, lightly and not inelegantly built, and defended by curtains from the weather. The grey horse which drew it seemed well calculated for the service. Though his proportions were small, there was a vivacity in his movements that indicated he could be speedy upon occasion, and the ease with which he was managed argued well for his docility.

When the travellers came close up to Roland and Atcherley, what was the surprise of the latter to recognize in them the two youths they had encountered at Dunstable. The surprise appeared to be mutual, though more marked on Roland and Atcherley's side.

"Our Dunstable fellow-lodgers, Atcherley, by all that is singular!" said Roland to his friend on making the discovery. "This is indeed a most particularly agreeable surprise."

"It ought not to be so, but it is," muttered Atcherley with his usual cloudy meaning.

"A pleasing and unexpected *rencontre*," he continued in a louder tone.

"Not more so on your side, gentlemen, than it is on ours," answered the youngest of the strangers. "We were debating whether we were correct in our surmise that it was you, sometime before we approached you near enough to decide the question. Company I am sure cannot be disagreeable on this lonely and not particularly attractive road. Besides our destination may possibly prove to be the same."

"Indeed!" answered Atcherley. "It might be so, I'll acknowledge, were our's known——"

"And how know you that it is not?" gaily rejoined the stranger. "I will allow that you are innocent of the disclosure, but the business you are upon does not concern you only though you may have the fee-simple in it. You were right in having the greater surprise on your

side, for during the last two hours I have been on the look out for you."

"Have you indeed?" said Atcherley, "then I must presume that you knew we were about to take this road. Am I correct in my supposition?"

"Perfectly so," answered the stranger——
"At least perhaps I am wrong in saying we knew the *road* which you were about to take. I knew the place to which you were going, which was nearly the same thing."

"It was indeed," said Roland, "if your knowledge prove to be right, which I am something inclined to doubt. But——if the question is fair, which as it so nearly concerns us we will set down as being so——how did you become aware of it?"

"I will tell you in a moment," answered the stranger, "for there is no occasion for secrecy. But time does not stay for us, and in present circumstances it is highly valuable:——Are you ready to proceed?"

"Yes," was Roland's reply; "we have remedied the mishap which delayed us."

"And your horse is capable of mastering the ground which yet lies before him?—it is something considerable."

"I do not fear him," was Roland's reply; "besides at the nearest blacksmith's we can give him a new shoe. As you appear to know our destination so well, you doubtless are acquainted with the road."

"Not at all," said the young stranger. "This is the first time I was ever in this direction. Well, as you are ready, nothing delays us; and with your good pleasure we will proceed."

In a moment Roland was in his saddle and following Atcherley, who was already mounted and leading the way. He spurred ahead of the vehicle for a few yards, and approached close to his friend.

"Atcherley," said he in a low voice, "this meeting is singular enough; it may be incon-

venient. Do you think this young fellow, who seems so inclined to include himself in our company, really knows anything of the place to which we are going."

"No," answered his friend. "Pray how should he? Do you think we are such asses as to let every empty-headed coxcomb into our secrets? He surprises me something, however."

"Do you think his presence in any way dangerous?" continued Roland: "—government spies are not wanting, and those who are least likely to awaken suspicion would be the most useful."

"Dangerous!" cried Atcherley, half laughing; "certainly not. Do you think that I should be easy on the subject were there anything worth consideration in it? No, no, we must humour him; and it does not much matter if he *does* accompany us to where the road parts for the place to which we are going.

We will rid ourselves of him by persuading him to take the first cross-road."

These words satisfied Roland. He fell back and joined the travellers.

"This is an unexpected piece of good fortune," thought Atcherley. "I bargained but for one advantage, and behold two fall into my hands! This, properly managed, will compass all to which I have been so long aiming. 'Tis well; I reckoned that I was suspected; and that suspicion has better aided my objects than the fullest confidence I could have won. I ought to smile at my calculations having been so justified."

He now pulled in his reins, and waited for his fellow travellers.

"You have said," said he to the stranger, "that the means by which you came to a knowledge of our destination were no secret. Perhaps then you will enlighten us."

"I will do so," answered the stranger, "and readily. In the first place let me say that

perhaps I am more worthy of confidence than my exterior seems to promise. I may not be altogether so superficial a person as I appear, and I am not so guided by the breath of every changing wind as an observer may fancy me to be. My coming hither is not a matter of accident. I have been commissioned to seek you, and sanctioned in my endeavours so to do by a party with whom you will be probably surprised to find me acquainted. But I am certain when that party is named that you will have no distrust. I should have joined you in a fitter manner—I mean, not encumbering myself with this vehicle—had it not been for an unfortunate accident. You have perceived that I carry my arm in a sling. A serious injury to the limb quite prevented me from making use of a horse, or such and such only would have been my mode of travelling. My companion drives for me:—we are foster-brothers. I would as soon trust him as myself in anything, therefore you

may confide in him. Be assured that I am both faithful and discreet; able and willing to exert myself when my services will benefit others and advance my own prospects. I am not so unused to weighty affairs as you may imagine; and when I tell you that the finding and delivering you a communication has been entrusted to me by no less a person—no less respected by me and dearer to you—than Master Oliver Rockingham, of Longwood, Derbyshire, I am positive that you will have no further distrust. But you may credit better things than my word. I know your intentions, and am prepared to lend my feeble aid towards their furtherance. I wish to become one of your party. This letter will I hope remove any reserve you will entertain towards me.”

Saying these words the youthful stranger put his hand into his pocket and drew out a letter, which he presented with a graceful movement to Atcherley.

The latter took it in silence, and deliberately read the contents. On casting his eye over the superscription, he immediately recognised the hand-writing of Oliver Rockingham. It was with considerable surprise that he sought a further acquaintance with his letter. It ran as follows:—

“ To Master William Atcherley.—These, with my sincerest regards.

“ DEAR MASTER ATCHERLEY,

“ The bearer of this is a friend of mine, and one upon whom, in every sense of the word, we can depend. Thou mayest trust him with the greatest security, for I have been well satisfied of his faith and discretion. I have been for some time past seeking means of communicating with thee, and the present is an opportunity which I should have been foolish to let slip.

“ Everything has been arranged for taking effect. All the friends are with me excepting

Roland and thyself; and we wait but thy presence to put our intentions in operation. I write this to expedite thine arrival, and at the same time to tell thee, through the advice of its owner, not to make use of the road entrance to our place of meeting. We have been here so long that we have not awakened suspicion by a recent arrival, and we keep so close that we fear no observation. Your arrival will necessarily be later, and in joining us thou and thy companions must not attract the attention of the neighbourhood: hawks have eyes though they keep under cover. There is a cross-road some two or three hundred yards from the place from which I write;—use that; it will conduct you to the back of the house, at which you will enter. A few days we shall be obliged to wait, and then for the final blow!

“ Tell Roland that *now* is the time he must prove himself worthy of my daughter. Let him remember the *oath* he took before me, and

'gird up his loins' for the struggle. 'The hour approaches when no man must sleep'; let him up and be doing! We fight for the Tabernacle of the Lord, for our altars and our homes! we rise up against the pride and abominations of Satan, and the 'Woman who sitteth on the Seven Hills, who is arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of the Lord.'

"Be not diffident of my messenger, for I again assure thee he is trustworthy. He is deeply impressed with the necessity of our designs, and longs for an opportunity of proving his sincerity. He has been recommended to me by one of the brethren: we have need of an increase of numbers; and one of the least ought to be welcome to our councils. The addition of one is of the greatest value. Let not his appearance be against him. Silence and solidity become our purposes. Though

not given to much speaking, when the battle is waxing fierce he is not likely to be backward. He will attend thee to our *rendezvous*.

“Farewell! until thou seest

“Thy Friend and Brother in the Word,

“OLIVER ROCKINGHAM.

“P.S. I need not tell thee to destroy this letter after thou hast shown it to Roland.

“O. R.”

Atcherley, after reading this letter, laid a finger to his brow, and for a moment was lost in thought. He then gathered up his reins with a decided air, and handing over the letter, said to Roland,

“Our friend carries his credentials. This is from Oliver Rockingham. Read it: you will find that we can place a dependence which we should have been otherwise justified in withholding.”

Roland took the letter and read it carefully

through. He then returned it to Atcherley, saying in an under tone,

"Rockingham is a little out, I think, in attributing silence and solidity to our new acquaintance. He appears however to be thoroughly satisfied with him, and if he is I am sure we can be so also."

"We can;" returned Atcherley with a dubious smile. "My dear sir," he continued, turning to their new friend, "now that we are perfectly satisfied of each other's character, you will perhaps oblige me with your name. Mine you doubtless know, and that of my friend, this young gentleman, is——"

"Also known," interrupted the young man hurriedly. "Like a good dog I am always ready to answer to my name. Call me 'Horace Belford,' and I shall not fail to reply."

"'Tis well," said Atcherley; "and your companion's——"

"Oh, his name is——" interrupted Master Belford; "why——a——a——. You had

better perhaps put the question where it's likely to be most correctly answered. I could of course inform you ; but you shall have your information at first hand, since the party is present and has had godfathers. Pray what are you called in your own neighbourhood?" he continued, addressing his attendant.

"If the gentleman," said the latter with a smile, "calls me 'Henry Morton,' he will not make a mistake."

"I am obliged by your confidence," returned Atcherley, slightly bowing. "Master Belford, my worthy correspondent desires me to destroy the letter with which you were charged, after I and my friend have perused it. We have no means of doing so at present, or I would readily comply with the wish."

"There is no need," said Horace. "Surely you can keep it about you till we reach a place of security. Besides Master Oliver Rockingham has of course written in such a manner that

no direct advantage could be taken of his letter."

"He has done so," was the reply of Atcherley;" but in these days folks are not over scrupulous in their interpretation of things on which they may chance to look with suspicion. But I will undertake to be its guardian; and depend upon it that while under my care, no eye but my own shall see it. I understand that you are to accompany us."

"I am," answered Horace. "It is so expressed, is it not?"

"It is," said Atcherley. "Some distance is yet before us, and by the leave of all present we will increase our speed."

The whole party set forward at an amended rate. Horace Belford and Henry Morton making their vehicle keep up with the horses of their companions. About four in the afternoon they began to greatly feel the want of refreshment; and in half an hour's farther ride

a neat little roadside inn luckily presented itself. By mutual consent all drew up to its door, and ordering their horses a couple of hours' rest, entered the inn to scrutinise its accommodations. They found a small though comfortable parlour, and ordered wine and refreshments.

The three horses on being again put in harness seemed much refreshed with their halt, and trotted along with a speed that argued well for the care which had been taken of them by the host. Conversation lightened the way, and none of the travellers seemed inclined to look upon it as tedious. They were now rapidly approaching their destination, and were looking out for the cross road which they had been appointed to take, and which it had been intimated passed at the rear of the house towards which they were so rapidly journeying. Atcherley knew the road and the house at which the conspirators were assembled.

The country had for some time become more interesting. Hill succeeded hill, disclosing many a rural prospect, and displaying the patches of wood which were to be discovered sometimes crowning the ridge of an eminence, and at others descending into the hedge-bound meadows, and relieving the lighter green of their silky grass with the shadowy convolutions of thick foliage.

At length the cross road—the only one, in fact, on that side which they had seen for miles—presented itself, winding off seemingly into a number of high and thick bushes, and running so narrowly between the tall and unclipped hedges, that for two vehicles to have passed in it would have been impossible. The high road at this place was somewhat wider, though a sudden turn, some yards in advance, concealed in what direction it passed forward.

Just, however, where the road disappeared, hardly discernible among some old trees whose widely spreading branches seemed to unite

across the path, the roof of the farm-house unostentatiously raised itself, almost from the mossy colour which was its prevailing characteristic mingling with the green around it, and even scarcely to be separated by its tall and dusky brick chimneys, which endeavoured ambitiously to peer over the foliage, and assert an independence which had been much impaired by the lapse of time and the consequent assimilation of colour which they had sustained with surrounding natural objects.

The party turned into the cross-road, which according to promise ran for some little distance in a parallel direction with the highway. It serpentineed gradually off, however, into the country, but not before it had brought our travellers to the back of the farm known by the name of the 'Rye House.'

The scene was pleasing and worth some description. To the right the hedge of the cross road was so thick and overgrown that it quite

concealed what might immediately lay beyond it. As the eye glanced up, however, it could be seen that the country at some distance rose broadly and steeply. Meadows of small extent, bordered with thick hedges, the grass in which was of the most even and delicate tint of emerald green, occupied it, interspersed in many places with patches of dark and straggling wood, the silver stems of which seemed traced on darkness, and dotted in many instances with single trees or groups of three and four, whose broad and sinewy trunks, partly covered with velvet moss and partly embossed with a fretwork of veins, proclaimed their advanced age, and whose thick clouds of leaves still announced that they could adorn and dignify the landscape.

The road in front, after gradually widening and leaving its sides with patches of pale-coloured grass, was edged on each side by a row of widely spreading trees, whose rustling branches almost embowered the road and

greatly shadowed its deeply channeled surface. Beyond this was a small valley, running diagonally between two gently sloping eminences, whose summits and sides were deepened with wedge-like strips of wild and dark wood. The road ran through this valley between high and irregular banks, the shaggy, pendant foliage on whose precipitous sides threw its tough and twisting tendrils, often coiling around and tightly binding the mouldless roots of knotted and protruding stems, over the clayey points and knobs of rock and the straggling wild-looking herbage that patched the upper portions of the rough and almost perpendicular declivity.

On the left, some little distance from the cross-road, was the old farm house, the face of which looked towards the highway on the other side: but it might have been said to have had two fronts, for that in the rear was little inferior to the true front, and had a greater number of windows. A wall and gates, sufficiently ancient, separated the enclosure in

which it was situated from the road; and leading down to the gateway was a broad avenue, some hundred yards in length, and bordered by a stately double row of elms and beeches. These were now in full leaf, and their clouds of leaves deeply shaded not only the avenue, but the ground for some distance on each side of it, and the wall, and the road on which the wall looked.

The scene was romantic though particularly solitary; and the house itself seemed not only to partake but in every sense of the word to add to the melancholy. No sign of life was to be discerned about it. The barking of no dog was to be heard, giving notice to those within of the approach of strangers, and agreeably announcing the neighbourhood of man and hospitality. All was silent and desolate. The house looked as if it had been entirely deserted, and the fitful wind, as it swept at long intervals along the front of the house and shook and rustled the huge branches of the

trees, seemed the only thing gifted with the power of action in it or in its neighbourhood.

This ancient farm-house was of large and straggling dimensions, somewhat lofty, solidly constructed, and disposed in the form of a capital T. The two arms of the letter pointed respectively to the east and west; and its shank drew down towards the south. From the extremities of the former and parallel with the main part of the building there were two old brick walls, battlemented at top, and terminating in a pair of iron gates, whose complicated filligrees had lost their original well defined outline through the rust of many years. These gates were fixed in square piers of brick, dressed with mouldering stone, one of which was connected with the wall extending from the arm of the T, and the other with a corresponding one drawing out from its foot. It will be consequently seen that the walls thus disposed included in their areas two spacious courts. In one of the latter was an

iron column supporting a couple of lamps, and in the other an ornamental pump. At each of the four inward faces of the building—springing from a moulded parapet of heavy woodwork—were three aspiring gables, whose successive angles drew up into a small pediment, terminating in a tall pinnacle of wood which ran down the face of the whole gable and united with the first horizontal beam it encountered. The roof was covered with ivy, which not only fringed the antique chimney shafts but depended from the parapets, and ran along the fantastic zig-zags of their multitudinous gable elevations.

The walls, constructed of brick and beams, had changed the picturesque red of the former and the chaste ash colour of the latter for the universal russet a long exposure to country

“Skyey influences.”

invariably induces. Their outlines were rounded with numberless knots and patches of fresh

or ancient moss — emerald, olive, pea, or copperas green, or orange, or yellow in colour, with the gloss of a thick pile velvet — and their characteristic tints were all sobered into keeping, and softened to and blended with the sylvan colours of the landscape by the silent yet ever active influence of time and the weather.

Nature has a characteristic antipathy to new buildings. She sees they cannot — as they originally stand—at all harmonize with her landscapes. They must be mellowed down to their prevailing spirit. The sharp angle, the elaborate finish, the fresh, staring and independent colour, assert a dominion incompatible with the wildness and inartificial luxuriance of her kingdom, and seem to stand alone—naked ungainly, and unpleasing as they are—mocking all that owns a subjection to her and spoiling all the beauties that she may have assembled together with their fresh and *townish*

appearance. She sets to work cautiously yet speedily — if her dominion is not likely to be further broken in upon—in reducing them to the temper and spirit of all which owns her rule. She presses the rains, the winds, and the sunshine into her service, and by their united efforts—aided by the softening effects of the sympathetic companionship—are they attired in her livery and brought down to uniformity with all around them. Greened, fringed and softened, are the obnoxious denizens qualified to make a part of the landscape: to terminate the sylvan vista, or ornament the side of a grassy and thickly wooded hill. From foes old buildings are thus converted into the fastest and most useful of friends; and the success of the experiment has added even a grace to the thousand beauties of the nature which so felicitously has wrought the transformation.

The latticed windows of the building were what are termed in Gothic architecture square-

beaded. Each was furnished with two mullions and a transom, and crowned with a deeply indented label or hood-moulding. The stonework was in every instance greened with the first invasions of vegetation, and extensively corroded. The whole building, in fact, presented more of the appearance of an old English country mansion—sylvan-tinted, venerable and solitary—than a farm-house that had indeed long seen its best days, but that ought to have had about it the signs of industry and the proofs that it had a well-founded claim to the title of farm house.

The barn-yard, which was on the left side, though large seemed fast going to decay. The gigantic barns looked like the ghosts of what they once were, and stood in melancholy silence falling gradually into ruin. The thatch was not repaired; the huge doors were falling from their hinges; the staples and other fastenings were eaten up with rust; the fences were overgrown with tan-

gled bushes ; and the area was choked up with weeds. Nothing was in motion except the tall grass, which waved to and fro, and seemed more to attest the desolation than any of the unstirring things which surrounded it.

To render the scene still more dismal, the sinking sun was blotted from the heavens by a mass of clouds, whose dark grey volume was rolled half over the sky and shadowed the distant country to a considerable distance. A lurid patch of red in a ragged break of the clouds served to indicate the sun's position and destroy the uniformity of the dull skies. Nothing disturbed the deep and solemn silence except the melancholy note of the blackbird and the heavy sigh of the wind. The mansion stood silent and solitary, seeming to vacantly and cheerlessly return the glance of the stranger. The country around looked as if there was no human creature for miles:

the shadows of the trees added to the universal solemnity, and the gloom of the heavens conspired to crown the whole with an all-pervading heaviness, though the day was warm.

CHAPTER XIV.

"*Cassius*.—I think we are too bold upon your rest :

Good morrow, Brutus ; do we trouble you ?

Brutus.—I have been up this hour ; awake, all night.

Know I these men, that come along with you ?

Cassius.—This is Trebonius.

Brutus.—He is welcome hither.

Cassius.—This Decius Brutus.

Brutus.—He is welcome too.

Cassius.—This, Casca ; this, Cinna ;

And this, Metellus Cimber.

Brutus.—They are all welcome."

Julius Cæsar. Act 2. Scene 1.

ATCHERLEY and his companions, having arrived at the gate, made good use of their eyes in order to discover a means of making

known their presence. The house to all appearance seemed uninhabited ; but Atcherley was pretty sure that there were those within who were looking out for their arrival. After considerable delay they found an old bell, which for some time refused to sound, but at last it sent its prolonged and dismal notes towards the ancient building. Its invasion of the silence seemed an act of daring that had a singular effect upon the nerves of those who heard it. It excited a sort of regret that you had disturbed the den, and the eye eagerly and almost fearfully glanced up the avenue, expecting to see something come down of a different character to what you bargained for. A pause ensued of some duration, during which the perfect silence was almost disagreeable. The minutes passed on, and yet no notice whatever seemed to have been taken of the arrival.

Having waited more than a sufficient time, Atcherley again applied his hand to the bell,

and this time made it give forth sounds which startled his companions. The echoes died away in the wood, and all became once more silent as before.

At last the gate at the head of the avenue was heard to distantly creak, and a figure was to be distinguished coming gradually down. With slow and cautious step this individual advanced to the gate which led into the road, and placing himself on the other side, in hoarse and deliberate accents he demanded the pleasure of those who waited without.

"Master Oliver Rockingham," said Atcherley, "can I not speak with him?"

"I can bear a message to him, sir," was the answer, "if such should be your pleasure."

"I wish to speak with him in person," answered Atcherley. "Open your gate and let us in: he has for some time looked out for our arrival."

"Master Rockingham is not at present in

the house." was the reply. "Perhaps, sir, you will entrust me with your name."

"If Master Rockingham be not then at the Rye House, be so good as to inform your master," rejoined Atcherley, "that a friend of both, William Atcherley by name, is waiting at his gate for admission. He will direct thee to open it, friend:—stay," he continued, as the servant was turning away, "—this will remove all doubt."—Saying these words he drew Rockingham's letter from his pocket and tore off the four last lines. "Carry this to Master Rumbald with my best regards;—he will recognise at a glance his friend's handwriting."

The man soon returned with compliments from his master and orders to unclosethe gate. The latter turned heavily on its hinges, and Atcherley, Roland, Horace Belford and Henry Morton quickly entered. The gates were then carefully locked, and the key committed to the warder's pocket.

A few minutes brought the party to the

head of the avenue. The second gate was also opened by the attendant, who, desiring the party to wait, disappeared in order to seek some one to lead the horses to the stables. He soon returned, and with him a countryman, to whom with an air of authority he gave the necessary directions. Agreeably to their purport, the horses' bridles were thrown over the man's arm, and the unoccupied hand guided the animal which drew the carriage. The clatter of their hoofs soon sunk into silence, and the whole of the party crossed the weedy court to the only entrance on the western side of the house.

Entering by this door, and conducted by the servant, Atcherley, Roland, and their two friends crossed a hall of some size, but sadly neglected and falling fast to decay. On one side was a heavy staircase which wound broadly up, and on the other were several doors. Instead of opening any of the latter, the conductor of the party turned into a pas-

sage opposite, and arriving at its extremity knocked at a wide oaken door banded with iron and otherwise well secured. The knock was answered by a person inside, who, hearing the voice of his servant, drew the only bolt which held the door, and quickly opened it. Ushered by the man who had conducted them, Atcherley, Roland, Horace Belford and Henry Morton entered the apartment. The door immediately closed behind them, and the servant disappeared.

The room was spacious and lofty. Its walls were of panelled oak, its roof was supported by cross beams, and the floor was uncovered. A couple of wide oriel, fitted with lattices and commanding a view of the road, the woodlands and the country opposite, gave light to the apartment, which was more comfortably furnished than the exterior of the house appeared to promise. Round the walls were settles and high-backed chairs of walnut, well supplied with woollen cushions, and wreathed and carved with considerable ingenuity. The huge fire-

place was on one side, and was ornamented with a multitude of dwarf columns, geometrical cornices and panels of foliage—all now black as ebony through age, though industriously polished.

In the centre of the chimney-piece, surrounded with foliated grotesques, were the arms of the then proprietor of the house, charged, mottoed and crested. They were placed in consequence in the most conspicuous situation the room could afford; for gathered around the fire on a winter's day, or examining the ancient carvings of the chimney every person must see them. A row of pegs was on the other side of the room, flanking an ancient ebony press in which was a somewhat costly display of old china, eccentrically fashioned plate, and various curiosities. These pegs were now occupied with steeple-crowned hats, some with bands, some plain, some with feathers; and some puritanically destitute of ornament, with cloaks of various colours, buff gloves, ra-

piers, matchlocks and petronels. Veiling the window were crimson draperies, and hanging from the ceiling was a lamp of bronze.

Nor was the apartment less well furnished with living occupants. There were six or eight men disposed about it, exclusive of the person who had opened the door, some of whom were sitting down, some conversing in under tones, and one or two looking out of window. They were principally attired in a sober fashion, being dressed in russet, murrey or slate colour doublets or jerkins, dark-coloured galleygaskins, black or sad-colour stockings, and brown riding-boots. One or two of the number carried swords; but the majority of their weapons were in different parts of the room.

Rumbald, the owner of the house, was a tall man of broad proportions and large features. His countenance was dark and weather-beaten, and his hair brown in colour, a little sprinkled with grey. He was dressed in an

olive green jerkin, galleygaskins and stockings of similar hue, shoes with buckles and roses, a broad buff belt, decorated with gilded tags, rapier, sash and starched band. His visage was determined though not ill-natured in expression, and his voice though deep was not inharmonious.

The deportment of our travellers on entering the room and seeing the persons in it was materially different. Atcherley advanced with his usual observing smile and easy composure. Roland's step was quicker, his eye glanced round him with curiosity and seemed to scan the appearance of the new society into which he was thrown. Horace Belford entered with hesitation, and furtively though eagerly examined each face round him. On completing his scrutiny he lost his embarrassment, and resumed his usual gay and unpreoccupied demeanour. Henry Morton, however, kept his eyes fixed upon the ground, and

sought to avoid observation by getting behind his courtly companion.

"I have to welcome," said Rumbald, "several very good friends I have no doubt. Staunch and true, politic like thyself, Mr. Atcherley, and steadfast like our excellent confederate, Master Oliver Rockingham. Pity that he is not here to receive thee!"

"Your man," said Atcherley, "intimated that he was not with you. I was disappointed."

"My man's information was correct," rejoined Rumbald. "But we ought not to regret Rockingham's absence since it will materially assist us. He plays the part of a look-out, and is this moment at Newmarket. He will return however to-night, or at latest early to-morrow."

"I see his drift and partly approve of it," answered Atcherley. "He determined to take the service upon himself; it required no ordinary prudence, and I think he has as much

of that very excellent quality as most men. I am right?"

"You are," returned Rumbald." The design was of his own proposing, and he offered to put it in execution himself. We shall have nothing to do for eight days yet. Charles has not yet set out—his return, so far as this, will not be doubtful—any further—"

"You will not guarantee him, Master Rumbald. I believe we perfectly understand each other. I bring some Friends whom you have only to know to be pleased with. Allow me to introduce them to the company. Our band is as one, though its members may have been scattered; 'tis fit that they should be as united in friendship as they are in purpose. Gentlemen, Sir Roland Torrington stands before you."

At this announcement there was a murmur of approval.

Each of the company advanced, fixed his eyes on Roland, and politely bowed.

"Baronet," continued Atcherley, "of Torrington in Derbyshire. From his youth up have his principles been those which have brought us forward. Approving of our designs from first to last, he is prepared heart and hand to advance as we advance, fight as we fight, pluck down what we shall pluck down, and restore that, the restoration of which has been, is, and shall be our guiding principle. Admitted to the confederation by Master Oliver Rockingham of Longwood, the most anxious doubter must be satisfied both of his faith and eligibility. Gentlemen, I have the honour of calling Sir Roland an early and a steadfast friend."

"We welcome him as we welcome thee," said Rumbald; an expression of kindness which was seconded by all the company.

Atcherley next took the hand of Horace Belford. The blush which mounted to Horace's cheek at being thus brought forward

was deep. Hastily he bowed in acknowledgment of the welcome of the company.

"This, gentlemen," continued Atcherley, "is Master Horace Belford, an individual upon whose faith you will be able to place the greater dependance when I tell you that he was charged with a communication of importance direct from our upright and valued friend, Master Oliver Rockingham, to myself. He joined me on the road, and will remain here until our intentions are carried into effect. His family is noble, and his principles are honest. By and bye he will prove every way a valuable adherent. Gentlemen, he is welcome."

"He is," returned all without hesitation.

"This young person," said Atcherley, carelessly, "is a foster-brother of Master Belford's. He is attached to his fortunes and acts as his attendant. The fidelity with which he follows his master will be the best guarantee both of his faith and compliance. Henry Morton, you can be both secret and discreet?"

“ I hope that I can, sir,” said Henry, though in subdued tones.

“ You will pledge yourself, Master Horace,” said Atcherley, turning towards him, “ for the fidelity of your dependant.”

“ I will most solemnly,” said Horace; “ he is as myself. Nay more—”

“ More is unnecessary,” interrupted Atcherley. “ Gentleman all,” continued he, addressing the circle. “ I doubt me not that you are all satisfied.”

“ We are—we are,” was the ready answer.

“ It now only remains,” said Atcherley, addressing himself in a frank sort of manner to Rumbald, “ that you should make us all acquainted—I mean myself and my three friends—with our good friends and fellow labourers in the room.”

“ I’ll do so and gladly,” answered Rumbald with alacrity. “ Gentlemen, please to advance. In the first place you must allow me to announce myself since I am to introduce others.

Gentlemen, my name is Rumbald. I am owner of this house, a friend to liberty and the laws, and abhorrer of tyranny and Popery ; an Englishman not only in name and by birth but in heart and soul. I hope to be one of the foremost in the fight in which we are about to engage, prompt in council, prompt in action, first in the avowal of the opinions that we intend to maintain, and last in their recantation. So much for myself. This, gentlemen," continued he, pointing to the nearest of the company, "is Lieutenant-Colonel Walcot, an officer not only of courage and reputation but, what is better, of the most ardent and liberal principles—uncompromising and unflinching in every respect. Next him, gentlemen, is Colonel Rumsey ; an officer not a whit inferior to the worthy man whom I've just mentioned—bold, resolute and politic. Next him is Master West, whom I will back for as good a professor and expounder of the laws as any in the United Kingdom ; Master West is the

Chancellor of our confederation. After him, gentlemen, comes Master Goodenough, Under Sheriff of the City of London; zealous for the cause, and of tried faith and experience. This is a brother in the word and faithful soldier of Zion of the name of Ferguson. To him we have committed the management of the City of London, and well has he hitherto discharged the trust. These gentlemen are named, Keiling, Holloway, Bourne and Lee: all men of spirit and honesty.*

* The council of six who originated and managed the chief conspiracy, were the Duke of Monmouth, Earl of Essex, Lord William Russel, Lord Howard, Algernon Sidney and John Hampden. The subordinate conspirators were Colonel Rumsey, (who had served in Portugal and was recommended to the King by Mareschal Schomberg), Lieutenant-Colonel Walcot, (an old republican officer,) West, Tyley, Norton, and Ayloffe, (lawyers), Ferguson, (an Independent clergyman), Holloway, (a merchant of Bristol,) Rumbald, (a maltster,) and Rouse, Hone, Keiling, Bourne, Lee, and one or two others, (merchants or tradesmen of London.)

As their names were successively mentioned, all bowed, the courtesy being duly acknowledged by Atcherley and his fellow travellers. These introductions all over, the majority of the party took chairs and seated themselves.

“ Travellers always are or ought to be hungry,” said Rumbald to Atcherley. “ We will order something for you. Expecting so great an addition to my household, I have taken care of my larder. We will have refreshments served in another room, where I will introduce you to my better half. She will be delighted at so agreeable an addition to our circle. Come, gentlemen; be pleased to follow me.”

Saying this Master Rumbald led the way out of the room. He conducted his visitors to an upper apartment, where they found Mrs. Rumbald diligently employed in needlework.

She was about forty years of age, with a good natured expression of countenance and a somewhat voluble tongue. It was not long

before she made herself well acquainted with all the travellers. The conversation was kept up with considerable spirit until the refreshments arrived; which in character and quantity told well for the solid hospitality of the mansion. Better influences seemed to preside over the interior of the house than might, from its chill and melancholy outside, have been anticipated. The cheer was good, the invitation to partake of it was both hearty and sincere, and the behaviour of Rumbald and his wife towards their friends, though deferential, was cordial and prepossessing. Roland was indeed much more pleased with the society into which his co-operation in Rockingham's designs had thrown him, than he had expected to be.

The character of the conspiracy was not wholly Puritanical, though several of the members of it, Rockingham included, had an absolute bias that way. They all agreed however in one particular, and that was the love of liberty. The eyes with which they looked upon the king, the court, and the ministry, were those

of the most unmingled hatred ; and the desperate measures into which they had entered, were the fullest and most natural evidence of their abhorrence.

CHAPTER V.

"A dozen of them here have ta'en the sacrament,
And interchangeably set down their hands
To kill the king at Oxford.
Were he twenty times my son,
I would appeach him."

Richard II. Act v. Scene 2.

"It shall go hard
But I will delve one yard below their mine,
And blow them at the moon."

Hamlet. Act i. Scene 4.

WE must now ask the reader to accompany us to Newmarket. The King was at this time resident there. It was on his way to this place that the conspirators had settled

to lie in wait for him. He was to speedily set out, but was not expected to return for some time. On the eighth day from the present the conspirators hoped to put their design in execution.

The house in which the King lived stood at some distance from the town. It was an old-fashioned brick edifice, stretching out into wings, and abounding in gables and oriels. On three sides it was surrounded with stately old trees, which partly concealed the house and added much to the solemnity of its appearance. Before its front were three antique successive terraces, approached by wide flights of steps, and ornamented with vases, statues, globes and heraldic insignia in stone. *Jets d'eau* murmured in its gardens, the walks of which were mathematically disposed and smoothly gravelled. The shadows of the fine old trees, the lulling noise and splashes of the fountains, the sunshine chequering the bright green smooth-shaven lawns, and the old red

brick walls and latticed windows discernible through the masses of wood in the middle distance, disposed the mind to repose or contemplation, and bore an expression of old-fashioned picturesque solemnity that interested and delighted the observer.

At the present moment, however, the summer twilight was fast declining into darkness. The distant trees began to look blue and gloomy through the calm, clear atmosphere. There was but very little wind, and the leaves only murmured as the gentle breeze agitated them. The walks, the lawns and the building were growing indistinct; and only one or two persons were seen to move about the now almost deserted gardens. Around was a belt of gigantic forest trees, looking like an assemblage of large and gloomy clouds. Their silver trunks could now only be faintly discerned, as well as the many romantic vistas which drew into distance between them. Nothing could be seen beyond this stately

mass of foliage; the shades of night seemed already to rest upon their semicircular outlines, and they stood out well defined on the pure though deeply tinted blue of the sky in the west.

“ It was the hour, when from the boughs
The nightingale’s soft note is heard ;
It was the hour, when lover’s vows
Seem sweet in every whispered word ;
And gentle winds and waters near
Make music to the lonely ear.
Each flower the dews had lightly wet,
And in the skies the stars were met,
And on each leaf a browner hue
And on the lake was deeper blue,
And, in the heavens, that clear obscure,
So softly dark, and darkly pure,
That follows the decline of day,
As twilight melts beneath the moon away.”

The moon, indeed, was rising yellowly and pensively over the dark and distant wood. As its broad disc circled slowly up, a spiritlike radius of light gradually diffused itself around

it, and melted the deep blue in its pale and softening illumination. No token of man was to be discovered except when lights would be seen to flit across the windows of the old mansion, dark and dreary as it now appeared. Sometimes the lights passed quickly away, and at others they would pause in the windows and gleam brightly out of the surrounding blackness.

Taking the great walk that led to the mansion which at the present moment boasted Royalty as an occupant, and ascending the broad stone steps which introduced a person approaching the house to the successive terraces before it, a figure was to be distinguished wrapped closely in a mantle. He walked slowly and steadily on until he neared the principal entrance. At this point he stopped, and seemed to consider of his further movements. The deliberation was not long, for he turned off to the right, and passing along the upper terrace at the right side of the building,

glided into the darkness of a semi-Gothic gateway that stood midway between the ends of the mansion, and he disappeared in a short collonade, at the end of which, facing the gateway, was an obscure door.

In this place was a bell-handle and wire, which depended from the groined ceiling of the collonade. The stranger put his hand to the bell, and gently rang it. The door was quickly unclosed, and a small though handsome hall was distinguishable, lighted by a gilt lamp which hung from an architectural ceiling. The stranger advanced without ceremony into the hall, and deliberately turned towards the man who had admitted him. The broad rim of his beaver was so disposed as to alant across his face, and little of his features could be therefore seen. His mantle also concealed the proportions of his form, though there were a dignity and courtlike ease in his manner that announced he was above the ordinary rank.

To the porter's whispered and respectful demand of his name and business, the stranger condescended no other reply than the putting a card in a cover into his hand. The envelope of the latter was of a fine quality, gilt-edged and perfumed.

"What does your lordship wish I should do with this?" asked the attendant.

"Nonsense, man, you have mistaken me, I am no lord," answered the stranger. "Do me the service to carry this to the gentleman in waiting, and request him to present it in the royal closet. The answer will be quick, and I will wait here till it be given me."

"Allow me to ask you, sir," said the servant, "to wait in this apartment until I have delivered my message." As he spoke he opened a door to the left, and requested the stranger to follow. The gentleman complied, desiring him only to be speedy.

The latter had taken but few turns in the apartment before the door softly opened and

the attendant re-appeared. The stranger stopped instantly in his walk, and cast his eyes on the servant.

“ I am commanded, sir, to request your presence in the royal closet. His Majesty is alone, and desires to speak with you. I will have the honour of conducting you to the ante-chamber.

In obedience to this direction the stranger, ushered by the attendant, re-entered the hall, passed down a corridor opposite the entrance of the hall, ascended a staircase of oak, the balustrades of which were gilt; and on arrival at the first story he proceeded down a wide and richly ornamented gallery till he came to the entrance of the ante-chamber. In this room he was passed over to a gentleman in waiting, who with the same obsequious deference as the inferior officer conducted him across the apartment into an audience chamber, and from thence to the door of the King's closet.

A gentle knock at the door was answered by a "come in" from the interior. In obedience to this command the door was slowly unclosed, and the gentleman in waiting, bowing profoundly, introduced the stranger to the royal presence. He then withdrew with the same obeisance, and silently shut the door.

The apartment was not large, though it was very lofty, and extremely rich in its decorations. The walls were tapestried with crimson damask, fringed and bound with silk of the same colour, lined with milk white sarsnet and looped up with cords and tassels of gold. Over the doors of which there were two, one opening into the audience chamber and the other into the king's retiring room, and in various other convenient situations were several pictures of great value, the work of Italian Spanish, and Flemish artists, in exceedingly rich and massive gold frames. The ceiling was of a rich fawn colour, fretted into so

many foliated lozenges and abounding with so many picturesque complexities, the gilding of which glittered like a network, that the eye was dazzled with its multitudinous ramifications and unable without much attention to understand its details. A Persian carpet was upon the floor, looking like a brilliant mosaic, edged out to the wall with thick crimson cloth. The panels and mouldings of the doors were richly gilt, and in the gorgeous style of Louis Quatorze: the whole apartment and furniture, in short, was in that eccentric though certainly magnificent taste. Each pannel presented a different group, or landscape, finished with the most singular art and a gem in itself. The handles of the doors were of ivory; the unoccupied portions of the doors were delicately coloured and highly varnished.

Light was admitted into the apartment by two bay windows, with *grilles* or lattices of brass lozenge work. Part of the glass of these

was coloured and embellished with the arms and various devices of the luxurious monarch. They were however now concealed by silken draperies of crimson, the folds of which were disposed with the utmost elegance. Cornices were above of massive gold, manufactured in the prevailing taste, and of the most elaborate workmanship.

The furniture consisted of couches and chairs of wreathed ebony inlaid with gold, and provided with seats and cushions of crimson damask with silken tassels at the corners; tables of the richest wood, mounted in ormolu; with red, amber, and green marble slabs; embroidered ottomans, cabinets of ebony and inlaid work with gold mounting, or of ivory and silver, vases of foreign china gorgeously painted and gilt, mirrors of the clearest surface in frames of foliated gold, and cases of books of small size in the most splendid bindings.

Two or three foreign singing birds of the most brilliant plumage were in cages of gold.

From the ceiling depended a chandelier of ormolu. The most delicate perfumes, too, were exhaling in thin blue wreaths of vapour from censers of silver. The whole apartment was redolent of the luxury and extravagance that characterised the time, and particularly the weak and profligate monarch who then sat upon the throne of England.

Charles himself was no bad personification of the magnificence that reigned around him. He was seated in an easy chair of green morocco; his attitude was negligent though graceful, and his whole appearance languid and nonchalant. His features, though harsh, had something in them distinguished; and the smile which curled his lip was of a good natured and insinuating character. The expression of his countenance was attractive and aristocratic; possessing little *majesty*, but much of an easy and polished dignity. His dark complexion and lively, familiar eyes gave a manly and agreeable expression to the con-

tour of his face, and intimated that he was not often disinclined to forget the sovereign in the companion. His shape was good, and it was well set off by the symmetrical cut of his habiliments. To sum up his appearance in a few words, it was good-natured without being precisely friendly; highly polished without being affected; dignified without being kingly; and prepossessing without laying hold of respect. The traces of age and dissipation could be detected in the strongly marked lines of his face; and he looked in every expression and gesture the *beau idéal* of a *roué*, but an elegant one, fast verging into age and its consequent decrepitude.

His attire was rich and becoming. He wore a frock of ribbed white silk, the seams of which were broadly laced with gold. The full sleeves of this garment were slashed to the elbow, and fully displayed the bright crimson lining. The shoulder points were thickly decorated with gold laces and a profusion of

glittering tags. His nether garments were ample, and of the same colour as the frock, they were slashed likewise from the waist to the knee, bound with gold, studded with quivering tags, and displaying at their sides the rich crimson silk lining. A shoulder sash of crimson crossed his breast, beneath which was a belt of gold in which his Parisian rapier was usually carried; at present however it lay upon the table. Silk hose were upon his legs, one of which was dignified with the kingly Garter; these joined his galley-gaskins a little below the knee, which jingled with a circle of bright gold tags. Slippers of scarlet morocco were at present upon his feet, mounted and ornamented with crescents of gold. A low-crowned, broad-brimmed velvet hat, with luxuriant plumes of the purest white, was upon the table; besides which were also a pair of the gloves in vogue, trimmed with lace, an inlaid inkstand, a lamp of silver with two burners, two or three miniature cases, designs

for additions to some of the royal residences, essence bottles, gilt books, and several other matters of a different though not less miscellaneous nature.

Charles himself on the entrance of his visiter was carelessly occupied in examining a military drawing, setting forth a new design for the dress of his Life Guards. But his notice was of that easy, desultory kind, which plainly indicated his attention was roving to a variety of subjects. Sometimes he would rub his chin and gaze listlessly at the ceiling; sometimes he would give a quick and impatient glance at his even-burning lamp; and sometimes he would gently stroke his temples and then resume the examination. We must not forget, too, that His Majesty wore a glossy and luxuriant wig, that struck full fifteen years off his age, and greatly assisted in improving his countenance.

As his visiter paused on recognising who was in the apartment, the King raised his

eyes and greeted him with a bland though self-complacent smile. He perceived at once who had sought the audience; and as the party entering approached the light, the King welcomed with much condescension no less important a person than William Atcherley.

"Ah! Master Atcherley," said Charles, without raising himself from his recumbent posture, "you typify the night. Had you an attention of rivalling its blackness when you donned so dingy a dress?"

"So please your majesty," said Atcherley quietly, "those who seek a good turn from the night ought to flatter its characteristic humours. Like a true friend I paired my outside to its countenance; and my courtesy will be repaid by its keeping my movements secret. Something may be gained even from such negative flattery."

"Aha! so you make out," said Charles, "that nature is not insensible to a compliment. She reflects her foible upon her fairest works,

who, to tell a truth, but seldom are. You need carry your diffidence no farther; and so we request you to throw off your outer covering. You were wise in preserving your incognito so far."

"Trusting to your majesty's pardon, I have continued it to your majesty's presence," said Atcherley.

"Right—right—and very good," continued Charles. "Your closer attire I however perceive well excuses you. Upon my honour, Master Atcherley, you almost shame my tailorage: the rainbow is best seen upon a black background—a thick cloud, and your gaieties display themselves to most advantage when exhibited from beneath the murkiness of a dark-coloured mantle. Do me the honour of seating yourself, Master Atcherley; here is variety of accommodation."

"I crave your majesty's pardon," returned Atcherley. "I could not think of seating myself in your majesty's presence. I could

not permit myself the honour even though commanded by your majesty, and I shall be able to perhaps best make my communication when unconfounded with the condescension, even supposing that I could so forget myself as to accept it."

"Pshaw! Master Atcherley," rejoined the King, "thou art over nice and not over wise. Upon our royal honour I cannot talk to thee if thou standest. To use a very unkindly phrase, which you will excuse, your compliance with this nonsensical punctilio will give me the fidgets. Sit down, man! sit down! and make no more words about so very simple a matter."

Charles spoke in so good natured and friendly a manner that his words could not fail of pleasing his hearer.

"Your majesty is too good; but as I would not be party to giving your majesty one moment's uneasiness, I will in one instance do violence to my sense of propriety."

Saying these words Atcherley seated himself with a respectful coolness that showed the condescension no way disconcerted him, and that he was prepared to receive much greater honour with indifference.

"Ah *now*," said Charles, "you look a little more in character with our room. Your cloudy cloak has blackened my imagination. Do pray reserve it for the funeral of your most respected friend, but never, while we have the honour of occasionally seeing you, bring it here. My house will turn methodistical if it be again displayed within it. It a little agrees with your countenance, Master Atcherley, which I don't flatter you in saying is 'comely', as the Puritans call it, as a black cloud agrees with a blue sky, or a white garment with a pale complexion. But wisdom cannot always be particular. I hope nothing of importance gives us the pleasure of your company to-night, Master Atcherley."

"I would never intrude myself," said At

cherley, "if matters of importance concerning your majesty's welfare did not force me to attract your majesty's notice."

"Our welfare!" echoed Charles, "I am obliged to thee, disinclined as thou art to seek my presence. For the anxiety of my friends on my account I ought to feel grateful and I do so. What is in the wind now?"

"Much, your majesty, that bodes ill," replied Atcherley, "but by the blessing of God we will avert it."

"Amen! Amen! with all my heart and soul!" returned the monarch. "You say the wind is bringing a cloud; of what shape may the latter be?"

"We must take pattern from the mariner, your majesty," said Atcherley, "and bring the danger down. We will pierce the cloud and force it to spend its perils on the invulnerable deep. I have been the first to descry the danger, let me, your majesty, be the first to apply the match."

"Thou art a steady, careful and most ever-waking watchman, Master Atcherley," said the King, "and thou shalt be the first to alarm the slumbering citizens. But they may at first be apt to d——n you for knocking at their doors!"

"When the danger is more clearly understood they will thank me for my interference. Their well-being is aimed at in the peril which threatens their——"

"What! have we *another* Popish plot?" exclaimed the monarch, "is *Prince* the word with which you would finish? Are not the idiots yet satisfied, or will they tempt the lion till he bites their heads off? Come, I see I must lick the dust from my eyes!"

"No, no, your majesty," returned Atcherley, "there is no occasion for your majesty to put yourself out of the way: I have let this danger work to a head, and we can therefore the easier crush it."

"Ah! Master Atcherley," said the King,

“we should have trodden down this matter in the bud. Strange that none but yourself should have perceived it! Here are some score of watchmen entertained by my people—you know whom I mean, Master Atcherley; our ministry, those to whom we have, with every confidence that they would do right, committed the administration of justice and the well-being of our children, for we consider our subjects our children—fellows paid out of our purse, maintained by our bounty, and upheld by our authority; and yet not one of these pendant men—these hangers on—these ivy tendrils to our trunk has even smelt out that a mischief was brewing, blind as they might have been to the nature of it. By Jupiter! Master Atcherley, I should have been dead long ago if I had not placed such *cheveaux-de-frise* around my throne, rotten wood as they have proved in this instance, to be. Tall as our throne is, we are obliged to hedge it in from the approach of reptiles and creeping

things, who though they could not scale our seat may yet slime the steps. Besides a malicious blow from without might tumble down the statue though the pedestal remained upright; my crown might roll in the dust though my seat would remain for another to step into. My life has been too often aimed at before, for me to think it now so strange a thing."

"And some such aiming, your majesty," said Atcherley, "has brought me hither now. But we shall be able to make the evil recoil upon the heads of those who have planned it; the work is easy, and it only requires decision and promptness in action. These treasons are easily thwarted; what does a good soldier do when he perceives that the enemy is mining towards him? Your majesty, he countermines, and blows up his antagonist in the ruins of his scheme. Oh there is no joy so intense as seeing your enemy fall by the ma-

chine he intended for your destruction! It is Shakspeare himself who has said

“For 'tis the sport to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petar :”

and he is right; the observation is deep; there is in nature that peculiar joy. Your majesty's safety is committed to those who, though zealous, are inefficient.”

“Odd'sfish, I think you're right, Master Atcherley! So long as the fellows get their penny they care little for the service. I am bound to you, my good friend, in many instances. I shall be glad of an opportunity to show my gratitude.”

“I beg your majesty will not mention it,” answered Atcherley, with honest haste; “I do, in truth. I have no intention to angle for your majesty's favour. My regard for your majesty's person is unmixed and unalloyed

with the hope of reward. What I have done I have done, candidly and straightforwardly. I am bound to keep an eye over your majesty's safety, and I hope I shall never flinch from the duty."

"Say no more, Mr. Atcherley, say no more," answered Charles; "you have already given me proofs of your sincerity and loyalty. I do believe in my soul that you are as attached to our well-being, as we would wish all our subjects! We are obliged to say *wish* and *all*; for you yourself bring me the unwelcome intelligence that we have some ill-willers in the community."

"So few they are that they scarcely deserve your majesty should give a second thought to them; but a shaft from the vilest bow—launched by a hand that fled from the very sight of the chase—may chance to pierce the noblest stag. Great things sometimes fall by little means. Your majesty, we will master the evil I have had the good fortune of discovering and, tread

upon the worm that has presumed to raise his sting against your majesty."

"Well said, Master Atcherley," said the King. "Yours shall be the heel that treads upon this worm, and I will shod it with the iron. Well, we will see now to business; by your leave, Master Atcherley, we will examine this direful matter, and plan its counteraction."

As the King spoke he raised himself from his recumbent position, drew his chair closer to the table, and invited Atcherley to do the like. Atcherley rose, and with an enviable *sang froid* deliberately drew his seat nearer to the King.

"Your majesty, I will communicate this matter standing," said he.

"Standing? Out upon your ill-timed delicacy!" exclaimed the King, "sit, sit, Master Atcherley! you give me a great deal of trouble with your politeness. Fancy me now somebody planning an escape from execution: your-

self the good fellow who has gained access to us. Come you must furnish me with the ropeladder to scale the walls with of my Doubting Castle. By the bye our talk must be serious, and I can be serious sometimes on matters of less moment. Do us the pleasure of handing us yonder bottle of essences, Master At—Atcher—what's your name?"

"Atcherley, so please your majesty," answered Atcherley.

"Atcherley—it is a well-sounding appellation: by the way, what may be your Christian name?"

"My first name, so please your majesty, is an old-fashioned one, it is William."

"William, William, is it?" repeated the King, "William Atcherley, Sir William Atcherley—the name would sound well. Are not you of my opinion, Mr. Atcherley?"

"Only partly in this instance, so please your majesty," returned Atcherley; the name

is too long already—too unworthy—to be lengthened.”

“We will see—we will see,” said the King. “Are you not in our service? I can discern the military cut about you.”

“So please your majesty,” answered Atcherley, “I have not either the honour or the gratification of serving your majesty. My commission runs in the German language and is dated from Vienna.”

“Aha! is it so?” cried the King; “so you sport the white jerkin and scarlet ribbands? Would not the scarlet colour alone do as well? How came you to enter the service of His Imperial Majesty?”

“The story is long, destitute of interest, and might be tedious just now to your majesty.”

“Ha! ha!” answered Charles with a friendly laugh, “well thought of! We’ll have it another time; so now to business. Before we

begin, however, we will have something to chase the devils from our imagination; these plots are Hydras, cut off one head and ten rise in its place; they chase away our brighter thoughts like fiends from the *Inferno*. It is not worth while to trouble our folks in waiting; stretch your hand, Master Atcherley, to the piece of furniture behind you. You will find upon it a *liqueur* of singular quality—the most obedient and comfortable gentleman in waiting we can boast of; he opens his heart with the utmost candour, and gives me the sweetest advice; verily a most unexceptionable privy-councillor! Bring us the angel in waiting—the ministering spirit—and a couple of recipients.”

According to his order Atcherley rose, and placed a richly-cut flask, filled with scintillating yellow liquid, and two tall glasses on the table.

The King opened the bottle, poured out a

bumper, and then pushed over the flask to Atcherley.

Atcherley saw that to be over delicate would be inapplicable to His Majesty's present gracious and familiar mood. He was too keen and sagacious a politician to interrupt the current even with a straw. He filled his glass, but before raising it to his lips he quietly said—

“Here's to your majesty's long and uninterrupted health and safety!”

“We thank you, Master Atcherley,” returned the monarch; “the wish is a good one, and worthy of your long-tried loyalty. Well, having thus fortified our souls against all evil influences—devils, plots, and treasonable machinations—having thus purified the sulphur-tainted atmosphere with celestial fire, we will brave these giants that are buckling on their armour for the attack. Don't you think, Master Atcherley, that we shall be able to split their shields for them, eh?”

"Aye, your majesty," returned Atcherley, "and drill their breastplates."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Charles, "we must play the mousetrap with the cunning vermin; the idiots little suspect that while with fear and trembling they are nibbling at the cheese, that hangs over their heads which descends to part body and soul. Now, Master Atcherley, I am prepared to listen. Give us the composition of this hell-broth they are brewing: we will blow up the cauldron and scatter the liquor over the cooks. Now for the particulars."

Atcherley prepared himself to reply: his communications were clear, deliberate and forcible.

"I will give your majesty," said he, "the outlines of the conspiracy in as few words as I can: they can be soon made known. The first design is to assassinate your majesty in a certain place, by overturning a cart in the

highway and so stopping your majesty's carriage, while shots from behind the hedges will bring about their principal object."

"Bring about! Master Atcherley," exclaimed the king, "you mean bring straight forward: a bullet is a special messenger that never takes a circuitous route!"

"I am happy to see your majesty take the matter so comfortably; it argues well for the success of our counteraction."

"Master Atcherley," said Charles, "we kings walk blindfold among red-hot plough shares;

'Custom hath made it a property of easiness.'

Go on:—What else do these gentlemen purpose?"

"They design, secondly, to make away with your majesty's ministers."

"A feat," said Charles, "for which some-

times they would get the royal thanks. But as our 'attendant spirits' do not happen just now to run counter to our inclinations, why we will beg to say with honest Dogberry,

' Flat burglary as ever was committed.'

Again, Master Atcherley."

" Thirdly, their object is to overthrow the government."

" Aye! and bury themselves in its ruins. The building is so stout, Master Atcherley, that before they can knock all clear away below the whole will be down upon their heads. A fool may pull away the props of an edifice; but it takes a wise man to raise one. Every thing on the wrong side is slippery; mischief will slide of itself—good is up-hill work. What would say our eager reformers if when they stretch to reach the pin that holds the parts of the machine together, the wheels should catch the skirts of their coats and drag them within

the *penetralia*, there to be ground to nought. The machine has still power for that operation; eh, Master Atcherley? Our eager cavillers calculate too soon on its craziness; but it has still teeth to bite, wheels to grind and hammers to strike with. Well, when the king is made away with, the ministry sent to Tophet, and the government overturned, little else remains to be done it must be acknowledged. I suppose our sapient setters to right contemplate no more. When the house is down, all that remains to the rabble is to throw the bricks at one another's heads."

"They intend to put them to a less commendable use, so please your majesty," answered Atcherley. "They have leaden-headed architects among them who calculate on raising a dwarf edifice of their own."

"Aye!" interrupted the king, "with so many chimnies that they will fall through the roof; vents for the smoky conceits of those who govern kingdoms and build governments in the

chimney-corner—puffing in each other's faces—rocked by the ever-shifting breath of the giddy multitude—blown one against the other—rattling each with its empty Utopia—in vain endeavouring to make an impression on the earthen craniums of their neighbours—till shaken from their 'bad eminence' by the convulsions below they tumble into the rubbish from which they originally sprung, and grind their lips in the clay to which they are kindred. Now that we know the intentions, we must be made acquainted with the persons of our gallant and sagacious reformers."

"Will your majesty honour me," said Atcherley, "by taking pen and paper? I will furnish you with that which is to be inscribed. But in the first place will your majesty pardon me for asking a question?"

"Ask fifty questions, Master Atcherley. Though we are no oracle we will answer."

"Will your majesty excuse me when I

humbly enquire on what day your majesty purposes setting forth from this place?"

"Eight days from to-morrow; I have some affairs to settle in the interim."

"Precisely, your majesty, as has been anticipated," said Atcherley. "On that day your majesty's enemies will be in waiting."

"Will they?" cried Charles; "a very great inducement to set out, upon our royal honour. What! the dragon is in our path on that particular day, is he, Master Atcherley."

"Your majesty he is," said Atcherley: "but if your majesty would be ruled by me, we should pass his den while the monster slumbers, and strangle him in its darkness."

"You would have me alter my day of departure?"

"Your majesty, I would."

"We will do it then," said Charles. "To arrive at our journey's end with whole bones is better than carrying something along with it

which we did not bargain for—namely, an accident. You shall be our pioneer, Master Atcherley. On what day does the oracle decree I should set forth.”

“ To-morrow, your majesty ; a few hours after dusk if you please. I will deliver these foes bound into your majesty’s hand. The fetters are forged, and I only wait your majesty’s word to put them on.”

“ To-morrow then it shall be. We have no occasion to alter our road ?”

“ None, your majesty,” said Atcherley. “ All which I have to request of your majesty is that you would direct your guards to accompany you.”

“ They shall—they shall, Master Atcherley ; man and horse, belt and blade, petronel and bandolier. But we can settle all these preliminaries to our tragi-comedy after you have given me the names of the conspirators. I am eager as a child to get hold of them. Now for the first ! my pen is ready.”

"Your majesty, these conspirators are divided into two classes; superior and subordinate. I am familiar with the names and designs of both divisions of them. Your majesty of course desires the former to take precedence."

"Aye, in every thing!" said the king with a grim smile.

"First then I am grieved to mention to your majesty the name of the Duke of Monmouth."

The king dropped his pen, and looked with a frown of penetration at Atcherley.

"Monmouth!" he exclaimed.

"Monmouth, your majesty," said Atcherley, quietly.

"Humph!—art sure? are you sure of it?"

"Perfectly, your majesty."

"Well—well; let us hear the remainder—Go on, Atcherley."

"I am sorry to be compelled to mention to your majesty the name of Lord William Russell."

"After Monmouth's name, this passes: go on."

"Thirdly, I must give you the name of the Earl of Essex."

"The traitor! proceed."

"Lord Howard."

"A competitor for the axe! Away with him—Again."

"Algernon Sidney, son of the Earl of Leicester."

"Son of the Devil! the block shall father him. Any more, Master Atcherley?"

"Sixthly and finally of our superior circle, John Hampden."

"The very name stinks of treason. Go on—it is tacked to the rest."

"These, your majesty, are the leaders of the conspiracy; though they are independent of the plot the contrivers of which I must now enufnerate. I acquit the preceding persons of this present scheme of assassination. Those

whom I am now about to mention are deliberate villains, the majority of them low wretches who will be satisfied with nothing short of blood; and royal—your majesty will pardon me.”

“I do,” said the king laconically. “Now for this subordinate Pandemonium or Chamber of Devils.”

“I wish your majesty distinctly to understand,” continued Atcherley, “that these are all connected with the design upon your majesty’s life which has now brought me here. I solicit your majesty’s most gracious attention. First among these gentlemen, among whom I have of course mixed with the objects which your majesty will perceive, is Oliver Rockingham, a zealous and restless republican, content with nothing short of a total overthrow of the government, and one of the most intent upon your royal life. He will be the first that I shall deliver into your majesty’s hand.”

"We thank you for the loan, Master Atcherley. Lend him to me—I will return him to you only shorter by the head. Proceed."

"The next," resumed Atcherley, "is an individual whom only my sincere attachment to your majesty's person could tempt me to give up. In mentioning him to your majesty, be assured, impelled by that consideration before which I have felt—irresistibly felt—all others must give way, I compromise the safety of a truly attached friend. It has taken much—very much—to work me up to this. Your majesty is witness that it is only at the eleventh hour I implicate him in the fatal business. I have wasted my nights and days in endeavours to turn him from his path, but my endeavours, which were often repulsed but still continued unremitting, have been in vain. My struggle has not been the less deep because it has been silent; and even with my foot upon the threshold of your majesty's palace I was tempted to turn back and leave you in ignorance of your danger. But

the die is cast. I sacrifice my friend on the altar of my duty!"

As he spoke, Atcherley dashed his hand quickly over his eyes, seeking to hide the tear which he had called up in them.

A pause ensued, broken only by a deep-drawn sigh from the heart of Atcherley.

"We pity you," said the king quietly; "but you yourself acknowledge the treason of your friend. Give us his name: you have proved yourself a worthy man, and a most true friend to us."

"His name, your majesty, is Roland Torrington, Sir Roland Torrington I should call him: his brother fell by the hands of thieves in the streets of London, and with all his unfortunate principles aggravated by his recent acquisition of wealth and influence he has stepped into the vacant baronetcy. He has a most extensive influence in Derbyshire; his tenantry are celebrated for the demoralising spirit of their political views, and he is himself

ready to give everything up for his darling republic."

As the king bent down to put Roland's name upon the fatal list, the inexpressible smile with which Atcherley witnessed the movement only caught his own eye in the mirror opposite.

"So much for these gentlemen," said Charles, "they fall into the pit they have dug for another. Our ministry shall be made acquainted with these fearful matters."

"Pardon me, your majesty," said Atcherley, "secrecy—perfect secrecy is indispensable at the present moment: no suspicion must go forth; the result might be fatal and reverse our plans. I understand that your majesty will set out to-morrow: time so your journey that you may arrive about nine in the evening at the spot I set down in this:" as he spoke Atcherley produced a sealed paper. "Allow me to beg your majesty to let no eye rest upon this paper except your own: be pleased also not to

open it until you give the directions for your route. Let no man observe it guides you in the road you take. Permit your majesty's carriage to follow you: *that* will be the object of attack. Disguised and on horseback you can precede it some distance, and you will consequently be in safety. Your majesty's Guards will as usual surround the carriage. Or, what will be better still, order them to follow it at some little distance, and let the carriage be accompanied by only the usual attendants. This will be the consequence of this arrangement. Your majesty will pass unnoticed and unsuspected, taken, begging your majesty's pardon, for an *avant courier*. The conspirators will dart upon the carriage, make an attack upon those that accompany it, be engaged in the combat when the troopers come up, and will be arrested to a man. I wish to place *all* in your majesty's hands, and it is therefore expedient that the plot work to the *latest* moment."

“ Good advice and worthy the following. But all this loyal interest and unusual care of our person, demands compensation—and no trifling, everyday compensation. We have said your name would grace the addition of Sir:—stay! this friend—*ci-devant* friend of your’s, Mr. Atcherley—for he little deserves that he should be styled such now—this late friend of yours is by title a baronet: we did not mistake, did we, Mr. Atcherley?”

“ He who *was* my friend,” said Atcherley with solemnity; “ is now Sir Roland Torrington.”

“ Ah ! Torrington — Torrington,” echoed his majesty, “ the name though not the title had escaped me. You are aware that he forfeits both title and estate for this bloody and audacious treason, of which, as you tell us, he is so obstinate an abettor. ’Twere meet indeed ~~that~~ such disaffected desperadoes should be allowed edge-tools ; things which at will can be turned to our prejudice. We give

not knives to madmen, Mr. Atcherley, nor will we give power to those who know not how to use it."

"Your majesty, indeed," answered Atcherley, "instead of surrounding your throne with reeds, or such things perchance as might turn to spears, would perhaps do best in planting those good stout oaken staves around your majesty, upon which dependence can be placed in the hour of need. They may cut but a bad figure by the side of our willow wands: but in the time of danger they will neither bend, break, nor pierce. But your majesty must permit me to withdraw. I have trespassed already too much upon your majesty's time. Shall I have the honour of repeating the mode which your majesty has adopted of baffling the vipers which are lying in your majesty's path?"

"No occasion for it, my trusty Achates," answered the king. "Perhaps it may be better that we now part. A king's house is better

furnished with eyes and ears, than furniture of a more useful description. We will solicit your pardon then, until we again see each other to-morrow."

"When I hope," said Atcherley, "to rend the net and put the tattered meshes into your majesty's hand."

"The fish hooked by the gills in the net—eh, Master Atcherley?" said the king.

"The present would but be of small value without, so please your majesty. We will tell them they have mistaken their stream and put them, shorter by the head, into a better one."

"Piquantly grilled," added the king, "a choice dish for the devil's table. He must thank us for the present. Ha, ha, ha! Speaking of the latter personage puts you in mind of your allegiance to your lawful monarch, does it Master Atcherley? You wish to reflect the countenance of your patron by donning his dingy livery again."

The King was referring to Atcherley's mantle, in which he was again enveloping himself, and which rivalled the hue of the night itself. The latter took the not altogether pleasing allusion with the best grace, smiled at His Majesty's conceit, and prepared to depart. The King deliberately rose, waved his hand gracefully to his visitor, and retired towards the inner door. With a reverential obeisance Atcherley silently withdrew, and was conducted out of the palace with the same quiet formality with which he entered it. The staircase was descended, the services of the attendant that he had found in the hall were put again in requisition, the hall was traversed, the door unclosed; and Atcherley once more found himself in the open air, veiled carefully from observation, and ready to return to the place from which he had set out.

CHAPTER VI.

"What childish frolic is this, Signor Don Louis, or what powerful cause has moved you to come in this manner, and this dress, so little becoming your quality?"

Don Quixote. Vol. 1, page 317.

"By this they found that the person, who seemed to be a peasant, was, in reality, a woman, and a delicate one, nay, the handsomest that two of the three had ever beheld with their eyes."

The same. Vol. 1, page 180.

WE must now return to the Rye House, where the conspirators, little imagining their purposes were betrayed by one upon whom they looked as the most sagacious and

trustworthy in their number, and little anticipating that their schemes were about to be frustrated by His Majesty's recent change of determination, were busied in arranging and maturing the plans which they fully expected were about to crown their hopes with success.

It was not difficult for Atcherley, who, as we have seen, had his own views in so doing, to leave the Rye House for a time. The whole party assembled there had of course little or no employment during the day; and it was after lounging about for some hours, that he resolved, as he said, to pass the time, which hung on his hands, and assist his friend Rockingham's self-imposed and arduous duty with his own industry and intelligence, to follow him, and endeavour to join him at Newmarket or encounter him on his return.

As will be gathered, Atcherley had been for some time known by the King, and from time to time had given hints of what was agitating against his government.

About ten o'clock on the following morning Rockingham arrived at the Rye House, having obtained, as he fancied, all the intelligence for which he had been seeking. Directly the first greetings were over, at Atcherley's desire a council was called of all the conspirators. The great parlour was named as the scene of consultation, and Rumbald was requested to desire the attendance of Roland and Horace. The latter were without the house when Rockingham arrived, and had not as yet seen him.

In the mean time Atcherley was conversing with Rockingham on the news which the latter had been able to pick up. Anxious to know what had induced his friend to trust with secrets of so much importance a youth of such a description as Horace Belford, he was preparing to put some questions on the subject, in order to elicit the reasons for apparently so incautious and unaccountable a step.

"So, Master Rockingham, we are indebted to you for a new confederate," said he. "In our situation every new adherent is a cast in our favour: it is not only at the first that a display of numbers would be requisite, but in the matters which must afterwards arise. Half a dozen hands could bring about our principal end, but the consequences must be backed with numbers. I have seen our new recruit."

"Hast thou, Master Atcherley; then I hope thou approvest of him."

"I could not do otherwise," returned Atcherley, "when he was recommended by so honest and sagacious a friend as Master Oliver Rockingham. He is a brisk person, and by and by may prove of service. At present we must commit the execution of our designs to older and, what is scarcely less necessary, stouter persons."

"Thou must strangely have mistaken his looks, my dear friend," answered Rockingham.

"We have not many in our fraternity, saving myself, Master Rumbald, and one or two others, who are older. And as for being stalwart—I have seen his stoutness proven on more occasions than one. He has before this been engaged in designs which should and do warrant to us his present fidelity. He is bold, stout and resolute: not apt perhaps to be distinguished in council, but one who can well acquit himself where steel is at work and shot flying. I no sooner cast eyes on him and became acquainted with his name and prospects, than I saw he would prove of substantial utility to us and all we meditate. I charged him with that letter to thee for a double purpose—that of informing thee of what it was at the time necessary thou should'st know, and giving thee an opportunity of approving my choice. Be assured his opinions run to the very extreme:—moreover he is a Puritan."

"A Puritan!" echoed Atcherley in genuine astonishment.

"I do not see," answered Rockingham with some displeasure, "that the matter is so very surprising. Is he any the worse for cleaving to the opinions of a godly yet persecuted body."

"My dear sir," said Atcherley, "not in the least so; but are you sure he has a proper claim to the title?"

"Undoubtedly — undoubtedly," returned Rockingham. "I know his family too well for me to suppose I am deceived. I am not altogether one to be over-reached in such matters. His brother is one of the most upright men with whom I am acquainted; one upon whom the influences of grace have descended in no common measure. He is an Israelite, indeed, in whom there is no guile; grave in discourse, blameless in conduct, clear in principle. His brother partakes greatly of his laudable silence and gravity. Thou obtain'st but little from him during your journey hither, I will be the warrant. I directed him how and where to join thee; for it was material that he

should come in thine and Roland's company, and with this particular spot he was by no means acquainted. Speaking of Roland, friend Atcherley; he is here? I long to see him."

"Sir Roland Torrington is here, my dear sir," answered Atcherley, "and I cannot now help breaking in upon our argument by congratulating you upon the wonderfully amended—nay, brilliant prospects of your son-in-law elect."

"Aye, yes: Sir Roland Torrington," answered Rockingham impatiently. "His good fortune in that respect—good he may think it, and good it is, in a mere temporal point of view—cannot much elate me. So as he proves himself what I hope and look for in this present business, it is of little moment to me what he may be otherwise: these baubles turn the head, Master Atcherley, and I am in some measure sorry for their having fallen into his

possession. They are the mere vanities of the sinful world in which we live—”

“But consider,” interrupted Atcherley, “my dear Master Rockingham, what infinite consequence they will prove towards and how much they will forward our enterprise. We want but wealth and high station, Master Rockingham, to break the superstructure which has been raised over our heads. We lacked both; but we have both. You heard, probably, of Sir Reginald’s singular murder: the business was at the time, and still remains, a matter of the most profound mystery.”

“Fearful was that murder indeed, my friend,” replied Rockingham. “It was as a warning to this sinful, heedless, and over worldly generation. Thou did’st not become aware what brought Sir Reginald up to London?”

“Heaven knows what induced the fatal journey!” returned Atcherley with a sigh. “It seems as if his destiny hurried him on to meet his de-

struction. I have regretted him much—much Master Rockingham—for there was that about him which pleased on close acquaintance. He was always particularly kind to me.”

“I cannot say,” said Rockingham, “that I was altogether attracted towards him. He on one occasion seemed desirous of making my daughter lady of his heart and estate; but she seemed averse to the match, and I was then so closely occupied with framing our present designs—with seeking means of bringing my speculations to bear—that I paid the matter but small attention. Besides wealth and dignity never were, and never will be, my objects. But you had some intelligence to communicate on my return—important intelligence—to our brethren in council. It concerns our present design; the hewing away our principal obstruction. Call our people together, and let us hear to what it relates.”

“With that you shall soon be made acquainted,” returned Atcherley; “and there is

time enough and to spare for the consequent preparations. Roland—Sir Roland, I should say; but we have been friends so long I lose the proper compliment—Sir Roland and Master Horace Belford must be made acquainted with our newly called council."

"Master Horace Belford!" echoed Rockingham; "I know not the name: perhaps a party introduced by thee, friend Atcherley, to the confederation: if such we rely upon him and he is welcome."

"You know not the name, Master Rockingham," repeated Atcherley, "you surprise me! Have you so soon forgotten your Puritan *protégé*—to speak a little clearer, your *quondam* messenger; the person whom I had the honour of conducting hither?"

"What can you mean?" said Rockingham: "the person to whom I entrusted my letter—the person whom I recommended to thee, did not bear this name."

"He bears it now at all events," said At-

cherley. "Your description of him is certainly somewhat different to that which I should have given. Silence and solidity seem not altogether his characteristics. Perhaps," continued he, recollecting himself, "your letter will assist in unravelling the mystery. He certainly duly presented it, and gave a good account of himself, and the letter is incontestibly of your penning. You will know your writing at a glance: there is no room to suspect a forgery."

Saying this, Atcherley produced the letter. Rockingham took it from his hand, carefully perused it, turned it over to look at the superscription, and paused a moment in deep consideration."

"This is evidently the same letter I wrote to thee; but the name is strange to me, and the party thou sayest differeth greatly from what hath been said of him herein. The presence of the man himself can alone resolve the mystery. Let him be brought in! I should

suspect treachery but that I know no one after betraying our councils would venture to trust himself so fearlessly among us."

"Hum—I do not exactly coincide with you, my dear Master Rockingham, in your last observation," said Atcherley drily. "But whether that would or would not be the case, the fellow must be aware that on our comparing notes the imposition would be detected—that the murder would be out. But hush! I hear voices outside: one is Roland's. Rumbald has I dare say summoned Roland and this young man to our consultation. We shall soon know how the land lies."

As he spoke the door opened, and Rumbald, Roland and Horace Belford entered the room. Roland quickly advanced to take Rockingham's hand, but Horace Belford, the instant he saw Rockingham, coloured highly, seemed much disturbed with fear and surprise, and quickly glided into the darkest part of the apartment.

"So, Roland, thou art come to greet me," said Rockingham; "thou art dearly welcome, my brave boy. May thy progress in the great—the mighty cause be such as will bring triumph to my heart."

"Amen!" was uttered by all.

"My regard for thee seemeth to be doubled since I see thee in this house and in this good company. Thou art indeed now one of *us*, and bound to *me* by ties stronger than any this vain world can boast. Where is this person whom we desired to see? A glance will satisfy me?"

"Do you mean our fellow traveller, sir?" enquired Roland, "there he stands. I have seen little or nothing of him since our arrival here. Somehow or other he seems to have kept out of my way, which I take very unkindly and I tell him so. He has bestowed more of his company on you and Mistress Rumbald," continued Roland, addressing Rum-

bald, "than his old acquaintances. I happened to light on him this morning out of doors, and at the desire of Master Rumbald brought him hither to be present at the consultation which I hear is to take place."

Atcherley stood silent. His attitude was negligent and easy, and there was a singular smile on his lip that at another time would have puzzled an observer.

"You brought him now at Master Rumbald's desire, and conducted him to this house at mine," said Rockingham. "Let us see him; his change of name wants explanation."

Rumbald stood back at these words, and all fixed their eyes on Horace Belford. He was evidently greatly disconcerted at their steady gaze.

"Why, gentlemen, here is what may turn out a dangerous mistake!" said Rockingham. "This is not the man I recommended to you.

This affair must be instantly explained. Please you, young man, to step out in the light and account for this very strange and suspicious imposition."

Horace Belford certainly showed no inclination to obey Rockingham. His silence increased the suspicions which were already gathering in Rockingham's mind.

"The youth will not answer," said Rockingham; "this business must be sifted to the bottom! We have fortunately the principal party in our power: he has not had any communication with any stranger since he lighted on Master Atcherley and Sir Roland Torrington?"

"He has not," said Rumbald, "indeed he has not, I believe, stirred out of the house since he came to it."

"As this young person," continued Rockingham, "will not do as we desire him and advance into the light, you must be pleased, gentlemen, to bring him forward. I must question him, I see, particularly."

With this direction, Master Rumbald laid his hand on Horace's arm, and brought him very reluctantly forward.

The moment he stood in a better light, Rockingham started, stared, and passed his hand over his eyes, as if doubting the reality of what he saw.

"Is it possible?" he exclaimed in astonishment. "Do my eyes really deceive me, or am I witnessing the truth? Good God! Julia, do I see thee here, or am I deluded with some machination of Satan."

Roland started at Julia's name, clapped his hand against his forehead, and fixed an eager glance upon the face of the suspected party. There was no room for doubt; for with her eyes fixed on the ground, her cheeks mantling with blushes, and her head averted, Julia Rockingham stood confest.

Atcherley's glance passed quickly from Roland's face to that of his disguised mistress. It was with a cunning smile that his eyes next

sought the astonished countenance of Oliver Rockingham.

"This is a goodly piece of work!" cried Rockingham, rousing himself from his temporary abstraction. "I cannot put my astonishment in words. And so this is your journey, mistress, to your aunt's house, is it? She has certainly escaped the scandal of having admitted you into it, though I am to bear the shame of having seen you thus."

"What could have made me so blind!" cried Roland. "Some vague thoughts of this have flitted across my mind; but somehow I could not put my surmises into shape. I must have been possessed! infatuated! dreaming! As this has escaped *me*," he said, turning to Atcherley, "there is very good excuse for your having never discovered it."

"Why, yes, the disguise is ingenious," said Atcherley, "or hard it would indeed have been to baffle the quick eye of a lover. But, Master Rockingham, you see that the case

stands thus, lamentable as you may think it, and I am partly glad it has turned out no worse."

"Our counsels are safe," said Rockingham. "I know what you mean. Master Rumbald, be so kind as to keep us private for a minute or two: 'twere not meet this disgrace met the eyes of any save those principally concerned."

"I take the hint, Master Rockingham," said Rumbald, "and withdraw. No one shall come in here till you please; but be speedy in whatever you do, for we are all naturally impatient for Master Atcherley to lay open his intelligence."

Rumbald accordingly withdrew, and left the apartment to Rockingham, Roland, Atcherley and the *ci-devant* Horace Belford.

"We are now alone," said Rockingham, when the door closed behind Rumbald; "and thou, my giddy mistress, need not fear the scrutiny of strange eyes. Tell us in the devil's name, since thou hast so much in thee of him,

what brought thee here, and what induced thee to put thyself in this strange and shameful attire! Thou hast no chance of pardon from me but by a full confession. I am happy—happy indeed—that no one penetrated thine horrible disguise till I detected thee. Speak; let us hear thee vindicate thyself; if vindicate thyself thou canst. Thou wilt attempt to do it, I know. I know thy impudence, and now, to my cost, know more of it than ever.”

Julia cast her cloak around her, and then, with many tears and sobs, threw herself at her father's feet. Roland stepped hastily forward and would have raised her, but he was prevented by her father.

“No!” said he, “to find her way to my heart she must explain her conduct and do it thoroughly, and the most appropriate attitude of penitence is kneeling. I must hear her clear up all, or I swear that I will have nothing to do with her in future.”

Julia raised her eyes to her father's face, and

caught his hand. At first he seemed disposed to withdraw it, but at last he found it difficult to avoid abandoning it to her.

“ I know, sir,” said she, “ you cannot avoid putting a very unfavourable interpretation on my present appearance and my seeming lightness of behaviour, but before you condemn me I know you will listen to the vindication I have to offer. I hope, sir, I shall never disgrace the name I bear—it is your name—it is my mother’s. You shall be convinced I have had deep reasons for putting myself in this improper disguise: but with all I have to advance in my defence, I am more ashamed of my obstinacy and folly than all that you could say, much as I should bow to it, would make me.”

“ Thou sayest thou hast something to advance in thy defence,” said Rockingham, “ deep reasons for this disgraceful disguise; I await them.”

“ Pardon me, sir,” said Julia, “ giving you

them just now. You shall know all—all that I have done and all my thoughts; but allow us to be alone before you insist upon my telling you. Be patient, my dear—my dearest father, but for a very little while, and you shall have all my heart laid open to you. I—I am ashamed to speak of my imprudence before—before the present company, inclined as I know they would be to place the most favourable construction upon what was at least done with no bad intention.”

“Ashamed to speak of thine imprudence before the present company?” repeated Rockingham. “Roland will I am sure be too ready to forgive thee, since, as I suspect, he was at the bottom of this mischief—nay, don’t be frightened, Roland! I do not suspect thee of conniving at the giddy child’s disguising herself in this way, but I can see thou wert the cause of it. Her dread of Sir Roland’s listening to her story, I dare to say has swallowed up all her fear of Master Atcherley’s con-

structions on her conduct, though she might have feared that he would have taken a less lenient view of it. But both of you," continued he, turning to Roland and Atcherley, "look as if you could forgive her."

"Forgive her!" cried Roland. "I bless her for her interest in me!"

"My forgiveness can never be given," said Atcherley, "for Miss Julia Rockingham can never do anything that I could forgive. Perhaps as she has so readily offered an explanation, she will satisfy us who her attendant, Henry Morton, is."

Roland eagerly looked to Julia for an answer. Perhaps she observed the glance, or at least perhaps she *felt* the direction her lover's eyes had taken, for she seemed anxious to clear away all doubt."

"You could not recognise," said she, with downcast eyes, "my maid Cecilia Capel, for I think that you have never seen her except in her present unfortunate dress."

“Hah!” cried Rockingham, “this is altogether a very pretty and maidenly piece of business! Mistress and maid masquerading through the country! I hope soon to commit thee into the hands of one who will look sharply after thee. Depend on it this will be the last of thy frolica. Well, on consideration, I think it will be best to hear what thou hast to say for thyself in private. I shall save thee much confusion I know, and therefore I shall get my story the clearer. Come, mistress, I must inflict my society upon you till we reach Mrs. Rumbald’s apartment. There shalt thou be bestowed for the present. I have not time at the present moment to listen to thy tale; for weighty matters engross me. Master Atcherley, wilt thou inform our friend Rumbald that this room is now at liberty and that I shall return immediately. Gather our brethren together, and let us hear what thou hast to tell us. Roland, look not so grave at my carrying off this silly quean, for I will soon retail the

particulars of her vindication to thy private ear. Gather our people together, for I will instantly return."

With these words Rockingham, leading his daughter, who seemed so abashed that all she could do was to steal a furtive glance at her lover just before she left the room, quitted Roland and Atcherley's presence, and ascended the staircase to Mrs. Rumbald's private sitting-room.

Roland, much chagrined that his mistress should thus be carried away when he had obtained the greatest proof of her unhesitating fondness, quickly paced the apartment and seemed disposed to preserve a moody silence. Atcherley was as easy as ever, and, humming an air then in vogue, strolled carelessly to the latticed window.

CHAPTER VII.

*“ King. Is there no exorcist
Beguiles the truer office of mine eyes !
Is’t real, that I see !”*

All’s well that ends well. Act 5. Scene 3.

*“ Buckingham. Lo you, my lord,
The net has fallen upon me ; I shall perish
Under device and practice.”*

Henry VIII. Act 1. Scene 1.

MASTER OLIVER ROCKINGHAM having transferred his truant daughter to the care of Mrs. Rumbald, returned to the great parlour, where, at Atcherley’s invitation, Rumbald and the rest of the conspirators had already assembled.

Rockingham had requested Mrs. Rumbald to

furnish Julia with one of her own dresses, and to order Cecilia Capel, the late Henry Morton, into the care of the oldest of her two female servants, with a charge to furnish her with the garments of her true sex.

All gathered around the table after a careful examination had satisfied them that there were no listeners. Atcherley was unanimously called to the principal seat, in consequence and in expectation of the intelligence which he had to lay before them.

There was perfect silence when he commenced. He spoke at some length, enumerating the preparations which had been already made, and dwelling on the names and the characters of the members of the confederation. At last he touched upon that which he intended to communicate, and which, as it happened, was the truth.

“Master Oliver Rockingham,” said he, “has brought a confirmation of that which has all along influenced our deliberations. King

Charles, he has declared, intends to set out eight days from this; thereby giving us full time for every preparation. But I have to inform you, gentlemen, that His Majesty, most contrary to expectation, sets out this very evening, and passes this house about nine o'clock. My authority is undoubted, though I am not at liberty to disclose it. But to the truth—the whole truth of what I have stated, I will pledge my honour.”

This intelligence—unexpected as it was—created an instantaneous sensation. There was that in Atcherley's look and tone which *convinced* the assembly that he spoke the truth. His means of gaining intelligence though mysterious were known to be sure; besides every body knew that he could have no object in deceiving them. There was a pause, during which each person present appeared struck dumb with surprise.

The consequent reaction displayed itself in every one present starting from his seat and

fixing eager eyes upon those of his neighbour. Rockingham was the first to break the silence.

"Why stand ye thus, my brethren?" cried he. "Charles comes to-night;—so much the better! the sacrifice is eight days sooner than it was appointed, and that is all. Gentlemen, we must interdict all idle canvassing of the matter—it is unnecessary and a waste of time. It behoves us now to instantly prepare ourselves. If we miss on this occasion, we lose all!"

"Why should we miss," said Rumbald. "His coming to-night can make no difference to us: our swords are as sharp and our hearts are as steady as they would be months to come. We only send the tyrant eight days sooner before that Great Tribunal where he must answer for his enormities. The root is evil—why should we delay to tear it up?"

These words seemed to excite an instant and fierce vivacity in those who were but a

moment previous lost in abstraction. All the desperate hardihood necessary for their daring enterprise seemed to spring up within them at the moment when it was required. It was the torch applied to the train, firing that which for so long a time had lain dormant into instantaneous explosion.

“Aye, tyrant—tyrant!” echoed on all sides “drunk with the blood of the wise and good—with the blood of those who combat for Zion ’gainst Satan and the woman of Babylon, and those who struggle for their earthly freedom with the tyrants of the earth. Heaven abides him no longer! Fate has torn out the leaves which yet remained in the blood-stained book of his life!”

“Peace! peace! my brethren,” cried Rockingham, “This disclosure hath called forth all that is necessary for our success, but let us make surety doubly sure, and sift and arrange all that bears the nearest or remotest relation to our grand design. Let our enterprise be a

system perfectly adjusted in all its details, approved by the most icy caution, carefully weighed in the balance of probability: let it be put together with the nicety of the most splendid machine, and let it crush in the security of perfection !”

Rockingham’s words appeared to have a very useful effect upon the company. They restrained the previous outbreak and composedly reseated themselves at the table.

“To do any thing well,” said Rockingham, after allowing sufficient time for silence to be restored and the meeting to calm, “is to do it deliberately. We have just heard that the deed which we expected to be called upon to do some little time to come, must be done to night. If anything the change in our proceedings is for the better. Delays damp the ardour of resolve. Master William Atcherley, I must put a question to thee. At what hour did’st thou say we were to expect our object ?”

“At nine o’clock,” returned Atcherley,

"the King, according to the information I contrived to obtain at the palace, passes this house."

"Does he travel lightly," enquired Rockingham, "or with his Guards?"

"With his usual attendants," returned Atcherley, "but without an escort. We can make ourselves masters of his carriage, and after routing his servants dispatch him in it."

"Dispatch!" muttered Roland, starting and looking suddenly up. Fortunately his emotion was not observed by his companions, or their construction upon his behaviour might not have been of the best kind. It will not appear strange that Roland's eyes were now for the first time opened to the design of the conspirators, when the cautious steps by which he had been led into the confederation by Rockingham and Atcherley, and the few and scattered hints which had been given him by the latter respecting the purpose of the plotters, are called to remembrance. He very well

knew that a design was meditating against Charles, but he concluded that as his friend Atcherley was acquainted with it, and as he considered him the personification of all that was great and honourable, that it merely pointed against the King's sovereignty, and that in waylaying him the only object was the getting him into their power. Atcherley had been cautious enough not only not to enlighten him on the subject himself, but to prevent others from doing so. Roland, too, was more inclined than he could approve of himself, to couple Julia with his privacy to the conspiracy. He could thoroughly acquit himself, however, of having joined the plotters solely through selfish motives. His conviction of the necessity of a change, of the tyranny of the government, of the inevitable consequences attendant upon the succession of James, Duke of York, as a Popish monarch—his certainty that men like Monmouth, Hampden, Sidney, and Russell, would not have acceded to and

even first framed the confederation unless the motives that guided them were upright, their objects great and just, and the means by which they sought to bring about their objects honourable and unequivocal; this conviction and certainty we say was strong as he or any one could have wished it to be; and he was so well persuaded that the whole was a struggle for religion and liberty against Popery and misgovernment, that he did not even think it necessary to analyse his motives, or examine how far his private feelings might be concerned in what he thus pronounced so self-evident as to need no looking into. Of course he had no means of knowing that the present desperate enterprise was one grafted upon the original, plot, and that it was unauthorised by and unknown to the chief conspirators.

His resolution was taken in a moment. To hesitate now was out of the question: but he determined to take no forward part in the design against the King's life, and if possible to convert the

mastership of His Majesty's person into but a temporary detention of him.

"'Tis well so far," said Rockingham, after a moment's pause upon Atcherley's last observation. "What is the hour now?"

"One, by the clock in the hall," answered Rumbald.

"We have, therefore," continued Rockingham, "many hours good. These must be spent in preparing our arms and sending out scouts. I believe we need debate no longer: every one present is convinced that the life of Charles Stuart is inconsistent with liberty. His assassination will be the signal for a general rise, and our upper council will be freed from the most onerous part of the duty. Future proceedings will be the subject of future councils. Our determination for this day is taken. Ye think in this matter perfectly as I?"

"All—all—all," was echoed round the table.

"Now then to prepare ourselves!" exclaimed Rockingham.

At these words there was an immediate bustle: all rose, some quitted the room, some took down rapiers, pistols and firelocks from the walls, examining their condition; and others betook themselves to their small magazine, where ammunition, buff coats, helmets, breast and back plates, arms and bandoliers awaited them.

The remainder of the day was spent in watching and completing preparations. At seven o'clock a table was laid with refreshments, wine and spirits. Pledging each other in token of everlasting friendship and unity of purpose, the band of conspirators began to prepare their minds for the approaching daring and dangerous enterprise.

When the table was cleared and all the household were assembled, together with Mistress Rumbald, Julia Rockingham, now in her proper dress, and Cecilia Capel, the conspi-

rators, with grave brows and uncovered heads, formed a circle round Ferguson the Independent clergyman, who with the Bible in one hand and a drawn sword in the other, his eyes directed energetically upward, and his countenance kindling with fervour, poured out his whole soul in a long and highly solemn prayer.

Such was the greatness of the general silence, that the slightest movement acquired an extraordinary distinctness. The deep tones of the speaker ceased to echo through the apartment, and bowing his head upon his weapon, a pause of solemn meditation succeeded. All kept their eyes bent humbly on the floor till the clergyman, by slowly raising himself from his inclined position, intimated that the service was concluded.

All was then energy and bustle. Eight had just sounded from the hall. Each conspirator buckled on his breast and back-plate or put on a thick and heavy buff-coat, placing helmet or thick beaver on his head, belting

on his sword and placing his pistols in the broad belt which cinctured his waist. Over all each man threw an ample cloak of uniform colour, and a few of the number concealed dark lanterns under its voluminous folds. Atcherley armed himself with a pair of single-barrelled pistols, and after carefully examining his bright and excellently tempered rapier he deposited it finally in the gilt scabbard.

Rockingham kissed his daughter hurriedly, for their peace had been made, and endeavoured to draw away Roland, who since the service had kept close to Julia's side. At last the voice of Rumbald awakened the lover to his duties. He started up and endeavoured to calm Julia, who clung to him as if he was about to take a last farewell of her.

"Roland!" she cried. "Oh! defend me from the ill that I am sure hangs over me! I feel—I see some terrible danger is approaching. Let all go—let them hazard their lives,

for their hearts are in the service—but do you stay with me! I shall be killed with fear for you. Why needest thou venture thy life in this woeful—this terrible—this desperate enterprise!”

“Because,” cried her father, “it is only by doing his duty in this enterprise he can ever obtain my daughter. Peace, child, peace! He is bound by an oath—a fearful oath—and shall he now retract? Silly girl! will he not return to thee unharmed? Roland—come!”

“I fear—I fear,” sobbed Julia. “Father, why will you not spare him?”

“He cannot, Julia, he cannot,” interrupted Roland; “nor do I wish him. You are to be won by this night’s service, and may I never see your dear face again if I hold back from the condition! I am bound every way and all ways to this night’s duty. I share but a general danger, and I were eternally defamed to hold

for an instant back. Think of this, dear Julia ! think of disgrace."

" Away !" cried Rumbald, advancing ; " do you know what it is you are about. The time is past that we ought to be awaiting him. Master Rockingham, this backwardness is ruin to the cause : Sir Roland, let us not place the worst construction on your delay. Away ! Away if you regard either life or reputation."

Rockingham, with a frown of authority, laid his hand on Roland's arm and drew him away from Julia. As he was drawn from her embrace she uttered a shriek and fell fainting into the arms of Cecilia. Roland, fixing upon her a look in which grief was mingled with unwillingness to leave her, threw his cloak hastily over his shoulder and strode after her father out of the apartment.

They found the rest of the conspirators, Atcherley included, grouped around a few trees which flanked the road, and which threw

sufficient shade to effectually conceal those who trusted to their concealment.

"I can guess at what delayed you," said Atcherley, as they came up. "Many tears I warrant thrown away for as yet little occasion. Let her wait, Roland," he added, in a whisper, "let her wait; perhaps your part of Fate's wheel has yet to grind the dust: time will show."

There was something ominous in the sarcastic tone in which these words were uttered. Roland looked at Atcherley, but had not time to ask what he meant.

"Our watch is cold," said Rumbald in a low tone.

"It is so at present," returned Atcherley; "but we shall be warm enough in a short time. Hark! I think I heard horses."

"No," said Rockingham, "it is the wind rushing through yonder clump of trees."

A pause of some duration ensued, during which nothing was to be heard but the

motion of the leaves and the hum of the distant wind. The sky was full of slowly drifting clouds, and the pale moon was hidden for the present behind a cloud of an extraordinary size.

At length the rumble of distant wheels was borne heavily down with the wind. All started as if they had received an electric shock. A subdued but earnest whispering immediately took place.

"The wind brings us down," said Atcherley, "the first murmur of Fate's chariot wheels. We must secure the goddess."

"Hush!" said Rockingham, "this is but an ill-chosen time for jesting. Gentlemen, look to your arms; the moment approaches to put them to proof. Had not half our number better take advantage of the present darkness and go over to the other side of the road? The attack must be made at once; and the word for engaging shall be, 'the day of reckoning is come!'"

“ A good proposition,” said Rumbald, “ and we will adopt it. I will keep ward upon the other side. Be you the person, Master Rockingham, to give the word : a dozen swords shall leap from the hedge. So ; they are too distant to observe us. To the other side, my brethren ! the moment approaches for you to show yourselves men. At the word, do you all throw off your cloaks and dart upon the carriage. Mind not the grooms, the carriage is your quarry.”

Rumbald, followed by half the conspirators, crept over to the other side of the road, where they were concealed by the shadow of the hedges. The murmur of distant wheels had now heightened into a rattle, and the royal carriage, surrounded by a few horsemen, could be indistinctly discerned advancing along the road.

The ambush now prepared themselves for the attack ; scabbards soon became empty, firelocks were cocked and levelled, and pistols drawn

from the belts in which they had been deposited. Fresh clouds drifted over the moon, and it would have been quite impossible, even had suspicion been awake, to have perceived those who were thus lying in wait for their victims.

The whispers of the band sank into silence; the carriage drove nearer, and the clatter of hoofs was heard close upon the road. Not a hand stirred among the conspirators. At last the rattle of the horses' feet drew close to the ambush, and a cloaked horseman cantered swiftly past. Without looking to the right or left he hastened forwards. This horseman was the King.

"The carriage, you say, the carriage is our object of attack," said Walcot. "Who is that horseman?"

"An outrider merely," said Atcherley quickly. "He gallops forward to show the road; for, strange as it may appear, the carriage goes without light. Be silent and steady;

for see, the King—the King himself is coming !”

The carriage drove up at this instant. It was surrounded by a few horsemen, but not in military dress.

“The day of reckoning is come,” cried Rockingham loudly, and at the word—quick as lightning—the conspirators from both sides rushed out of their concealment.

All instantly became noise and confusion. The King’s attendants, taken wholly by surprise, seemed for the first moment panic-stricken ; but they soon recovered themselves, and reining in their plunging horses, drew their swords and began to lay about them. Balls began to whiz, pistols to crack and steel to clash. In the midst of the confusion voices were heard loudly shouting to the postillions to drive on. These orders were vain, for one of the postillions received a ball in his breast and instantly fell, and the other, entangled with the horses, which being high-spirited

animals began to plunge and rear, lost his saddle and fell under their trampling hoofs.

The combat meantime proceeded with unabating fury. Rockingham and Roland, who fought side by side, after bringing two of the King's men down to the ground, cut their way to the carriage door, and were each endeavouring to open it. Atcherley could not be seen among the plunges of the horses, the shouts of the men, the cries of the attacking party, who were evidently getting the best of it, the clinking of the swords, the clash of armour, the reports of the firelocks and pistols, and the jets of smoke, which, mingling together, rolled over the *melee* and, aided by the darkness, revealed little more than the flashes of the fire-arms and the glimmer of thrusting steel.

Just at this important moment a heavy tramping seemed to shake the earth, and before the hearers—who amid the din and the excitement of the engagement had not before

distinguished it—could exactly make out what caused it, an instant and sweeping rush of cavalry broke like a storm into the crowd, and momentarily separated both the attacked and attacking parties into fragments. The Life Guards had just rode up at the gallop, and their broadswords were to be seen flashing above the heads of the conspirators. It was in the very centre of the fight that the voice of Atcherley was to be heard high above the noise this new accession of force to the King's party induced.

“Ye who love your lives!” he cried, “Soldiers of Liberty! Off to the house! These cavaliers will find it difficult to leap the fences which surround ye. Away!—away and shift each man for himself!”

The din was for a minute redoubled, but Atcherley's happy suggestion was for the most part obeyed. Two-thirds of the conspirators were able to extricate themselves, and, clambering over the hedges, they were soon at the

doors of the Rye House. Those who were not so fortunate were either cut down in the road or made prisoners.

Among the former were Atcherley, Roland, and Rockingham. They rushed into the house, and began instantly to shut up all the doors and windows. The noise without, however, after a momentary cessation seemed to come nearer.

"We shall have them here directly," cried Atcherley; "the windows of this room seem to face the noise. Throw open the shutters, and let us fire a volley upon them."

"Had we not better hold all fast?" said Roland; "these doors will resist them for some time."

"Madness, man!" exclaimed Atcherley, "our only hope is in driving them away. Our defences will not sustain five minutes' siege. Open the windows; they are just below them."

The windows were thrown open, just as a

violent battery was commenced on the doors fronting the road.

"Now then fire on them! fire on them!" cried Rockingham. "The blood-hounds are bringing up irons to force the doors. Away with some of them to the devils that await them!"

"Surrender!" cried a loud voice from without, "or ye are all dead men. They answer not. Batter away, my merry men, this hornet's nest is ours!"

The demand to surrender was answered by the reports of half a dozen firelocks and pistols. The smoke cleared away, and the attack on the doors was renewed.

"We had better commend ourselves to the powers above," said Atcherley smiling. "We shall be smoked out of our hive as sure as powder answers to flash. Hark! they have begun again."

"Down to the hall!" exclaimed Rockingham, "down to the hall! Our doors we cannot

maintain; but we can heartily welcome the first who get in. When the oak gives way we must hold our citadel at the points of our swords and the muzzles of our fire-arms. If we can repulse them for a minute we may escape from the back of the house. Away, men, to the hall!—blood must redden its floor.”

The whole party rushed downstairs, just as a violent blow broke open one of the leaves of the heavy oaken door. Half-a-dozen grim faces were to be seen without. Pistols were presented, and the hall was filled with the rattle of their reports, as well as with clouds of smoke.

The other leaf of the door could not long sustain the incessant hammering from without. It creaked, splintered, cracked, groaned, and finally fell with a frightful crash, bringing all its ringing defences down to the ground along with it.

A number of armed men, in the splendid uniform of the Life Guards, instantly rushed into

the hall and commenced an eager tilt with its few and scattered defenders. An officer of the king's party soon received Roland's rapier in his breast, and Roland's sword-hand was at that moment wounded by a stroke from a soldier's weapon. Resistance became more and more feeble on the side of the party assailed. Three fourths of the hall were already in possession of the soldiers. Atcherley gradually fought his way towards Rockingham and Roland, who now had four antagonists to deal with. Their hearts were cheered at what they deemed this timely help; but Rockingham at this moment received a wound in the shoulder which caused him to stagger back.

"Thus I end our tragedy," cried Atcherley, striking Rockingham on the back of the head with the butt-end of one of his pistols. The blow stunned the party at whom it had been aimed, and he fell heavily to the ground.

Roland had witnessed the blow. He started as if a fiend direct from Hell had risen up

before him and struck him with the Sceptre of the King of Evil: a thunderbolt could not have more completely paralyzed his every faculty. For a moment he lost all his self-possession, and gazing with statue-like astonishment at Atcherley, he helplessly dropped the crimsoned point of his weapon.

“The game is struck,” cried Atcherley, with a smile which might have rivalled that of a devil. “This prostrate wretch is in your power; you can fetter him at your leisure. Seize the other’s weapon, and let his majesty thank me for having delivered two of the most arrant rebels in his dominions into his royal hands.”

Roland’s sword was immediately snatched out of his passive hand: it was an easy task, for he seemed alike incapable of thought or resistance. Two or three of the military raised Rockingham from the ground; and though gradually recovering his consciousness and endeavouring to free himself of the grasp of those who held him, he was soon overpowered

and bound with cords which one of the soldiers drew from his pockets.

Meantime Roland shared a similar fate. Before he had time to recover his recollection his arms were closely pinioned; and a guard-man on each side of him with drawn broadsword, ensured his capture beyond all hope of recovery.

“The traitorous attempt upon the king’s life,” said Atcherley, “has recoiled upon the heads of those who attempted it. This old house is in your power, gentlemen. Remove your prisoners, who I assure you are the heads of the conspiracy. His majesty will acknowledge that I have done him signal service. Affairs call me hence on the instant. I wait upon the king to-morrow at an early hour. With whom you find here, you may do as you please; I commit the finishing of the affair to you.”

Saying these words Atcherley quitted the hall with haste, and ascended the staircase to

an upper room, where he found Mrs. Rumbald, Julia Rockingham, and her attendant Cecilia ; all in the most terrible agitation, and awaiting intelligence of what had occurred below with the greatest impatience.

“ All is lost,” said Atcherley, without waiting to be questioned. “ The house is in the power of the blood-hounds that have tracked us. Mrs. Rumbald, thy husband is prisoner or escaped ; I know not which. No time is to be lost if we wish for escape. Julia, thy father and Roland have been driven from the house ; the soldiers have cut off all communication with the great staircase. In the confusion of the scene I saw Roland and your father hewing their way forward ; but numbers prevailed, they were driven back, and were only able to fight their way from the back of the hall. All hope is over. Hark ! I hear our people still struggling below. One only chance of escape remains. From the next chamber leads a secret passage to the outside of the

house. I and Rumbald are only acquainted with it: my horses can be soon procured. Clear of the house we may find and rejoin your father and Roland. This is no time for ceremony. Julia, will you go with me?"

"Oh where—where is my father?" cried Julia, her hands clasped in agony.

"I trust escaped. Delay not, but let me guide you to him."

"Could Roland leave the house without me?"

"Leave!" echoed Atcherley; "he had no choice. His instant death must have been otherwise certain; you he knew they would spare and treat with respect. But they are without; we can go to them: only for God's sake do not delay."

"My husband is in the power of the blood-thirsty king!" cried Mrs. Rumbald, her eyes streaming with tears. "I will share his fate."

"But *you* have no reason to remain, Julia," urged Atcherley. "Why do you delay to

follow me? Here, take my arm—a moment or two will see us in safety.”

“I cannot—dare not do it,” said Julia firmly, and starting up. “Oh God! Oh God! I cannot—cannot help distrusting you. That distrust brought me here. I feared thee then and fear thee now. By all your hopes of mercy,” she continued, sinking on her knees and catching hold of Atcherley’s cloak, “tell me where they are?”

“Escaped—without; and thou wilt not follow them!”

“No! I will not believe thee,” she cried, starting to her feet. “A hundred swords would not have made Roland leave the house without me: and leave me in thy power, too! Thou art not what thou appearest. I must see Roland and my father before I quit this room.”

“Believe that they are in the power of the bloodhounds who have dogged their footsteps,” cried Mrs. Rumbald. “Believe that they will

be dragged to the scaffold, and that the woe is complete! Why should we fly? whither should we fly?"

"Julia, Julia," cried Atcherley, furiously, "this is worse than madness! Once more, wilt thou accompany me?"

"Leave me—leave me where I am," she answered. "I quit not in *thy* company."

"Then the truth must out—though I have tried to conceal it. Prepare for the worst. Roland is—"

"Oh God!—not dead! Not killed! Do not drive me mad by saying he is killed."

"My blood freezes as I answer—he is killed!"

Julia heard no more. With a loud shriek she swooned away, and was caught as she was falling by Atcherley. Throwing his arm around her waist, and freeing his sword-hand from the folds of his cloak, he darted out of the room, crossed the landing, and entering an opposite chamber touched a spring in the wainscot,

which, flying back, discovered a passage and stairs constructed in the thickness of the wall. The panel through which he fled closed instantly behind him; and his hasty footsteps died away gradually into silence, as he threaded the passage and descended the dark and winding staircase.

CHAPTER VIII.

"What work's, my countrymen, in hand! Where
go you
With bats and clubs! The matter! Speak, I pray
you."

Coriolanus. Act 1. Scene 1.

"Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny."

Julius Caesar. Act 3. Scene 2.

"*Fang.*—A rescue! A rescue!

Hostess.—Good people, bring a rescue or two."

Henry IV. (Second Part.) Act 2. Scene 1.

WE must now turn our attention to Roland Tor-
rington, whom we left in the power of the royal
guard, and about to be conveyed away under a

too easily established charge of high treason. The youthful victim to feeling, impulse and circumstance, was immured within the gloomy precincts of Newgate. This Atcherley knew, and that he was about to be removed, previous to trial and (calculating reasonably) execution, to the Tower of London.

It was on a day about this time that a strong detachment of the King's Life Guards was marched to the great gate of the gloomy metropolitan prison. It was understood by the crowd which gradually gathered about the troopers and before the building, that two or perhaps more of the conspirators were about to be removed at the same time. But the intentions of the authorities were different. Rockingham and several others of the Rye House party who were located in the same place of confinement, were reserved for trial at another and perhaps a fitter season. Roland as a baronet, moreover, was the only one of the number honoured (an honour that he would

doubtless have gladly dispensed with) with a lodging in the Tower: and he was now to be conveyed alone to that dark and blood-stained structure, which has witnessed so much misery, injustice and tyranny.

A full half-hour elapsed before the bustle about the gate and the eager closing together of the people announced that the prisoner was coming. Little could be seen of the portal from which he was to issue, owing to the close order in which the soldiers were drawn up, the momentarily increasing and wavy crowd, and the huge side of the lumbering carriage, which with its four horses was destined to convey the person in custody to his next place of confinement. At length the steps were heard to be rattled down—the windows of the houses opposite and on each side of the prison at that moment flew open, and the hatless and capless heads of the curious neighbours were eagerly thrust out, to catch, if possible, a sight of the unfortunate captive. A whisper ran through the swaying

crowd, while the gaolers stood on each side of the carriage door, and the troopers backed and pranced their horses to make the confused and thickening assemblage give way.

A pause of a moment or two then ensued and presently half a dozen persons successively emerged from the portal, and last of all the prisoner, guarded before, on each side and behind by a tall and martial-looking halberdier. Without looking either to the right or left, and apparently anxious to escape all notice, Roland Torrington stepped hastily into the carriage, and the glasses were immediately put up by the officers who were to ride with him.

At the word of command the horse-soldiers wheeled into marching order, and the postillions put their horses in motion. The cavalcade began to move forward at a trotting pace; but the crowd was so thick that it was obliged to fall off into a walk. The orders of the military to clear the way, were as loud and frequent as they were imperative.

The crowd appeared to take these commands, so despotically urged, in high dudgeon—and many black and evil-boding looks were exchanged between those belonging to the procession and the multitude. Political feeling at that time ran high; and, all things considered, it was as dangerous as injudicious a proceeding to attempt to remove prisoners who had the popular current in their favour, in so open and careless a manner. The river was the usual means of transport between the various metropolitan prisons and the Tower; and what induced the present deviation from usage it were perhaps useless and tedious to attempt to trace. At the top of the street the crowd was augmented by a collection of some of the lowest characters that were to be found in the holes and corners of the metropolis.

It was easy to be seen the proceedings of the government excited in the crowd feelings as active as they were hostile. The great bulk of the people were at that time greatly

incensed. Setting aside the shocks which liberty had received, all did not merely think, but were thoroughly and entirely convinced that the church and their Protestant religion were in danger. That the immediate successor to the crown was a Papist was enough of itself to warrant the belief, and though it was artfully propagated that the design of the Rye House conspirators was to kill the king, and consequently lay open the succession to the obnoxious Duke of York, the people were persuaded that the contrary was the truth ; that the chief design was the setting aside his title, and raising the Duke of Monmouth to the dignity which it was thought dangerous and an outraging of religion for the king's brother, with the religious principles which he openly professed, to fill.

It is well known that the Duke of Monmouth was highly popular, and it is very natural that men arming in his cause and in the name

of liberty, religion, and the laws, should be looked upon as martyrs when brought out for a trial which every one was persuaded would terminate in their sacrifice to the Moloch of Popery and despotism.

The ferment of the populace was gradually but surely rising, like the ocean when awakening from its sullen state of repose to the fury of the tempest. The soldiers began to be more uncereemonious, and pressing briskly forward they endeavoured to force their way through the stern and unyielding mass. In this manner, but with some increase of speed, the cavalcade contrived to reach Cheapside, and here, the street being wider, the soldiers broke off from that close proximity to the carriage which they had hitherto preserved, and began to drive the crowd before them with the flat of their broadswords. The people of England were ever peculiarly alive to the invasion of their persons: they will bear much, but seldom

put up with blows. An alteration for the worse was directly perceivable in the temper of the crowd. The military were now saluted with groans, execrations, and hisses; but as yet no projectile was hazarded against them. In this manner, with difficulty enough, but still without any very material obstruction, the carriage and the soldiery trotted through Cheapside, and were rapidly nearing the Poultry and that part of the thoroughfare where a number of streets converge.

Here the crowd was joined by a number of the rabble of the City, who had become aware of the removal of the prisoner to the Tower, and had rushed out in a swarm, like bees from a hive, to testify their sense of the conduct of the government. This rabble, joined to the old multitude, made an awful mob: as lawless as such assemblages generally are, and equally as intent on and desirous of mischief. It seems a necessity that a great crowd cannot disperse without

an outbreak of some description. A crowd appears like a large and formidable engine when put in motion, which must work upon something, though the destruction of its own contriver be what it effects. Shouts and cries began to be bandied about.

“No Popery !” “No Idolatry !” “Tor-
rington for ever !” “Monmouth for ever !”
“Down with the bloody Papists !” “Down
with the persecutors !”

It is astonishing, when one has led the way, how soon the multitude find their hearts and follow. The first cry was repeated by only a dozen voices, and these all in one quarter ; but no sooner had the ice been broken by some more reckless or more daring than the rest, than the shouts doubled and redoubled, till the groans, cries, and other modes of expressing popular displeasure, were general and deafening, and at last deepened into a roar like the roar of the sea, continuing with little or no intermission.

The mob began to be unruly—it waved to and fro more actively than before; hats were taken off to cheer the prisoner, angry gestures were discernible in the mass, and the crowd began to show symptoms of a determination to forcibly obstruct the further progress of the procession. Matters began to look serious.

At this moment a comparatively trifling incident decided the fate of the day. Just as the carriage neared one of the turnings, a party of one of the different sects of the religionists which were to be found in plenty in the metropolis, was returning from the conventicle where they had been holding some week-day exercise or other, and was essaying a passage over the crossing. While driving back some of the crowd who appeared more noisy and mischievous than the rest, the Guards happened, in nautical language, to run foul of one or two of the most forward members of the sectarian party, and to upset one who had been looking the contrary way, and been,

under these circumstances, taken unawares by the soldier's horse. A loud cry was immediately raised by his brethren, from under whose cloudy brows gleams of indignant hatred shot forth upon the sacrilegious trooper and still more sacrilegious horse.

The insulted party started to his feet again in a trice; but it was to lay his hand on his sword, and to call upon his followers for a confirmation of his rage. All these directly lent the aid of their voices to the uproar which was now raging fearfully around. Yells, groans, and outcries of every description echoed far and wide; the windows of all the houses flew open; and everything seemed to threaten a general tumult.

All was now one mass of heads, some with hats on and many bare—the coverings of the latter being held boldly aloft, and waved to and fro with enthusiasm. The carriage could no longer proceed—it was inextricably wedged in the middle of the vast sea of hats and heads.

The soldiers could however be seen, with compressed lips and lowering brows, prancing their horses in the mass and flashing their swords above the heads of the rioters. At each bound forward of the heavy troop horses, the crowd—densely packed as it was—could be seen to wave like a field of corn with the wind flying over it. At each passionate rear and plunge of the horses, an awful groan burst from the mass of people, and in one or two instances the soldiers could be seen being grappled with by the mob, struggling like children in their arms, and torn down from the animals they bestrode.

The confusion now was frightful: mingled with the uproar, there were to be heard the snapping reports of the pistols and carabines of the soldiery. The latter appeared like glittering points in a wide and rushing tide of dingy hats. Rumours began to fly about the edge of the crowd that several unfortunate creatures had been shot or trampled down, some by the horses, some by the mob, in the

centre of this scene of tumult. Window-shutters were closing in every direction, and the inhabitants were quickly disappearing from the windows.

The guard was evidently too small to protect the carriage from the attacks of the populace. While they hunted the crowd away from around it, a fresh and eager mass from behind rushed forward to the back of the coach and began to clamber its wheels, roof, and sides. When the soldiers spurred back their chargers and began to close around and to cut at the men that hung upon it, the party which had been driven back returned with a dreadful rush, and almost overturned the horses that drew it. First one postillion was knocked from his horse; and then the second was laid hold of and pulled down by a dozen hands.

The hubbub and confusion was now frightful. The crowd was so great and tumultuous about the carriage, that even had they been willing the soldiers could have done nothing for its

preservation. The rabble seemed bent upon pulling it to pieces. Roland and the two officers who rode with him, as may be imagined, were in a state of great excitement.

“By Jove, this is pleasant!” cried one—
“we can’t go on. What shall we do?”

“Do!—d—d if I can tell!” returned the other. Roland threw himself back in the carriage with his arms folded, determined to let things take their course.

“Now then,” shouted two or three men outside, “the carriage is your own, boys. Knock those skulking constables on the head! Set free the prisoner! Tear the coach to pieces! Liberty for ever! Down with the blood-thirsty Papists!”

These cries were followed by the smashing of one of the coach-blinds; and half a dozen grim and dirty faces were discovered staring into the coach. Rough hands were wrenching the handle of the door, while half a score of iron crows, and all sorts of implements of much

the same description, rained a shower of blows on the groaning, cracking, and splitting panels. One of the officers started to his feet, and thrust a horse-pistol out of the window.

“By—I” he cried, “if you don’t instantly move off, I’ll blow out the brains of the nearest man to me”

A hoarse laugh followed this threat.

“Fire away you d——d fool! your crack’s soon spent. Pull the coach to pieces! pull ’em all to pieces!”

The officer fired, as a hail of blows was showered on the devoted carriage. The door was torn open, and half of the front shaken to pieces.

The officer who had fired was now pulled out of the carriage like a child: and a hundred fierce-looking figures were preparing to do the same by Roland, but with a different intention.

“Come out—out with you and save yourself! The soldiers are wheeling round to

charge us. Run, run for your life!" vociferated a Babel of coarse and different voices. "You won't be perceived in the crowd. Fly, jump to the water side, and get over the river as fast as you can!"

"I am bound to abide the result of my trial, my masters," cried Roland. "I thank you all most sincerely for your good intentions, but if I fly I shall only increase the danger of my situation and aggravate the suspicions against me. Disperse, my good friends: you don't know what you have done. The city will be upon you in a minute."

"Are you mad?" shouted the nearest of the mob. "Do you want to be hanged? for that's your fate as sure as the sun's shining now."

"What's the matter with the fellow?" others called out. "Won't he go? pull him out and make him! If he won't thank us now for what we're doing for him, he'll thank us by and bye. Pull him out, you there in front:

take him up and carry him. Look sharp, my masters: there'll be knives on our heads in a minute!"

Roland sat irresolute for an instant: but urged by the eager multitude, and alive to his present chance of escape, he started up, jumped out of the carriage, and plunged into the middle of the crowd with half-a-dozen of his new friends before him. A passage was with some difficulty made through the mob: but he got through seemingly unperceived by the soldiers, and in a minute or two he was in the edge of the crowd.

"Now off with you as fast as you can toddle!" cried one or two of his rescuers: "take all the blind ways you can, double like a fox, get down to the water, and my life on't you won't be strung up this bout. Clap down your beaver, and run like a stag! Bravo! Hurrah!"

Roland did not pause, but did as he was advised. Plunging through a variety of courts

and lanes, which he now saw for the first time, he directed his course towards the Thames, and after much difficulty found himself close to one of the stairs that line the banks of the river

CHAPTER IX.

"Tom, away :
Mark the high noises, and thyself bewray
When false opinion, whose wrong thought defiles
thee,
In thy just proof, repeals, and reconciles thee."
King Lear. Act iii. Scene 6.

"You are well encounter'd here, my cousin Mow-
bray."
Henry IV. (Second Part.) Act iv. Scene 2.

THE watermen, as Roland walked down to-
wards the stairs, began as usual to set up the
cry, "Boat, sir," "Boat, your honour," in
answer to which ready proffers of service he

simply nodded, and stepped into the nearest wherry. The waterman pulled as earnestly as if he had been really aware of the necessity there was for exertion; and in a short time Roland was landed on the opposite side of the river, and was threading the dingy lanes of the north-western part of Southwark.

After walking at a quick pace for half an hour, Roland stopped and began to look around him, uncertain where he was and in what direction to go. He had several friends in London, and to one of these, after some debate with himself, he determined to apply for assistance. He was indeed doubtful whether they might be inclined to take any notice of him, as he had so recently been apprehended in the company of men who had made an actual attempt upon the life of the King. Of course, should their view of his conduct be so unfavourable, he would be classed by them as one, and perhaps as the basest, as being the most superior in rank, of the assass-

sins. This however, as he acknowledged to himself, he was obliged to hazard. If he bent his steps toward the country, he knew not where to go or where to seek for safety, and was, at the same time, doubly exposed to the chances of detection and re-arrest.

His mind was in a perfect chaos:—fears for Julia and Rockingham, of whose fate he had heard nothing, but for whom he dreaded the worst, made such a constant warfare in his thoughts, that he was almost incapable of directing himself even in an instance the most immediate and the most pressing. One moment, as he had heard nothing of her since he was carried off from the Rye House, he fancied she must be in safety, but this hope was the next instant thrown down, and he feared and anticipated the very worst. Atcherley was like a serpent in his imagination. He was astounded at his most exquisite villany, for which he could assign no possible reason, and he burned with the most constant and teasing

desire to call him to account for all his complicated acts of deceit and treachery.

A light had broken in upon his brain while agitated with all these thoughts in prison. He was now convinced, and his heart sunk within him at the conviction, that Atcherley had been all along deeply attached to his own intended bride, and had now brought this ruin upon him and her father to put them both out of the way, and to bring about his hellish designs with the greater probability of success. He had been ready to tear his prison door, when he thought that Julia—*his* Julia—was in the power of the false friend who had crushed him and all his hopes, and was perhaps at that moment calling upon him for assistance and rescue. At these times Roland would gnash his teeth, strike his hand against his forehead, and close his fingers upon his palms with so much force, that the print of his nails would leave a mark which would remain for hours after the paroxysm of despair and writhing anguish had

passed over that gave rise to the tempest in his mind. He would curse his folly and himself over and over again, and writhe in violent but useless vexation, till like a caged tiger he was ready to tear to pieces the first human creature he saw. Oh that he could get on the other side of that grated window and iron-bound door! the stroke which would avenge him would be too sure to need repetition. He envied every fly that buzzed without, and in his rage and wild impatience he burst in his mind's eye out of the cage in which he was shut up, and painted pictures to himself of what he would do were he but in the open air and a free agent. To use a metaphor, his mind was actually being grated and rusted away in his confinement.

“To him this dungeon was a gulph,
And fetter'd feet the worst of ills.”

How madly insensible he thought he had been

of the blessing of doing what he liked, and *going where he pleased!*

Roland had been so accustomed to rely for everything upon his friend Atcherley, that self-confidence and self-dependence were something entirely new to him. The injurious tendency of such unlimited reliance upon another was now most painfully evident to him. For want of the exercise, and from the habit of leaning so much upon the advice, suggestions and resources of another, he was almost wholly unfitted for directing himself. His character as hitherto had had no opportunity of displaying itself, it had had no opportunities of acquiring strength, and he was now, totally unaided, to take his first lesson in the stern realities of life in a situation of the most bewildering perplexity and danger. He now blamed exceedingly that indolence of spirit which had made him look to the countenance and help of another instead of his own independent resources. He made many reso-

lutions for the future, and determined to break through the bonds which he had allowed to be imposed upon him ; to think and act for himself, and revolutionise his whole character.

Thoughts upon all these points occupied his mind as he walked quickly forward :—as if even to justify the strength and durability of his resolutions to himself by the firmness and quickness of his pace. After walking some time he found himself in the neighbourhood of Lambeth, and he instantly determined to again cross the river, and betake himself to the apartments of one of his friends who lived in the western part of Chelsea. This friend was in fact a young man who had been an officer attached to the regiment of horse in which Roland had served in former and happier times. There was an old and hereditary friendship between these two young men, for the gentleman he was now going to seek was the son of a Sir Peter Waldegrave, a landholder of considerable estate in Derbyshire

and a follower of the Court. Sir Peter had been an old and valued friend of Roland's father; and the intimacy had been perpetuated in the persons of their sons.

Roland accordingly bent his steps to the river side, and walked along the smooth and willow-bordered road which led from Lambeth Palace to Battersea. He wished to seek as retired a ferry as he could, and to pass over as unobserved as possible.

He had proceeded about two miles along this road when he heard the sounds of a horse behind him, and looking instinctively round perceived a horseman cantering towards him. A misgiving crossed his mind for a moment that the stranger was some person or other who had traced him thus far from the city and was come out to re-apprehend him. Full of this unpleasant idea, but making up his mind to the worst, he turned round, and walked on as unconcerned as he could appear to do.

At length the stranger neared him, and was in the act of passing. Roland stole a glance at him from under his eyebrows, and his eye fell as he observed that the eye of the horseman was fixed intently upon him. Roland however mustered up his courage, and was preparing to give another glance when the stranger suddenly pulled up his horse, drew him towards the footpath, and called out—

“Why bless my soul, Roland ! can this be you ?”

Roland looked him full in the face, and recognised the very friend he was going to seek :—no other person in fact than Sir Edgar Waldegrave.

“How got you here in the name of all that is wonderful ?” reiterated Sir Edgar.

“Hush ! be cautious for God’s sake if you wish to save my life,” said Roland in answer.
“I was going to seek you.”

“Then this is a lucky overtaking of mine ; for had you gone to Chelsea you would have

found me absent:—yes, and absent for a week! I thought I knew the cut of your figure as I rode up, and I was looking to make sure.”

“I was coming to ask your assistance. I really need it,” said Roland. “You have heard all I suppose?” he added with some hesitation.

He looked to Sir Edgar, uncertain what reception his enquiry would meet with.

“To be sure I have!” said Sir Edgar, “and heard too much of it. You have been a fool, Roland, begging your pardon for the word, but it’s deserved. I knew directly that you had been practised upon by some discontented firebrands; but when they attempted to make me believe you were mad enough to join in the assassination business, by Jove I fairly laughed in their faces! You’ve run into mischief though after all:—you’ve been too much of a republican, Roland. You’ve got on too fast.”

"I have been grossly—devilishly practised on, that is certain," said Roland.

"I am glad that you intended to apply to me and nobody else," said Sir Edgar. "I'll get you out of this scrape if I can, though I can't do much. But you stand in rather a dangerous predicament just now I can assure you. You wonder at my looking back so often, at least you look puzzled with it—Don't be alarmed. The short and long of it is that the King himself is not far behind me."

"The King?—Good heavens! is it possible? And I here!"

"Yes!—and he has a whole legion of his court people with him as usual. But I'll manage so that you shall have a word or two with him by himself:—that is, with only myself as a friend, you know, as an auditor. Oh he's kind and gracious as the sun in heaven if you know how to take him. Two words will do your business: you don't want discretion, at least you did not when I knew

you before, and if you play your cards well old Rowley is so generous, that you may laugh at all the courts, judges, juries, axes and executioners in the world. He is not unfavourably disposed towards you, for some reason or other that I can't find out. To say the truth, those rats in office, those black buckram gown'd devils, his ministers, egg him on, and make him sometimes do things that, poor fellow, he'd never think of if it wasn't for them. A friend of yours, too, one Master Atcherley;—he's now, by the bye, the Lord of Torrington manor, got the house and land, Roland, got the title, possessions and everything; aye, and in a most singular way too!—what was I talking about?...I'm so out of breath with my hard riding and the fluster of this strange and in some respects fortunate meeting, that I hardly know what I am saying. Ah! I know. Well, this friend of yours has proved friend in court with a vengeance.—”

"He is a devil!" muttered Roland.

"No, no; let us hope not as you've been his companion so long. Any way he is a very great villain; but his services in this last terrible affair have disposed the King to give him your title and all belonging to it. His Majesty thinks very highly of him as I am told, but is almost afraid of him: he seems such a prince of Machiavels. Old Rowley is in an odd mood respecting you; he thinks you deserve hanging, but he is disinclined to string you up. I have done as much as I could for you, I assure you, since your madness became public; and I have a little diminished His Majesty's anger, which was at first hot enough against you."

"I thank you fervently," said Roland. "I would have done as much for you had our situations been reversed. I have been all my life unfortunate. I am now at the bottom of the pit."

"Well now keep quiet for a minute or two,"

said Edgar Waldegrave. "I'll back to His Majesty and let him know a little how the land lies here. He's just now in one of his best tempers, and that's an excellent thing for you, and he has been joking my Lord Archbishop up at the palace yonder, till I really thought the Right Reverend Prelate would have run to his windows and thrown them open to give his laughter room:—politic—politic, you know—royal jokes always excite more laughter than other people's; there's more wit in them! The King is going with some of his dear friends and allies up the Surrey side of the water to Kew—and then we are off for Windsor! Good day, *Sir Roland*, for the present!"

And so saying, back galloped Sir Edgar Waldegrave, leaving Roland to slowly and pensively proceed.

CHAPTER X.

"How now, my lord of Worcester ! 'tis not well
That you and I should meet upon such terms
As now we meet.
This is not well, my lord, this is not well.
What say you to't ?"

Henry IV. First Part) Act 5.

"Discomfort guides my tongue,
And bids me speak of nothing but despair."
Richard II. Act 3. Scene 2.

It was not long before the sound of horses upon the hard road behind him, and the cloud of dust which when he turned his head he saw driving along the road, warned Roland that the royal *cortege* was approaching. In a

few minutes the horsemen were individually distinguishable. First rode the King, accompanied on one side by Sir Edgar Waldegrave, and on the other by some gentleman whom Roland did not know. Roland, as the party neared him, respectfully paused in his walk and drew near to the side of the footpath.

Sir Edgar had been apparently communicating something to His Majesty, for Charles was turned towards him.

The king and Sir Edgar were something in advance of the other equestrians when they came up to the spot on which Roland was standing. Charles looked hard at him for a moment or two, and then gently drew in the magnificent horse on which he rode.

"Your name is Roland Torrington is it not?" said the king, looking keenly but not sternly at the party he addressed."

"Your majesty, it is," said Roland, bowing his head: his hat had of course been removed before his majesty approached.

“ And it is your wish to say something to us. Fortune has favoured you, young gentleman, in our chancing to take this unusual road to-day, or we should have else been more difficult of access. Stand back, gentlemen, if you please: we shall only detain you a moment or two, but petitioners naturally dislike a circle of eyes around them when they have to speak about their distresses. Sir Edgar you may remain, since it is at your request and instance that we wait to hear what this young person has to say.”

The king's attendants, to the number of about a dozen gentlemen, reined back their horses at the king's command, and drew respectfully off in a group to the road side. They were sufficiently distant to be entirely out of hearing. As they went off, however, there was a hurried whispering among them, and one of the company remained for a moment to speak a word to the king.

“Your majesty is pleased to forget that your safety—”

“Safety?” interrupted Charles; “nonsense—nonsense! This poor person has no disposition depend upon it to assault us at present. Besides here is Sir Edgar Waldegrave, as true a knight as ever drew steel. To satisfy yourselves, however, if you like you may take his sword. Give it up, sir, if you please,” said Charles to Roland, “when we have done with you we will return it.”

Roland did as he was directed, and handed the rapier to Sir Edgar, who in turn gave it over to the gentlemen who had suggested the expedience of some such guarantee for his majesty's safety.

“Now, sir,” said Charles, as the gentlemen drew off. “What have you to say for yourself? “Here is Sir Edgar Waldegrave, a friend of yours, who says that you deny having ever contemplated our assassination. Let us hear how this can be established. You

were arrested with arms in your hands, and in the company of desperate and bloody traitors. I have no disposition to be severe upon you, and I will compliment your common sense so far as to suppose that you have been led into this vile and sacrilegious conspiracy without being aware of its real object."

"If your majesty," said Roland, "will grant me your attention for a few moments, though I may not be able to convince I may yet be able to shake your majesty's present firm opinion that I am a person likely to be capable of taking away another man's life; a life especially, if I even could be so abandoned as to contemplate taking away any man's life, that I should the least dream of assailing."

"Firm opinion, man?" said the king. "I said that I thought you had been led into the business not knowing its real object. I supposed, also, that *common sense* would have withheld you from assenting to it. But to tell you a truth, friend—a truth to which we

suppose you were not willing to blind yourself,
we may say with Faulconbridge,

“ We do not suspect thee, very grievously.’ ”

“ If your majesty,” said Roland, “ knew the hellish cunning to which I have been victim, you would rather I think be inclined to pity than condemn me. The very man who betrayed me to your majesty, coupling my as yet unsullied name with all that is base and murderous, was the very person who led me by foul and fiendish arts to join in the design for reformation of abuses which I thought was afoot, and not for taking away your majesty’s royal life, which God long preserve ! By a series of the most complicated treacheries he has at last wound round and destroyed me. I am ignorant of the reason of his hate, but this I know that neither man nor devil ever contemplated or brought about so refined and total a re-

venge. He has brought me perhaps to the scaffold—he has destroyed my friend—a friend that was yet to stand in a nearer and dearer relation to me—and he has carried off and still keeps in his accursed custody she who was to be my bride. I am undone — crushed — destroyed every way! Let your majesty, since there is no hope of relief for me, put me out of the way at once—finish the hateful life that I bear most unwillingly about me; for I stand a desperate man, uncertain whether to throw myself to the ground in the utter hopelessness of despair, or start madly away, without direction or object, to the rescue of her for whom God knows this instant I would lay down my life, and of whose place of concealment, and of whose condition at this moment—hard, cruel Fate! I am yet entirely ignorant! Let your majesty go on: you and yours are happy. I am a miserable wretch, only fearing to perish because I leave my love in danger behind me!”

Roland's tone and look startled the king: the intensity and bitter desperation of his expressions and the misery conveyed in the tone of his voice were as touching as they were sudden and surprising. Roland had mastered himself for a long time, but in a gush of regret, fury, and despair, all his soul broke out in a moment. Every word, stamped as it was with truth, served to thoroughly convince the as yet incredulous king. The tempest of the soul lays bare the most hidden things of the mind in an instant:—every thing falls before it, all the barriers which we raise up to defend ourselves from the observation of others.

A pause of some time ensued. The king looked grave, but not displeased.

“I am sorry at all this,” said he, “and I am as astonished as I am sorry, You speak strange things, young man, things which if untrue will not be much the better for you. But don't think I am harsh or severe. I do

believe there is really something strange in the case, and depend upon it I will sift the whole business thoroughly. You complain of this man Atcherley, you say he is a villain: all that you have said against him, and all that you have advanced he has done to you, you are of course ready to maintain at another time and in another place."

"Only give me the opportunity, my liege," said Roland. "'Tis a blessing which I pant for."

"Well, we desire to set all this right," continued the king: "but we must proceed fair and softly; nothing is done well that is done in a hurry. I must first say something to you on another subject. How comes it that you are not in the Tower, Mr. Torrington? You were this morning to be removed thither from our prison of Newgate. As we rode along, too, we heard something about a riot in the City, and a skirmish between some sol-

diers and a mob. What was it, Sir Edgar? —you were at our elbow when the fellow bothered us with it.”

Sir Edgar respectfully reminded the king of what had been detailed to him by an express from the city. The account which had been given, though true in the main, differed in some particulars from what had actually occurred.

“Well, you have heard all this, Sir Roland,” said the king, slightly yawning and looking round him, when Sir Edgar had finished. “We suppose that you were, one way or other, concerned in this violation of the public peace.”

“An unruly mob, your majesty,” answered Roland, “chose to set me free by force, notwithstanding my protestations against the violence, and the determination which I expressed to abide the issue of my trial. I was carried out of the midst of the confusion, almost blindfold, by some men, and placed eventually

out of reach. My rescue, I may truly say, was involuntary on my part."

"It was certainly not odd, altogether," said Charles, "that a man when pulled from the grasp of fellows that were taking him to a place like the Tower, and with the prospect of death before his eyes, should make the best use of his legs when he had been set on them. Don't you think you would have done the same, Sir Edgar, if you had been placed in such a situation? Ha?"

Sir Edgar laughed.

"I am afraid, your majesty," said he, "that I should have found it difficult to have even summoned up a diffident face at the offer to set me free."

"We'll help you, young man, if possible," said the king, graciously. "We have some thought that we have seen your face before. Providence has blessed us with so many friends, that we cannot be expected to remem-

ber all their countenances. Are we right, Sir Roland, in our fancy?"

"Your majesty is perfectly right," said Roland, who had by this time quite recovered himself. "Though I have served your majesty for some time in a military capacity, it was in the Netherlands that I last had the honour of personally addressing you. Your majesty may perhaps condescend to remember that in the neighbourhood of Louvaine I once had the happiness of saving your majesty from the poniard of an assassin."

"Louvaine!—assassin!—I remember the circumstance, I remember all about it," said Charles, apparently much surprised. "I had taken a strange fancy to see *incognito* a little how the world wagged in that quarter. Very strange indeed! Sir Edgar I was riding alone, for I had only taken three or four of my confidants with me over the water, and that day I chose to rove a little about, for once in my life, perfectly unencumbered with attendants

or anything else. 'Twas an odd whim altogether; but I was back again in England in a short space. I remember the day and the incident very well indeed! Riding leisurely and carelessly along, I overtook a man who looked at me pointedly as I passed, but whom of course I had no reason on earth for suspecting. As I was passing him, the fellow rushed towards me, and I saw something glittering in his hand. Before I had time to put myself on the defensive, the man received a heavy blow on the head with some instrument or other, and rolled senseless under my horse's feet, encumbered with his cloak. I looked up, and saw a young man standing before me with a walking-staff in his hand. That young man was my preserver, and that young man is Sir Roland Torrington! He had crossed into the road a little lower down, and came up just in time to save me my life perhaps, and the man a murder. The villain was walked off to prison between us, we managed to make two

excellent guards that day, Roland; but two weeks before his trial he contrived to make an escape. So ended the affair at that time; but I assure you I have not forgotten it. If we remember rightly," continued the King, turning to Roland, "we gave something on the occasion as a memento of the occurrence, and as a pledge of the future gratitude of a gentleman and a King!"

"Your majesty's memory is as perfect as it is condescending," returned Roland. "Your majesty was pleased to present me with a ring from your own royal finger, and at the same time to intimate that if ever I should be placed in a situation of difficulty or danger, I should apply to you and that your majesty would if possible relieve me."

"And we suppose you claim the performance of our promise just now," said the King.

"With your majesty's leave, I do," said Roland.

"We are glad of it," said the King, "for we shall now acquit ourselves of the debt we owe you. Come nearer, Sir Roland. We give you our royal word that we will do all that you want. You said that a lady—a lady to whom you are bound by vows—is against her own will in the power of the giant of this romance—this Sir William Atcherley. Upon our royal honour, you two gentlemen ought to take lessons of him, for he is the very pink of courtiers and prince of politeness!"

"The lady, your majesty, is at present in the utmost danger," said Roland anxiously.

The King smiled. "I see—I see how it is," said he good humouredly. "Well you shall be the brave knight her deliverer—you love her wonderfully of course."

"Your majesty I see anticipates my reply," said Roland.

"The presumption of this redoubted champion, this Serpent Knight as he would be called in the romance books, must be looked to," ob-

served the King decidedly. "His pride shall be humbled, and he shall be made to disgorge his jewels like a fish. It shall be your own fault, Sir Roland, if you do not meet him quickly. You shall attend us to Windsor—no words; you must—and we will hear and settle all as we go along. Depend on it we will winnow the whole affair thoroughly, and set everything on its proper bottom. As for Rockingham, your intended father-in-law, I don't know what I can do for him. He is a republican, moreover he is a Puritan, and moreover he has in all godliness and sincerity made a *bond fide* attempt on my life. As so many of his accomplices—I will not offend you by calling them yours also, Sir Roland—have been sent out of the world, and yet remain to be trowled down, all I can do for you—and it is for your sake only that I do as much, adding also his daughter's, if she be as fair as I have been given to understand and as your look seems to say;—all that I can do, I say, is

to let judgment of death be recorded against him, and then give him the choice of execution or transportation for life to some one of our colonies in America. I fancy we shall be able to get on without the old Puritan father-in-law, eh, Sir Roland? Ha! ha! ha! Now then, as all this is arranged, call up the gentlemen, Sir Edgar, and take them my apologies for detaining them so long. Let us forward then in God's name! for it grows late, and we begin to feel an extraordinary inclination for dinner."

Roland, at Charles' command, was mounted on one of the horses; a groom being dismounted and sent back on foot for his accommodation. The whole party set gaily forward; Roland at the King's side, though he felt far too anxious to join in the laughter and lively discourse which prevailed around him. Charles however seemed a little more serious than usual, and spoke much to Roland as he rode along. At the King's command he de-

tailed all that had occurred since his first acquaintance with Atcherley, his father's death, his life in Germany and England, his brother's assassination, his friend's systematic treachery, his introduction to the conspirators, and all that he knew or conjectured respecting the life and character of Atcherley.

The King paid great attention to all Roland disclosed, and especially to all that related to his *quondam* companion. He seemed to look upon Atcherley with great interest and curiosity, and in one or two instances gave vent to some expressions of wonder when something particularly striking was narrated. Charles, though now getting into years, still possessed much of the vivacity and many of the good looks of an earlier age. Time seemed little to have impaired either his wit, his spirits, his gallant bearing or courtlike exterior.

CHAPTER XL

“ Lord Marshal. Harry of Hereford, Lancaster, and Derby,

Receive thy lance and God defend the right !

Bolingbroke. Strong as a tower in hope, I cry—Amen !

Sound trumpets ; and set forward combatants !”

Richard II. Act 1. Scene 3.

“ Thy oath remember ; thou hast sworn to do it :

’Tis but a blow, which never shall be known.”

Pericles, Prince of Tyre. Act 4. Scene 1.

“ Whence comest thou ? what wouldst thou ? thy name !”

Coriolanus. Act 4. Scene 5.

“ O villany ! Ho ! let the door be locked :

Treachery ! seek it out.”

Hamlet. Act 5. Scene 2.

ROLAND was treated with much indulgence by the King, who determined, upon the strength

of his representations, which after some time the king became convinced were true, to rescind the former grant to Atcherley, and to restore the Torrington title and its dependencies to the proper heir.

To this end, not to take any undue advantage of him, he caused a summons, which Atcherley received, to be duly forwarded, and determined to wait till sufficient time had elapsed for him to appear in answer to it. He wished if possible to save him, as he had still a lurking respect for his talents and an admiration of him generally, from disgrace as well as from the temporal injury of having to surrender his newly-acquired estate. The king's sense of justice, however, and displeasure at the unwarrantable things of which he had been guilty, determined him to do equal justice upon Atcherley, but if he found him tractable and prepared to resign both his captive and his ill-gotten booty with a good grace, Charles at the same time

resolved to provide for him in some other manner, and to bestow upon him, while loyal and deserving, at least a negative countenance. The King never imagined for a moment that Atcherley would have the presumption not to immediately appear, throw himself at his feet, confess his faults, and make ample and voluntary reparation for the wrongs of Julia and Roland.

Application moreover to Rockingham, who was still in prison, fully established the truth of Roland's story, and the king, somewhat interested in the romantic history of their attachment, determined to conclude the drama by making both the lovers happy.

Great was his indignation when the day mentioned for the appearance of the culprit passed over without his attendance or even an explanation from him. This implied contempt put to flight every one of the king's gracious feelings towards him, and did more to make him set down Atcherley as the villain he was repre-

sented, than all the affliction of Roland or the entreaties of his imprisoned friend.

Roland we may be certain was too eager to lose an instant; and the moment he was armed with the mandate of the king, authorising him to take the command of a detachment of soldiers who were appointed to second the formalities of law, and bear out the sheriff of the county in what he was to do, he took the proper steps for an immediate departure from London.

Sir Edgar Waldegrave volunteered to aid in the good work of Julia's rescue and the punishment of Atcherley, and his offer was gladly accepted by the eager Roland.

Losing no time, the two friends, accompanied by a troop of the King's Life Guards, which His Majesty had graciously permitted to join in the service, set off from London, and travelled with such expedition that they reached Northampton the same day. At this place both the horses and the horsemen were

obliged to rest for the night, and a special messenger was sent forward to direct the Sheriff and legal authorities of the county of Derby, under the seal of the king, to meet the parties named in the warrant at a certain place on the borders of their jurisdiction.

At six o'clock the following morning, Roland, Sir Edgar, and the party of horsemen, were in their saddles. The roads were in good condition, and so the horses were enabled to push forward without much fatigue. An order had been sent down from London, for two troops of a regiment of cavalry which was stationed at Leicester, to join the little expedition at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The cavalcade, therefore, with Roland and Sir Edgar at its head, riding through Kingsthorp, Boughton, Harborough, West Langton, Kibworth, Odeby, Knighton, Leicester, Glenfield, and over the Bardon Hills, reached Ashby late in the day, and were there reinforced by the additional body of troopers, who had pushed

forward thus far from Leicester, in order to take time in their progress and not be compelled to fall in with the rapid pace at which the others advanced, by losing the opportunity of gaining ground upon those who were to come up with them.

The whole party rested for a time at Ashby, and then made an evening march of a few miles to the village of Castle Dunnington, close upon the borders of Derbyshire.

At this place, in the best of the two inns which the town could boast, Roland found the Sheriff of the county, with whom the proper arrangements were made, and the plan of operations was settled for the morrow. The order of the Privy Council, cancelling the grant lately made to Sir William Atcherley on the ground of misrepresentation and contempt of the king's authority, was shown to the civil officer, and duly acknowledged by him and his followers as a valid document.

Roland and Sir Edgar had not been seated in a private room of the inn ten minutes, before an orderly arrived in the village, and, casting himself from his smoking horse, walked into the house. He brought a communication from the Secretary of the Privy Council, stating that up to the hour when it was written, nothing had been heard of Atcherley. The expedition was ordered therefore to proceed as soon as possible. A second letter was handed to Roland, who, breaking the seal and calling for light, found when the latter had been brought, that the letter was from Oliver Rockingham. It was the first communication which he had received from his unfortunate friend, since their common apprehension at the Rye House.

“ My dear Sir Edgar,” said he, “ I know you will excuse me for a few minutes : my letter is rather long and somewhat important.”

“ I wish it were from Julia,” returned Sir

Edgar, "begging your pardon, by-the-bye, for speaking so familiarly of one I have never seen, and who stands in so near and sensitive a relationship to you—were it from her, I was going to say, I fancy did it even reach to a volume, you would not complain. But we must wait for to-morrow—till she can speak for herself. As to your silence for a few minutes, don't mention it! I will leave you alone to study your letter at leisure. I shall go and see how our friends are getting on outside, and what mine host has to give us all for supper, and I shall expect your thanks for my trouble on my return. I hope you will learn that Master Rockingham is out of prison."

Saying this, Sir Edgar went down the creaking stairs, and sought the officers of the detachment which accompanied them, who were superintending the dispositions which were in progress for quartering their men for

the night. The Sheriff had gone to spend the evening and sleep at a friend's house in the neighbourhood, whither all the gentlemen of the party had been also invited. They, however, preferred, except the functionary himself, spending the time with the soldiery.

Roland, now alone, drew the lamp towards him, and read his letter, which ran as follows : —

“ My very Dear Son Roland,

“ If the blessing of a father, given in tears and affliction, can benefit thee and thy cause, be assured that thou hast had it, and now hast it, over and over again. If thou hast a mind that I shall ever live to speak to thee again, save—oh! save my child! The serpent which we have nourished in our bosoms hath turned upon and stung us. Who could believe that such abominable villany could lurk in

the heart of man! Let us hope, through the clemency and kindness of the Royal Charles—against whom God forgive me for entertaining a thought!—that we may rise renewed out of the ruins of our happiness, and extricate ourselves from the net with which that prince of hypocrites hath entangled us withal. I know not whether what I write be intelligible, for I am broken-hearted and despairing—full of sorrows as my life is full of years, and sometimes inclined to think that I shall be made to bow down my head with sorrow to the grave, and to take a last leave of the world without again beholding the dear child whom I never thought I loved or could love so much. When this reacheth thee, thou wilt be close to her prison: save her—rescue her—restore her to me, and I shall once more rejoice at beholding thee!

“Oh! who could have foreseen such a disastrous issue to our undertaking! Much could I say of all which hath befallen us, and of the

fate preparing for our beloved and suffering brethren. Fearful is the guilt of him who has betrayed and destroyed them. But grief is selfish. I cannot speak to thee of anything but that which relateth to thyself and my dear daughter—whom God Almighty grant thou may'st soon recover ! By accident did'st thou escape the doom which we ought to have all shared together, and that escape hath proven my reprieve from death. When my daughter once more blesseth my sight, the fountains of mine eyes will be opened, and I shall weep for the fate of my friends and fellow labourers in the vineyard of the Lord, and regret that I was not decreed to partake of the destiny that separateth us in this life, to meet I trust in the eternal mansions of the Blessed !

“To the King I must be grateful:—he has been pleased to spare my life, to admit thee to his favour, and to do that for which I shall ever bless him—lend the hand of assistance

towards the recovery of the loved one that has been torn from us. I know not how it is, but I almost seem a changed man. Perhaps I am degenerate and fallen away, but my mind does not seem to so strongly see the necessity of active agitation as the means of obtaining reform both in religion and government, as it of late hath been accustomed to do. Personal griefs have I fear greatly driven away political anxieties, and now, all things considered, I am not sorry that our enterprise miscarried. I cannot bring myself to regret having projected it, but I would if possible, though I should shed it indirectly, and with the holy and religious design of furthering the word, save my hands from blood. But this weak and calculating holding-back savoureth but too much of the devil! We are told to spare neither small nor great in the service of the Almighty. For what read we in the Book of the Prophet Samuel? 'But Saul and the people spared Agag, and the best of the sheep,

and of the oxen and of the fatlings, and the lambs, and all that was good, and would not utterly destroy them: but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly.' Was not he who was commissioned to do the work of the Lord, also the same day reprov'd for false pity and a weak and wavering indecision, 'Wherefore, then, didst thou not obey the voice of the Lord? but didst fly upon the spoil, and didst evil in the sight of the Lord? for rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry.' Did not Ehud, also, strike Eglon the King of Moab, who 'gathered unto him the children of Ammon and Amalek, and went and smote Israel, and possessed the City of Palm trees,' making the children of Israel serve him eighteen years. 'Curse ye Meroz,' said the Angel of the Lord, 'curse ye bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.' Oh my son! my

heart sinketh within me with apprehension and affright when I think that I—that you—may be thus cursed for abandoning the cause of the Lord, and compounding with tyrants, persecutors of Saints, scoffers at the statutes and commandments of the Just One, Papists, idolaters and men of Belial. Oh! are we yet strong in the strength of the holy? The weakness of humanity still clingeth to us, and bitter—bitter must be our repentance for falling off in the day of trial!

“ I have accepted the grace and commutation of punishment offered by the man Charles. I almost despise myself while I confess it. But what could I do? I have perilled my soul for the sake of once more seeing my child; and thou and Julia, when I am gone from this land, must pray for and extenuate me to the brethren. The choice of death or transportation to America was offered me. In an unguarded hour my human nature prevailed, and I accepted the latter. I write this

at Chatham, to which place, along with some others of the brethren, I have been conveyed. We are waiting for a ship to convey us to the New World. I am permitted to see ye both, my children, before I take my departure for ever, and I am happy that in leaving my native country, I leave her who is dearer to me than that country, dear as that country is, to the care and protection of one like thee. Do not concern yourselves about me. I shall be happy when I know that ye are so. You will have my hourly blessing; and one visit perhaps in about a year's time from this, if my repentance in the mean time satisfieth me, I may be brought to allow myself from you. Weaned from the world and all earthly ties and affections, I shall be able to devote myself to the new duties which I have prescribed myself. Religious exercises, strengthening the weak, upholding myself by the example of the strong, daily supplications for continued grace and final pardon, labouring incessantly

in the Lord's vineyard, sowing seed among the heathen who will surround me, converting them from block-worship to the knowledge and adoration of the true and only God, will employ my hours, days and years, until Providence shall be pleased to bid me sleep with my fathers, and leave my name and memory with Julia and thyself, and the holy brethren with whom I have striven. I would not permit you to accompany me, even did you wish it. I must forsake all and follow the Lord to atone for my many sins, and especially the sin which lieth heaviest at my heart, the abandonment of the brotherhood with whom I leagued myself, with whom I strove in common, and with whom I ought to have suffered. But let me hope that my active life will be more beneficial to the great cause than the death which would have ended both the means and will of doing good. Heaven pardon me and strengthen my resolution, and increase my ability to carry through that resolution.

“That my daughter’s character may not suffer an instant in thine opinion, I will relate to thee that which up to the present moment I have been unable to inform thee of, the revelation she made to me when I carried her away from thy sight in the parlour of that fatal Rye House. Love—foolish, foolish love for thee, was the cause of her unbecoming and irreligious disguise. The love became that moment foolish, when it prompted her to a step which Heaven knows I should never have thought a daughter of mine capable of. When I departed from home, my she was to leave my house for that of my maiden sister. Instead of so doing, instigated doubtless by her handmaiden, Cecilia—whom after much weeping and protestation on her part I have at last been induced to forgive—she and her thoughtless companion took the same road which you had taken, and followed you to London. In Derbyshire, before I started, they learned the name of the person whom I

recommended to the countenance of Atcherley, and also ascertained that he was to have the letter which was intended to introduce him to your company. With much art Cecilia contrived to find out the inn at which the new member rested—an orderly hostel kept by a devout brother of ours in the City of London. Thither she repaired, while her mistress—I am ashamed while I speak it—sought lodging at an inn at the west of the metropolis. There my giddy and unfortunate daughter remained until her maid returned to her. Cecilia had been successful. By her grave and becoming behaviour she had imposed upon the person upon whom she was practising, and made him believe that she was a humble friend of mine—you must remember that she was appropriately disguised—who had been protected by me from childhood, and was then edifying some of the conventicles of London by his remarkable gift of extemporaneous exhortation. Jonathan Latimer was too re-

served and cautious a person to drop a word about the letter or the design in which he was to participate. But the day was warm, and in one of the pauses of their grave and orderly conversation Jonathan unfortunately fell asleep. Why need I dilate upon the mischievous result? the letter was extracted from his pocket, Cecilia returned to her mistress, the active attendant—too active in what was evil—found out your place of residence, became acquainted with the reasons which delayed your departure for the Rye House, and found out all that they desired to know, or that might speed them in their foolish, indiscreet and unfortunate intentions. Julia had, before I left her in Derbyshire, learnt from me the fact that you were going to the Rye House, but the object of your going thither I concealed from her, as I thought it unnecessary, though I knew it could not be dangerous, that she should know it. She was also aware that I was to join you there, in order, as she

imagined, to prepare, in concert with others, a petition to the King for the redress of grievances. Thus, you see, what with the clue thus afforded, and her own sagacity, aided by the cunning and aptness of her attendant, she succeeded but too well in following you and making herself mistress of the letter, without which she well knew, disguised as they were, you would not admit them to your company. I have reason to believe that Atcherley recognised her the moment she first crossed your sight at Dunstable, but kept the knowledge to himself in order to perfect his schemes, and make himself at a future period master of her person. She had, it seems, for some time previous to this distrusted his character. She consequently followed thee, on a romantic impulse, to watch over thy safety, and become thoroughly acquainted with the designs which he who may almost be called thine evil genius entertained against thee. The intention might be good, but, as far as pro-

priety was concerned it was as inexcusable as it was dangerous.

“God speed and help thee, my dearest Roland, in that which thou art going to do! The instant thou hast liberated my daughter, post over the country to Chatham, where I will, Providence permitting, witness your union, give up my earthly interest in her unto thee, and then depart for my new and foreign home, with a blessing on my lips, and a promise from you to once more see me on the distant shore to which I shall then be hastening.

“Cecilia Capel is at present under mine eye in this town. She anxiously desires to again behold and enter the service of her late mistress. Of course thou art aware that no restriction was placed upon either Cecilia or any of the subordinates when we were arrested at the Rye House. She has promised so much, and seemingly repented so sincerely, that I shall not perhaps object should'st thou again

permit her to attend my daughter. Affliction hath made me forgive my child already. I shall now see too little of her to bring her faults too harshly to her mind. If in your enterprise you should cross the fiend who hath brought all this misery upon us, you may give him my forgiveness. Let him seek the Lord in time, and though his sins be red as scarlet, yet shall he be forgiven, and prove, like the Apostle Paul, perhaps a warning and an example to future generations.

“ I am,

“ My Dear Son Roland,

“ Thy Loving Father,

“ And Faithful Friend in the Word,

“ OLIVER ROCKINGHAM.”

“ This Place.

“ — mo.,

“ Anno Domini, 1683.”

Roland had just finished his letter when the host tapped at the room-door. The “ come

in" of Roland was answered by the host's appearance. His errand was to say that a gentleman, then waiting below, wished particularly for a few minutes' conversation with Sir Roland Torrington.

"Speak with me, did you say? did the gentleman mention his name?"

"He did not, sir," returned mine host. "But I should fancy that he was not a stranger to you, as he did not appear to ask for you as if he were—"

"The request is odd at this time," said Roland, "for I know of no friends that I have in this part of the world except those who came with and are around me. But show the strange gentleman up, by all means."

Mine host disappeared; and presently his heavy tread, accompanied by the lighter one of the stranger, was heard to ascend the old-fashioned stairs and approach the chamber door. The handle of the door was turned, and in walked the landlord, ushering in a tall

man apparently of large proportions; the voluminous folds of the large mantle which he wore however prevented his figure from being clearly seen. A hat with broad flaps was upon his head, and but very little of his face could be discerned from beneath its shadow, especially as the lights gave forth but a very indifferent illumination. He stopped when he had advanced three paces into the apartment, and remained still as a statue. His large dark eyes could however be seen to roll significantly round to the host, who with the curiosity peculiar to people of his calling was somewhat anxious to learn who this strange visiter could be, and what was his errand.

"You may leave us," said Roland, when he observed that his host seemed inclined to linger.

The landlord, sadly mortified, slowly retired, and gently shut the door: his steps were heard, one after the other, to lazily pass down the creaking stairs.

Roland was somewhat surprised to observe that his visitor kept his position without uttering a sound or moving a muscle, till he heard the last footstep of the host die off along the passage at the bottom of the stairs.

All was now quite still; and a moment or two were suffered to elapse before the stranger spoke.

"Your name is Sir Roland Torrington of Torrington Place in the neighbouring County of Derby," at last he said.

His voice was musical and at the same time grave and composed.

"You are right, sir; that is my name, and in the house you mention was I born," said Roland: "perhaps you will be pleased to seat yourself, and to inform me of the reason of this rather late, though I assure you not on that account disagreeable visit. I have never had the pleasure, I believe, of seeing your face before."

"You have not," was the laconic answer.

"I do not perhaps ask too much, when I request that you will raise your beaver and allow me to see the features of one with whom I shall have to communicate."

"As you please," was the answer, and the stranger raised his hat, but did not take it off. The features of a man about forty years of age were displayed—they were handsome and regular though exceedingly brown. There was the same grave kind of expression however about the eyes, which physiognomists have attributed to Charles the First of England.

"The object for which you have sought me," said Roland, "is—"

"This," interrupted the stranger, glancing from under his brows in a suspicious manner round the room and towards the door. "I come to give you some intelligence which may be useful to you to-morrow. I have secret reasons for aiding you, heart and soul, in the destruction of the villain yonder: the wrongs

which he has done you cannot be greater than those which he has heaped on me. Though not the fittest bearer of a lady's message, I must give you that which I have been commissioned—no matter under what circumstances—to deliver. When you have read this letter, I will tell you in what strange way I chanced to meet with, became interested in, and be trusted and employed by your lady—Mistress Julia Rockingham, daughter of Oliver Rockingham, newly released from prison, and now at Chatham waiting for a vessel to transport him for life, along with a few others, to some one of His Majesty's Colonies in America."

Roland's heart started when he heard Julia named, and still more when the stranger drew out of his pocket a letter in a female hand and folded after a female fashion. Roland's natural eagerness and excitement when this letter was displayed to him sparkled in his eyes.

The stranger walked across the room to Ro-

land, and loosening his right hand from the encumbering folds of his cloak, held out his left when he had approached Roland close, and gave the letter. Roland immediately took it and broke the seal, almost unconscious of the stranger's presence.

"Do you acknowledge the letter?" demanded the stranger.

"Yes," said Roland, whose eyes were fixed upon the seal, the device on which he recognized for one of Julia's.

"Acknowledge this too then," continued the stranger. He dropped the mantle from his right hand, and drawing the hand back to add a fatal strength and certainty to the blow, was about to plunge the poniard which glittered in his grasp in the heart of his preoccupied and unsuspecting victim. A hand, however, roughly caught his arm from behind, and Roland, as if struck by lightning, started far out of reach. The hand which had so providentially rescued Roland from a so

certain death, was that of his friend Sir Edgar Waldegrave. The assassin, seeing that the single blow to which he trusted had miscarried, threw the folds of his dark mantle around him, and darted as quick as light to the door of the apartment.

"By Jove, Roland," shouted Sir Edgar, "let not the villain baffle two of us! Here fortunately lie your pistols! Surrender, you devil, or you shall have a bullet through your cowardly head!"

As Sir Edgar almost shrieked this out, the assassin succeeded in opening the door. As he passed he snatched the key from the lock, and jammed the door after him with a force that shook the door posts.

"By —— he has shut the door!" cried Sir Edgar. "There goes the lock! Our pursuit is prevented by everything comfortable! Hark! how he bolts down the stairs! There is only one way! Throw open the window! Shout, Roland, shout, and I'll try to hit him as he

sallies forth. Here! attention, you sentry below! Stop the man you see come out of the door! Ah! there he is, by ——”

As Sir Edgar spoke he fired his pistol, and the ball struck the party at whom it had been aimed. He, however, strode boldly on. The alarm by this time had been given in the street, and the fugitive, disabled by his wound, was overtaken, captured and roughly disarmed.

All the place was of course in commotion. Roland sat down, and Sir Edgar, going to the head of the stairs, commanded some of the soldiers to bring up the prisoner.

In a minute or two the room was full of people. The officers of the detachment were gathered around Roland and Sir Edgar, congratulating the former upon his fortunate escape, and the latter upon his lucky shot.

“The villain,” cried one of them, “would

have otherwise escaped as sure as the moon's now shining in the sky! The sentry, puzzled with the strange affair and the outcry from the window, would most likely in bewilderment have missed the man when within his reach. We at a distance should not have known what was the matter, and in the general confusion the assassin would have slipped by us in the darkness. But we have him now, and he shall well pay for it!"

"Your threat is of little consequence to him," observed the doctor of the town, who had been hastily called in. "His wound is mortal."

"He must then lay open his mind, and let us know his accomplices and the reason of his attempt on Sir Roland's life. It's a most extraordinary thing! Gentlemen, question him while he is able to answer, for the doctor here says that there is not more than a few hours' life in him."

All present did not fail to follow this advice ;

but nothing was to be gathered from the prisoner. He sat bound in a chair opposite to those of Roland, Sir Edgar, and their friends, and preserved a moody and contemptuous silence.

After some time spent in this manner, all were directed to quit the room except Roland, Sir Edgar, and one or two of the officers. The assassin was then gravely applied to over and over again for the reason of his daring act, the nature of the design against Roland's life, and the names, if any, of the accomplices. His dreadful state was properly represented to him, but this, together with the assurances of the surgeon that he could not possibly survive, failed to move him in the slightest degree. His constancy of purpose was extraordinary, as well as the surprising fortitude with which he bore the pain under which he must have been suffering. Finding every effort useless, the prisoner was carried to a bed-chamber, his wound dressed, and everything which art, skill and

attention could supply, bestowed upon him. The ball had penetrated a vital part, and but few hours of life remained to him.

Several hours were spent that night in debate and consultation: but at last all thought it proper to retire to rest, to prepare and fit them for the fatigues and uncertainties of the morrow. A proper watch was kept over the assassin during the night, and everything attempted which could retard or prevent the catastrophe.

CHAPTER XII

‘On, on, you noblest English,
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war proof!
Fathers, that like so many Alexanders,
Have, in these parts, from morn till even fought,
And sheath’d their swords for lack of argument.

The game’s afoot ;
Follow your spirit : and, upon this charge,
Cry—God for Harry! England! and Saint George.”
Henry V. Act 3. Scene 2.

“On, on, on, on, on! to the breach, to the breach!”
Ibid. Act 3. Scene 2.

“Arm, arm, and out!
If this, which he avouches, does appear,
There is nor flying hence, nor tarrying here.”
Macbeth. Act 5. Scene 5.

EARLY the following morning the bugles blew
in the village street, and Roland, Sir Edgar,

and their friends, starting from their short and interrupted slumbers, began to attire and accoutre themselves. In a short time the space before the inn was full of horses; and officers hurrying in and out of the house and troopers examining the state of their arms and horse furniture, gave uncommon liveliness to the scene. So much bustle had not been seen in the little town for a very considerable time. The inhabitants grouped themselves at their doors, and gazed with eyes of rustic wonder on the martial assemblage before them.

All the superiors of the party having armed themselves and hastily broken their fast, the officers of the detachment went out to their men, and Roland, Sir Edgar, and the host betook themselves for the last time to the apartment in which the wounded assassin of yesterday lay dying. Affairs here were in much the same situation. The man was evidently fast departing, and the doctor, who had sat up with him the whole night, declared that it was ex-

traordinary how he could have survived even so long as he had. He appeared [insensible to pain, and had conversed a good deal with his attendants: but whenever the subject of the assassination was started or approached, he stopped suddenly, and continued to preserve a total and provoking silence.

Everything was urged by Roland and the others which could induce, by hope of reward or dread of danger, the disclosure which they so much wished to make themselves masters of. To this the stranger returned no other answer than—

“Gentlemen, it is useless. I am not a man to change a purpose, or to do that to-day which I refused to do yesterday. I am now fast dying. When I am dead ask my cold and insensible body, and the senseless corse, which will hear you as readily as the table at which you are now sitting, shall as soon answer then as I shall answer you now. Your

efforts are useless. You will be disappointed I assure you. I have failed, and I came not here unprepared for the consequences. This wound—this mortal wound is immaterial. I should have been otherwise sacrificed, either by the blind and instant rage of your friends, Sir Roland, or the slower but not less sure hand of the law. What should I have profited by the delay? Death must arrive; I must have died; and I am dying!”

“That villain yonder—that Atcherley—is at the bottom of this,” observed Sir Edgar, involuntarily perhaps making the words half a question. Roland looked to the culprit to see how he would take the observation, but not a muscle moved.

“Perhaps so,” he carelessly said.

“And the letter,” added Roland. “I have since found out that it was a forgery.”

“Very probably,” ejaculated the criminal.

"The seal however I did not mistake," continued Roland, "it is—"

"That which you took it to be," interrupted the assassin.

"Obtained in some strange manner though," said Roland, anxious to continue the conversation and seduce the stranger into some sort of confession.

"Stolen—stolen, perhaps," returned the latter, "or given to second the deception and put you out of the way. Women are changeable creatures, you know, Sir Roland."

This trifling observation made Roland start up all in a hurry, frown, and sign to his friend to follow. "'Tis of no use," said he as they descended the stairs together—"let the villain die! Not a moment is to be lost. I will rescue Julia or perish! The man is of course a liar?"

"Very probably," replied Sir Edgar drily. "I give you his own words for an answer."

When the two gentlemen sallied out, they

found all the troopers in readiness for an immediate departure. Roland and Sir Edgar mounted the horses which were in waiting for them, and cantering to the head of the detachment, gave, as they passed, the order to set instantly forward.

The direction was answered by the martial clatter of the horses' feet, and the glittering train trotted briskly out of the village.

The road happened to run close by the gentleman's house at which the Sheriff had quartered himself for the night. He consequently joined the party at a gate which opened into the road. On being told the extraordinary event of the preceding evening, his wonder was excessive; but the brisk pace at which the whole cavalcade pressed forward precluded much conversation.

In about two hours' time the detachment had arrived in the immediate neighbourhood of Torrington Place. The little public-house mentioned in the earlier part of our narrative

had been passed some time ; and at about a hundred yards' distance the old wall of the park began to disclose itself. Roland's sensations were rather exhilarating than painful, and he prepared himself, like a good commander, to make dispositions for his hostile approach to his own house. Anyone could have seen in his eyes that he contemplated paying Atcherley well for the wrongs which he had done him.

Nothing appeared to stir about the old house or in the park, and Roland and the soldiers, taking the grassy ground which surrounded the park, cantered towards the great gates. They found them fastened up, and a sentry peeping from an arrow-slit at the troopers whom he saw coming towards him.

"Who comes there?" cried he, and he levelled his firelock.

"Beware what you do, fellow," returned the Sheriff, riding to the front, but with a stout guardsman on each side of him. "We

come in the King's name, and under the authority of the law. Remember that every one who resists is amenable to the law, and will be treated as a rebel and a traitor. Somebody give this paper to the man yonder, and he must bear it to his master."

"The villain has turned out all our old servants I see," said Roland, "and filled the place with desperadoes of his own. We have, I suppose, all the cut-throats to be found in the five nearest counties to deal with. Mr. Sheriff, is this form necessary which you propose?"

"Undoubtedly it is, Sir Roland," answered the Sheriff, until this paper is delivered, and a refusal to obey all its commands returned to us, every hostile step you take is illegal."

"Enough then," cried Roland, "enough!—Hand him the paper in the name of God! Fellow, I am the owner of this house and estate. Will you open the gates and admit me and my followers?"

"Certainly not, without orders," was the reply.

"Then I must force my way. Carry that paper to William Atcherley—he is deprived of the dignity lately bestowed on him by his Majesty. Say that I wait here ten minutes, and at the expiration of that time intend—if I do not in the mean time receive an answer, and a decisive answer to my demands, to break into my own park, and march up to take possession of the house of my fathers. Away, sir, and take care how you perform your errand."

The paper was thrown over the gate to the sentry, who disappeared for a moment, having doubtless handed it to some invisible neighbour.

The party now withdrew to a short distance from the gate, and anxiously awaited the answer to the summons in the King's name. Just before the ten minutes had elapsed a horseman galloped up, who had been left be-

hind for the purpose, and informed Roland that the assassin of Castle Dunnington had breathed his last.

"It matters nothing now," was the answer. "We shall all have enough to employ our minds about in a moment. "He made no revelation I suppose?"

"He spoke not a word, sir," said the trooper.

"'Tis well. Attention! here comes the answer."

As Roland spoke, the sentry again approached the gates, and signed for one of the detachment to draw near. Roland, before any one could obey, started forward and rode close up to the gate. An instant's apprehension seized upon his friends behind.

"Well, sir? the reply," demanded Roland sternly.

"Sir William Atcherley," exclaimed the sentry, "declares that he will keep with his life the title and estate which His Majesty,

under his own hand and seal, has bestowed on him. He has read your paper carefully, which he declares to be a forgery, and this is his only answer."

"Come forward then," cried Roland, drawing his sword and beckoning to his soldiers. An instant and spirit-stirring gallop-forward of the latter was the answer.

"Captain Forester," said Roland, "direct your troop, if you please, to ride round the park wall towards the north. Sir Edgar, will you lead another troop southwards, dispersing the men so about the sides and rear of the building that no person can escape from it. Life and death depend on this dispersion of our forces! The remaining troop will for the present abide with me. Should I force this gate, a bugle will call you back. The park will then be open, and we shall be able to closely invest if not force ourselves into the mansion itself. Now, gentlemen, God prosper us!"

As he spoke, the two troops wheeled off to the right and left. The remaining soldiers dismounted, and, applying sledge hammers, which they had procured from the neighbouring village, to the iron gates, sought to make some of the rusty tracery or hinges give way. Fortunately a crowd of the tenantry, anxious to display their zeal for their old master's son, came running forward armed with a variety of cumbrous implements, which could however do good service in the present design.

Abundance of blows were rained on the gates. They stood the storm as yet with an extraordinary obstinacy. A number of men, however, circled within, and began to discharge their pieces among the crowd. Roland instantly ordered the people to get under cover of the wall, leaving only a few soldiers to employ the men inside.

The party assailed, increasing in numbers, drew nearer to the gates; and one or two could be seen to mount the wall and prepare for a

tirailade from that advantageous situation. A few dropping shots were all that were heard of the rest of Roland's friends. The gates were much too strong to be easily forced, and Roland saw with mortification that they were every moment becoming more difficult of access. Sir Roger Armstrong, a friend of Atcherley's, had taken post at this point of the defences, and had now mounted a great many of his men on the ridge of the wall, which was wide, for a considerable distance on either side. These men, firing repeatedly upon the assailants, swept the ground between those who were under cover of the massy buttresses and superabundant iron-work of the gateway, and their comrades in the rear. The besieged also on the other side of the gate, becoming bolder as their sharpshooters above reiterated their shots, with effect drew closer and closer to the wall, till they at last fired from between the bars, and drove off those who were battering the gates.

Affairs thus stood for several minutes; but

at length a bugle sounded from the other side of the park, a preconcerted signal, intimating to Roland that his friends had succeeded in forcing an entrance into it. Quick as lightning he gave the word to close together and gallop round to the postern, the only place at which he knew it was possible to have effected a breach. When he arrived there he found that some of the troopers had managed to get across the outer moat and to lower the little draw-bridge which communicated between the park and the neighbouring country. Under the superintendence of Sir Edgar Waldgrave they had continued to fire upon the walls until they had forced every one of their defenders to abandon them—one or two were killed, several wounded, and the rest intimidated. The besieged had naturally kept the postern-gate close fastened up, as they knew that a sally would be out of the question with such scanty numbers, and against a force trained to war, carefully disciplined, and well armed and

accounted. Depending upon their individual skill in the use of the gun, they had ascended the wall, and hoped by marking out their opponents to keep the besiegers at a satisfactory distance from the moat. The latter however had been too expeditious for them. In spite of the fire, several of the boldest troopers sprung into the water and scrambled over to the other side, where there was a little green ledge just under the wall. While this was doing, the remainder of the assailants lined the outward bank, and found the people on the wall sufficient employment by keeping up a nimble fire with their carbines.

The draw-bridge was secured with chains passing to the inside of the wall, so there were at present no means of lowering it. Man after man, however, crossed the moat, until two-thirds of the whole number were on the ledge before mentioned.

The postern was old, and the wood-work

soon began to crack and splinter. When Roland came up a plank was already stove in ; and the heavy implements brought by those who came with him soon decided the business by shattering the door to pieces. Before this all the defenders had fled, and when the invaders rushed in they had no opposition in lowering the bridge and admitting the cavalry.

All poured into the park through this entrance, but Atcherley's party were at a considerable distance, running eagerly towards the mansion. Sir Roger Armstrong and all at the principal gate instantly retreated when they saw that their antagonists had gone round. They knew that the postern would only hold for a short time, and that if they remained they must be overtaken and destroyed by the horse soldiers before they could reach the house. Though Roland and the troopers strove hard to cut them off, Atcherley's people, favoured

by the rising ground and the many trees which delayed and incommoded the horses, all got clear across the inner moat, and obtained the protection of the mansion itself.

CHAPTER XIII.

" Ruffian let go that rude uncivil touch ;
Thou friend of an ill fashion !"

Two Gentlemen of Verona. Act 5. Scene 5.

" They have tied me to a stake ; I cannot fly,
But, bearlike, I must fight the course."

" Why should I play the Roman fool, and die
On mine own sword ? whilst I see lives, the gashes
Do better upon them."

" *Macduff*.—Turn, hell-hound, turn !

Macbeth.—Of all men else I have avoided thee :
But get thee back, my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.

Macduff.—I have no words,
My voice is in my sword ; thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out !"

Macbeth. Act. 5. Scene 7.

ROLAND, Sir Edgar, and the guardsmen and

troopers, galloping through the park, soon came up to the inner moat; but here there was no attempt made to dispute their passage, and the water being but shallow there was no great difficulty in getting to the other side. There was also a gate and causeway, the former of which, having been broken open, easily admitted the horses. Once within the inner circle, Sir Edgar, at Roland's particular request, rode round to the rear of the building, and dispersed his men so about that there would have been no flying from the house without much difficulty and opposition. Roland, with a troop of the cavalry, rode up to the entrance of the house. As they advanced the casements of the whole front were suddenly opened and a number of bristling firelocks protruded.

“Heed them not, men,” shouted Roland, “but follow my example and we shall burn these hornets out of their nest! Throw yourselves from your horses and force the principal

door! Once in with our numbers resistance will be madness."

Saying this he dismounted. His companions likewise threw themselves from their foaming chargers, and with drawn swords all advanced to the doors.

Before they could do this, however, the pieces above were seen to flash out their deadly contents, and the rattle of the discharge, magnified and repeated by the echoes, rang along the whole smoky front of the ancient edifice. The snow-white sulphury vapour rolled full in the faces of the assailants: one or two dropped to the ground, and several of the horses, maddened by the pain of their wounds, broke wildly away, and galloped off with reins and stirrups flying among the old oaks of the park.

Before however the besieged could load for a second volley, the assailing party were close up with the doors and out of the range of their antagonists. A few dropping shots from two or three windows in the angles of the mansion

were all which could now by any possibility take effect. The windows of the hall—which were within reach of the ground—were successively shattered; and those who failed to obtain entrance through them, waited until their friends could pull away the defences, draw the huge bolts which secured the doors and throw them open. The few defenders found in this part of the house, and the absence of his arch enemy, convinced Roland that a flight was meditated from the rear of the building. Terrified at the bare idea that this should be successful, and fired with revenge against his traitorous friend, he left the overpowering of the remainder of the garrison to one of the officers, and shouting for a few men to follow him, darted up the great staircase, and being familiar with the internal arrangement of the house, sought in all directions for Julia and the villain who had held her in confinement. Cries and shouts were heard in all parts of the house, with a few scattered shots now and

then, trampings and stampings of feet, clattering of weapons, shattering of glass, oaths and deadly execrations. Roland speeded on, out of one room and into another, unmindful of everything but his object.

At length Roland and the men behind him rushed into the passage which led to the apartments in which Julia had been imprisoned. A crowd of men were advancing in an opposite direction from the outer door. Roland, with an eye like lightning, instantly saw in the midst the form of Julia carried along in the arms of Atcherley. The foremost of the party suddenly stopped when they saw strangers in possession of the way before them, and recognised the uniform of their opponents. Roland rushed forward; those in front of Atcherley levelled their pieces, but before they could discharge them Roland's sword had cut one on each side of him down. The guardsmen started back for a moment when they

saw their leader rush headlong upon the very barrels of their enemies' firelocks. They instantly however recovered their impetuosity, and charged hotly after him.

"Surrender, you monster!" cried Roland, "or I will stain the floor of my father's house with your treacherous blood!"

Atcherley did not reply, but coolly committed Julia to the care of two of his followers. She instantly recognised Roland's voice, and was struggling to free herself from the grasp of the ruffians who held her.

Atcherley advanced to the front, and placed himself opposite to Roland.

"So! Mr. Roland Torrington," said he with great composure, "we meet upon somewhat extraordinary terms. My house and park have been broken into, and my life publicly threatened. Fall back, men, fall back! and you too, gentlemen, with your prisoner, get to the rear! This very enterprising young

man will I suppose allow us a word before his blow."

His partisans accordingly drew back a pace or two; but the soldiers did not stir a step.

"Sergeant," cried Roland, "post round to our friends outside, and bid them close up towards the back of the house. Be sensible, men," he continued to Atcherley's followers, "and throw down your arms I will answer for your lives and your pardon."

"By——!" cried Atcherley, "I will cut down the first man who stirs a foot or drops his arms! Roland Torrington," he continued, as the sounds of a hostile approach came from his rear. "Do I pass into opener and fairer ground? Beware! you sell your life."

"You stir not an inch unless you free your captive," said Roland, firmly. "You and I must then meet and settle our quarrel in blood!"

"You are a fool!" said Atcherley, with a

calm and contemptuous smile. "Do you think that I have not made my way through a hundred times more formidable obstacles than these. Well then let us try this question! I make my way through you all! for I *must* escape through yonder door, and with this lady with me. Charge, men, charge! Fear not for a moment! We'll cut these gallants into as many pieces as their ribbon-ends. Now then; upon them! upon them!"

As he spoke he rushed on towards the opposing party. His followers kept close to him, and seemed to acquire a desperation from the conduct of their leader. Nor was Roland slack in meeting them. Half way they encountered, and in an instant all was a confused and dizzy struggle. The eye could make nothing out of the fearful scene of chaotic and tempestuous contention. Swords were hissing and darting in all directions, like snakes at play or quick and dazzling zig-zags of forked lightning. Some of the combatants were tum-

bling heavily to the shaking floor with a noise that made the gallery echo. In a minute or two the combat did not seem quite so fearful. Roland had darted upon Atcherley in the onset, and had been able to drive him back for a few paces, as the latter marred his own efforts by useless attempts to make out the situation of Julia. The two men who held her captive and Atcherley had been separated—unavoidably separated in the first rush, and three or four tall guardsmen, throwing themselves upon the ruffians, had swung them off from the prisoner and struck them to the ground. Julia was instantly placed out of reach in the rear of the royal party.

The combat between Roland and Atcherley and their remaining partisans, continued all along the gallery. Atcherley was a much better swordsman than Roland, but having frequently to parry the thrusts of several antagonists at once, his superiority was but of little service to him. The eyes of both comba-

tants glittered like points of fire. At length a severe wound of his sword-arm nearly disabled Atcherley. A trooper attempted to seize him by the collar, and so by main strength to overcome his balance. A flash however of his eyes, which seemed almost to blast his assailant, was followed by a thrust, which, passing through his heart, caused the presumptuous soldier to fall stone dead to the floor. At that moment Roland chanced to make a deadly lunge, and his sword, seemingly without an effort of his own, passed straight through the breast of his antagonist and glided out of his back. Atcherley turned pale, and dropping the point of his weapon sunk heavily to the floor!

The fight did not last much longer. Atcherley's people disappeared as if by magic, and all that remained were the groaning wretches who could not fly. Sir Roger Armstrong took horse, and with as many of his people

as he could find galloped off like the wind.

Roland had now conquered, and had obtained all that his heart could wish. Julia was folded in a long and ardent embrace, and both, in the simplicity, fondness and joy of their hearts, were crying like children! She of course was entreating to know how this blessed rescue was brought about, and how her father was situated. Roland delayed all explanation of the former for the present, but quickly informed her that, her father was safe, was as happy as he could be in the uncertainty of her situation, and was impatiently waiting to embrace and join them together. Their joy and delight were fortunately tempered into *happiness*, by doubts of its reality and fears of its blessed—blessed permanency.

Atcherley, unable to move, was still lying in the gallery. Roland at the sight of his enemy thus prostrate before him did not feel half so revengeful against him as he had sup-

posed he must have done. He drew near, and, looking in the face of his treacherous friend, said that he forgave him, and begged him to turn to repentance for a means of consolation in his dying moments and reparation for what he had done.

Roland Torrington," said Atcherley, with a surprising calmness, "you are now happy: and the most fortunate thing for the continuance of your happiness is that I am being fast removed from your side. I hated and still hate your name! I have nearly exterminated it, but it seems that it must flourish in spite of me. 'Tis fate. I have lived;—my time is up, and I must die! I have had my part in this poor pageant of mortality, and now I must resign it. Do you think that if I had been really desirous of prolonging my life that I could not have baffled you in all your attempts against me? No! I prepared to resist you as a sort of interlude between the drama which I had been able to bring to a

successful termination, and the last great act which was to close my performance upon the stage of this world. You have obtained your mistress;—she loves you, and be content! I would have kept her from you; but you have conquered me, and are just now entering into the temple of your happiness. Such happiness would have proved none to me, even did I see you lying here where now I lie. I have known no happiness. I do not know what my life has been:—a storm;—the delight of the tornado as it sweeps through heaven, o'er-charged with lightnings, breaking up with its too heavy freight of thunder, and waging a fearful war with every visible and less destructive element. I do not think I was made for such a world as this;—it has not suited me. Every thing in it has been strange, and foreign to my nature. Roland Torrington, a word before we part for ever. Did you love your father?"

"Why ask you such a question?" cried Roland. "Can you—do you doubt it?"

"You remember his death—you remember how he died. I—I poisoned him!"

"You?—poisoned him?—Oh my God!" exclaimed Roland.

"Hush!—there is more to hear. Your brother died by the hands of villains in the streets of London.---Did he not?"

"He did;---so we all concluded," said Roland, gasping for breath.

"His murderer is now before you!" said Atcherley, looking as if he enjoyed the astonishment of Roland.

"Gracious God! I stand hearing this," cried Roland, "and the devil yet alive before me! Your blood is yet upon my hand, but you have breathed too long already! Oh wretch! Oh villain!—what—what have you done?"

"Stand back!" thundered Atcherley as Roland wildly approached. "Stand back and

hear me! The wretch I put out of the world he polluted—the wretch whom you call your father, was mine—my father—mine also; and I slew him! Destruction had marked him for a sacrifice the moment I was born! I branded him with my hate—my deadly hate, the moment I learned he was my father!—father by nature—stranger by law. I cursed him in my heart; I swore to revenge—to revenge in blood the honour of my mother! That vow was registered in Hell if not in Heaven, and the mortal characters, chiselled upon the stone of my gradually hardening heart, remained—remained to stare at my soul till I struck them out in blood! He fell; and fell as all of his house have fallen—all but one. I would have destroyed you all—have torn out your name from the book of the living—have trodden down your souls and trampled out your every spark of life—have griped ye as death—the giant, Death, grips to his fierce embrace the creature that he crushes—have clutched ye to

my heart, and crushed your fabric in mine iron arms, till shape was massed to nothingness and bone did crack—till your annihilation became my own act, and I at last had my one great revenge!

Atcherley's voice died off in inarticulate sounds. At last he ceased, and, rolling on his back, stretched out his limbs. A spark of fire seemed to live in his eyes, while his face grew pale as death. At last his lower jaw dropped, the expression of his face became fearful, and every feature fixed as if cut in marble. The fire in his eyes went suddenly out, and they continued staring dull, ghost-like and stony upon the roof of the gallery. Roland, who had turned away his head in horror, once more looked round:—but all that remained of Atcherley, was the lifeless shell of life before him.

The evil spirit was now removed from Roland's side. He looked up already with a new, a fresh, and a holy contentment and independence. A gush of pure and soothing feelings stole gently over him. The blight was removed from his life ; the dark and fearful cloud had passed over ;—and the bright and glorious sunshine streamed forth upon him, while the fast retreating shadow in his mind, as the light of a new existence seemed to chase it back, glided quicker and quicker into distance, till all it shaded were the memories of other days, and all which was now existent of his false friend Atcherley.

THE END.

T. C. NEWBY, Printer, 72, Mortimer-St., Cavendish-Square.